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MEDIA RELEASE

Victorians will say good riddance to duck hunting today

Most Victorians will be relieved when duck hunting season ends today according to four leading animal charities.

RSPCA Victoria, Wildlife Victoria, Animals Australia and Birdlife Australia are calling for the season to be the last, citing concerns around animal welfare, sustainability and data indicating two out of three Victorians support a ban.

The future of duck hunting in Victoria is currently under review, with hearings underway for the Government's *Inquiry into Victoria's recreational native bird hunting arrangements*.

RSPCA Victoria CEO, Dr Liz Walker, is relieved the 2023 season ends today and feels Victoria is on the cusp of positive change.

"Put simply, the RSPCA is opposed to the recreational hunting of ducks due to the inevitable pain and suffering caused to waterbirds. There is also much data to suggest it is unsustainable and has significant impacts on other species including threatened species," said Dr Liz Walker.

"Data shows that at least two out of three Victorians support an end to duck hunting. With the Inquiry underway, now is an historic opportunity for the Government to take action to ban duck hunting and bring Victoria in line with NSW, Queensland, Western Australia and the ACT."

Lisa Palma, CEO of Wildlife Victoria, said her organisation has seen first-hand the impact of this year's season.

"Wildlife Victoria was in field near Donald for the first five days of duck hunting season. Across those five days Wildlife Victoria's veterinary team received and assessed 73 native waterbirds including eight threatened species that are illegal to shoot. Of the 22 waterbirds that presented alive to the veterinary team, all needed to be euthanised given the severity of their injuries and on welfare grounds. The majority of the 73 waterbirds assessed had gunshot pellets in their bodies on x-ray and gunshot wounding was the cause of death.

"This is just a tiny snapshot of the death and injury that was inflicted on our native waterbirds across the state's wetlands for the last six weeks," said Ms Palma.

Birdlife Australia's National Public Affairs Manager, Sean Dooley, echoed concerns about the impact on waterbird populations and said duck hunting is no longer sustainable in Victoria.

"Waterbird populations continue to show significant long-term declines. If we are serious about recovering and restoring these beautiful species, we must remove any additional pressures. That means an end to recreational hunting."

Glenys Oogjes, CEO of Animals Australia, said her organisation senses a mood for change in the community.

"This is the Victorian Government's chance to be on the right side of history and make a change that will put the views of most Victorians and the welfare of our native waterbirds first," said Ms Oogjes.

“This practice is no longer acceptable to most people within our community, who care about our environment, sustainability and the welfare of animals. Victoria is a progressive state and Victoria has a massive opportunity to relegate duck hunting to history today and join other progressive states which have already banned this practice.”

- Ends -

Footage/images:

Credit Wildlife Victoria:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1FRSN4dGuCfyCAIzPJ44UITcDED4qvM9c?usp=share_link

Credit Animals Australia: <https://vimeo.com/830411228?share=copy> Password: Ducks

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