



# Pollies unite to ban hunt

VICTORIA'S crossbench politicians are hoping it's a case of birds of a feather stick together when it comes to ending duck hunting in the state.

Greens leader Samantha Ratnam, the Reason Party's Fiona Patten and Animal Justice Party's Andy Meddick say they and other crossbenchers will join forces in parliament to convince the re-elected Labor government to ban duck hunting in Victoria.

"Bird numbers are at record lows and that's exacerbated by the drought situation," Mr Meddick said. "It puts our native waterbirds at increasing risk of having even lower numbers and even extinction levels going forward."

About half of the 11-member crossbench was in agreement on the issue. Ms Ratnam said the government had the power to cancel the 2019 season already. Ms Patten said the crossbench was finding consensus on several issues and that combined agreement could prove crucial as leverage against the government, which needs at least three non-Labor votes for Bills to pass the upper house.

The Game Management Authority announced earlier

this month this year's season would be shortened from 12 to nine weeks and the bag limit decreased. But both major parties say there will not be an end to the sport.

"It's a legitimate recreational activity that many Victorians participate in," Acting Premier Jacinta Allan said yesterday. "We have no plans to change that."

Despite the newly elected Liberal member for Brighton, James Newbury, using his maiden speech in parliament to deplore duck hunting, the Liberal-National coalition says the activity should remain.

**AAP**