

Wildlife Act Review

Submission Comment 52a:

Contributor: Individual

Primary interests:

- Wildlife welfare
- Protection and conservation of wildlife and habitat
- Management and control of wildlife causing problems or damage

Comment

The Authority to Control Wildlife System needs to be reformed so that clear principles are followed and so that there is far greater transparency, monitoring and enforcement, which actually protects native wildlife, not just regulating killing.

Protections for exotic invasive species like deer need to be removed. A Senate inquiry has called on all states to register deer as a pest species – it's definitely time to unprotect the estimated 1 million deer stomping and chomping across Victoria.

An independent statutory regulator should be established to enforce the Act, along with a dramatic increase in penalties, including prison.

The Act needs to increase protections for wildlife and wildlife habitat by providing new tools such as "wildlife protection zones" and "wildlife protection orders" and by upgrading to legislation the current regulation that a person is "not to damage, disturb or destroy any wildlife habitat".

Native timber harvesting operations should not be exempted from damaging, disturbing or destroying wildlife habitat.

All native wildlife should be defined and protected as native wildlife, including our native ducks and quails, currently open for recreational hunting.

The idea of a "general duty of care" should be supported – a duty to "avoid harm" to wildlife could help to minimize incidences of wildlife being treated as collateral damage.

Provided May 28/2021

Submission Comment 52b:

Contributor: Individual

Primary interests:

- Protection and conservation of wildlife and habitat

Comment

Below are multiple points I wish to make about the Wildlife Act, but first and foremost it should be about protection and preservation of Victoria's (and Australia's and indeed the world's) flora and fauna which are rapidly disappearing.

The Authority to Control Wildlife System needs to be reformed so that clear principles are followed and so that there is far greater transparency, monitoring and enforcement, which actually protects native wildlife, not just regulating killing.

Protections for exotic invasive species like deer need to be removed. A Senate inquiry has called on all states to register deer as a pest species – it's definitely time to unprotect the estimated 1 million deer stomping and chomping across Victoria.

An independent statutory regulator should be established to enforce the Act, along with a dramatic increase in penalties, including prison.

The Act needs to increase protections for wildlife and wildlife habitat by providing new tools such as "wildlife protection zones" and "wildlife protection orders" and by upgrading to legislation the current regulation that a person is "not to damage, disturb or destroy any wildlife habitat". Native timber harvesting operations should not be exempted from damaging, disturbing or destroying wildlife habitat. All native wildlife should be defined and protected as native wildlife, including our native ducks and quails, currently open for recreational hunting. The idea of a "general duty of care" should be supported – a duty to "avoid harm" to wildlife could help to minimize incidences of wildlife being treated as collateral damage.

Provided May 28/2021

Submission Comment 52c:

Contributor: Individual

Primary interests:

- Protection and conservation of wildlife and habitat
- Traditional owner cultural values and use of wildlife
- Compliance and enforcement

Comment

Examples of how the current Wildlife Act is failing native wildlife. It protects exotic invasive species like deer as protected game animals despite the significant damage they do to wildlife habitats around the state. It allows wildlife to be declared as unprotected. It allows the for the destruction of a plethora of native wildlife through a highly non-transparent Authority to Control Wildlife permit system, as well as the commercial harvesting of our iconic kangaroos for pet food. It provides no direct protections for wildlife habitat under the legislation. It has weak penalties for those who commit an offence under the Act. It treats some native wildlife, such as ducks and native quails, as sport for recreational shooters.

The Act is toothless when it comes to actually prosecuting illegal acts of harm to wildlife. We've seen appalling incidents of the illegal poisoning of Wedge-tailed Eagles & the bulldozing of koalas met with little to no penalties. The Authority to Control Wildlife System needs to be reformed so that clear principles are followed and so that there is far greater transparency, monitoring & enforcement, which actually protects native wildlife, not just regulating killing. Protections for exotic invasive species like deer need to be removed. A Senate inquiry has called on all states to register deer as a pest species – it's definitely time to unprotect the estimated 1 million deer stomping and chomping across Victoria. An independent statutory regulator should be established to enforce the Act, along with a dramatic increase in penalties, including prison.

