

1975/76 DUCK SEASON

The 1975/76 Duck Shooting season opened at 6 p.m. on Saturday January 10th, 1976. This year, night shooting was permitted on the opening weekend only (10 and 11 January), between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. at Lake Wannamal, Lake Coomelberrup and Benger Swamp. These areas had previously been closed to night shooting on long term conservation grounds, but this year it was decided not to preclude regular shooters of these areas from participating in the opening shoot.

Generally the season was not a good one. While there were a few lakes with good water content, a reasonable number of guns and good stocks of duck, the dry season and late opening date had caused many waterways to be devoid of game.

From the records it is evident that few people obtained the allowable bag limit of 10 game species per day, but the majority averaged 1 to 4 ducks each for the opening weekend.

Wildlife Officers' reports have indicated that the pressure of the opening shoot is causing a few incidents. The party atmosphere, alcohol and anticipation of the 6 p.m. starting time, caused several firearm accidents and hindrances to Wildlife Officers carrying out their duties safely and efficiently.

At Gundaring Lake on Saturday 10th January, 1976 a shooter contravened Regulation 49 (5) (C) which prohibits the shooting of game less than 3 metres above water level: a man was seriously wounded. Wildlife Officers will be looking to curtail this type of irresponsible shooting next season.

Although Katanning lakes were very dry the average bag was 4 birds. It was also noted that some shooters were using heavy shot. Wannamal produced a small average bag compared with the amount of birds on the lake, but the shooters behaviour was to be commended.

The Yealering chain of lakes produced an average bag of 1.3 birds, the worst for years. A good average bag of 5.8 was had at Lake Taarblin with 300 guns attending the opening shoot. Wildlife Officers detected bad littering and illegal fires at Taarblin with shooters refusing to extinguish fires when called upon to do so.

The Department is hoping for a successful shoot in 1976/77 and emphasises the need for all shooters to abide by the Game Regulations which help determine the success of following seasons.