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Wildlife Victoria responds to the 2023 duck hunting announcement

Wildlife Victoria, the state's wildlife Emergency Response Service, is devastated by the Victorian Government's announcement of a 2023 duck hunting season.

The decision comes after recent media attention suggested a permanent ban was imminent.

"We are incredibly disappointed in the Government's decision. Duck hunting is inherently cruel and a completely unnecessary practice. It causes significant distress, fear, pain and suffering not only to duck species, but to other native species caught in the crossfire". **Lisa Palma, Wildlife Victoria CEO**

Duck hunting will continue despite recent studies conducted by independent groups showing nine out of ten Victorians support a permanent ban.

With less than 0.5% of Victorians participating in the 2022 duck hunting season, it is unclear who this decision was made for.

Last year, 262,567 native ducks were killed in the name of sport. This number doesn't include the thousands of waterbirds wounded and who later die from starvation, predation, or the elements. Reports from the Game Management Authority found between 6 and 40 per cent of ducks are wounded each season rather than killed outright.

Wildlife Victoria notes that the shorter 2023 season announced by the Victorian Government does not guarantee better outcomes for water birds. Problems with shooter compliance, and the inability of authorities to monitor all wetlands during the season means many ducks will still suffer.

The Victorian Government's decision once again places the burden of care on Wildlife Victoria's team of veterinarians and support staff, who will be in-field desperately trying to save as many lives as possible.

"There is a human toll here that is continually absent from the narrative. Each year, countless volunteers arrive in advance of shooters. They prepare themselves to stand by as innocent wildlife are shot from the sky, unable to act until it is too late. Our vet team do what they can, but the majority of their time will be spent ending the lives of innocent water birds or x-raying already dead animals. We are the ones dealing with the pain, injury and suffering of these innocent native water birds who are doing nothing but trying to live their lives. There is an emotional, physical and mental toll that builds." **Lisa Palma, Wildlife Victoria CEO**

This has to stop.

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For additional information or interview requests, contact Wildlife Victoria's media team on 0447 193 121 or email media@wildliffevictoria.org.au