

Submission to Game Management Authority re Native Duck & Quail Shooting 2022

By Regional Victorians Opposed to Duck Shooting Inc, supported by our key alliance partners

Regional Victorians Opposed to Duck Shooting Inc (RVOTDS) is calling for the 2022 native duck and quail shooting seasons to be completely closed based on dire environmental factors, significant long-term decline of all waterbird indices, lack of critical data concerning Stubble Quail and protected species, and a severe lack of social/economic impact studies (on anyone other than hunters.)

Introduction

The GMA Act states that it is a function of the GMA to:

- S6 (g): promote sustainability in game hunting and
- S6 (i) to make recommendations to relevant Ministers in relation to - iii) declaring public land open or closed to game hunting, open and closed seasons.

S8 (b) of the Act requires GMA to perform its functions, (unless otherwise directed by the Minister in which case such directives must be published in GMA's Annual Report).

However, the GMA has not once closed a duck or quail shooting season despite presiding over some of the worst environmental conditions ever recorded. Previous governments cancelled duck shooting seasons in 2003, 2007 and 2008 for less dire circumstances.

In addition, S6(h) states it is a function of GMA to monitor, conduct research and analyse the environmental, social and economic impacts of game hunting. Further, S8A requires the GMA to have regard to (b) the principle of triple bottom line assessment, which means an assessment of all the economic, social, and environmental costs and benefits, taking into account externalities and (e) the principle of stakeholder engagement and community participation, which means taking into account the interests of stakeholders and members of the local community in implementing appropriate processes for stakeholder engagement.

RVOTDS, a not for profit incorporated association with over 5500 supporters, represents those who live and work around regional waterways, adversely impacted by duck shooting. In all of our submissions and communications to GMA we have provided significant evidence of adverse social / economic impacts to families, farmers and businesses. We do so again in this submission.

It should be noted that one in four Victorians now live in regional areas. It should also be noted that no government department has been able to estimate the number of thousands of public waterways open to unmonitored duck shooters, let alone signpost them or monitor hunters' compliance at more than a tiny percentage of them.

Finally, it should be noted that no risk assessments, no desk top studies, no consultations with nearby communities, have ever been conducted (other than at two wetlands in Mildura in 2019 which were subsequently closed to shooting for safety reasons). This would indicate that the information we provide to GMA regarding the impacts of hunting, would be of keen interest to GMA in order to fulfill their obligations under the Act.

The sheer number of public lakes, streams, rivers, creeks, wetlands and waterways where duck shooting is allowed, obviously means there is a gross lack of monitoring of bird species which may or may not be present, as well as a lack of monitoring of what is being shot. This poses a significant risk not just to the public, but to our dwindling native waterbird populations including threatened species.

Quail. Given its obligations under the Act, but even just considering sustainability generally, it is surprising GMA have never considered consultation and information pertaining to quail shooting seasons. This is our second submission to GMA outlining reasons why recreational native quail shooting should be cancelled in Victoria, same as it has been in other states, including South Australia (due to concerns for sustainability and lack of population data.)

This Submission outlines the best available evidence of environmental factors and social/economic impacts of bird shooting to Victorian communities.

It is based on this evidence, we re-iterate, GMA must exercise its obligation to recommend duck and quail shooting season **closures.**

Restricted seasons are not a solution. In restricted seasons there are still significant adverse impacts to community and thousands of our dwindling numbers of native birds including threatened species killed and maimed.

Ongoing shooting of native birds – an example of Victoria’s failing

Australia is the worst in the developed world for species extinction and Victoria has the highest number of threatened species by sub region on the country.

Without doubt, the most robust, long-term dataset available regarding the health of waterbird populations, is the annual East Australian Waterbird Survey covering over a third of our continent, by the Centre for Ecosystem Science, University of NSW. This long term data tells us Australia’s native waterbird numbers have declined up to 90% in just the last four decades.

Worsening effects of climate change will stress them further. *“We’re going to see long term declines exacerbated”* (Head of Ecosystem Science, University NSW).

Hunting remnant populations, particularly when there is little breeding activity, is not sustainable.

Why did a shooting season occur in 2021 when the best evidence showed it should not?

It is unclear why a shooting season was allowed to proceed at all in 2021 given the 1600 pages of documents regarding the 2021 duck season tabled in Parliament last year, showed:

- The Head of Biodiversity at the Environment Department (DELWP) recommended further shooting restrictions, if not outright cancellation of the shooting season.
- Total game duck abundance was well below long-term average and declined from the previous year despite better rain.
- Breeding continued to be suppressed for a fourth consecutive year.
- South Australia protected three of the game duck species: Blue-Winged Shoveler, Hardhead and Pink-eared Duck, due to low abundance. But Victoria dismissed advice from DELWP that the Hardhead met criteria for threatened species status and ignored evidence that the Pink-eared Duck had suffered serious decline in recent years.
- Game bird numbers in NSW were less than half what they were five years ago.
- In SA, the numbers of “game” ducks were only 25% of the long -term average, a 28% decline from the previous year.
- In Victoria, GMA’s ground count of “game” ducks showed an 80% reduction from the previous year.

The tabled documents also showed other concerning issues:

- Hunt clubs recommended a full shoot, irrespective of the damning science and of the fact they recommended a restricted shoot the previous year when bird numbers were higher. This obviously poses serious concerns about their regard for evidence or conservation.
- GMA’s initial proposed timeline for consideration of stakeholder submissions was less than three business days, suggesting a pre-determined outcome.
- GMA’s recommendation to Ministers appears to have been delayed as its Chair (a long time holder of a duck shooting licence himself according to documents obtained via FOI) attempted to obtain the results of the trial helicopter data.
- Leading scientists at DELWP advised against the use of this untested helicopter data due to its unreliability. In spite of this, and the clear evidence of the shocking decline in our waterbird indices, helicopter data was used to more than double the kill rate just months later. (RVOTDS have requested more information via FOI on this – the information was due to be released to us in November 2021. We are still waiting for this and have escalated the matter as a complaint to the Office of The Victorian Information Commissioner.)

Letters

Hunting makes no sense this season

WE cannot easily reverse a warming climate, or avoid the likelihood of more frequent and longer droughts and fire seasons. What we can change with the stroke of a pen, are the additional man-made threats such as recreational bird shooting, or we will have to take responsibility for aiding and hastening a catastrophic downturn of waterbird species.

It is often falsely believed that birds will simply "bounce back" — there are biological limits to this bouncing back because of the limited opportunities and options that birds have themselves.

Moreover, many successful breeding pairs will have become victims of past fire and drought catastrophes themselves and inexperienced birds may not have had time to acquire partners. Bearing in mind, that at the best of times only 25 per cent of any avian species ever breeds in a given year, it is predictable that the number of breeding events will decline this year.

It can thus be expected that breeding success of the surviving birds will diminish, even if conditions should remain reasonably good.

It is scandalous to allow any shooting season this year and it is particularly puzzling that the shooting season of waterfowl allows, tolerates or turns a

Sure you can Camp
Fish down on the
creek frontage...



blind eye to the shooting even of vulnerable and endangered species.

Native birds have a role to play in maintaining a healthy Australian ecosystem, healthy waterways and in control of pests. I would like to see shooters shoot clay pigeons as accomplished sportsmen and women, not as self-appointed executioners of native wildlife.

Gisela Kaplan,
Prof. of Animal
Behaviour, PhD (Vet.Sc)

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This article by Prof. G. Kaplan — a highly regarded bird expert whom GMA have surprisingly never consulted — we believe expressed matters eloquently.

Since last year's submission process, all waterbird indices have declined further.

**GAME BIRDS FALL BY MORE THAN HALF ON LAST YEAR –
NOW JUST 25% OF LONG TERM AVERAGE**

The results of the latest (39th) EAAWS *now* show:

- **48% of wetlands surveyed had no birds.**
- **Waterbirds are 41% down on 2019 (a year of record drought).**
- **“Game” ducks are down by more than half (58%) on last year and are at just 25% of the long term average.**
- **Breeding is still well below long term average and ibis (non-game) are responsible for most (83%) of it.**
- **All major indices show significant long term declines.**
- **All the above, is despite record rains.**

We wonder if these shocking statistics will make it into the "key points" of GMA's recommendation to Ministers this time.

GMA have often said, and on page 2 of the EAAWS report it states in point 5, "***Long term trends are more informative for predicting population status than year to year fluctuations***". The graph of NSW Riverina data does not show a long-term trend. It only goes back as far as 2015, so it masks the fact that in 2016 game ducks were at their lowest abundance in four decades of EAAWS surveys. Shooters speak of a recent “explosion” of ducks in the Riverina but a recovery to (almost) 2016 levels is still a very poor result.

But no doubt shooters will be pushing results of their second ever helicopter survey instead of long term data, in the hope the picture may look better to justify their recreational bird shoot. Will GMA be considering the “best available” evidence as is required of them in the GMA Act S8A(d) or will they once again buckle to shooters whims at the detriment of our dwindling native bird populations and rural communities?

GMA chose not to alert stakeholders to the only substantial peer review of the first helicopter survey, completed by Professor Kingsford and Dr Prowse in late September 2021. Their review is quite technical but (after consulting a maths expert) we understand that it raises serious concerns about the accuracy of the results from the helicopter survey. A number of concerns were raised that would lead to over-estimates. As these criticisms were published shortly before the second helicopter survey, we assume that the same significant shortcomings continued into the second helicopter survey.

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club (CFNC) have assisted with this submission by contributing the following comments.

CFNC is strongly opposed to duck hunting, but we acknowledge that the current request from the GMA is not concerned with the policy but seeks comments on whether the 2022 season limits on duck numbers should be higher, lower or the same as for 2021.

Daniel Taneski (GMA) in his email to stakeholders on 25th November 2021 wrote: “Each year, Victorian Government agencies monitor a number of environmental and population *variables to ensure duck hunting remains sustainable in Victoria*” [our emphasis in italics]. We strongly believe that in the interests of having a ‘sustainable’ hunting season that the 2022 hunting season be curtailed to not just less than the 2021 hunting season but cancelled altogether.

Looking at the figures in the various reports:

- All game species show either no-change or a decline since 2020.
- All species are well below their peak levels (10%-15% of peak) which mainly occurred at the start of the data collection in the 1980s
- Most of western and northern Victoria has missed the extra rainfall experienced along the eastern seaboard.
- Most of Victoria has an ongoing soil moisture deficit meaning that run-off will not be filling wetlands and dams outside the mountainous areas and not creating breeding habitat.

All figures point to an on-going decline in duck abundance and habitat, the current ‘wet’ year an aberration.

- Page 38 of the ‘Considerations for the 2020 Duck Season’ describes how season 2020 was reduced because of low game duck numbers.
- The data show that 2021 numbers are generally less than 2020.

