

The Age editorial

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Failure on so many levels

Why this state, which is home for so many progressive and broad-minded people, tolerates the "sport" of duck hunting is beyond belief. It is not done to cull vermin. It serves no real purpose other than to stir the adrenalin of gumbooted shooters.

Victoria, under the Baillieu and now the Napthine government, allows duck shooters into every corner of this state - in all state forests, vacant Crown land and so-called game reserves - from March to mid-June. The problem is, some shooters do not respect even the most basic rules of engagement, such as making sure what you are shooting is, in fact, a duck. Do not shoot into flocks is another. And the simplest: pick up the carcasses.

But as *The Age* reported on Monday, there has been despicable, wanton carnage in at least one wetland. Whistling kites and black swans - which, to be perfectly clear, are not ducks - were among the 800 bird carcasses left at a small wetland near Boort on day one of the shooting season. Also found were 147 dead freckled ducks, an endangered species.

What does any of that mean to the reckless shooters who participated in this orgy of violence? One has to wonder. Clearly the swans that aren't ducks, the kites that don't quack, are mere collateral.

Duck shooting is unnecessarily cruel, and for this reason *The Age* deplores it. But it is also not being properly regulated in this state, and for that there is no excuse.