Bendigo Branch

Field & Game Australia Inc.

NEWSLETTER

June 2026

Field and Game Australia– Bendigo Branch Inc. A1843.
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Branch Report

BF&G Annual Mulwala Fishing Trip

Wow, what a weekend May 2nd-3rd 2026

Fantastic weekend was had by all at our annual fishing trip to Mulwala attended by 20 members and guests.
Thank you to Sarge, Barry, Bruiser and their band of helpers for making this trip another success.
The competition started fiercely@12am Saturday, with everyone sleeping and catching some ZZZs for the morning .
It was a slow start with a couple of sore heads. There was something in the Esky ice water from Friday night.
The fish were not extremely active; however, this bunch of individuals had some skills.
With the weather change on Saturday morning, things got choppy on the lake.
The majority of us made the decision to quickly pull our boats out and head to Bundalong, 10 minutes down the road on the river. The river conditions in Bundalong were perfect.
In total for the weekend 18 Murray Cod, 1 Yellow belly and 2 Trout Cod were caught.
Just a couple of Cod kept for the weekend, all others released to see another day.
There was only 1 carp caught for the weekend which was amazing to see.
Thank you to Gail from Ski Land Motel for once again accommodating our club. Gail has been looking after us for over 25 years.
Well, done to Kyle Maher for his amazing 89cm Cod, taking out our annual biggest fish shield.
This amazing fish was released as required after a quick pic and measure.

Mitch Cranking Hard for a Fish

Left – Cod on the brag mat

Below - Kyle Maher with the 89cm Cod

A big thankyou to BCF Bendigo for donating a fantastic Esky and Chair for our raffle. Also thankyou to the club for supplying funds for additional prizes to be purchased for raffle prizes and give aways.

Please remember, this fantastic annual fishing trip is available for all our members, families and friends every year.

Leigh Climas
President

Left - Mitchell Climas 50cm Cod

Below L- Barbara and Elaine

R- Sarge doing the raffle

Duck Information Night.

Thank you to everyone who attended our Duck Information Nigh. The evening started at 7.30pm in the Goldfields Room at the Sporting Globe Bar and Grill in Hargreaves Street Bendigo.

We had approximately 50 attendees. Information from Ron Treble & Trent Leen from FGA was well received.

And an overview of current rules and regulations with tips to follow from Kurt Murphy of the Game Management Authority. Much appreciated.

A big thank you to Bek and Leroy from the Sporting globe. Bek went out of her way to especially open the top bar for us and the kitchen was open all night. You could even have your meal delivered while listening to our presentation.

Again, many thanks to the Sporting Globe for your continued support and sponsorship. Thanks also extended to Peter McKenzie for organising a great night

BF&G Members and attendees enjoy a drink whilst listening to guest speakers

BENDIGO FIELD AND GAME
WORKING BEE!
7:30 AM, 30TH MAY – START TIME
TIME TO GET BUSY!
CLAY TARGETS
Fix Up & Clean Up!
Rake & Clean!
HELP YOUR CLUB!
• TIDY UP THE TRAPS!
• MAINTAIN THE RANGE!
• CLAY TARGET LOAD UP!
FREE BBQ LUNCH & FUN SHOOT AFTER!

Conservation

From the GMA news website

Thanks to the duck hunter who returned this tracker from a Grey Teal harvested at Laanecoorie Reservoir, near Eddington, on 12 April 2026.

We originally banded and attached the tracker to the duck at Lara on 14 August 2025 for research into the movement and survivorship of game ducks.

62 ducks have been fitted with solar-powered backpack trackers so far, with hundreds more to be fitted over the next few years. Track their progress here: https://shorturl.at/DRJMn

If you find a tracker, please contact research@gma.vic.gov.au

Even if the tracker appears damaged, please contact the GMA as it may be repairable and able to be redeployed on another duck.

The knowledge gained from this research will help improve our understanding of game duck ecology and contribute to population modelling to inform Adaptive Harvest Management for duck hunting in Victoria. Thank you for your support!

Tracking Victorian game ducks

A study of the spatial ecology and survivorship of Victorian game ducks.