Any hunting is relying on the breeding of birds in other parts of the continent with Victoria being a population sink. This is not sustainable!

- The NSW Riverina is outside Victoria. Band 2 wetlands with maximum breeding are outside Victoria. This region should not be part of the calculations
- Nor is it morally acceptable for Victorian hunters to rely on birds that have bred in other States (NSW, ACT, Queensland) that have banned duck hunting.
- Further, in relying on the NSW Riverina for breeding the GMA figures include Plumed Whistling Duck (not a game species). **PWDs were the only species to show a year-on-year increase in the Kingsford report so should be removed from any calculations involving the NSW Riverina.**
- There seems to be reliance on the breeding of non-game species to make up the numbers.
- The summary of the ‘considerations’ report points to the need for a further reduced or no hunting season in 2022. Despite a predicted La Nina, the impact on breeding will be too late to justify a full shooting season.

Based on the figures presented, we conclude the duck hunting season should be cancelled so as to prevent further declines in waterfowl numbers.

We note also that:

- The ARI report is a fairly recent study (started 2020). Given the wide accuracy margins and lack of history to guide the use of the numbers any use of this report should use the L95 population estimate rather than the estimated population – precautionary principle.
- Not covered by the reports is any consideration of impacts on other species. It is well known that other non-game species are maimed or killed by hunters but the impact of this is not considered.

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club

Further critical factors which support a season close for 2022

1. Long-term effects of climate change which are predicted to worsen.
2. Birds' unique susceptibility to climate change.
3. Threat to migratory birds already experiencing significant decline.
4. Detrimental impact to bird populations of shooting monogamous bird species.
5. Adverse impacts of lead shot which is still used (impacts on people, animals and ecosystems).
6. Lack of data regarding game birds and threatened species present on wetlands prior to shooting.
7. Lack of data of game birds and protected species shot during duck season.
8. Lack of knowledge of where shooting areas are, and lack of compliance monitoring.
9. Shooters' critical knowledge gaps as proven by recent tests.
10. Lack of social/economic impact studies of duck shooting on the wider community.
11. Lack of data regarding the impacts of quail shooting including to the critically endangered Plains Wanderer which quail closely resemble.

The above points are detailed as follows.

1. The long-term trend of climate change and its impact on our waterbirds is rarely if ever mentioned by GMA. The Bureau of Meteorology has warned that our country is heating more rapidly than the global average. Worsening storms and floods, longer droughts, hotter, drier summers are some of the repercussions we are already seeing as a result of a 1°C rise in average temperatures. The bureau says we are headed for an unliveable 4°C rise in the next 80 years. The consequences for our wildlife will be catastrophic.
2. No consideration has been given by GMA to the fact that **birds are twice as vulnerable to climate change as mammals**. (Global Change Biology, Zoological Society of London – report by international scientists group based on 481 species in 987 populations around the world). With climate change set to only worsen, it is obvious our already struggling bird populations require protection from shooters.
3. No account is given by GMA to the **impact of duck shooting on migratory birds** who are in serious decline and particularly vulnerable to climate change and disturbance. Shooting disturbance at Victorian waterways adversely impacts their ability to obtain critical feed and rest prior to their long journeys along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

Of the species who use the flyway, 50 are in “catastrophic” decline and Australia is under numerous International obligations to protect them (<https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/migratory-species/migratory-birds>).

We assume that the 2019 ARI report by Menkhorst on duck shooting disturbance to threatened species was influenced by GMA, as the “threshold” chosen for potential action is unrealistically high; it states that duck shooting “opportunities” will not be affected.

4. No consideration has been given by GMA to the ripple effect through bird species most of which form life-long pairs. In fact, 90% conduct joint parenting. (As a comparison, only 5% of mammals, including humans, pair up and raise young together.) When one of a pair is shot, it is likely any offspring won't survive and the remaining partner may never recover. The real impact to bird populations therefore of shooting the hundreds of thousands of birds reported as bagged each year in Victoria– even in “restricted” seasons – is far larger than just the “harvest” numbers. Refer [this article](#) by Professor Kaplan.

5. No regard has been given by GMA to the serious issue of **lead still used** legally in quail shooting and illegally in duck shooting (as reported most years). Lead is extremely toxic to ecosystems, animals and people even in tiny traces (emedicine.medscape.com/article/1174752) It is an insidious poison causing extreme suffering to animals who ingest it, such as dabbling ducks, swans and secondary predators like protected eagles. Given the decline in breeding noted the last several years, it is worth noting that lead also **inhibits waterbirds' breeding**. Refer this [short webinar](#) by Dr. Ruth Cromie – Head of Ecosystem Health, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT).

GMA should be aware of the EPA analysis of a small number of Victorian wetlands in recent years and the toxic lead levels found in ducks (outside safe food guidelines) at Hearts Morass and MacLeod Morass (duck and quail shooting areas).

According to a Department of Sustainability & Environment report, each ammunition cartridge holds 30-45g of lead. Multiply 30g by the average number of 175,000 shot quail each year in Victoria (GMA harvest estimates) and one gets a staggering 5 tonnes of lead potentially pumped into Victorian (including food-producing) environments each season - without even adding in the lead deposited by missed shots. Lead is highly toxic.

A 2018 CSIRO study was scathing of Australia's failure to take seriously the risks to humans, animals and the environment from lead ammunition.

GMA must cancel the duck and quail shooting seasons for this environmental reason alone - until more is known about this lead pollution issue.

Lead and lead toxicity

– extract from [“lead Toxicity in Nz Brown Teal”](#) by Massey University NZ 2014

Lead is one of the most toxic metals known to man and can cause disease in wild animals, domestic animals and humans worldwide (Fisher et al., 2006). Lead is a highly toxic non-essential heavy metal found naturally in the environment in small quantities however environmental contamination can occur due to anthropogenic use of lead based products (Hoffman et al., 2002; Pattee and Pain, 2003).

The most common routes of lead absorption by animals and humans are by ingestion, inhalation or absorption through the skin depending on the type of lead compound (Pattee and Pain, 2003). Lead is commonly used in domestic items such as shot, paint, batteries, plumbing material, solder, fishing sinkers, galvanised wire, foil, construction material, petrol among others (Dumonceaux and Harrison., 1994; Locke and Thomas, 1996).

The most common cause of lead toxicity encountered in wildlife is ingestion of lead shot, fishing sinkers and other sources of lead found in the environment (Hoffman et al., 2002; Davidson, 2006). The most commonly affected wild birds are waterfowl and birds of prey due to either direct ingestion of lead or indirect means such as via prey containing lead shot (Samour and Naldo, 2005; Davidson, 2006; Pain et al., 2009; Lambertucci et al., 2011). Other terrestrial birds and seabirds are also at risk due to the anthropogenic contamination of the environment with lead (Fisher et al., 2006; Pain et al., 2009).

6. **Insufficient data regarding birds including protected species present on wetlands prior to shooting.** In previous years (before GMA existed) over 500 wetlands were typically surveyed for the presence of bird species. However, neither GMA nor DELWP have been able to list, map or even estimate the number of all the thousands of waterways where unmonitored shooting is allowed, let alone monitor what may be present on them. Pre-shooting checks are now far, far fewer than they used to be.

It is the epitome of irresponsibility to continue to allow shooting in these circumstances and ludicrous to suggest “sustainability” can be ensured with such a gross lack of critical data.

The following contribution was made by Hamilton Field Naturalists Club:

"The Hamilton Field Naturalists Club has had a couple of comments to make:

- The GMA has consistently allowed hunting on wetlands at Lake Linlithgow, Lake Bolac and Tower Hill when many hundreds of Blue-billed ducks and scores of Freckled Duck and Shovelers were present– and even a flock of 50 Brolga on Lake Bulrush in one year. They have done that despite the birds having no other sanctuary areas to go to. We regard that as utterly irresponsible and uncaring.*
- There are no safe sanctuaries for waterbirds in SW Victoria – since DELWP and the GMA are unwilling to put any wetlands permanently off-limits then there is absolutely no case for allowing any hunting on the region’s wetlands. Apart from conservation and animal welfare considerations, tourists have no hope of seeing ducks and other waterbirds at close quarters on lakes or swamps while the birds can be shot at there. Birds depart when people approach closer than about 200 m."*

*Secretary
Hamilton Field Naturalists Club*

7. Insufficient and unreliable data of birds shot including threatened species.

GMA’s own “Season Considerations” documents state *“To effectively manage game species, it is important to accurately quantify the number of animals harvested”*. Yet this is never done.

Despite GMA receiving millions more in taxpayer funds, there is a gross lack of monitoring. Given the vast number of waterways where duck shooting is allowed, even the army would be incapable of such a massive undertaking.

While earlier regulators commonly checked shooters bags at around 60 wetlands – still far too low a number to be able to accurately estimate the impact of shooting at thousands of waterways – GMA have struggled to check a tenth of that number. It has recently been confirmed no hunters’ bags were checked in 2020 or 2021 due to COVID. GMA should have cancelled the shooting seasons until they could have performed this basic function, to at least help in some small way, their requirement to monitor compliance and promote sustainability in hunting. (The GMA Act S6).

Estimates of numbers of birds bagged by shooters are not only based on a survey of a small number of shooters then extrapolated out assuming the entire duck shooter base would be the same, but reliant on shooters’ memories and honesty. We are still waiting for the results of the 2021 duck shooter survey, more than six months since the shooting ended. This suggests the data collection and analysis is problematic.

Estimates do not include birds shot and left behind including protected species, found most years by the public, some examples below:

- ⇒ Box Flat 2013 *“The bodies of about 760 game ducks and 155 non-game birds were left on the water at the Box Flat flood plains near Boort. The shooting happened on opening weekend of duck season”*. (ABC March 2013)
- ⇒ Lake Toolondo 2016, *“The Andrews government is headed for a showdown in the courts over the illegal shooting of dozens of rare and threatened birds during the opening of duck season.*

The shooting occurred despite the presence of Victoria police and authorized compliance officers". (The Age April 2016)

⇒ Kerang 2017, *"The total number of illegally shot freckled ducks now stands at 112. The latest find takes the total number of birds gunned down in the opening weekend shooting spree to 1,247 and this was from just one of Victoria's wetlands."* (Medianet March 2017)

The shooting of protected species during "duck season" has been occurring for decades.

Sadly since GMA's inception, there has been little data collected on this.

However a Freedom of Information Request (FOI) resulted in our obtaining documentation by previous regulators which shows a sample of the protected species killed in duck shooting seasons in Victoria (sample six years to 1993).

In addition, the documentation clearly stated more than once, **that partial wetland closures do not protect threatened species like Freckled or Blue-billed Ducks.** (ARI Technical Report # 135)

Year	Collected by animal welfare	Collected by CNR	Total
1988	152	152	304
1989	273	392	665
1990	374	80	454
1991	435	119	554
1992	250	94	344
1993	813	159	972

Number of protected and threatened species found dead at several Victorian wetlands in duck shooting season each year from 1988 to 1993.