Provided May 28/2021

Submission Comment 52d:

Contributor: Individual

Primary interests:

- Protection and conservation of wildlife and habitat

Comment

I welcome this long overdue review of the Act.

After reading the Issues Paper I have a greater appreciation of the complexities involved and struggle to put my own words together. So I use the well thought out words of others to say I support the following actions in reforming the Act:

1/ The Authority to Control Wildlife System needs to be reformed so that clear principles are followed and so that there is far greater transparency, monitoring and enforcement, which actually protects native wildlife, not just regulating killing.

2/ Protections for exotic invasive species like deer need to be removed. A Senate inquiry has called on all states to register deer as a pest species – it's definitely time to unprotect the estimated 1 million deer stomping and chomping across Victoria.

3/ An independent statutory regulator should be established to enforce the Act, along with a dramatic increase in penalties, including prison.

4/ The Act needs to increase protections for wildlife and wildlife habitat by providing new tools such as "wildlife protection zones" and "wildlife protection orders" and by upgrading to legislation the current regulation that a person is "not to damage, disturb or destroy any wildlife habitat".

5/ Native timber harvesting operations should not be exempted from damaging, disturbing or destroying wildlife habitat.

6/ All native wildlife should be defined and protected as native wildlife, including our native ducks and quails, currently open for recreational hunting

7/ The idea of a "general duty of care" should be supported – a duty to "avoid harm" to wildlife could help to minimize incidences of wildlife being treated as collateral damage.

Provided May 29/2021

Submission Comment 52e:

Contributor: Individual

Primary interests:

- Protection and conservation of wildlife and habitat
- Management and control of wildlife causing problems or damage
- Offences and penalties relating to wildlife

Comment

Comments on Areas of the Act Needing Reform

1 Protections for exotic invasive species like deer need to be removed from the Act. A Senate inquiry has called on all states to register deer as a pest species. There are huge and increasing numbers of deer causing damage in Victoria.

2 An independent statutory regulator should be established to enforce the Act, with a large increase in penalties, including prison for significant breaches .

3 Providing “wildlife protection zones” and “wildlife protection orders” and by upgrading to legislation the current regulation that a person is “not to damage, disturb or destroy any wildlife habitat”.

4 Native timber harvesting operations should not be exempted from damaging, disturbing or destroying wildlife habitat.

5 Native wildlife should be defined and protected including our native ducks and quails

6 The “general duty of care” should be supported by a duty to “avoid harm” to wildlife to minimize incidences of incidental wildlife harm

Provided May 29/2021

Submission Comment 52f:

Contributor: Individual

Primary interests:

- Protection and conservation of wildlife and habitat
- Management and control of wildlife causing problems or damage
- Compliance and enforcement

Comment

I am a bushwalker, camper and father of 2.

How to fix the Wildlife Act:

At the very least the following amendments are needed to the Act:

- * An independent statutory regulator should be established to enforce the Act
- * There must be a significant increase in all penalties, including for the prohibition that a person is “not to damage, disturb or destroy any wildlife habitat” (which is currently only in the regulations and should be moved into the Act), including prison terms
- * Much like the new preventative "general environmental duty" in section 25 of the EPA Act 2017 (as amended), the Act should include a general and positive duty of care, that is, a duty to avoid harm to wildlife to help minimize incidences of wildlife being killed while other activities are being carried out by farmers, etc. Our precious native wildlife must not be seen as merely collateral damage or pests to be destroyed by farmers
- * The Authority to Control Wildlife System permit needs to be reformed so that a permit to destroy is an absolute last resort with applicants having to find an alternative solution to killing the wildlife (eg, relocating, added fencing/netting, etc). This whole system needs to be made more transparent so each permit is added to a public register with full details concerning what each issued permit allows
- * There should also be 3rd party appeal rights so that interested parties (eg, animal welfare bodies) can appeal the issue of a permit to destroy
- * Protections for exotic invasive species, like deer, must be removed
- * The Act needs to increase protections for wildlife and wildlife habitat by providing new tools such as “wildlife protection zones” and “wildlife protection orders”
- * Native forest logging operations must not be exempt from the prohibitions against damaging, disturbing or destroying wildlife habitat
- * All native wildlife should be defined and protected as native wildlife, including our native ducks and quails, currently open for recreational hunting

Provided May 31/2021

Submission Comment 52g:

Contributor: Individual

Primary interests:

- Protection and conservation of wildlife and habitat
- Management and control of wildlife causing problems or damage
- Protections for marine mammals

Comment

The system needs to be reformed so that obvious and clear principles are followed. There should be far greater transparency, monitoring and enforcement, which actually protects native wildlife, not just regulates the killing. In particular, protections for non-indigenous invasive species like deer need to be removed. Deer should be considered a pest species as the senate inquiry has found. An independent statutory regulator should be established to enforce the Act, along with a dramatic increase in effective penalties. The Act needs to increase protections for wildlife and wildlife habitat by providing new tools such as “wildlife protection zones” and “wildlife protection orders” and by upgrading to legislation the current regulation that a person is “not to damage, disturb or destroy any wildlife habitat”. Native timber harvesting operations should not be exempted from damaging, disturbing or destroying wildlife habitat. The idea of a “general duty of care” should be supported.

Provided June 2/2021

Submission Comment 52h:

Contributor: Individual

Primary interests:

- Protection and conservation of wildlife and habitat

Comment

Following are what I consider to be important issues of concern which should be included in the review: Currently non-native wild animals such as deer are protected for game shooting, where as some native wild-life are declared as unprotected which, at one stage, had the perverse outcome of wombat shooting being promoted as a tourist attraction. Native wildlife needs to be number one consideration for protection and definitely not for purposes of game shooting.

The commercial harvesting of kangaroos for pet food needs to cease (kangaroos are not a commodity) and the Authority to kill Wildlife permit system must be completely transparent and used very judiciously, with enforced regulation.

There must be legislation providing direct protections for wildlife habitat, including appropriate penalties for those who commit an offence under the Act.

The practice of treating native wildlife, such as ducks and native quails, as sport for recreational shooters must cease.

Provided May 28/2021

Submission Comment 52i:

Contributor: Individual

Primary interests:

- Protection and conservation of wildlife and habitat
- Wildlife welfare
- Offences and penalties relating to wildlife

Comment

The current Wildlife Act is not protecting native wildlife.

It protects exotic invasive species like deer as protected game animals despite the significant damage they do to wildlife habitats around the state.

It allows wildlife to be declared as unprotected which, at one stage, had the perverse outcome of wombat shooting being promoted as a tourist attraction.

It allows the for the destruction of a plethora of native wildlife through a highly non-transparent Authority to Control Wildlife permit system, as well as the commercial KILLING of our iconic kangaroos for pet food.

It provides no direct protections for wildlife habitat under the legislation. It has weak penalties for those who commit an offence under the Act.

It treats some native wildlife, such as ducks and native quails, as sport for recreational shooters.

ALL THE ABOVE MUST BE FIXED!

Provided May 28/2021

Submission Comment 52j:

Contributor: Individual

Primary interests:

- Protection and conservation of wildlife and habitat
- Wildlife welfare
- Rehabilitation of sick, injured and orphaned wildlife

Comment

I would like to express my concern about the Wildlife Act 1975. I volunteer at a wildlife shelter, so see how wildlife are challenged to survive in many ways, largely due to human impact. I believe the Act fails to protect wildlife in a number of ways: - It provides no direct protections for wildlife habitat under the legislation. It allows the for the destruction of a variety of native wildlife through a highly non-transparent ATCW permit system. - I am deeply troubled by the over-harvesting of our iconic kangaroos for pet food. - The Act is toothless when it comes to actually prosecuting illegal acts of harm to wildlife. For instance, the illegal poisoning of numerous Wedge-tailed Eagles, and the cruel bulldozing of koalas in trees and left to die painful deaths, met with little to no penalties.

Provided June 1/2021

Submission Comment 52k:

Contributor: Individual

Primary interests:

- Protection and conservation of wildlife and habitat

Comment

All native animals should be protected under the Act. This means the practice of native forest logging which is driving native species to extinction should cease immediately. An independent regulator should be established to enforce the Wildlife Act with stronger penalties for offences. The OCR does not appear to be genuinely independent and regularly turns a blind eye to illegal and destructive practices by VicForests. The "sport" of duck hunting should be outlawed in Victoria. The Act should not protect exotic invasive species like deer as protected game animals despite the significant damage they do to wildlife habitats around the state. The Act should not allow native wildlife to be declared as unprotected. In an extreme case this has led to a situation where wombat shooting was promoted as a tourist attraction. The Act provides no direct protections for wildlife habitat under the legislation. Penalties for those who commit an offence under the Act are too weak. NB the poisoned wedge-tail eagles and the bulldozing of koalas.