Project overview

The GMA, in partnership with researchers from Deakin University, is conducting new research to better understand the movements, survival and behaviour of four of Victoria's most important game duck species (Pacific Black Duck, Australian Wood Duck, Grey Teal and Chestnut Teal). The research involves attaching a small solar-powered satellite tracking device to 400 individual game ducks (100 on each of the species studied).

The tracking devices capture information about the duck's location, movement, breeding, feeding and resting patterns 24 hours a day.

This project aims to identify the drivers of game duck movement in relation to the fluctuating water availability in the Australian landscape. It will also record how long game ducks survive and provide insights into the primary causes of mortality.

This knowledge will help model game duck population dynamics to inform Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) for sustainable duck hunting in Victoria. It will also provide important information for waterfowl conservation more broadly and disease management.

This project is funded as part of the Victorian Government's commitment to implementing adaptive harvest management for game ducks in Victoria, to ensure duck hunting remains responsible and sustainable.

Fitting the Tracking devices

The ducks are fitted with GPS-GSM trackers that inform on their movements over months to years. GPS uses satellite technology whereas GSM uses mobile communications technologies

The transmitters weigh about 12 grams and are attached to the back of the duck with a harness.

The trackers have a rechargeable battery that is charged through solar power.

The transmitter sends a call via the mobile phone network to deliver daily updates of the ducks' geographic locations and behaviours (e.g. feeding, resting, flying, walking, breeding).

If you find a tracker or leg band, please contact research@gma.vic.gov.au

field & game AUSTRALIA INC.

Conservation Pledge

BF&G Pledge of $500 to Rushworth F&G : Work at Gaynor's Swamp.

Meeting formerly ratified an earlier decision of committee members via telephone/email, to pledge the sum of $500.00 to the Rushworth FGA Branch to assist with restoration works at Gaynor Swamp.

Hunting

Duck opening 2026

What an opening it was! After those rains that came down from the north from the cyclonic weather we had in February that left northern Victoria with an influx of moisture rarely seen at that time of the year, birds in their thousands followed and were in not only state game reserves but in flooded paddocks, creeks and depressions.

Ducks on the move a location in Northen Victoria

Anyone who came to our annual Duck Information night that we held this year 11th of March at the Sporting Globe would have heard how things had changed locally and some eleven swamps had water in them that wasn't there a few weeks before.
Locally we had water in Tang Tang and Thunder swamps let alone further north in Boort, Kerang and every creek, swamp and depressions in between held water and of course birds that followed.

One of the wettest areas was at Mitiamo and if you followed the water run-off from there, there were low lying areas that became small gathering areas for a lot of birds, mainly Teal and Blacks and one of the most outstanding was on the highway at Pyramid Hill that had thousands of ducks on either side of the road right on the 50km speed signs which never got hunted on due to its close proximity to the town.
Up the road at Macorna, the water spilled out into the paddocks and the ducks followed and anyone who could hunt these areas did very well.
Our party of five found a swamp that hadn't had water for six years and it was a typical lingnum swamp that had deeper holes and good water in between high bushes that made finding a dropped bird difficult (o for a dog again).
Some of the water was only knee deep and broadened out onto low paddocks which proved good hunting at night and kept birds in the area but sadly petered out by May under too much hunting pressure.
Opening itself, for those who had the time off, proved to be as good as it looked and one of our group who flew down from north Queensland had his best shoot in years and was top gun and we followed that up over the next few days with daily bags.
Even the cleaning of those ducks surprised me as how easy they were and presented so well, plump and fat, mainly Teal and some Blacks. We did see a Blue Wing that landed in my decoys, and he was in magnificent condition, bright colour and yellow legs as he swam in and out before departing and catching up with his Teal mates. Our camp was bare with little cover and full of flies but the results were worthwhile and we dined on entertaining meals and of course the obligatory red!
There are still a few ducks about but have become wary under hunting pressure and with environmental flows into MacDonalds, Murphys and Johnson's swamps there should be more

ducks around before the end of the season. Where they all came from at the beginning is a mystery although Gippsland was down and South Australia's Watervalley cancelled their year and perhaps that is where they came from.