According to the CEO of GMA, the numbers of protected species illegally shot each season are not quantified.

This horrific fact is further confirmed by Arthur Rylah Institute (ARI) who say in regards to the risks or impacts of direct hunting mortality on non-target species;

Impact of duck shooting to protected / threatened species?

Impact to protected / threatened species:

"that is a separate question that can only be properly addressed by gathering robust data on the rates of non-target species being killed or injured by hunters. Such data does not exist and would be extremely difficult to gather"

(ARI 2019 Report "Waterbird Susceptibility to Disturbance from Hunting")

Little if any effort has been afforded this critical component of "promoting sustainability" in duck shooting.

Table 29 Number of specimens of non-game wildlife found dead around waters used for hunting during the 1993 duck open season. The data for birds collected by members of animal welfare organisations are counts made by CNR officers of birds delivered to CNR Heidelberg during the season.

Species	Collected animal welfare	Collected by CNR	Total
Freckled Duck <i>Stictonetta naevosa</i>	229	57	286
Eurasian Coot <i>Fulica atra</i>	242	35	277
Blue-billed Duck <i>Oxyura australis</i>	84	7	91
cormorant species	44	4	48
Black-tailed Native-hen <i>Gallinula ventralis</i>	0	43	43
Black Swan <i>Cygnus atratus</i>	29	14	43
Galah <i>Cacatua roseicapilla</i>	21	11	32
small grebes	19	5	24
Musk Duck <i>Biziura lobata</i>	19	1	20
Great Crested Grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	14	1	15
Australian Magpie Lark <i>Grallina cyanoleuca</i>	0	13	13
corella species	7	5	12
ibis species	8	3	11
White-faced Heron <i>Ardea novaehollandiae</i>	3	6	9
Red-necked Avocet <i>Recurvirostra novaehollandiae</i>	6	1	7
Yellow-billed Spoonbill <i>Platalea flavipes</i>	0	6	6
migratory waders	1	4	5
Australian Magpie <i>Gymnorhina tibicen</i>	0	4	4
Silver Gull <i>Larus novaehollandiae</i>	4	0	4
tern species	0	3	3
Barn Owl <i>Tyto alba</i>	0	3	3
raven species	3	0	3
Darter <i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>	2	1	3
Dusky Moorhen <i>Gallinula tenebrosa</i>	2	0	2
raptor species	1	1	2
kingfisher species	0	1	1
Noisy Miner <i>Manorina melanocephala</i>	0	1	1
Australian Pelican <i>Pelecanus conspicillatus</i>	0	1	1
Fairy Martin <i>Cecropis ariel</i>	0	1	1
Little Friarbird <i>Philemon citreogularis</i>	0	1	1
Brush-tailed Possum	0	1	1
Total	813	159	972

“In 1993, animal welfare organisations concentrated their efforts at Lake Buloke, but also collected dead wildlife from wetlands near Kerang and Colac. A wide range of dead wildlife were collected, including non-game duck species, waterbirds and Brush-tailed possum. ...Thirty eight dead ducklings were collected; these were not identified as game or non-game”.

972 protected species found dead at several Victorian wetlands in duck shooting season in 1993. These included Australia's rarest native duck the Freckled-Duck, thought to be one of the world's rarest, Blue-billed Duck, swans, galahs, musk ducks, magpies and ibis.

A clearer copy can be viewed in the ARI Technical Report No. 135.

Importantly, these tables show only a fraction of the true toll on our protected species which is likely much larger because the vast majority of waterways where duck shooting is allowed, aren't monitored.

It is highly irresponsible of GMA – if they are concerned with sustainability – to continue to allow shooting when such a high number of protected and threatened species are impacted. Allowing shooting to occur in these circumstances is playing Russian roulette with our birdlife, many species threatened and unique to our country.

In their 2017 Hunters Bag Survey Report, ARI state that less than ten wetlands (out of thousands) were checked for wounded / un-retrieved birds. Just at these few, 18 birds were found including nine dead swans and two dead pelicans.

According to their 2018 report, only one wetland was checked for wounded/ un-retrieved birds.

In both the 2017 and 2018 reports, ARI's number one recommendation was that more wetlands needed to be checked and more data collated to be able to determine the impacts of hunting on waterbird populations.

Yet the number of any such checks for 2019 and 2020 was understood to be zero.



Birds left behind after
duck shooting:
including penguin,
musk duck and pied
cormorant (protected
species). Picture Kim
Wormald

8. **Serious shooters knowledge gaps.** As shown by GMA's recent knowledge tests:

- Only 42% of hunters of all animal types got a general knowledge question on personal safety correct.
- Only 37% of duck shooters were able to correctly answer a two-part question on wounding.
- Only 20% of duck and quail shooters were able to correctly answer a three-part question on identifying game species.
- Only 13% of duck shooters correctly answered the question on dispatch of downed birds.

Further, there are no ID tests for quail shooters, even though quail resemble the critically endangered Plains Wanderer which are the subject of a significant taxpayer funded recovery project.

These knowledge gaps pose a significant risk to people let alone our struggling bird populations - more reason GMA must insist on a season close.

9. **Lack of cost-benefit analysis or social/economic impact studies on the wider community.** GMA suggest that duck shooting is of economic benefit to rural communities. This statement is not based on a cost benefit analysis and ignores the analysis by independent economists such as The Australia Institute, Dr Kirsty Jones and VEAC Red River Gum Investigation reports which state duck shooting is detrimental to rural economies. It also ignores scores of surveys and petition feedback from rural communities. GMA's statement is purely based on a small survey of shooters, answers unverified, which does not take into account the adverse impacts to the wider community and the cost to the State of regulation and compliance.

Even so, the **latest survey summary report by DJPR showed duck shooting expenditure (according to shooters) dropped 46%** and associated jobs fell 31%, down to just 587 state-wide from 2013 to 2019*. Quail shooting expenditure fell 58% and jobs 48% to a mere 202.

*Duck shooters may argue their decreased spending is due to reduced season length. But the reduction in shooting days was only 12%. They may also argue reduced bag limits was a reason but this won't fly either, because in the survey, shooters said the main reason they go hunting is to "be in the outdoors" (not to kill animals).

The recent economic analysis by the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) put duck shooters at a potential spend of just \$4m - 10 m. When one compares this to the spend by 1.4 million tourists who birdwatched in the first year data was collected (Tourism Research Australia, 2019) which was \$2.88 billion, and noting that independent economists (and polls) show most tourists avoid shooting areas, it is quickly understood how duck shooting is a **cost** to rural communities.

A major failing of these hunter economic impact surveys is the omission of costs. The costs to taxpayers of law enforcement and compliance monitoring for example or of the adverse impact to tourism and other activities due to unmonitored shooters killing animals in public areas. Studies show most tourists - and domestic tourism is worth \$80 billion to Australia - avoid areas where shooting occurs.

Consider the impacts of "[coked up shooters](#)" and [campers' terrifying nights](#), of over [30 instances of hunting and firearms offences](#) in a single weekend.

The number of tourists to just one area where they shoot with cameras, like Yea Wetlands, is 30,000 and to Winton Wetlands 66,000 annually. And let's not forget Phillip Island Nature Parks which contributes around \$500 million a year to our state, and of this, \$120 million and 800 jobs just to the local government area.

To provide authenticity to the debate over the supposed economic benefits of duck shooting, it is important to consult with those in the tourism industry. Our submission includes comment from Susan Kerr travel:

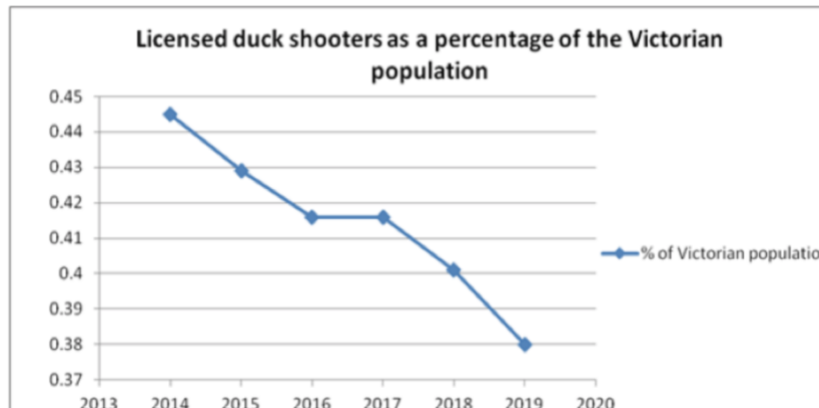
"It is well known in the travel industry that any form of animal hunting is anathema to most travellers and generally countries and regional centres have discovered in recent times that there is more financial benefit from 'wildlife viewing' than killing!"

There is a worldwide travel industry movement to train staff in educating clients on 'Not riding or harming wildlife' at all and many of these so-called tourist attractions have been or are in the process of shutting down.

Regional centres would see more tourism financial benefit by changing their mindset to promoting wildlife especially as bird watching is becoming more and more popular."



GMA also incorrectly state duck shooting is “popular”, quoting numbers of game licences issued which is misleading because the population of Victoria has boomed. The accurate measurement is the percentage of the population interested in duck or quail shooting which is tiny (less than half of 1%) and declining. Half this tiny number again are active.



Less than half of one percent of the population are licensed to shoot ducks. Less than half again are active, yet this tiny number significantly negatively impacts the wider community and deters the tens of thousands of tourists such as birdwatchers flocking elsewhere. **Update: The figure for 2020 fell further to 0.35% - so low it is off the scale of this graph.**

Duck shooting, a declining pastime in which only 7700 participants partake is not “popular”, particularly when continual polls show the majority of Victorians – city and country – are opposed.

Birdwatching, one of the fastest growing pastimes in the world in which over 1.4 million participants took part in Australia in the first year data was collected (2019), is “popular”.

And the former should not be allowed to hamper the latter!

GMA must cease incorrectly asserting that duck shooting is popular or of economic benefit to regional communities.

In 2020, over 21 organisations including leading conservation, environment, regional and animal welfare groups provided statements / submissions to GMA calling for a season close. They were ignored.

In 2021, the number of groups calling for a ceasefire had grown, exemplified in the list of 44 major business, union, environment and wildlife organisations who signed on to our “Alliance” advertisement which ran in several major newspapers. Their members and supporters number in the hundreds of thousands. This is in line with the continual professional public polls which show the majority of city and country constituents oppose duck shooting.

In 2022, the number of First Nations Clans, business, union, environment and wildlife groups willing to publicly support our stance has grown further.

This submission proudly includes the voices of regional groups – those on the ground, whose lives and livelihoods are impacted by duck shooting for weeks, usually months, each year.

