

Duck activists in a flap

Dead birds dumped on Bracks

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FORTY dead birds believed to have been illegally shot in the opening weekend of the duck shooting season were left at the feet of the Bracks Government yesterday.

Government staff were forced to walk around the haul of dead birds, including two swans, as a protest against the controversial blood sport.

The Coalition against Duck Shooting laid out the birds outside Premier Steve Bracks' Treasury Place office.

The anti-duck shooting activists labelled the Government as being stuck back in the 1960s for failing to ban the controversial blood sport.

The annual protest seeks to highlight how birds other than ducks are caught in the cross-fire and pressure for the practice to be banned.

Anti-duck shooting

Jeremy Kelly

campaigner Laurie Levy said shooters continued to flout laws surrounding legal prey.

"Even though the number of duck hunters has disappeared over the years, they still shoot illegally," Mr Levy said. "They shoot so-called game birds and leave them."

There are about 20,000 licensed hunters in Victoria, with most hunting done over the three-month season in the state's northwest.

However, Mr Levy said only a couple of thousand were active.

"It's really hard to understand why the Bracks Labor Government in the 21st century has the same policies towards native water birds as the Bolte Liberal government did 40 years ago," Mr Levy said.

"The Bracks Government has a very close relationship with the

shooting lobby and ... they pander to them.

"There was a time Labor Governments stood on their principles."

Mr Levy said the pain of banning duck shooting would be minimal.

Of the haul dumped outside Mr Bracks' office, Mr Levy said one of the swans had been shot and the other mauled to death by a dog.

Other protected species included in the haul were coots, a swallow and an assortment of legal birds, which Mr Levy said were left behind because of the shooter had either exceeded their quota or because of neglect.

In defending the duck shooting season, Mr Bracks said it was allowed only when there was sufficient stock and it was appropriate that it take place this season.

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