Provided June 5/2021

Submission Comment 52I:

Contributor: Individual – Jessica Walton

Primary interests:

- Protection and conservation of wildlife and habitat
- Offences and penalties relating to wildlife

Comment

The Authority to Control Wildlife System needs to be reformed so that clear principles are followed and so that there is far greater transparency, monitoring and enforcement, which actually protects native wildlife, not just regulating killing. Protections for exotic invasive species like deer need to be removed. A Senate inquiry has called on all states to register deer as a pest species – it's definitely time to unprotect the estimated 1 million deer stomping and chomping across Victoria. An independent statutory regulator should be established to enforce the Act, along with a dramatic increase in penalties, including prison. The Act needs to increase protections for wildlife and wildlife habitat by providing new tools such as "wildlife protection zones" and "wildlife protection orders" and by upgrading to legislation the current regulation that a person is "not to damage, disturb or destroy any wildlife habitat". Native timber harvesting operations should not be exempted from damaging, disturbing or destroying wildlife habitat. All native wildlife should be defined and protected as native wildlife, including our native ducks and quails, currently open for recreational hunting. The idea of a "general duty of care" should be supported – a duty to "avoid harm" to wildlife could help to minimize incidences of wildlife being treated as collateral damage.

Provided June 18/2021

Submission Comment 52m:

Contributor: Individual

Primary interests:

- Protection and conservation of wildlife and habitat
- Compliance and enforcement
- Traditional owner cultural values and use of wildlife

Comment

The Wildlife Act is in great need of updating to ensure our native wildlife are protected in the face of threats such as climate change. Changes needed include:

- The Authority to Control Wildlife System needs to be reformed so that clear principles are followed and so that there is far greater transparency, monitoring and enforcement, which actually protects native wildlife, not just regulating killing.
- Protections for exotic invasive species like deer need to be removed. A Senate inquiry has called on all states to register deer as a pest species – it's definitely time to unprotect the estimated 1 million deer stomping and chomping across Victoria.
- An independent statutory regulator should be established to enforce the Act, along with a dramatic increase in penalties, including prison.
- The Act needs to increase protections for wildlife and wildlife habitat by providing new tools such as "wildlife protection zones" and "wildlife protection orders" and by upgrading to legislation the current regulation that a person is "not to damage, disturb or destroy any wildlife habitat".
- Native timber harvesting operations should not be exempted from damaging, disturbing or destroying wildlife habitat.
- All native wildlife should be defined and protected as native wildlife, including our native ducks and quails, currently open for recreational hunting
- The idea of a "general duty of care" should be supported – a duty to "avoid harm" to wildlife could help to minimize incidences of wildlife being treated as collateral damage.

Provided June 18/2021

Submission Comment 52n:

Contributor: Organisation – Midway Ltd

Primary interests:

- Protection and conservation of wildlife and habitat
- Compliance and enforcement
- Traditional owner cultural values and use of wildlife

Comment

Midway Ltd supports the submission from the Victorian Forest Products Association (VFPA) regarding the Independent Review of the Wildlife Act 1975 (Vic)

Given the significant regulation of the forestry industry, the Wildlife Act and Regulations must clearly exempt forestry operations conducted under the forestry laws, regulations and codes. It's important to recognise that the forest industry devotes significant resources to the protection of wildlife. For example, it is estimated that the Victorian plantation industry spends in excess of \$10M per annum on Koala protection measures during harvesting.

The issues paper does make brief reference on p5 to the economic impacts of wildlife (. In its review, the Panel will consider: ..., the impact of wildlife on agriculture and other activities) but economic impacts don't receive much discussion in the rest of the paper. We note the expertise of the Independent review panel, but given that private land occupies around 2/3 of Victoria's total land area, it's surprising that there's no-one on the panel that might represent those landowners, such as representatives from peak organisations from the agriculture or forestry sectors.

Provided June 18/2021