The following comment by Goulburn Valley Environment Group makes a powerful point:

"Many wetlands across Northern Victoria receive environmental water for the promotion of aquatic ecosystems; waterfowl are an important link in the restoration of these wetlands.

The Victorian public and local communities have a significant investment, both financially and in the management of these wetlands for ecological outcomes.

Where water in these wetlands is wholly attributable to environmental water deliveries, hunting should be banned to promote multiple ecosystem outcomes.

I question the use of environmental water to facilitate hunting which in turns impacts wetland ecosystems.

Surely we Victorians are smarter than this!"

President of Goulburn Valley Environment Group

GMA may have noticed the increasing number of articles in regional papers submitted by regional families and farmers impacted by duck shooting. Often these authors have submitted communications to GMA in the first instance to no avail. Hence it would seem not only is GMA not actively sourcing feedback regarding impacts of hunting to community but is actively dismissing it.

Attached to this submission are:

- Attachment A: The voices of regional Victorians around the state living with duck shooting.
- Attachment B: The comments of local community at Mount Alexander Shire requesting duck shooting be excluded from their local wetlands. Their petition attracted 483 signatures, mostly local, compared to a counterpetition run by duck shooters which obtained 21 signatures, only 11 locals.
- Attachment C: A first-hand account of a "Home and business under siege".

All of this is relevant in GMA's consideration of the social / economic impacts of hunting, taking into account externalities.

Despite their power to make recommendations to Ministers regarding public land open / closed to shooting, despite their requirement to consider a triple bottom line assessment of social / economic impacts of hunting, GMA have so far failed to exempt the locales of Attachments A & B, from shooting and we believe, failed their obligations under the GMA Act.

10. A word on Quail. It is highly irresponsible and a key demonstration of GMA's failings, that GMA allows full quail shooting seasons every year in Victoria without 1. holding any public consultation or 2. knowing critical quail population data.

Despite the fires and the fact there is little population data of quail before or after shooting seasons, despite the fact quail closely resemble the critically endangered Plains Wanderer, GMA has allowed a full Quail shooting season to take place in Victoria, with a full bag of 20 birds a day per shooter, with hardly any monitoring.

For the pitiful economic “benefit” claimed to be associated (according to surveys of hunters) - which has fallen 58% between the last two “economic” surveys - the harm being done to ecosystems in quail shooting is significant.

If GMA are concerned for sustainability, GMA should recommend as a matter of urgency:

- a moratorium on quail shooting until quail numbers are better understood
- mandate accuracy tests for quail shooters
- ban the use of toxic lead ammunition

These are all things GMA can recommend to Ministers and should have done so long before now, in the interests of sustainability. It would be in the public interest to know how many GMA staff are recreational quail shooters.

Conclusion / Recommendation

Up until now, recommendations to hold duck and quail shooting seasons have been made by GMA based on little if any evidence. We are unfortunately seeing the ramifications of that in ongoing plummeting of bird numbers and stressed ecosystems.

If GMA are at all concerned with sustainability, or the impacts of hunting on anyone other than a minority group of bird shooters, it’s long past time GMA recommended a season close for duck and quail shooting. They MUST do so for 2022.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission. We hope to see GMA ensure the sensible outcome, that is, duck and quail season cancellations.

Regional Victorians Opposed to Duck Shooting Inc.

Regional Victorians Opposed to Duck Shooting Inc. is a not for profit association which incorporated in April 2018. It now has over 5500 supporters, consisting largely of those who live or work around Victorian duck shooting areas adversely impacted by it. [Click here](#) to see some of what rural people said.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: The voices of regional Victorians around the state living with duck shooting
- Attachment B: The comments of local community at Mount Alexander Shire requesting duck shooting be excluded from their local wetlands. Their petition attracted 483 signatures, mostly local, compared to a counterpetition run by duck shooters which obtained 21 signatures, only 11 locals.
- Attachment C: A first-hand account of a “Home and business under siege”.

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ATTACHMENT A

The Voices of Regional Victorians – a key group among GMA’s stakeholders

Here we present an extract from 2018 survey submissions that RVOTDS received from people who live and work with duck shooting around the state including:

Alexandra, Armstrong Creek, Bairnsdale, Ballarat, Barmah, Barnawartha, Barabool, Basalt, Bobonawarra, Bolinda, Boort, Buckley, Bullengarook, Bunbartha, Bundalong, Bunninyong, Byrnside, Cassillis, Castelmaine, Churchill, Colac, Congupna, Connewarre, Crip Point, Crossley, Dereel, Drysdale, Dunkeld, Eagle Point, East Geelong, Elingamite, Geelong, Gherang, Grovedale, Hazelwood North, Healesville, Heathcote, Hoddles Creek, Homerton, Horsham, Kallista, Kennington, Killarney, Kirwans Bridge, Koondrook, Kyabram, Lakes Entrance, Launching Place, Leopold, Longford, Mallacoota, Maldon, Marlo, Maryborough, Mildura, Millgrove, Moe, Monbulk, Mooroopna, Mornington, Mount Eliza, Mount Taylor, Mount Duneed, Nagambie, Narbethong, Nathalia, Nerrena, Newmerella, Numurkah, Ocean Grove, Ondit, Port Fairy, Portland, Quantong, Raglan, Rosebrook, Rushworth, Seymour, Smythes Creek, Stuart Mill, Tambo Crossing, Torquay, Torrumbarry, Traralgon, Tuerlong, Upwey, Ventnor, Warring, Wallington, Warburton, Wardiboluc, Warragul, Warrnambool, Wendouree, Wonthaggi, Woodend, Wycheproof, Yandoit, Yea

Summary of major concerns about duck shooting that were expressed in responses:

- Concerns for safety
- Had never seen any authorities at the waterways during shooting season
- Do not believe duck shooting benefits their communities
- Distress/anxiety from duck shooting in close proximity
- Issues with illegal trespass, removing habitat, leaving rubbish, fires unattended
- Children were upset/frightened

Specific comments are listed in the following pages grouped by theme.

- Loss of Freedom/Amenity
- Mental Health (including that of Children)
- Law Enforcement – Unhappy with Government/Authorities
- Environment Issues
- Economic Impact
- Violence and Cruelty
- Intimidation

LOSS OF FREEDOM/AMENITY:

"Lake Wooroonook ... I don't feel safe for my children or myself to visit this beautiful lake..full of many native bird and animal species"

"..less outside time, feeling less safe, feeling people we know nothing about are near us with guns"

"It's ridiculous locals can't enjoy the area in peace because they have to allow this barbaric activity"

"Living on the Murray River trying to ski or fish during this time is dangerous"

"..stops amenity like bird spotting, cycling, walking"

"Exclusion from wetlands you tend all year is unfair"

"It impacts on my rights to access public land"

"As a rural person I hate it"

"It makes no sense shooting is allowed when so many people want to visit and are living in close proximity."

".. it's taking away the public's rights to enjoy the outdoors"

"Boats roar up and down guns blasting on an otherwise quiet wildlife refuge"

"The effect of having shooters dressed in camouflage hiding in bushes is disturbing and that's putting it mildly"

"..shooting too close to a retirement village. Dangerous and distressing"

"[More] People are moving into the area [*near the duck shooting*].."

IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH, including CHILDREN

"The Vietnam vets in the town don't find the season pleasant"

"Shooting native waterbirds only a few meters from my house turns my home into a warzone"

"My husband is a war veteran. After a few days I hear him saying "I just want some peace"

"It's awful. Sounds like a war zone from first light.."

"It's deeply disturbing, sends a shock through the body every time a gun goes off. The sound echoes through the area from a great distance. Makes me feel very unsafe."

"..I was pregnant at the time and my baby jumped inside me each time a shot went off"

"We feel we aren't safe in our own back yard when the shooters are in the wetlands behind our house."

"We often have shot pellets fall onto our roofs and if we are outside it falls on our heads."

"..firing across my boundary with shot gun pellets striking the house. One occasion saw a member of the family struck."

"Don't like it at all. Totally unacceptable. Our granddaughter is often in our back yard, and we have to keep her inside if shooters are around. "

"..noise and horrific sights of dead and injured animals"

"Distresses our family"

"The noise is disturbing and sickening to our family "

"Disgusted and ashamed it's happening"

"I am distressed by the idea and the noise of gunfire close to my home. I do not feel safe being outside"

"We're constantly tired during duck season and the guns scare our granddaughter. Our dog is terrified"

"On edge and extremely sad"

"Mentally disturbs me that people find joy in breeding game species and killing.."

"..accident waiting to happen"

"..uneasy, angry, distressed and disgusted"

"Leaves us feeling defeated and stresses. Always on high alert"

"Safety wise, I hate shooters near my house and pets"

"It is unsafe. They shoot not far from our home"

"..gunshot pellets raining down on our roof"

"..we've had gunshot fall onto our roofs and if we are outside it falls on our heads.

".. just end the shooting for the sanity and safety of local residents".

"It wakes us up and distresses the dogs and children"

"My horses run around the paddock terrified. My dog barks constantly. My cat hides. All the wildlife is very disturbed and so am I. It drives me crazy"

"..anxious and dread this time of year"

"We are all frustrated. Children and animals are frightened."

"My family are constantly scared"

"I was prescribed anti -anxiety medication"

"..[there is] gunshot in our water as pellets have fallen on our roof which collects our water supply"

"..sick to the stomach"

"It's distressing and unnecessary. It leaves smelly carcasses to rot. Children with me .. very upset to watch this useless destruction of life."

"The noise alone is interruptive to my sleeping children, which ruins their entire day schedule."

"It's very frightening. It certainly frightens the kids"

"Every child I've spoken to is upset and confused as to why adults allow such a thing to happen"

"Children are horrified, particularly when they come across several unclaimed bodies"

"..they cry and scream. Best way is to keep them away from the experience"

" Children love nature and love animals. Then to have animals dropping from the sky through an act of man creates fear of the world."

"My children don't need to hear the slaughter of animals. They become frightened. This is not a gun toting country. Duck shooting is un-necessary and cruel"

"I don't know a child that's comfortable hearing gunshots. Children in general are extremely sad if they know people are shooting animals"

LAW ENFORCEMENT - UNHAPPY WITH GOVERNMENT/AUTHORITIES

"..nieces and nephews ask why it's allowed. When I say the government allows it they say change the government"

"Get someone off their arse to come and have a look and experience it"

"I've photographed abandoned dead and injured "game" species and dead and injured protected species. My images have been sent to the Ministers"

"There is a public safety issue as shooting occurs next to households and the road"

"Trespassing on my workplace is common. We have no ability to prove who it was...we re-enforced our fences, but they still enter. Have been told there's nothing we can do."

