



SHOOTING SPORTS COUNCIL OF VICTORIA Inc.

PROMOTING THE IMAGE OF AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN SHOOTING SPORTS

PO Box 2115,
Blackburn South, 3130

Mr. Simon Toop
Director Strategy and Research
Game Management Authority
121 Exhibition Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

6 January 2021

Dear Simon,

Submission on the Proposed 2021 Duck Hunting Season

The Shooting Sports Council of Victoria (SSCV) is grateful for the opportunity to make this submission on the 2021 Duck Hunting Season.

We also apologise for the lateness of our submission but in part it is due to the impact of the Covid-19 virus, we have been unable to convene members meetings for the majority of this year due to the Government and DHHS restrictions.

We note that this submission is made with reference to the data provided on your website labelled *Considerations for the 2021 duck season*.

At a recent members meeting of the SSCV it was agreed, unanimously, that the proposed duck season for 2021 would be sustainable with a full length season and a standard bag limit. Serious consideration should also be given to increasing the bag for the Wood Duck species of ducks to encourage the taking of these birds to reduce their impact on crop farmers and food producers of this state.

We would like to take this opportunity to make comments regarding the data provided by the Game Management Authority and provide justification for our call for a full season in 2021.

- As you have indicated, your data, which was obtained prior to November 2020, does not include a count of birds but an indices of birds at various locations in the Eastern States of Australia. This aerial survey was carried out prior to the affect of the current La Nina weather patterns that we have seen during December 2020 and early January 2021. The current weather patterns have seen large scale rainfalls and flooding in the surveyed areas, this will have a positive effect on bird numbers and habitat prior to the proposed season in March 2021, but not yet evident.
- Every year as wetlands reduce in water content and flow, huge numbers of duck species die due to water contamination of these wetlands by the birds themselves.

By allowing hunters to reduce the numbers of birds there will be less birds dying from water contamination.

- Due to the restrictive irrigation practices forced on the food producers of this state the production of food and provision of habitat has reduced the number of birds within this state, over the past 20 years. This reduction of bird numbers reduces the opportunity for hunters to harvest birds during the season.
- The Bureau of Meteorology has recently predicted that the La Nina effect will increase the rainfall throughout Australia in the summer quarter of 2021. This effect will increase the rainfall with potential flooding throughout Australia and will markedly improve the habitat for duck species.
- The current Government practice of allowing huge amounts of fresh water to empty into the sea is responsible for not only our reduced ability to grow food but reduces the wetlands and irrigated farm lands available for all native species of birds. This is a phenomenon that is beyond the control of hunters, but should perhaps be seriously addressed by conservation and anti duck hunting groups.

Council expresses its concern at the inclusion of anti duck hunting groups in the stakeholder meetings to discuss a 2021 duck season. So called "Conservation" groups have little knowledge of the outcomes to bird populations that their actions in support of the redirecting and sanitising of irrigation water flows have caused. These groups are known to be staunch vocal opposers to the duck season and therefore have no valuable input to this process, they offer no sound arguments, simply that the season and duck hunting, in total, be banned.

It is also of concern that the principle objective of the Game Management Authority is to administer game management within Victoria. The licensed game hunters of this state expect the GMA to provide this service.

Council would be pleased to discuss these matters, in particular the reduced carrying capacity of wetlands, in greater detail with the Game Management Authority.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Croft', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Croft
Secretary SSCV
Mob.0407 055 818