



New data reinforces case for duck hunting ban

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Animal welfare and conservation groups have renewed calls for the Victorian Government to ban duck hunting, citing new evidence released in the [2023 Eastern Australian Waterbird Survey](#).

The annual survey revealed five of the eight game species of ducks continue to show significant long-term declines in abundance. It also indicated three major indices for waterbirds (total abundance, number of species breeding and wetland area index) show significant declines over time. Researchers noted that long-term trends more accurately predict population status than yearly fluctuations.

RSPCA Victoria, Animals Australia, Wildlife Victoria and BirdLife Australia said the survey data provides further, critical evidence to support a ban on hunting and reinforces the recommendation made by the Select Committee during a recent Parliamentary Inquiry.

RSPCA Victoria CEO Dr Liz Walker said her organisation has long-held animal welfare concerns around wounding from hunting and the latest data also highlights sustainability concerns that cannot be ignored.

“We know that many ducks are wounded and left to suffer during hunting season, and the release of this latest survey data highlights the fact that duck hunting will put additional pressure on species that are already threatened by global warming. There is now so much evidence to support a ban on duck hunting in Victoria, and we are calling on the government to finally put one in place,” said Dr Walker.

BirdLife Australia CEO, Kate Millar, echoed these concerns, saying; “The latest survey clearly shows that despite a series of good seasons, waterbird and game species numbers have not increased to where we would expect them to be. With a return of drier, El Nino conditions there can be no justification for increasing the hazards faced by waterbirds through continued duck shooting.

Animals Australia CEO Glenys Oogjes cited multiple reasons why her organisation supports a ban on duck hunting, saying; “We know that unacceptably high wounding rates are unlikely to reduce, despite continual scrutiny. We know that there are too many wetlands for any level of robust regulatory management, and we know that the majority of the Victorian community support an end to shooting native birds.”

Wildlife Victoria CEO Lisa Palma shared additional concerns about compliance, saying: “In the first week of this year’s duck hunting season, Wildlife Victoria’s Veterinary Triage Unit assessed 73 native waterbirds found abandoned in direct violation of duck hunting regulations. Of these, eight were identified as threatened species and six were non-game species.”

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For more information or an interview with a spokesperson, please contact:

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