"As landowners we find the need to roster ourselves to keep an eye on trespassers, drunken men with guns and native waterbirds dying around the lagoon"

"I complain every duck season to the shire, and they say it's legal. I complain to the Agriculture Minister (and) they say it's legal"

"Outrageous that we as landowners seem to have no rights"

"..appalling discrimination in favor of a minority. Very much a gender issue.. 99% are blokes"

"..outrageous really. When else would this impact be acceptable?"

"I've been making complaints for 20 years. Overwhelmingly authorities don't respond/aren't interested"

"..we had someone shooting not 100m from a major road. We rang police and nothing was done."

"Duck shooting needs to be stopped. If they want to shoot, do it on their own land not ours. "

"Not one [*compliance officer seen*] in 20 years I've been here"

"..saw a man driving away with a ute full of black swans.. nothing was done because I couldn't get the license plate"

"I have tried to appeal to the Shire of Strathbogie on the grounds that the river is too populous to no avail"

"I am a farmer ..I keep a pretty open mind about this. However, there is no policing acts of cruelty or stupidity during the season"

"..chainsaws to cut wood, human waste, toilet paper everywhere, rubbish thrown into the water, campfires left burning.."

"Complaints to Game Management Authority regarding illegal activities received nil replies"

"We have written to Parks Victoria and the Government and have been ignored by both"

"..barbaric activity, totally un-enforced"

"I was told shooters are local police officers and we can't speak out about them"

"..disgusted the government still allows this. Maybe in the 1950's ...but not now. "

"The taxpayer should not have to foot the bill to put environmental flows into our wetlands for a minority group to hold regional towns to ransom for 3 months of the year. Do what's right and let our towns flourish"

"I don't understand why people feel the need to kill and maim animals. They also seem to feel they have a god given right to travel through any private property they feel like"

".. In more progressive states like NSW where it's banned, the waterways are used by many people. The practice is so arcane, to appease a minority and Victoria needs to move ahead for the whole community"

"It's male dominated... encourages lack of respect"

ENVIRONMENTAL Issues

"We live across the road .. every year, shooters litter the wetland with beer, UDL cans (sometimes left in bird boxes), and human faeces "

"The numbers of water birds is much lower than 10, 15 years ago. ..(and) they get blasted by shooters!"

"In my 40 years in a rural area I've never heard "Oh I'm glad duck shooting is on as the ducks are so out of hand" They've never been a problem"

"Shooting in the ..one area which is one of the five most important remaining habitats for the Orange Bellied Parrot, ... a recognised habitat for other endangered species ... is an abuse of natural heritage"

"In this day and age, we need to nurture nature not kill it. It's having a hard enough time as it is. The older generation has had the best from this planet. It's about time we take responsibility for our actions and set a good example for younger generations"

".. It's an accident waiting to happen, bad for tourism and a nuisance at the very least. Not to mention rare duck species here as well as spoonbills. One year a hawk was found with gunshot in it"

"Ducks are part of our landscape because they serve a purpose, they serve many purposes"

"No one needs to hunt ducks here in Australia in the 21st century"

NEGATIVE ECONOMIC IMPACT

"Duck shooting is the reason I sold and moved"

"I would like to buy a property with water views at Cairn Curran.. but do not want the risk of duck shooters injuring and frightening dogs and horses."

"..unsettling stock"

"I have racehorses and it stresses them out"

"..(shot gun pellets) in the middle of a cow's head"

"..animals hate it. Chickens change laying times"

"..distresses my horses"

"I run a dog training school and the dogs are terrified"

"My neighbours horses bolted from shot pellets falling onto it and then it got tangled in the fence"

"I've had horses go through fences because of it"

"..stock caught in the fence"

"My dogs are terrified and urinate every morning when shooting starts. Through the day they hide under the bed"

"My hens stop laying"

"We move our outside animals away from the wetlands near us for fear of them being shot. "

".. dog who was so scared of the gunfire she escaped many times by biting her way out. She broke most of her teeth"

"I think most people find it barbaric and un-necessary. It's spoiling the chances of rural communities getting money from tourists"

"I had to give up my night shift job because I couldn't sleep during the day because of gunshots in close proximity... financial impact on my family"

"..(economic benefit of duck shooting) is total bullshit."

"Other states don't seem to suffer from banning duck shooting and neither would Victoria if we had some leaders with conviction"

"..they confirm it prevents tourists from wanting to be at the ..campground - especially the school groups that might otherwise come during that time of year"

"If anything, it scares tourists away"

"..international visitors at the local lookout have asked me what the gunshots are about and are appalled when I tell them"

"Tower Hill... attracts international tourists...that shooting and game dogs are permitted, the usual response is incredulity... a bad message for these people to take back to their home countries".

"..tourism access to the lake and bush areas is curtailed because of danger"

"It's never been (lucrative).. just ask the local store"

VIOLENCE AND CRUELTY

".. an injured duck.. its bill was split in half by a gun wound and it was unable to walk"

"Somebody shot a whole family of ducks on our waterhole last year except for one poor duckling who swam around by itself"

"I spent many years as a shooter.. witnessed swans, freckled ducks, cockatoos shot.. hundreds of birds. Birds are left injured."

"First-hand experience, as a boy driving past a river, seeing ducks wounded and trying to get away"

"It's dangerous and teaches young children that cruelty to animals is accepted by our community which it's not"

"..don't like getting injured wildlife on our dam"

"A neighbour found a dead wallaby with a spent cartridge in its pouch"

"I have wounded ducks flap across the ground to find shelter near our house"

"Violence has an impact on all people and animals in the vicinity and has the potential to encourage others to behave violently."

"It promotes violence"

"Calling it a sport doesn't change that it is killing for fun, something most humans have evolved past"

"Native animals and wildlife should be enjoyed not harmed"

"Killing anything un-necessarily is violence"

"Killing animals for fun and pleasure should be illegal and stopped. It is not a sport"

"It's archaic and cruel. It's also a minority of voters who want it. Most humans don't approve of unnecessary shooting and risking of endangered birds' lives"

"Duck shooting is a barbaric pastime, there is nothing sporting about it"

INTIMIDATION/ BULLYING

"Duck shooters came onto our property without permission, my husband when confronting them had a shotgun poked in his chest."

"Gun lobbyists are intimidating"

"There is an over-riding aggressive feeling of "it's our right" from shooters and they hold the gun"

"They get close to my house with kids in it and I don't want issues with them"

"We have had death threats"

"..seems to be a lot of yuppies from the city dressed in cammo gear ready for combat"

"I am intimidated by boat loads of blow-ins dressed in camouflage, shooting over my land"

ATTACHMENT B

Mount Alexander Community 2021 Petition

I want the area to be a sanctuary (free of bird shooting) because..

- I'm sick of hearing gunfire dawn to dusk for weeks and months and being left to clean up rubbish when shooters leave.
- Shooting and killing of our native wildlife has no place in a compassionate society. Duck shooting is cruel and abhorrent. Also, I do not want my peaceful amenity destroyed by a handful of individuals with their shooting and abusive behaviour.
- Shooting beautiful water birds is not defensive!
- It may have been caused by a dam on the Loddon River, but it has become an area of natural beauty and of refuge to wildlife. Its status as a refuge should be confirmed.
- When nature has been so stressed over the last two years give the wild ducks a break. Too many other birds also use this area and too many Protected birds get shot, as you already know.
- Wildlife is becoming increasingly important in itself and as part of our lives. Recreational shooting is cruel, destructive and has absolutely no useful or essential purpose except to amuse an increasing few individuals who enjoy killing helpless wild birds both those targeted and those that become collateral damage. It's time to stop this!
- I don't believe in cruelty to any animals & want the beauty of this sanctuary to be protected for all fauna & flora
- It is not sport to kill beautiful water birds and should not be allowed
- Environment should be safe for everyone to be able to enjoy peace and tranquillity without threat of guns
- There are so few places for these poor birds to breed, particularly with climate change and diminishing water areas for nesting.
- Shooting birds for sport is barbaric
- Shooting is wanton destruction, not sport or food supply.
- Duck shooting is cruel and callous. Mt Alexander Shire should follow through on their agreement to end this barbaric sport.
- I like peace.
- It saves and protects the environment
- Our native wildlife are a precious resource and not fodder for recreation.
- Animals and flora are way more fun than killing ducks
- we need to conserve the precious ecosystem of which birds are an essential part.
- Such a beautiful spot should be protected and not ruined by an influx of people.
- It's the perfect area for a sanctuary. It needs to be done. The area will be enhanced and benefit all living beings. It's a no brainer, win win situation. Do it!
- Public waterways should be closed for shooting for safety and preservation reasons
- Sanctuaries preserve nature. Nature is life. Life is the most important asset we have.
- Cairn Curran and surrounding wetlands are important places for a variety of birds that make the area their home and are used by migratory species. Creating a bird sanctuary will assist to ensure the safety of birds and other fauna into the future.
- I like birds.

- People and birds need it
- Two years ago, the Mount Alexander Shire Council voted to ban recreational native waterbird shooting in the Shire in favour of safer, more peaceful and beneficial activities. Mount Alexander Shire and Cairn Curran Reservoir specifically, is home to threatened species such as the White-bellied Sea Eagle. Cairn Curran is important for a large range of waterbirds and raptors as well as a feeding ground on the flyways of migratory shore birds, many of which are in significant decline. Residents of the Shire and members of the public who visit, want to enjoy the area in peace and not be confronted by shooters in army fatigues and gunfire near their homes and recreation areas.
- Protect birdlife, quiet enjoyment.
- To protect the birdlife, including ducks, that frequent Cairn Curran reservoir.
- Many threatened species of birds inhabit Cairn Curran Reservoir, and it should be kept as a safe haven.
- Wetland birds need protection and Cairn Curran is a popular recreation area that people should be able to visit without shooters disturbing the peace
- Wetlands are critically important to protect birdlife and are constantly being diminished.
- This area is used by many people for many recreational purposes. It is inappropriate to allow hunting in the area. In addition to public safety issues, the rich wildlife of the area is part of its value to the people who visit.
- Protect birdlife and ensure threatened species have a protected habitat
- I have watched numbers of waterfowl and other native birds plummet in my fifty-plus years. Please let us keep what little remains of Victoria's wild birds and natural habitats.
- Birdlife and animal life should be protected not hunted. People should be able to enjoy the area and appreciate the wildlife in peace, knowing the wildlife is being protected, and not shot for sport. Our wildlife is already under continual threat from climate change, more extreme fires and droughts, habitat loss and development. We should be protecting them not adding to these threats by allowing hunters to kill and wound them. Hunters have no place in our environment. I was planning to visit this area soon, being new to the area, but I won't be going if I know hunters use it.
- Shooters have convincingly demonstrated over the years that they can't be trusted to follow restrictions on the type of bird shot or catch numbers. I can't see any good reason why Victoria, unlike other States, doesn't totally ban duck shooting.
- Animal welfare
- Our local wetlands are a significantly biodiverse refuge in our region, and of international significance. I support them being declared a sanctuary. I support the rights of wildlife to live without additional and totally unnecessary dangers. I support the rights of local residents to enjoy the amenity of our region, without awaking to a fusillade of gunfire in the morning. I support Mt Alexander council's decision, and I support it being enforced.
- This is a special wetland with a wonderful array of indigenous flora and fauna, and we need to preserve and protect such unique and healthy areas such as this now before it is too late.

