The 2003 Northern Territory Waterfowl hunting season is set to begin this month, running from 23 August to 14 December 2003.

The Minister for Parks and Wildlife, Kon Vatskalis, announcing this year’s season today, following consultation with local hunters.

"This year’s season will run four months, with the duration and timing based on careful consideration by the Parks and Wildlife Service and wildlife management officers," Mr Vatskalis said.

"Research suggests recreational hunting has a very minor impact on bird numbers compared with other sources of mortality.

"Regardless, research and monitoring of waterfowl populations will continue and controls will be implemented if deemed necessary."

Mr Vatskalis reminded hunters a ban on lead shot applies to all Parks and Wildlife Hunting Reserves, including Shoal Bay Coastal Reserve, Howard Springs Hunting Reserve, Lambells Lagoon and Harrison Dam Hunting Reserve.

"This is part of a national strategy to combat the problem of lead shot poisoning of waterfowl, which exists in many wetland areas across the country."

The Minister said waterfowl permits will be available prior to the opening of this year’s season in three weeks, with all hunters required to obtain a permit for hunting on reserves, crown land and private property.

"Rangers will be running regular checks to enforce the laws and ensure hunters are carrying out appropriate practices," Mr Vatskalis said.