Another opening done and dusted but surprisingly much better than expected and some follow up shoots have been just as good. They have tasted as well as they looked and although my cooking skills leave a lot to be desired, I am trying another recipe next time. Season over for me and another opportunity that was unforeseen and greatly appreciated.

Peter McKenzie

Below : Some of the water around in the North, ducks harvested private property Boort Area

Around the Shooting Ground

EPA report on shooting Ground

On the 29th of January 2026, EPA staff attended the Bendigo Field & Game located at 755 Collins Road, Bagshot North VIC 3551.

The purpose of the inspection was to continue the ongoing EPA Northwest project of inspecting all clay target clubs.

EPA Officer Jake Morris was also in attendance. I (Chris Peel) was met onsite by club secretary Garry Buchanan and explained to him the purpose of the inspection and the project as a whole. Garry then led me on a tour of the site. Garry informed me the club had recently had an EMP developed for the site to allow them to apply for grants. He said that the site overall tested well and that he would send me a copy of it. Garry informed me that the club has 450 paid members and generally attracts 120 shooters on average for the monthly shoots. I was informed that the club uses Big Boy bins for their general waste, and have it emptied every 1-2 months as necessary and their recycling is usually driven into Bendigo to be recycled for free. I was informed the club uses both the older PAH clay targets but is also starting to try and use more of the environmentally friendly clay targets. They keep the ranges clean by manually raking and leaf blowing and have been collecting and storing the shooting waste onsite. They also have a grounds caretaker that cleans the site after shoots and retrieves unbroken clays for use in practice shoots. I observed a small fence installed at the front of the dam to prevent solids from entering the water. Garry informed me it still required work to be more effective and that he has never seen or heard of the dam overflowing. It fills and evaporates with the weather. The water is not used onsite. I observed an acoustic barrier wall. Garry informed me it was previously installed to reduce sounds affecting a neighbour in that direction. I was also informed all shooting fall-zones fall within 200m of the boundary of the site. I observed an area of the site that was designated for scrap metal waste, cardboard waste - that was heavily weather damaged, concrete culverts and other miscellaneous items. I discussed with Garry going through the scrap and looking to remove unnecessary items and having club members collect items they have stored onsite.

Compliance advice given by EPA

1. EPA deems large sections of the site could be better maintained by either manual or mechanical raking/sweeping. (*Note: Club has been investigating equipment that may assist in this task).*

2. EPA recommends familiarising club members with EPA publication 1667 – “Management and storage of combustible recyclable and waste materials guidance”. This publication provides practical guidance on how to comply with Victorian environment protection laws that require duty holders to understand the fire hazards associated with their activities and put controls in place to reduce the fire risk associated with those hazards.

Committee at Work

As you may <u>not</u> know we only have 30 Days shooting a year and NO Sundays
Peter and Garry are working on an application to Amend our Planning Permit for more days of shooting if not, possibily some Sundays without increasing the number of days.

Safety around the ground

Bob Bennett clearing around "Binns Tower" for the installation of a concrete slab and Scaffolding for safer access to tower

We have had a few large trees fall over around the shooting ground over the years, this tree had part fallen some months ago as it had a 3-part trunk and the remainder fell on the Friday night just prior to our February shoot this year, you can see the trap on the ramp in the background for the ready for the shoot

Clay Shooting

Head Lifting

Q&A from Clay Shooter Magazine

I have a problem with lifting my head off the gun. In overcast conditions or shooting against a background with vegetation, the problem gets worse. I don't lift it intentionally, but when I do, I shoot high. How can I stop myself from lifting my head?

There are three basic causes for a shooter lifting his or her head off the gun. The first, and least common cause, is anticipation of recoil. If your gun has a pitch problem (the angle of the butt pad in relationship to the rib), this can cause excessive muzzle jump, a bruised cheek and a tendency to lift the head in anticipation of the recoil. However, I don't believe this is your challenge.

