

The Victorian Wildlife Act of 1974 is hopelessly outdated concerning the recreational shooting of ducks.

I have been a volunteer duck & waterbird rescuer whenever there has been a duck shooting season announced in Victoria for the past 25 years.

There have only been two years that this activity has been put on hold. 2006 & 2007 when the Millennial Drought occurred due to climate change & duck shooting.

I continue to be extremely alarmed & worried by waterbird numbers, not just ducks, that continue to decline in numbers due to climate change but primarily by duck shooters. Time & again protected species such as the Freckled Duck, one of the ten rarest waterbirds in the World, continue to be shot at by duck shooters as they mistake this bird as a Pacific Black Duck. The Blue Winged Shoveller which is protected in Victoria since 2015 also continues to be shot at as well.

I have rescued both alive & dead protected species of waterbirds from duck shooters over the years including the following:

Eurasian Coot

Freckled Duck

Black Swan

Long Billed Corella

Murry River Turtles

Welcome Swallows

Galahs

Little Cormorants

In these enlightened times an urgent overview of the Wildlife Act of Victoria 1974 must immediately be put into place to protect these animals from the cruelty of duck shooting or there is the very real possibility of some waterbird species becoming extinct in the near future if this recreation is allowed to continue.

I live in Kerang, Northern Victoria. Kerang is known as Victoria's Kakadu. It has RAMSAR listed wetlands where tragically duck shooting is allowed. There are many Aboriginal middens, scar trees & places of great significance & spiritual importance to the First People. The fact that recreational duck shooting is allowed to be continued under the extremely outdated current Wildlife Laws of 1974 is beyond reprehensible & extremely disrespectful to the habitat, fauna & flora endemic to Kerang & surrounds. Not to mention Victoria wide.

Duck shooting in this State may have been popular some nearly 40 years ago. In 1986 there were some 100,000 duck shooters in this State. Now there are only 25,000 registered shooters. Duck shooting is an obscenely cruel & very outdated practice. What may have been the social norm in 1974 does not belong in 2021.

I plead with those over viewing the current 1974 Victorian Wildlife Act to place a permanent ban on duck shooting in this state effective immediately.

Nature based tourism is the future and more & more people wish to escape Melbourne, get back to nature, & see the waterways, rivers, lakes, swamps & creeks & the animals, particularly ducks & waterbirds, that reside in Victoria. Future generations of children & grandchildren have the right to see these beautiful gentle native waterbird species, be out in nature, enjoying the fresh air & appreciating the wildlife so unique to this State. Future generations have the right to see scar trees, Aboriginal middens & the magnificent RAMSAR listed wetlands of Victoria.

If the recreational shooting of not only duck species but other birds continues in this State without a ban, these birds will decline. Australia already has the highest extinction rate of flora & fauna in the World. It is time for the Wildlife Act of Victoria to move with the times & take the courageous step into banning duck shooting for good in this State so that current & future nature lovers, birdwatchers & environmentalists can enjoy the wonderful ducks & waterbirds endemic to Victoria.

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