

The West Australian

PERTH MONDAY NOVEMBER 5 1990

Duck shoving

DOUBTLESS the WA Government's Bill to ban duck shooting will evoke emotional debate and spirited lobbying on its journey through State Parliament.

Critics have drawn some long bows already in their efforts to kill the Bill. At various times they have portrayed the legislation as an infringement on civil liberties and a step towards outlawing pastimes such as crabbing, marroning, spearfishing, prawning and fishing. Their arguments are spurious.

So too are duck shooters' attempts to equate their activities with sport. It is difficult to imagine what equal chance unsuspecting ducks have when pitted against shotguns. In these days of high environmental awareness and community concern about the need to preserve wilderness areas and wildlife, the practice of blasting water fowl for the roasting dish is sadly misplaced.

According to opinion polls, the Government has solid public support for its efforts to ban duck-shooting. But judging by Opposition reaction so far, that support will count for little when the Bill reaches the Upper House.

The Opposition is against a ban and favours a survey to identify high conservation value areas from which shooters would be barred. That would be better than nothing but is no substitute for effective action to prevent the slaughter of WA's native birds.