The most common reason for head-lifting is excessive drop-at-comb. The comb is the part of the stock that runs parallel to the rib and is in contact with the shooter's cheek when executing a shot. Gunfitters measure drop-at-comb from an imaginary line that extends along the top of the shotgun's

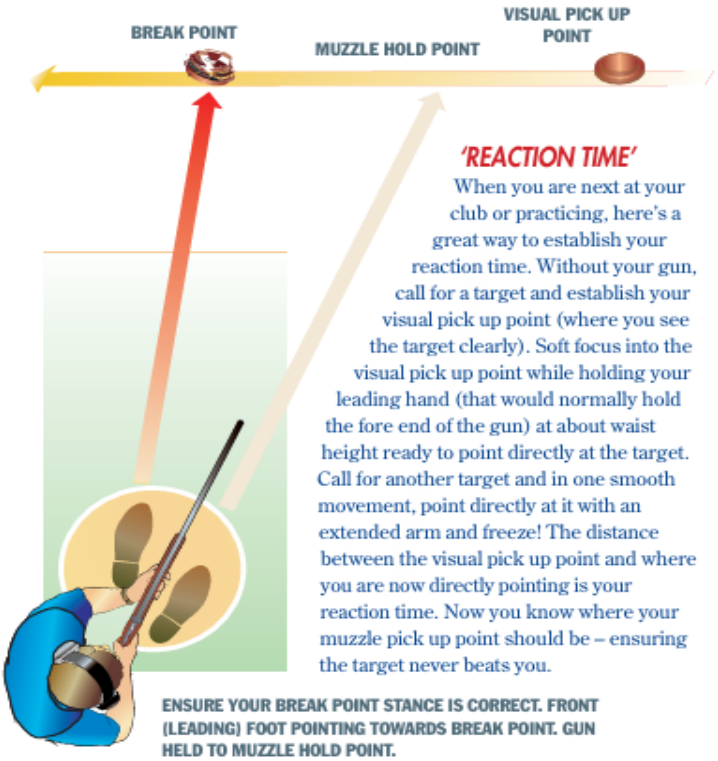
rib to the back of the gun. How far the comb drops down from the rib line determines the vertical position of the shooter's eye when the shooter is fully mounted to the gun. The proper drop-at-comb for an individual is determined by the shooter's facial structure (the distance between the lower cheek ledge and the eye) as well as where the shooter positions the comb on the face when fully mounted. The shooter's entire iris (the colored portion of the eye) should sit atop the rib so the shooter will see a bit of rib when looking over the barrel. If the comb is too low, you might not be able to see the target over the gun. In this case, the raising of your head might be a subconscious effort to maintain visual contact with the target. To fix this, have an adjustable comb installed on your shotgun and raise the comb to enable you to see "the snowman," which is the mid-rib bead appearing immediately below the front bead when fully mounted.

The third possible explanation for head-lifting is the choice of lenses in your shooting glasses. I wouldn't normally think of this except when the problem is worse in low-light conditions. Try changing to a lighter yellow lens when shooting in overcast conditions and to a purple lens when shooting against foliage.

If you raise your head off the gun involuntarily, it's usually your subconscious telling you that you can't see the target well.

Long Crossers

Last newsletter we had an article about lead in general, this article is lead on long crossers

