

Dear Review Panel,

The existing Wildlife Act seems primarily to involve management of consumptive use of wildlife, with the result that conservation of wildlife is given inadequate consideration. A key function of a Wildlife Act should be to assist the existence of viable populations of all indigenous wildlife. This is completely missing from the list of key functions given in Box 2 of Issues Paper. All human interactions with, and management of, wildlife covered by the Act should be consistent with this key conservation function. The fact that the number of endangered wildlife species is increasing (e.g. State of Environment Report for Victoria 2018) suggests that the Wildlife Act is not helping to maintain viable populations of indigenous wildlife. It should be assisting and complementing the FFG Act, but this is clearly not always the case, particularly when it allows duck shooting and does not consider exotic deer as pest species. Duck shooting involves killing endangered or threatened species of ducks and deer are one of the most destructive invasive exotic animals that threaten many other animal species by destroying their habitat. Deer should NOT be protected under the Wildlife Act. They should be declared pest species as occurs in other Australian states. Any Wildlife Act that deals with management of animals should require management plans for threatened species and ensure that such plans are implemented. Protecting some habitat is a step in the right direction but it is a tiny step in relation to what is required.

Yours sincerely,
Michael Feller