

COALITION AGAINST DUCK SHOOTING

Media release

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Victorian government declares war on its native waterbirds Waterbird numbers dangerously low

“The Victorian Government has declared war on native waterbirds, at a time when their numbers in Victoria are dangerously low,” Craig Davey, spokesperson for the Coalition Against Duck Shooting said today.

“The Victorian Government should be held responsible for decimating Australia’s native waterbirds, especially when their numbers are in serious trouble. The Game Management Authority’s (GMA) helicopter bird survey that estimates there are 2.9 million waterbirds in Victoria, just isn’t credible. Last year only 13,394 ducks were counted, but this figure was then scaled up to an absurd total estimate of 2.45 million. It was based on new complex modelling and maths which was ripe for cherry-picking by vested interests.

“This year the helicopter survey was conducted in October 2021 yet our recent wetland surveys have shown dangerously low numbers of waterbirds on Victoria’s wetlands.

“If birds were present in October, it’s obvious they’ve now flown north to the rains and floodwaters in NSW and Queensland.

“Despite the current La Nina wet cycle, which brought rain to Victoria, our surveys have shown that a large number of Victorian wetlands are still dry, including many of the 23 Ramsar wetlands near Kerang.

“Native waterbird numbers have already been seriously impacted by climate change yet the GMA has never acknowledged that climate change is impacting on native waterbird numbers and that shooting only adds to the problem.

Professor Richard Kingsford of the University of NSW who has conducted aerial surveys across eastern Australia since 1983 says waterbird numbers have decreased by 90%.

“Duck shooters must not be allowed to continue to shoot native waterbirds. The only option is for the Government to cancel the season. If not, concerned members of the public will again be out on the State’s wetlands to help rescue wounded waterbirds,” Davey concluded.

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