

## FOCUS

### OUR VIEW

# Ban duck shooting

**E**VERY year, hundreds of Victorians play out a battle on the wetlands in the north-west of the state.

The combatants' ideals are eons apart. Duck shooters and duck rescuers clash furiously over the morality of the sport.

Unfortunately, the loser is always Victoria's wildlife.

So far during this year's season, which began in March, more than 900 protected water birds and other animals have died.

This is the most heart-wrenching aspect of duck shooting — these birds, protected species, are killed senselessly.

Freckled and blue-billed ducks and black swans are supposedly out of bounds for the hunters, who by law are restricted to shooting game birds.

Added to this is the damage to the wetlands.

The lead shot is threatening the ecosystem, poisoning the food chain which leads to a long and painful death for the inhabitants.

Duck shooters have, for the most part, escaped the prying eye of television cameras this season.

But thanks to the efforts of organisations such as the Coalition Against Duck Shooting, the issue has remained high in the public consciousness.

Duck rescuers must be commended for their efforts to save the defenceless animals.

They take enormous risks to their personal safety to protect our natural wetlands.

The argument over duck shooters' rights is moot.

It is a barbaric sport, senseless and dangerous. Marksmanship can more than adequately be tested with clay pigeons.

The killing must stop and the Victorian Government has the power to do it.

It must follow the example set by Western Australia in 1990 and ban duck shooting.

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