

Attitudes Towards Duck Shooting in Victoria– Summary Findings

Wild bird numbers have been reduced by over 80% in the last 10 years as a result of climate change and drought, and several States (Queensland, NSW, WA and the ACT) have now banned duck shooting. The Victorian State Government is soon to make a decision on whether or not to allow the 2008 duck shooting season to proceed.

In advance of this decision, the Coalition Against Duck Shooting commissioned Roy Morgan Research to conduct a survey amongst the Victorian public to gauge their views on this issue.

The survey was conducted over four rounds of Roy Morgan Research's weekly telephone omnibus survey, CATIBUS. Between October 3 and 27, 2007, Roy Morgan Research surveyed a representative cross-sectional sample of 637 Victorians aged 14 years and over to determine their attitudes towards shooting of native water birds for recreational purposes.

The questionnaire comprised two closed questions to ascertain the proportion of Victorians who support, and those who do not support, a ban on recreational shooting of native birds in Victoria, and an open ended question to capture respondents' reasons for why they felt this activity should or should not be banned.

Respondents were first asked: *"In your opinion, should the shooting of native water birds for recreational purposes be banned in Victoria?"*

A large majority of Victorians (75%) said they thought that the shooting of native water birds for recreational purposes **should** be banned in Victoria. Twenty percent thought it should **not** be banned, and 5% were undecided.

Women (83%) were more likely than men (67%) to say the shooting of native water birds should be banned. Support for banning this activity was highest amongst younger people (14-17 year olds – 80%) and lowest amongst those aged 35-49 (71%). People living in Melbourne (80%) were more likely than those living in country areas (63%) to favour banning the shooting of native water birds as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Analysis By Sex and Age

QD1. "In your opinion, should the shooting of native water birds for recreational purposes be banned in Victoria?"

	Total Respondents	SEX		AGE					AREA	
		Men	Women	14-17	18-24	25-34	35-49	50+	Melbourne	Vic X-City
	(637) %	(306) %	(331) %	(40) %	(69) %	(111) %	(172) %	(245) %	(453) %	(184) %
Yes, Banned	75	67	83	80	74	76	71	77	80	63
No, Not	20	28	13	17	24	20	23	18	16	32
Can't Say	5	6	4	3	2	4	6	5	4	5

Base: Total Respondents

Analysis by State Voting Intention showed no difference in attitude of supporters of both major parties in relation to the issue of recreational shooting of native water birds - 74% of ALP supporters, and the same proportion of L-NP supporters, felt the activity should be banned. Greens supporters (89%) were most strongly in favour of banning the activity, followed by supporters of Other Parties/Independent Candidates (78%).

Table 2: Analysis By State Voting Intention

QD1. "In your opinion, should the shooting of native water birds for recreational purposes be banned in Victoria?"

	Total Respondents	Total Electors	ALP	L-NP	The Greens	Other Parties / Independent Candidates	Can't Say / Refused
	(637) %	(545) %	(269) %	(184) %	(45) %	(19) %	(28) %
Yes, Banned	75	76	74	74	89	78	79
No, Not	20	20	21	23	9	16	17
Can't Say	5	4	5	3	2	6	4

Base: Total Respondents

Respondents were then asked if they would like to make any comments about the issue of recreational shooting of native water birds in relation to why they felt it should or should not be banned.

Fifty nine percent of people did not wish to make any further comments in relation to the topic.

The main reasons given by those who thought that shooting of native water birds **should** be banned in Victoria were:

- It's cruel/horrible/appalling/wrong (10%);
- Disagree with shooting for recreation/fun (7%)
- It's a pointless/unnecessary activity (6%)

Comments made by those who thought that shooting of native water birds **should** be banned in Victoria included:

“I've long held that it should not be done, but particularly now when water resources are shrinking and habitats are dying out.”

“I think it should be stopped straight away with the droughts and everything going on right now.”

“I think it can be cruel. Especially if an animal is wounded. I find it horrible, the thought of an animal being in such pain.”

“It's very cruel because most of the people don't kill them straight out, they are shot but not dead.”

“Some are shot that are not even ducks and the fact that the birds are in pain and die slowly too. It should've been banned a few years ago. I don't know whether our Government would bother to ban it or not.”

“It's disgusting. It's deplorable. I can't believe this practice takes place.”

“It's purely sick that people go out and kill animals... it's purely just to show off and just testosterone. Animals are defenceless really, they can't hold a gun and shoot back.”

“It's horrific, ducks weren't put on earth to be clay targets and the people who shoot ducks should be lined up and shot themselves.”

“I don't believe in any sort of blood sports. I think it should be banned.”

“I don't consider a sport of shooting animals. They have the right to be free like us.”

“I just think the Government is bloody weak in not banning it altogether.”

“I think it's a stupid recreation and I can't see how people enjoy that the way they say they do.”

“They sometimes tend to shoot other birds at the same time.”

“I don't see any reason to shoot something for sport. It's not as if they're shooting the ducks and wildlife for food.”

“I'm in a duck shooting area here and when I was a kid people ate the duck for food but it's just a pointless sport now.”

“We need to protect our wildlife and men should find something better to do then shoot our birds.”

