

MONTHLY SERVICE BULLETIN

DUCK SEASON TO OPEN LATE

DEPARTMENT OF  
FISHERIES AND FAUNA  
LIBRARY  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

The Hon. Minister for Fisheries and Fauna, Mr. G. C. MacKinnon, recently announced the change in the opening day for the wild duck shooting season.

Acting on the recommendations of the Fauna Protection Advisory Committee and departmental research staff, Mr MacKinnon accepted in principle that the opening date be set on a biological basis rather than on tradition.

The Director, as Chief Warden of Fauna, recently issued an open letter to farmers, naturalists, duckshooters, nature lovers, sport store owners and others, outlining the reasons for the change. This letter is published in full below:-

Dear Friends,

Changes have to be made to the traditional duck shooting season.

DUCK STOCKS OVERALL ARE LOW: Don't be misled into doubting this should they happen to be more plentiful in your district at the moment. Ducks are never evenly distributed.

Our experts have looked at the situation on a state-wide basis. They have made surveys by land and by air and they report: "DUCK STOCKS ARE DOWN."

THEY ARE DOWN BECAUSE -

- \* approximately 500,000 acres of prime waterfowl wetlands between Perth and Busselton have been drained;
- \* vast areas of what were undisturbed refuges have been exposed to all types of human disturbance through agricultural development in the last few years.

WE CANNOT TURN THE CLOCK BACK.

We cannot return the wetlands to the waterfowl!

BUT WE CAN -

- (a) Reduce mortality by avoiding the destruction of parent and immature birds, eggs and clutches of young, which occurs when the season opens too early.
- (b) Save remaining wetlands by better land use.
- (c) Purchase key areas with moneys from the FAUNA CONSERVATION TRUST FUND which is to be financed by a Game Licensing system.
- (d) Rehabilitate spoiled areas such as salt flats, uselessly drained or cleared and eroded land.

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- (e) Improve the fauna carrying capacity of farm lands by fencing sections of dams, distributing nesting boxes, and planting trees, shrubs and other cover and food plants.
- (f) Improve existing habitat by damming creeks and other run-offs to create more wetlands and by blasting potholes in potentially productive flats that now dry out too soon.

The Fauna Conservation Trust Fund will provide funds for most of this work.

Delaying the opening of the season and abolishing the dual opening are just the first steps of a new, real conservation programme of which the game license will be the key. We and the ducks need your co-operation to set this programme in gear. Everyone who buys a license will participate in this programme.

DON'T FAIL THE DUCKS!

SUPPORT CONSERVATION.

Sincerely yours,

A. J. Fraser,  
CHIEF WARDEN OF FAUNA

The 1968 duck shooting season will open at 2.00 p.m. on January 20 and close at midnight on April 30.

The season will apply to all the South-West and Eucla Land Divisions, thus abolishing the separate opening for the dairying districts.