



Duck shooting has been banned in NSW, QLD and WA and was never permitted in the ACT. The Greens want to protect our native water birds and see an end to duck shooting in Victoria.

Every year, from March to June, eight species of usually-protected native waterbirds are declared by the government to be 'game species' that can then be shot during the duck shooting season* and as a direct result, thousands of ducks and other birds are shot across Victoria's wetlands.

The Greens will put an end to duck shooting in Victoria by amending the Wildlife Act to make it illegal.

DUCK SHOOTING IS CRUEL AND UNNECESSARY

Duck shooting is cruel. Few birds die instantly when they are shot and so need to be 'finished off' by shooters when they retrieve them from the water. As many as one quarter of the ducks that are shot are wounded and are either not found or retrieved by shooters. If they are not rescued, they will either suffer a slow, painful death or survive and live with shot-gun pellets in the bodies. Ducklings are not able to cope if the mother is killed and so they die too.

Every duck shooting season, hundreds of our precious protected, rare and threatened ducks and other bird species are also shot and left to die on the wetlands.

Shooters also deliberately leave injured and unwanted birds on the water or discard smaller ducks, so they do not exceed the designated bag limits. Some have been caught hiding bags of birds near camp sites and mass

graves of birds – many of them containing rare and protected species, have been found at or near wetlands.

The exact number of the annual carnage of our native water birds and other birds that are shot every year is unknown, but every season, thousands of discarded birds are found by duck rescuers on wetlands across Victoria.

DUCK SHOOTING CANNOT BE EFFECTIVELY REGULATED AND FLOUTING OF THE 'RULES' IS WIDESPREAD

At the start of the 2017 duck season at the Koorangie Marshes near Kerang, thousands of protected birds were massacred by shooters and the authorities did little to stop it.

Due to the public outcry, the Game Management Authority (GMA) commissioned Pegasus Economics to conduct an independent review to evaluate its 'compliance and enforcement regime and its capacity and capability to deliver its compliance and enforcement obligations'.ⁱ

The '*Pegasus Report*' concluded that 'non-compliance with the game hunting laws is commonplace and widespread and that the GMA is not able to effectively fulfil its compliance and enforcement responsibilities'.

The report also found that the regulatory and institutional frameworks in which the GMA operates are



extremely fragmented, and the game hunting laws are widely perceived by internal and external stakeholders to be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to be effectively enforced in the field.

The ABC's 7.30 report (11 April, 2017) interviewed ex-GMA manager of compliance George Bucchorn, who had resigned due to the failings of the GMA. He said the GMA does not have the will to investigate breaches by shooters, GMA staff discouraged him from investigating, and he was told not to refer to cruelty or to the code of practice.

The Greens opposed the creation of the GMA in 2014, due to the inherent conflict of interest in promoting and regulating hunting. The Pegasus Report confirmed this. The Greens say that the GMA should be shut down.

OUR WATER BIRD SPECIES UNDER THREAT

The 2017 Aerial Survey of Wetland Birds in Eastern Australia run by the University of NSW found that:

"Total waterbird abundance is well below average: the 12th lowest in 35 years and that 'game species abundances were well below long term averages, in some cases by 'an order of magnitude' and that there had been 'a sharp decline in wetland areas'.ⁱⁱ

It is reported that the 2018 Survey will show even less wetland areas and even lower waterbird numbers.

Despite the low numbers of native water birds, that birds are not breeding and the effect of the drought on wetlands, habitats and bird numbers, the Labor state government has still allowed duck shooting seasons to proceed.

QUESTIONABLE ECONOMIC BENEFIT

Successive governments claim that duck shooting provides economic benefits for parts of regional

Victoria. However, many people, including those who live in regional Victoria, challenge these claims.

'*Out for a Duck*' - an analysis of the economics of duck shooting in Victoria found that:

'Claims that duck hunting – or any recreational hunting – contributes significantly to the economy of Victoria are wildly exaggerated. They assume that without hunting any related expenditure would be lost to Victoria. On the contrary, our survey shows that if duck hunters were prevented from hunting ducks they would go fishing, hunt other species or go camping'. There would be no impact on expenditure in Victoria from a duck hunting ban.'

The analysis also found that:

'revenue from non-hunting tourism is far more important to Victoria's economy. It found that 'more than half of survey respondents would be less likely to holiday in an area with duck hunting'.

'The non-monetary benefits of ending duck hunting and the improvement in welfare of the non-duck hunting public are far greater than the non-monetary losses that hunters would incur from a ban. We estimate this benefit of banning duck hunting at around \$60 million per year.'ⁱⁱⁱ

*in 2018, the blue winged shoveller was not declared a game species due to low numbers.

References

ⁱ Pegasus Economics 2017 Assessment of the GMA's compliance and enforcement function: http://www.gma.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/435551/2017-Assessment-of-the-GMA-compliance-and-enforcement-function.pdf

ⁱⁱ The Centre for Ecosystem Science at the University of NSW – Aerial Survey of Wetland Birds in Eastern Australia - October 2017 Annual Summary Report: <https://www.ecosystem.unsw.edu.au/files/2017-Eastern-Australia-Waterbird-Survey-Summary-Report.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ The Australian Institute - Out for a Duck - An analysis of the economics of duck hunting in Victoria (Rod Campbell, Richard Denniss and David Baker): <http://www.tai.org.au/content/out-duck>