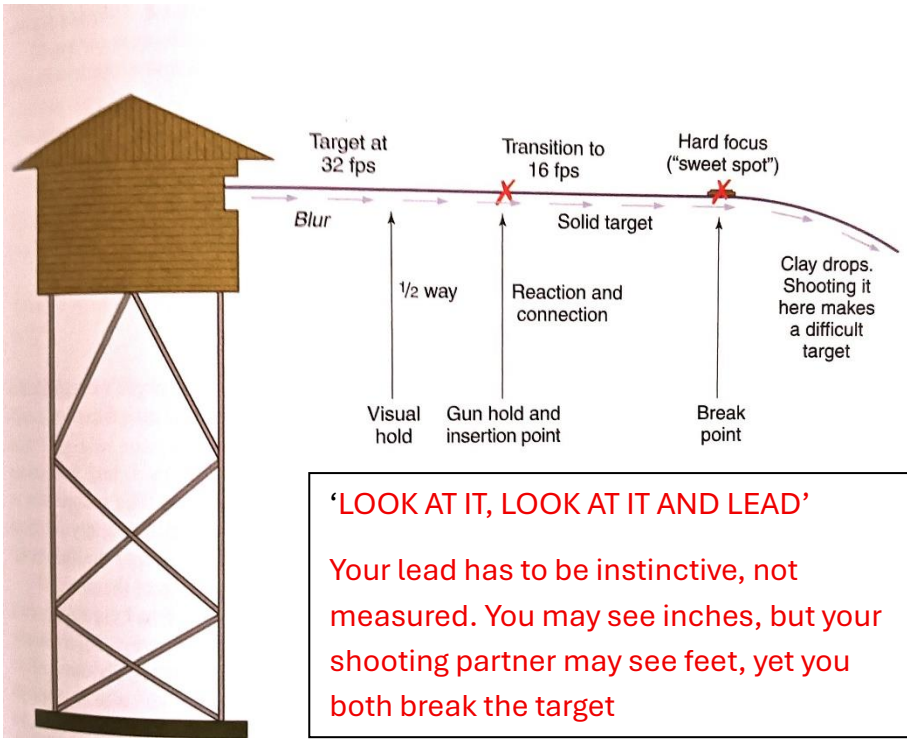


For the mid-class shooter, the long crosser can be the most daunting of all targets because the lead picture is big and there is always a tendency to look at the gun to measure the lead. Making sure is fatal, causing the gun to slow down– or even worse, stop. To prevent this, you must learn your perception of lead – some see inches, some feet, while others measure in barrel or finger widths. 35 yards One way to learn how you perceive lead is to put a clay on a post at 40 yards, then put another post 8ft to the left or right – this is the approximate theoretical lead a target needs at 40 yards. Then mount on the clay and move away to the 8ft marker post. This will achieve two things. It gives you your perception of what 8ft looks like at 40 yards and physically allows you to check that your eye rib alignment is correct (you should be able to see the clay and the 8ft marker post without lifting or moving your head).

Another thing that must be taken into consideration is that the further away a target is, the slower it appears to move. Think of it like standing at the side of the highway with cars passing you at 70mph. With an outstretched arm, point and follow each car with your finger, noting how fast your arm is moving. Now move back from the edge of the highway by 20 yards, then 40 yards, and do the same exercise comparing how fast your arm is moving – it's a lot slower although the traffic is moving at the same speed.

The same applies to a clay target moving at the same speed at 10, 20 and 40 yards. All these factors have to be taken into consideration when tackling the long crosser – you must do your homework before you get in the stand. Find your happy zone to break the target, assess your reaction time and make up your mind which method of achieving lead you are going to use. Pull away always works well with long crossers and should be your first choice – or the fall back method if the wheels fall off when using one of the other methods. Maintained lead works well if you have a tendency to look at the end of the gun to measure the lead – as you have to be looking ahead of the target all the time to see the correct lead picture. Now you are on the stand, ready to call for your target. You know where you are going to break the target so ensure your stance is balanced at this point. You know your reaction time to seeing the target, and you know your hold point is in the right place along the flight line – so the target cannot beat you. As you pick up the target, move with it to ascertain it's speed and direction. Spend a bit longer on this type of target to give your brain a little longer to work out its speed and direction. With long crossers I always teach my pupils to say to themselves, at normal conversation speed "LOOK AT IT, LOOK AT IT AND LEAD".

This makes you spend that split second longer on the target as opposed to the fast short target "ON IT AND OFF IT". Remember the clay on the post picture – and when it feels that the target will break, go with that feeling and pull the trigger. Do not check, as checking is fatal and will always result in a miss behind. You will have to practice quite a lot on this type of target to get to know your own perception of lead and what method works best for you, but this is what will take you from a mid-class shooter to a more advanced shot.



'LOOK AT IT, LOOK AT IT AND LEAD'

Your lead has to be instinctive, not measured. You may see inches, but your shooting partner may see feet, yet you both break the target

Your lead has to be instinctive, not measured. You may see inches, but your shooting partner may see feet, yet you both break the target. Lead is very personal, don't ask and then copy other shooters' perception of lead, learn your own.

