

# DUCK SHOOTING

While thankfully, shooter numbers are declining, thousands of native ducks are shot annually as part of the recreational shooting season held in several Australian states. Duck shooting has already been prohibited in Western Australia, New South Wales and Queensland. All ducks deemed 'game' species are native. Like all native species, 'game' ducks are in a delicate balance with the rest of the wetland ecosystem.

## A FATE WORSE THAN DEATH

A 2017 inquiry into the adequacy of the Victorian GMA's ability to enforce compliance stated that "...non-compliance with the game hunting laws is commonplace and widespread." Shotguns operate by projecting a 'cloud' of pellets spread over a larger area. A natural consequence of this is that in addition to shooting at the target animal, there will be some inevitable 'collateral damage' to surrounding animals.

No compulsory accuracy test is required before being awarded a game licence. There is no consideration of the behavioural stressors to wild animals that have their environment invaded by the sound of guns, and the potential loss of their bonded mates, with some game and non-game species mating for life and maintaining family groups.

## COLLATERAL DAMAGE

At least 260 protected species were killed during the 2017 opening season at Koorangie and many more injured, including species which are not ducks at all. Disturbingly, hunting is routinely permitted in the poor visibility conditions before sunrise and after sunset, contributing to the risk of accidental shooting and demise of the species.

## ALREADY UNDER PRESSURE: CLIMATE CHANGE

Australian native waterbirds are already facing severe environmental pressures associated with climate change without the additional pressure of shooting.

The Eastern Australian Waterbird Survey disturbingly highlighted that waterbird numbers are currently 25% of long term average, and the numbers are the third lowest since surveying began 39 years earlier. Another important environmental hazard to mention is the voluntary anti-shooting effort that cleans up a multitude of spent shotgun cartridges, rubbish, environmental damage and other debris left behind by hunters.

# IT'S TIME TO BAN THIS UNJUSTIFIABLE HARM

## AN ILLEGITIMATE 'SPORT'

Despite ongoing claims of legitimacy and ethics, a hunter knowledge survey commissioned by the Game Management Authority itself in 2019 exhibited a disturbingly low knowledge base regarding basic duck hunting principles: only 37% of the sample population could correctly answer a question about minimising wounding, only 20% correctly on game duck identification, and a shocking 13% correctly on appropriate dispatching of downed ducks.

There is no justification for the continued shooting of ducks, and this so-called 'sport' must be banned.

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