Bigger Bag Limits This Hunting Season

Parks and Wildlife Minister Karl Hampton today announced the dates for the 2011 Waterfowl Hunting Season and an increase to daily bag limits.

Mr Hampton said bag limits for magpie geese and approved duck species would increase from seven per day to 10 per day.

“Hunting waterfowl is a popular pastime among many Territorians and I am sure increased bag limits is welcome news to all hunters,” Mr Hampton said.

“The decision to increase bag limits for magpie geese and approved duck species is based on scientific evidence that shows that these figures still fall well within the sustainable harvest limits of 14 per cent annually.

“Parks and Wildlife will continue to carefully monitor waterfowl populations so we can maintain the balance between this unique aspect of the great Territory lifestyle and the long term sustainability of these treasured bird species.”

Permit applications are available from Parks and Wildlife now and permits to hunt will be issued from early September.

Parks and Wildlife Rangers will be regularly patrolling hunting areas and have powers to stop hunters, inspect licences, test ammunition and check bag limits.

Hunting without a permit can attract fines of up to $68,500 or five years imprisonment, and penalties for exceeding a bag limit can range from infringement notices up to $411, licence suspension for five years, or prosecution for more serious breaches.

“The 2011 season will commence 6.15am on Friday 23 September and have staggered closures,” Mr Hampton said.

“Lambells Lagoon Conservation Reserve and Howard Springs Hunting Reserve will close at 7.30pm on 23 December and will close at the two other hunting reserves, private property and crown land at 7.45pm on 2 January 2012.

“The start date was chosen as an appropriate commencement date to ensure that goose populations would be well established in dry season habitat prior to hunting commencing.

“Staggered closures, which were implemented last season in recognition of resident concerns regarding disturbance during the Christmas period, have been maintained.”
Mr Hampton said it is important that the hunting community observe the early closure at Lambells Lagoon Conservation Reserve and Howard Springs Hunting Reserve, as hunters will still be able to hunt in other areas during the Christmas break.

Magpie Geese are classified as protected wildlife in the Northern Territory and hunters are reminded of a number of conditions related to waterfowl hunting in the NT:

- The use of lead shot is prohibited on all Northern Territory land including Parks and Wildlife Hunting Reserves, Crown Land and private property. The ban on lead shot has resulted from lead shot poisoning waterfowl that exist at many wetlands being identified as a serious problem and is a part of an overall national strategy to combat the problem.
- Waterfowl hunting permits are available prior to the opening of and for the duration of the season - all hunters are required to obtain a permit whether hunting on the Hunting Reserves, Crown Land or private property.
- Lodgement of a permit return at the end of the hunting season is not mandatory. However, permit returns have an essential role in determining the overall management of the waterfowl hunting season. Failure to lodge a permit return may reduce our capacity to appropriately manage future waterfowl hunting seasons and place the long-term continuance of the season in jeopardy.

You can hunt on:

- Designated Parks and Wildlife Service Hunting Reserves (Lambells Lagoon Conservation Reserve and Howard Springs Hunting Reserve until 23 December 2011 and Shoal Bay Coastal Reserve and Harrison Dam Conservation Reserve until 2 January 2012) provided you have a permit to hunt waterfowl;
- Designated Crown Land provided you have both a permit to hunt waterfowl and a permit issued by the Department of Lands and Planning;
- Private property (which includes Aboriginal Land) provided you have a permit to hunt waterfowl, you have the permission of the landholder beforehand and can meet the setback conditions under the Firearms Act.

Mr Hampton said that to ensure long term sustainability of hunting, it’s important that all hunters obtain permits and respect closure times.

“While lodging a permit return is not mandatory, we encourage permit holders to submit a return at the end of the season, as it provides key information for declaring the season and ensuring the sustainability of the magpie goose hunting season for the future.” Mr Hampton said.

“Territorians have enjoyed hunting geese for many years and through careful management and cooperation we can continue this great part of our lifestyle.”

For further information go to [www.nt.gov.au/waterfowl](http://www.nt.gov.au/waterfowl)

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