- It is an important recreational area, passive and active with no room for guns
 - Protection of birdlife.
 - Duck shooting is incompatible with the conservation and recreational values of Cairn Curran
 - It should be a place wildlife and the environment can be enjoyed.
 - the protection of biodiversity contributes to the well-being of all life. It is essential we think not only of ourselves and easy profit but of future generations. We owe it to leave the world a better place for having been here. An abundance of varied birdlife brings great joy.
 - I abhor recreational bird shooting or hunting of any animals.
 - I care about our native birds
 - Ensuring biodiversity around Cairn Curran would support the health of the reservoir, a sanctuary and more native vegetation would support this
 - Preservation of wildlife and harmonious recreational activities should be a focus
 - I'm strongly opposed to recreational hunting. The species using the wetlands need to be protected.
 - Preservation for birds and wildlife is very important
 - I deplore duck shooting as a 'sport'. Also, because I love seeing the variety of birds some migratory and others resident and enjoy the peace of the surroundings. Some species are rare, and I don't believe many so called sporting shooters know or care what species they are targeting.
-
- I don't want people with guns shooting birds
 - The area will sustain and protect the variety of bird life and also attract visitors to the region.
 - Native birdlife is essential for healthy ecosystems. Shooting ducks and water birds is unnecessary loss of key species in wetland ecosystems.
 - The Cairn Curran Reservoir and surrounding wetlands are a vital haven for our birds and need to be protected from disruptive activities such as duck shooting.
 - We need more sanctuaries!!!
 - We need to be protecting our wildlife and natural areas for so many reasons. We are part of the eco system. Anything the damages it will have knock on effects. Also, I really want my children to be able to continue to see and appreciate our local wildlife and be able to pass on the same love and knowledge to their children.
 - I believe the environmental value is higher than the recreational shooting value
 - Wetlands are an important and endangered ecosystem and duck shooting is not well controlled and monitored with many protected species killed.
 - Wetlands have become scarce in this area and it's critical that these ecosystems are preserved in perpetuity. And many birds have been lost in the 2020 fires, no more should (ever) be shot.
 - We don't need duck shooting, we need ducks, as we need all wildlife to prosper.
 - The shooting of birds is in my opinion not a sport. Birds are precious and need our protection especially as the destruction of their habitat is ongoing.
 - I urge you to protect our wetland areas and make them a safe place for our birds to inhabit.
 - It's important for wildlife and humans

- All creatures need protection to help maintain a balance in nature and to provide people an environment to enjoy and educate.
 - Our wildlife is most important and needs protection
 - Native animals all across Australia are being destroyed. We need to preserve our precious wildlife and wetlands while we still have them.
 - With sharply increasing encroachment by human habitation in this shire, our wildlife is under enormous strain due to habitat loss and predatory domestic animals. Combined with climate change, the risk of species loss and ecosystem collapse has never been higher. The benefits of a well-managed sanctuary will have far-reaching benefits. I am vehemently opposed to duck hunting - it is not only cruel and pointless, but also harmful to a wide range of species - including humans. The primary eradication programs need to target feral pets, deer and foxes! And this needs to be done professionally (so female populations are prioritised). After the catastrophic losses of wildlife and ecosystems during the black winter/spring/summer fires of 2019/20 protecting ALL remaining wildlife must be our priority.
 - To protect of endangered wildlife
-
- Protection of our wild-life and my personal protection from unwanted confrontation with shooters on public land. . .
 - Protection of threatened species, safety to general public
 - Significant species under threat.
 - Cairn Curran is a valuable water catchment for our region and provides safe haven to a myriad of wildlife and birdlife in the Mt Alexander shire.
 - There are species of birds that are under threat and require protection from harm.
 - Cairn Curran is important for a large range of waterbirds and raptors as well as a feeding ground on the flyways of migratory shore birds, many of which are in significant decline. In particular, Cairn Curran Reservoir specifically, is home to threatened species such as the White-bellied Sea Eagle. We must keep our birdlife protected and safe from those who kill birds for a sport.
 - Duck shooting is cruel and unnecessary. As duck numbers are in decline it should be banned.
 - There are a number of threatened bird species that live in the wetlands. Giving it sanctuary status will help protect these birds.
 - In addition, duck hunting is grotesque, with approx. 25 per cent of birds only being injured rather than killed quickly and relatively painlessly. Under one percent of the population shoots birds.
 - Cairn Curran Reservoir Is a vast stretch of water and surrounding wetland that is of vital importance for the preservation of migratory species, whose feeding and resting sites are rapidly diminishing world-wide, AND as a safe habitat for the local birds that live in what is currently still a well-vegetated area of central Victoria. Moolert Plains were recently saved from new battery farms. Save Cairn Curran as an adjacent sanctuary to add to the safety and protection of birds and bushland.
 - Our native birds are a precious and special element of our world, killing them for no good reason is a disgrace
 - It is an important gem of nature for birds and other wildlife, and our sanity.
 - I am an avid bird watcher & there is no place for the destruction & harm caused to our wildlife in our State or indeed throughout Australia

- We moved to the country from Melbourne 3 years ago. It is a pleasure to share our space with birds & animals that are indigenous to our region. To support our principles, we've erected bird boxes in some of our trees & near our dam to attract ducks.
- To protect the Birdlife.
- We must protect the diminishing numbers of birds, and because habitation loss must be halted, or the very basis of our life will be destroyed.
- Our bird life needs protecting.
- Duck shooting is barbaric and unnecessary
- It is a family place for all sorts of activities - shooting is not suited to here.
- Having visited and fished on this beautiful lake, I am aware of the significance of this special, wetlands habitat for birdlife from waterbirds to raptors and feel that duck shooting would greatly reduce the current population of birdlife where wetland areas like this are being affected by climate change. There have been recent dry years when the lake was very low and blue /green algae affected the habitat for the birds and other water life. With the climate becoming warmer, the natural environment at Cairn Curran should be made into a sanctuary to protect all the birdlife and other fauna.
- Many bird species in the area are threatened and endangered. Shooters have shown to have poor species recognition. This area will be a far greater community and environmental asset if left free of shooters.
- Duck shooting does not represent the values of the broader community anymore. In the face of a changing climate and continued loss of biodiversity sanctuaries are critical to achieving the goals stated in Victoria's Biodiversity 2031.
- I support the safety of all waterbirds and disapprove of duck shooting. I want our local waterways to be safe and welcome sanctuaries to all waterbirds.
- I want out birdlife to be safe and protected
- More and more of our native wildlife are threatened with extinction due to loss of habitat and the poor policing of already existing protection laws.
- To protect of endangered wildlife
- We need more sanctuaries
- It will preserve our ecological inheritance. It is a sanctuary not only for wildlife but also for our next generation to enjoy.
- The slaughter of birds for human gratification should end, and the natural environment they live in should be protected for the bird's future safety
- Without shooting and motor sports, Cairn Curran could be a worthy asset for generations to come. Go there on a day of shooting our dickheads in motorboats and it's a living hell. A day without them is a beautiful place. And if you were a duck the answer to this question is pretty obvious.
- It is a precious environmental asset.
- It is a perfect nature site with many varied ducks
- As our climate changes and human activity impinges on ever increasing areas of the land, significant wetlands such as this are becoming the last safe refuges for birds and other species which are heading toward endangered status at an alarming rate. We need to act now to protect our wildlife before critical species disappear forever. This is an opportunity to do something good for life.

- There are few wetlands in the region so Cairn Curran should be protected.
- I value our unique wildlife, particularly our water birds and raptors.
- Because Cairn Curran provides a safe habitat for many different bird species, and it should be managed as a safe haven for same.
- We need to ensure wetlands are protected
- The decline is unacceptable as SPORT! it's cruel & should be curtailed!
- It's a significant environment for endangered species and a safe haven in shooting season. Our birdlife is unique to this country. FLIGHTWAYS FOR MIGRATORY BIRDS HUGELY THREATENED WITH LOSS OF THEIR USUAL DESTINATIONS. A sanctuary for birds is significant for birdlike and environment. Loss of this will have extraordinary repercussion.
- Birds are important for the health of farms, their right to exist and the ecology that depends upon them - birdsong is good for mental health. We need a network of safe places for birds to live. Please think carefully on this
- I live close by and use the Curran to walk my dogs and talk with friends, I want to be safe, and I don't want to listen to shooters killing our beautiful water birds.
- It good for the balance of the local environment
- Duck shooting is incompatible with the conservation and recreational values of Cairn Curran
- I love the area and the wildlife.
- We need to protect native wildlife
- I don't want birds shot and the risk that people shooting at the lake poses to other people is unacceptable
- Our wildlife is under increased threat, numbers are in decline, and we need to conserve native birds and their habitat not shoot them
- The birds living here & visiting are very important and must be protected.
- I believe in protecting birds and their habitat.
- Nature is precious for our future and our children
- Duck shooting is an outdated hideously cruel hobby, it's not a sport. Our wildlife needs all of our protection we can give them before it's too late.
- It is rich in animal and bird life and becoming a sanctuary would protect the birds in particular which are under threat from climate change and shooters.
- Native water bird numbers are in steady decline, and they not only need to be protected from being shot, but have safe havens to go to and breed
- Wildlife is decimated enough in this country. It's an utter disgrace.
- Native animals all across Australia are being destroyed. We need to preserve our precious wildlife and wetlands while we still have them.
- The wetlands are home to many wonderful and charismatic species
- Wildlife is sacred
- To protect the wildlife and so I can use the reservoir as a kayaker all year round.
- Cairn Curran is a haven to many water birds, including pelicans, swans, and threatened species such as the white-bellied eagle.
- Many local people use Lake Cairn Curran for their family recreation - huge safety issues