The main reasons given by those who thought that shooting of native water birds **should not** be banned in Victoria were:

- Shooting is necessary if the population grows too large / needs culling (2%);
- It should be regulated / monitored / controlled (2%);
- Shooting should not be allowed of endangered species (2%)

Comments made by those who thought that shooting of native water birds **should not** be banned in Victoria included:

“There should be a lot more restrictions on who can shoot, what they can shoot and how many they can shoot. Shooting should only be possible if the species can be sustainable. Don't shoot them unless the ones that are being shot can reproduce. Limited to an amount so the species can increase its numbers.”

“If the birds are becoming a nuisance yes they should be killed.”

“I think the current controls are excellent, they have seasons and an opening day and tests and things that protect the species, they have testing of the shooters, so they feel that they can protect the endangered species. I don't feel that they need to make any concession to the duck shooting lobby.”

“If the population is already too large then we should be allowed. If they are an endangered species then we should not be allowed to shoot them.”

“I'm a farmer and if we don't have shooting of ducks I'm out of business.”

“I believe if the animals weren't controlled, they'd have to be controlled by chemicals and all that sort of stuff. I guess the shooters would control the birds.”

“If they were an endangered species I would be concerned, but where I live they are in plague proportions.”

“I think it's a fair sport, it's been going on a while, and as long as they eat what they shoot.”

“If they don't keep them under control they're going to eat all the crops; they do, I've seen it happen.”

“Ducks are over populating and also they are ruining the farmer's crops.”

Those who initially thought the shooting of native water birds **should not** be banned in Victoria, or who were undecided (25%) were told:

“You may or may not be aware that due to drought and climate change, the numbers of native water birds across eastern Australia have dropped by over 80%, that at least one in four native water birds shot at, are wounded, and that duck shooting has been banned in WA, NSW and Queensland.”

These respondents were then asked *“Knowing that, do you believe the recreational shooting of native water birds in Victoria should be banned, or not?”*

After being given this additional information, almost half (49%) of those who initially thought the shooting of native water birds should not be banned, or were undecided, changed their opinion, bringing the total of Victorians who thought the shooting of native water birds **should** be banned to 87%. Ten percent still thought it should **not** be banned, and 3% remained undecided, as shown in Tables 3 and 4 below.

Table 3: Analysis By Sex and Age

QD1. “In your opinion, should the shooting of native water birds for recreational purposes be banned in Victoria?”

QD3. “You may or may not be aware that due to drought and climate change, the numbers of native water birds across eastern Australia have dropped by over 80%, that at least one in four native water birds shot at, are wounded, and that duck shooting has been banned in WA, NSW and Queensland. Knowing that, do you believe the recreational shooting of native water birds in Victoria should be banned, or not?”

	Total Respondents	SEX		AGE					AREA	
		Men	Women	14-17	18-24	25-34	35-49	50+	Melbourne	Vic X-City
	(637) %	(306) %	(331) %	(40) %	(69) %	(111) %	(172) %	(245) %	(453) %	(184) %
Initially thought should be banned	75	67	83	80	74	76	71	77	80	63
TOTAL think should be banned	87	81	94	91	88	89	86	87	91	77
Should not be banned	10	15	5	7	12	10	11	10	7	19
Can't Say	3	4	1	2	-	1	3	3	2	4

Base: Total Respondents

Table 4: Analysis By State Voting Intention

QD1. “In your opinion, should the shooting of native water birds for recreational purposes be banned in Victoria?”

QD3. “You may or may not be aware that due to drought and climate change, the numbers of native water birds across eastern Australia have dropped by over 80%, that at least one in four native water birds shot at, are wounded, and that duck shooting has been banned in WA, NSW and Queensland. Knowing that, do you believe the recreational shooting of native water birds in Victoria should be banned, or not?”

	Total Respondents (637) %	Total Electors (545) %	ALP (269) %	L-NP (184) %	The Greens (45) %	Other Parties / Independent Candidates (19) %	Can't Say / Refused (28) %
Initially thought should be banned	75	76	74	74	89	78	79
TOTAL think should be banned	87	87	87	83	98	84	97
Should not be banned	10	11	11	14	2	11	3
Can't Say	3	2	2	3	-	5	-

Base: Total Respondents

Detailed cross-tabulations and an ASTEROID database of the survey findings have been provided as an addendum to this report. A file of all verbatim comments has also been supplied. The survey instrument utilised for this survey is provided in Appendix 1 overleaf.

APPENDIX 1 – SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

In VICTORIA, ASK:

QD1. Next about the activity of duck shooting or recreational shooting of native water birds. In your opinion, should the shooting of native water birds for recreational purposes be banned in Victoria?

YES, BANNED	1
NO, NOT	2
CAN'T SAY	3

IF YES (Code 1 on QD1)

QD2a. Are there any comments you would like to make about this issue?
RECORD VERBATIM

IF NO (Code 2 on QD1)

QD2b. Are there any comments you would like to make about this issue?
RECORD VERBATIM

IF Can't Say (Code 3 on QD1)

QD2c. Are there any comments you would like to make about this issue?
RECORD VERBATIM

IF NO OR CAN'T SAY ON QD1 (CODES 2 OR 3 ON QD1), ASK:

QD3. You may or may not be aware that due to drought and climate change, the numbers of native water birds across eastern Australia have dropped by over 80%, that at least one in four native water birds shot at, are wounded, and that duck shooting has been banned in WA, NSW and Queensland.

Knowing that, do you believe the recreational shooting of native water birds in Victoria should be banned, or not?

YES, BANNED	1
NO, NOT	2
CAN'T SAY	3