



25 JUN, 2021

Duck activists' video of 'prolonged cruelty'

Swan Hill Guardian, Swan Hill

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Else Kennedy

DISTURBING footage has emerged of what activists have described as "prolonged cruelty" to wounded ducks during Victoria's duck season.

The videos, which have been published online, came as the Game Management Authority (GMA) revealed four hunters were issued with infringement notices during the season and three people received a banning notice for hindering or harassing hunters.

Members of the Coalition Against Duck Shooting (CADS) went to Lake Cullen, south of Swan Hill, over the Queen's Birthday long weekend and claimed in a statement to have saved 10,000 ducks through surveillance and monitoring activities.

Footage filmed by anti-duck shooting activists at Lake Lonsdale in Central Victoria appeared to show a shooter encouraging a dog to play with a wounded bird.

In another video, filmed at Little Lake Buloke, near Wycheproof, a shooter appeared to shoot a wounded duck at close range, but failed to kill the bird.

The man then picked up the bird and carried it while it struggled for more than a minute.

CADS campaign director Laurie Levy said the footage showed duck shooting was inherently cruel.

"The gun groups want us to believe that only a few duck shooters do the wrong thing, but this is simply not true," he said. "Cruelty is part of duck shooting."

This year's duck season in Victoria ran from May 26 to June 14. Due to coronavirus restrictions, many shooters were unable to travel to wetlands for the shoot.

Mr Levy said CADS had recorded multiple incidents of malpractice

by hunters during the season.

"Despite the record short season and very few active duck shooters this year, CADS rescuers yet again witnessed and documented unconscionable cruelty to native water birds and other alleged offences on just a few wetlands," Mr Levy said.

"Duck shooters were also recorded illegally shooting from a moving boat; shooting above the bag limit; shooting in the dark, outside the legal times; shooting out of range; illegally shooting rare and threatened freckled ducks; illegally flushing birds into the air with a motorboat; not picking up wounded birds before targeting other birds; taking small children on to a shooting wetland; littering with spent plastic shotgun cartridges and not safely breaking shotguns when walking from the wetlands," Mr Levy said.

CADS provided the first video to the GMA, the agency responsible for enforcing compliance with duck shooting laws. In a statement, the agency said it was investigating the allegations.

Minister for Agriculture Maryanne Thomas said in a statement:

"Drones and body cameras are being used to monitor activities and new safety and case management systems have been introduced."



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Activists say they have filmed "prolonged cruelty" to ducks.

Picture: Coalition Against Duck Shooting