- It is so hypocritical if this government allows shooters to decimate our threatened birdlife in Victoria considering the tragic loss of large percentage of our native fauna in the recent 2019 bushfires. Victorians have donated millions in a huge effort to restore and retain these fauna including birds. It would be a complete reversal of the steps taken to save these species. Many birdlife species in Victoria are struggling to survive as it is. Allowing deliberate killing of our beautiful birds in the name of "sport" is devastating and ludicrous to all caring and intelligent people. Please stop it all.
- Recreational shooting of waterbirds is barbaric and cruel. This area should be protected for benefit of ecology and wider community values.
- We need peaceful areas with wildlife, not dangerous, unpleasant gunfire, or cruelty. My son and I like to kayak there. Can't think of anything worse than being around people firing guns at innocent bird life.
- It is imperative our wildlife is protected. Shooting animals and birds for recreation is cruel and unnecessary. It should be banned immediately.
- Ducks and other local wildlife need protection
- Our bird life deserves to be protected especially given the vagaries of our climate
- Allow birdlife to prosper.
- As habitats diminish and the need to protect existing wildlife and environment becomes more and more imperative, we need to relegate all additional sanctuaries as a priority.
- The environment and wildlife need to be protected.
- Cairn Curran Reservoir should become a wildlife sanctuary... -a sanctuary supports precious wildlife -as well as a range of peaceful human activities. Allowing anti-social activities such as duck shooting pushes out all others. We don't want to be around it.
- With native waterbird numbers down by 90%, they need all the protection they can get.
- We need to consider the impact our behaviours are having upon our wildlife and environment from the perspective of preservation and conservation not human pleasure and gratification. I am concerned about the ongoing eradication of habitat for wildlife as humanity intrudes into these spaces. I am all for protecting such spaces and providing areas where wildlife can be left in peace. I am also greatly concerned by the multiple reports of irresponsible bird shooters who are unable to accurately identify bird species, who shoot beyond their allotted kill count and who leave wounded birds to die. I don't support duck shooting primarily because of these behaviours which unfortunately seem to grow every year.
- Bio security of native animals
- Birdwatching is my passion and the environment. Please make this area a sanctuary for both the wildlife and for the sake of environmental tourism,
- I value wildlife diversity over recreational shooting.
- We must always have areas of sanctuary for our waterbirds- they deserve no less and almost certainly a good deal more than we have given them in the past
- Duck shooting is a cruel barbaric non-sport. The family uses that area for birdwatching and don't see why it should be barred from us for the sake of such a sickening purpose. Mount Alexander is better than that!
- The safety of our nature is important

- Nature should be preserved and it's our responsibility to respect what was there before we came here. no one owns Nature.
- For the protection of wildlife
- It is so beautiful to go there and see birds living naturally there.
- My children adore wildlife and in particular bird life, a commitment to protect wildlife habitat ensures the enjoyment of wildlife for Generations to come.
Protecting wildlife corridors and habitats formally also supports the United Nations Sustainability Goals, specifically SDG 6 (6.6), 13 and 15. Meeting these goals by 2030 will support peace, health and keeping global warming to below 2 degrees. Every action, every wetland, every biodiversity corridor counts. It also supports the goals of International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) IUCN, a membership Union composed of both government and civil society organisations. It harnesses the experience, resources and reach of its more than 1,400 Member organisations and the input of more than 18,000 experts. This diversity and vast expertise make IUCN the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it.
- We must protect the creatures we share the earth with.
- We should be preserving not destroying the natural habitat and wildlife of the region. There is precious little left as it is.
- We need to protect our wildlife
- I live here for the peace and quiet and native flora and fauna. Not to have it shot up by weekend cowboys
- I want Cairn Curran to become a Sanctuary to protect our beautiful native waterbirds.
- Each year, during duck shooting season, shooters leave behind copious amounts of rubbish, carcasses and waste. The number of natives on Cairn Curran seems to have reduced over the years & it would be wonderful to see those numbers increase again
- Native birds (& animals) need more protection, or we will lose them.
- Enough animals and birds have suffered at the hands of humans. Our extinction rate of native animals is one of the highest in the world. We need to protect all wildlife for many reasons beyond extinction. Without them our ecosystem will collapse.
- Our native birds and wildlife species need to be protected and preserved
- Duck shooting is incompatible with safe access by the broader community, and with contemporary norms that are opposed to the destruction of native wildlife.
- Our biodiversity, particularly our waterbird populations, are continuing to decline with a trajectory to extinction. They need safe places to live, feed and breed.
- Also, every year protected birds are illegally shot during duck season demonstrating that many hunters are unable to follow the rules.
- to protect wildlife and habitat
- Duck hunting does not stack up in this area across the realms of animal welfare, protection of threatened species, amenity, and human safety. I and virtually everyone I know support the Shire implementing this ban in full, and in the near term.
- We need to save SAFE places for birds and other wildlife!
- Preservation of threatened birds, and community safety and public amenity reasons.
- Too many of our native flora and fauna are becoming extinct through climate change

- Water birds need protection now more than ever and a sanctuary is a far better visitor destination than a shooting range.
- Areas such as these are extremely vital for our Fauna and Flora as continual destruction of habitat is having such a devastating impact on all our important and dwindling natural areas.
- Habitat loss across the shire continues and with more development and increased population significant sanctuaries are essential.
- the waterbirds deserve protection not death
- More biodiversity and beauty are a plus for the region
- I am deeply concerned at the decline in the populations of waterbeds, particularly "game species".
- The impact on all water birds by shooting is severe, not just the ducks.
- Making this and other wetlands in the Shire free of hunting will be a wonderful initiative that others should follow.
- Cairn Curran Reservoir is home to threatened species such as the White-bellied Sea Eagle. Cairn Curran is important for a large range of waterbirds and raptors as well as a feeding ground on the flyways of migratory shore birds, many of which are in significant decline.
- Cairn Curran is a popular place for both locals and tourists. Allowing duck shooting here would have a negative effect upon people wishing to visit here. It would also create a negative impression of the region, with people less likely to come and spend money in and around Castlemaine. Also, there are many native birds in and around Cairn Curran, including sea eagles, that would be likely to be shot by indiscriminate shooting.
- The area should be for peaceful enjoyment for all species
- Wildlife needs refuges
- The wildlife and Birds need to have some secure areas for their safety and survival. Not all water areas need to be available for shooting. Humans without guns also should be able to visit an area without shooters around during duck season.
- I want the bird life protected from shooting.
- The area belongs to all. It is already a major wildlife sanctuary, particularly for waterbirds many of which are endangered due to loss of habitat and urban expansion. The use of firearms in this area is totally inappropriate and is dangerous.
- Goulburn Water should immediately enact the Council ban on the shooting of ducks in this area.
- I love birds and duck hunting is cruel - and in an era of declining wildlife unnecessary
- It deserves to be protected
- The natural environment (including wetlands) is diminishing due to global warming and human population pressure. This is already placing pressure on declining bird numbers. We should not be adding to this by shooting ducks and consequently killing rare species such as freckled duck. Game shooters do not always distinguish between species.
- 1. To protect the native birds and other wildlife that lives in the area. 2. For the safety and sake of all the people that visit the area.
- Habitat protection is vital to ensure continued survival of species threatened by human activity.

- If we don't set aside these areas, we will lose our wonderful birdlife and the natural surroundings they need to survive. These areas of nature bring us to a peaceful place in a crazy world and are as important to humans as they are to the wildlife.
- For human safety reasons, for animal welfare reasons, for conservation reasons, for economic benefit reasons. Native wildlife in Victoria is being destroyed at an ever faster rate with claims of population explosions when entirely the opposite is occurring, to justify the mass slaughter of Australian wildlife in the state. The current Labor Government is promoting and enabling the killing at over twice the rate, than that of the previous Coalition Government in the state. In Victoria 88 native species are currently on the government kill list plus other native animals with no so called protections - ducks and quails are among the latter. Australian wildlife in Victoria have almost no places of sanctuary, mass killing activities are being undertaken by the Victorian Government on public lands including state and national parks. Any place of sanctuary is therefore welcome.
- We need to ensure the permanent safety and continued breeding of our Native wildlife so that we, and future generations can continue to have this wonderful asset in our lives.
- I am a frequent visitor to the Shire for recreational purposes, including birding. I wish to see the area made a sanctuary so it can safely be enjoyed by all locals and visitors and out of concern for preserving our valuable wetlands fauna, in particular birds.
- Grey-headed flying foxes traverse this region en-route from Warrnambool and Colac to their colonies in Bendigo and Tatura. Shooting endangers these animals who are active at pre-dawn and daybreak returning across open water after foraging for nectar, pollen and fruit. The bats are major pollinators of our forests and of over 100 species of native trees. They will roost for a few days in a local bush before proceeding to major camps at Bendigo, Tatura and beyond. The indigenous megabats are listed as Vulnerable to extinction federally (EPBC Act 1999) and are protected under Victorian law (Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988). In spite of protection (\$5000 penalties apply for killing a Grey-headed flying fox), they have been shot over water at other Victorian wetlands.
- The threats to our native ducks, other waterfowl, and our unique flora and fauna are increasingly threatened by extreme weather events on top of the continual environmental degradation at our own hands. Proactive actions are needed to protect our wildlife and protecting Cairn Curran and other waterways in our Shire from the needless shooting of wildfowl for 'pleasure' is one small step forward.
- It is a life support system. It supports a diversity of life.
- Shooting results in unavoidable and horrendous cruelty. Our wildlife needs and deserve protection.
- Our Wildlife are losing their homes. Land needs to be preserved for them
- We should protect nature and not destroy it. For the health of all of us and our planet we need to retain what little we still have. Please put a stop to all duck shooting and help create a peaceful area for the animals, birds and the community. We need the birds to be alive not dead.
- Wetlands are vital
- I care about the wildlife, and wildlife deserves a home

- It's a terrific place for people from Castlemaine, Maryborough and elsewhere to visit and enjoy nature.
 - It is about time that the mindless shooting of ducks for 'sport' is stopped.
 - It is a place to be enjoyed for its peace and the beauty of its waterbirds, at least one of which is a threatened species. But threatened or not they enhance the environment for the majority of local residents and visitors. The recreational shooting of waterbirds is an unnecessary activity that often results in the abominable suffering of the birds.
 - Fauna & Fauna need places for safe place & home to thrive & to keep people healthy
 - The wild animals that still manage to enjoy such a life should be allowed to do so without risk of getting shot and maimed or killed.
 - This area is important habitat for a wide range of birds and other animals. It is also too close to houses to be safe for shooting
 - Our native wildlife has already been under enough stress with bushfires, drought, climate change and shooters. Please protect out native waterbirds
-
- I am opposed to duck shooting as an amateur sport. Duck shooters are rarely discriminatory in their targets and our diminishing numbers of native wildfowl deserve to be protected. The only justification for shooting is culling overpopulations, particularly of feral animals - this should be done by professional shooters.
 - Our waterbird populations are in decline, and need more protected habitat
 - Shooting and visitors enjoying nature don't mix. Wetland habitat is increasingly rare.
 - Because we have already destroyed so much.
 - Habitat for wildlife is depleting rapidly in Australia
 - We need to protect all native species including ducks. Duck shooting is brutal and not a sport. A sanctuary will inhibit the capacity of shooters to unnecessarily kill native birds.
 - We need sanctuaries for waterbirds, not hunters.
 - Wild animals are important to our ecosystem.
 - Wetlands are of huge ecological importance. Victoria has lost large areas of wetlands and swamps. Naturalists from Alexander Humboldt onwards have pointed out the damage to economies and to society as a whole. Killing wildlife of any kind has been shown to be detrimental. Duck shooting is cruel, and shooters are repeatedly shown to be killing protected species. Areas of the Western District are now being rehabilitated and the wildlife is returning. The economic benefits from tourists interested in wildlife will far outweigh the benefits from duck shooters. We urge you to protect this area and to make it into a sanctuary.
 - As humans, inhuman acts like shooting wildlife in the name of recreation is not needed. Some may want it, but it is not needed
 - It is refuge for people and wildlife alike
 - Our native wildlife need protection. At the moment they have very little.
 - I regularly go bird watching there.
 - Our remaining wetlands are extremely important reservoirs of biodiversity. Not many of them remain after the massive effort throughout SE Australia to drain them.
 - Animal welfare, public safety and amenity reasons