Another factor that must be taken into account when shooting crossers is that it is easier for a right-handed shooter to shoot a right to left target as he has more natural movement right to left than left to right. When a target is coming onto your good side, the lead hand is pulling the gun onto the target. It is easier to control the gun when pulling than it is when pushing.

The gun is also coming onto the face. So, due to the lack of free movement left to right, a target moving onto your bad side (left to right) will always need more lead for a right handed shooter. This is because it is harder to push the gun and keep good control and there is a tendency for the gun to be pushed off the face.

So be wary of targets coming onto your bad side (left to right for a right-hander, right to left for a left-hander). To finish with, a few facts you might like to consider that could influence you in your approach to crossing targets.

Big long targets need long slow movement, as opposed to close fast targets that need short fast movements. At 30 yards a 1/2choke patternis30 inches in diameter at the front (slightly less at the back) and 10ft long. So, if in doubt over lead, be bold there is always the chance of catching the target in the shot string. But, if you are behind the target, nothing can help you! Do not worry about the drop of shot. Shot falls 3 inches at 40 yards – with a 30 inch diameter of spread at the front of the shot string, drop of shot will not be a factor.

(Clay shooting USA)

Items of Interest

Bits And Pieces…

Posted on May 7, 2014 by bcbuck

Did you know:

A 1 1/8 oz shell at 1200 fps has exactly the same recoil as a 1 oz shell at 1330 fps.

Normal shell velocity changes 5 fps for each 1″ of barrel length. Manufacturers' acceptable shell to shell speed variance is well over 25 fps.

At 1125 fps #8 shot will travel 224 horizontal yards. At 1350 it will go 240. #7 1/2 shot at 1125 will go 234 yards, at 1350 fps it is 247. At a muzzle velocity of 1135 fps, #7 1/2s take .063 seconds to reach a 20 yard crosser. The actual lead on a 30 mph 20 yard crosser would be 2.77 feet. Starting the same shot at 1330 fps would result in 4.2″ less lead. At 40 yards the difference would be 8.45″ and at 60 yards it would be 12.14″

Increasing muzzle velocity of a 1 1/8 oz shell from 1135 fps to 1350 fps will increase recoil about 35%.

With a standard 1200fps load, increasing the weight of an 8# gun by one pound will lower recoil about 11%.

Store your guns muzzle down in the gun safe. This keeps errant oils out of the stock and also keeps the stock from taking a set at the wrist. When judging distance to a target, estimate distance to a stationary object, like a tree, which the target flies near. It is much easier that way. Slower burning powder always has more free recoil than faster burning powder. Powder weight is part of the free recoil formula and you have to use more of the slower powders.

The average antimonial content of "magnum" #8s and #7 1/2s is 6%. In "magnum" #9s and #6s it is 4%. "Chilled" shot is 0% to 2% antimony. Antimony costs four to five times as much as lead. Clay targets are made from pitch, lime and (sometimes) paint. The average sporting clays target's mid range speed is 35 mph. That is also what it is at the center stake at skeet.

Right handed shotgunners lose hearing in their left ear first if they insist on shooting without ear protection. The right ear fails somewhat later.

Comparing pellet hardness between two sample lots is easily accomplished by alternate pellet squeezing with needle nose pliers. Choke up for teal. The teal is much further away than the trap is. You are shooting on the hypotenuse of the triangle (A"+B"=C"). The centrifugal force imparted by a rapid rate of spin makes a clay target relatively easy to break. Targets thrown from the front of the trap arm have very little spin compared to those thrown normally from the middle of the arm. These deceptive end-of-arm "knuckle balls" require more choke and/or larger pellets.

LATEST NEWS

- **Field and Game has appointed Turlough Guerin as the new CEO and he will start on 9/06/2026, he is from Landcare NSW**
- **The updated ASF Rulebook Version 3 (2026) has now been finalised, the New Rulebook will come into effect from 1st June 2026.**

FGA website – click here to access

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