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Five protected ducks and three non-game species killed on day one

Wildlife Victoria, the state's wildlife Emergency Response Service, has found overwhelming evidence of hunter non-compliance on day one of the Victorian Government's 2023 duck hunting season.

Four blue-winged shovelers and one hardhead were brought to the Wildlife Victoria veterinary triage tent either dead on arrival or with lethal gunshot wounds. Both species are listed as threatened under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and are illegal to shoot.

One of the blue-winged shovelers arrived semi butchered. The bird arrived with both wings removed, the breast flesh cut off the animal, and its chest skinned. An x-ray found the bird had been shot through the heart. "It's sad to see a threatened species that has been one, shot, and two that despite this, they have still proceeded to do this to the animal." **Dr. Alisdair Eddie, Wildlife Victoria Veterinarian**

In addition to threatened duck species, three non-game species waterfowl were caught in the crossfire. All were dead upon arrival at the veterinary triage tent.

All evidence of non-compliance, including x-rays of threatened species riddled with gunshot wounds will be handed over to the Game Management Authority (GMA). Unfortunately, prosecution is thought to be unlikely with no GMA officers on site at the wetlands to supervise shooter compliance.

"Today we have seen very few shooters – yet just one gun can cause substantial damage. I find it extraordinary that in the first few hours of the first day of duck hunting, with a public inquiry looming, we have once again found substantive evidence of non-compliance with duck shooting regulations. It's clearly time for the Victorian Government to end this practice once and for all." **Lisa Palma, Wildlife Victoria CEO**

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For additional information or interview requests, contact Wildlife Victoria's media team on 0447 193 121 or email media@wildlifelifevictoria.org.au