

COALITION AGAINST DUCK SHOOTING

Media Release

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Game Management Authority ‘fudges’ bird numbers to increase bag limits

Duck shooting is large-scale, legalised recreational animal abuse

‘Wildlife Victoria’ joins the rescue team at Stawell for the opening week

The Coalition Against Duck Shooting’s Campaign Director Laurie Levy said today: “Our recent wetland surveys across the main shooting wetlands in Victoria have revealed dangerously low numbers of waterbirds. It looks like the Game Management Authority (GMA) may have fudged the numbers of birds still in Victoria in order to justify increasing the bag limit for duck shooters over the shortened 20-day shooting season.

“We believe that the GMA used a helicopter survey conducted five months ago in November 2020 to justify increasing the bag limit, but ignored the fact that most waterbirds would have flown north out of Victoria following the floods in Queensland and New South Wales. The GMA had originally said its own survey was a “trial” survey only and was never intended to be part of the considerations for a 2021 season.

“Duck shooting is legalised recreational animal abuse on a large scale. The question is why do both major Victorian political parties continue to support this outdated recreational animal abuse, when other Labor state premiers banned recreational duck shooting decades ago because of the unacceptable cruelty?” See, for example: <https://youtu.be/SRSyn-HoLYI>

“Victorian governments continue to allocate millions of taxpayer dollars to prop up a dying activity for a dwindling number of duck shooters who make up only 0.2 per cent of all Victorians. Yet no government money has ever been spent for the rescue and veterinary care of the tens of thousands of wounded victims that shooters always leave behind.

“For the last 35 years, it has been volunteer members of the public who have risked their lives to assist the suffering victims in duck shooting war zones, while GMA compliance officers stand meekly onshore,” Levy said.

This year, volunteer rescuers will return to the wetlands, joined by Wildlife Victoria, together with its mobile veterinary clinic and volunteer veterinarians to treat wounded waterbirds.

The Wildlife Victoria veterinary team will also include a portable X-ray machine to help treat wounded birds. Native waterbirds flying overhead are usually shot in the belly and suffer shocking internal and nerve injuries as well as shattered and broken bones and smashed legs, wings and bills.

“Without the dedicated help from volunteer rescuers and veterinarians, wounded native waterbirds would be left to suffer slow, agonising deaths,” Levy said.

“We don’t expect duck shooters to show any empathy for their wounded victims, but we would expect today’s progressive Labor politicians to show more empathy and concern for the suffering of the shooters’ sentient victims,” he concluded.

The rescue team will be stationed in the regional town of Stawell and will be able to deploy its rescue and veterinary teams to cover surrounding wetlands.

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