- Such an important area needs protection as do the species who either live there or move in and out.
- I believe that the wildlife of our Shire and particularly the birdlife which includes migratory species is in dire need of our protection in order to survive. Much of our birdlife is endangered, some critically and it is our duty to do everything to help them.
- We actually need more & more areas for sanctuaries, there isn't enough & there can never be too many.
- Wildlife keeps getting pushed out of their habitats.
- It is so valuable for future generations.
- I oppose recreational bird shooting. It is barbaric. I support the proposal to make Cairn Curran and its surrounds a wildlife reserve, to protect and support a wide range of bird species.
- Although some shooters are responsible, many are not. Our native wildlife suffers the consequences of mistaken identity or simply the thrill of the moment. Even without the killing/wounding aspect, the roar of gunfire frightens and disorients not just target species but all wildlife. Public amenity and safety are also an issue. It's pretty difficult to go for a walk with gunfire blasting. Time for a change to a more considered, respectful and educated future for us and our native birds, mammals and ecosystems.
- We are rapidly losing these places of beauty and where the welfare of our birds, fauna and flora can be protected.
- We need to provide habitat for native species in order that we can all survive on this planet
- It's a public area for recreation and observing the natural flora and fauna. It is NOT a place for shooters who pose a danger to people, animals and birds in general.
- The life of these wetland birds is important for future generations to enjoy/appreciate
- Duck shooting is cruel and unnecessary
- For nature conservation
- The ongoing habitat degradation and climate change is causing a major decline in waterfowl and other species which will likely cause the extinction of some species. Duck hunting exacerbates this problem as well as adding a significant level of cruelty to the species concerned. No hunter can guarantee an instant kill of a fast moving bird and the spray of pellets usually causes injuries that are not immediately fatal. In addition, many other species are killed, either through mis-identification or hunters deliberately shooting these species. Finally, there is a significant number of birdwatchers and wildlife photographers (more in number than registered hunters) who spend as much, if not more in regional communities but who avoid areas where there is active hunting thus depriving local businesses of their custom during the hunting season.
- Or wildlife is struggling
- I am a local resident and feel unsafe with shooting occurring in my area, also I don't think the birds like being shot.
- With so many endangered birds we need to stop pleasure shooting. NOW

- We need to preserve our precious wildlife and habitats for all living creatures including ourselves, especially for next generations, to be able to continue appreciate what we have now.
- We have an extinction crisis and need to protect all species. Killing innocent animals, birds or fish is not okay. Shooting must end.
- Duck hunting is a totally outdated practice that leads to damage to many other bird species.
- Hunting is practiced by a tiny percentage of the population and is allowed to continue in spite of the view of the majority.
- in a time of climate change all species need sanctuaries if they are to survive, let alone thrive. Too many species are in the vulnerable to endangered category and this will only get worse if a strategy of protection is not implemented.
- I am a frequent visitor to the area and appreciate the environment of the area.
- It is an important refuge for many bird species, including the magnificent White-bellied Sea Eagle, a variety of ducks, as well as several species of shore birds who rely on this area for feeding before undertaking their amazing journey to the far north for breeding. Duck shooting is barbaric and an insult to a beautiful and peaceful environment.
- Cairn Curran is an important wetland for both human recreational purposes and for bird habitat and conservation. A sound and appropriate decision has already been made. It must be acted upon urgently.
- To watch the birds-not kill them!
- Our native wildlife and wetlands are very precious
- I value the environmental asset that our shire may provide for many species of wildlife including some rare migratory species.
- Cairn Curran is also a valuable asset and resource for human health and wellbeing.
- Wonderful BirdLife
- It's a place that has lost all of its natural habitats... it would be nice to protect and support life that doesn't have a voice in politics
- We fish and water ski here with our kids we don't want people shooting the wildlife it's unsafe and unnecessary
- Our native wildlife needs protection.
- It is a precious resource for humans and animals. Shooters can still practice their skills using targets. Lead pellets pollute the water affecting all organisms from insects to humans. In this day and age, we should have more respect for the animals and environment.
- Our birdlife is so threatened, and the lake hosts a huge range of birds.
- I love watching the birds in the area
- It is a beautiful spot that needs protecting
- Way too much land has been for human use.
- Our wildlife has suffered terribly due to lost habitat.
- We need to everything we can to preserve our environment and to protect our wildlife
- Many species are threatened with extinction and this loss of biodiversity will eventually affect the health of all life on earth
- Many birds are at risk here. We need to be proactive and protect what is left

- C.Curran is an important refuge for wildlife
- These areas need to be preserved or the natural progression of man will eventually destroy them and the creatures that live there.
- Cairn Curran Reservoir is a home to many species of birds, both on the water and around the adjacent land and vegetation.
- waterbirds have been subject to massive population declines due to recent droughts and wetland drainage. Cairn Curran could be a local refuge.
- It is the main wetlands area in this region, and many different species of birds and animals live there including turtles, platypus, ibis, cranes, pelicans, ducks to only name a few. It is a special area and should be treated as such.
- Now is the time to preserve as much of our natural habitat that we have remaining to us.
- Because we need to protect what wildlife we have
- It's urgent that we leave safe refuges for the diminishing numbers of waterbirds. An added bonus it would bring ecotourism to the Shire.
- I would like the area to remain as interesting for bird life as it was whenever I visited in the past.
- Cairn Curran is a beautiful peaceful area which I visit frequently as a birdwatcher. It should NOT be used as a killing ground of our unique wildlife and waterbeds in particular during the outdated and barbaric "duck hunting season". Cairn Curran reservoir is also used by migratory birds and they should NOT be at risk of being shot and killed or maimed by gunmen. I have seen this happen first- hand.
- As voted by the council, please implement the ban of hunting at Cairn Curran and make the area a peaceful sanctuary for all time.
- I'd love for those beautiful and endangered creatures to be protected and preserved
- The plant and animal life are entitled to it. We are losing far too much already.
- Our water birds need every wetland to be a safe place. Their numbers are seriously depleted already and should not be reduced even more.
- There are too many cowboy shooters who "accidently" shoot other native birds. The duck population is not out of control. Their numbers do not need reducing.
- I'd like to protect native flora and fauna
- To preserve the habitat for local plant species and wildlife, which also helps maintain water quality and absorbs toxins.
- In a country of mass extinction of native birds and animals we should not have recreational killing of our birds.
- Birds will be protected
- It's obvious that killing defenceless beings is a crime.
- We should be doing our best to protect and enjoy our native birdlife in a natural wetland environment. Shooters could be more useful by shooting at deer that are destroying our natural environment
- Shooting birds of any kind has no place in an area used by many for leisure, recreational activities and camping. Further "recreational" shooters have been demonstrated to be indiscriminate in what they target leading to the death of threatened species. Many Australian birds are already under pressure due to development and climate change; further pressure for the sake of the "recreation"

(destruction?) by some is frankly obscene. Shooting does not belong in this environment. Make Cairn Curran a wildlife sanctuary.

- Duck shooting is abhorrent. All wildlife should be protected. Cairn Curran Reservoir must become a sanctuary.
 - Cairn Curran is a key habitat for many important and threatened bird species.
 - Indigenous birdlife must be protected
 - Our relationship with "Nature" is custodial. Nature will be here long after mankind has been relegated to the rubbish bin of history.
-
- To encourage and support the appreciation and conservation of our natural heritage
 - It is worth protecting
 - There is no place for further endangering bird species. It is a great place for human recreation (fewer screaming boats and jet skis would be good too), dog walking, bird watching. Shooting foxes and rabbits, at specific times only, could be an option for people desperate to kill things, but leave our peaceful environment and wonderful birdlife alone!
 - We need to put an end to the barbaric slaughter of native wildlife. There are not enough protected areas in this country.
 - Of the beautiful native water birds living here
 - there's a wonderful array of birdlife there
 - it is home to threatened species such as the White-bellied Sea Eagle. Cairn Curran is important for a large range of waterbirds and raptors as well as a feeding ground on the flyways of migratory shore birds, many of which are in significant decline.
 - I grew up in Newstead and I've witnessed the devastation of duck throughout my life, it's time that we conserve our bird life from this senseless slaughter.
 - I frequently visit the Newstead area, to visit the reservoir and surrounding area to view the wildlife
 - It's their home, we can't destroy homes
 - We need protected areas to keep our beautiful wildlife safe
 - Duck shooting is incompatible with the conservation and recreational values of Cairn Curran
 - The waterfowl in our area are a tourist attraction. It makes no sense for birdwatchers and shooters to share this space.
 - We have lived in this area since early childhood, it is special to us. We want to share it with likeminded people who will assist in the protection and security of the local flora and fauna. We have a diamond in our backyards which requires preservation.
 - Duck shooting is brutal and unnecessary. No one likes it. Let's get into the 21st century!!
 - It is important to protect our wetlands
 - The natural environment is the charm of the place. Hearing constant shooting and seeing wounded birds makes my family want to leave. Can't have friends here during duck shooting season because they get very upset. It's a loss of tourism income for the town.
 - Duck shooting makes me feel sick. This area should be so much better than that.
 - Many species need protection, some endangered to the point of extinction, and many water birds' numbers become depleted.

- I am heavily opposed to the recreational shooting of birds, especially in an area home to endangered species.
- It's important to protect endangered birds and the species that are endemic to the local habitat. All bird species that visit and or live within the natural wetlands of Cairn Curran should be protected and the proposed sanctuary will provide that assurance and prohibit the ad hoc slaughter of defenceless birds
- We need to protect our natural environment from the insensitive ravages of man
- Wildlife needs protection
- Changing the way that Cairn Curran is viewed will enable a shift in management to a regenerative conservation process rather than a simple access to recreation.
- There has been too much destruction of flora, fauna and natural ecosystems locally, nationally and globally and I would like to protect what remains.
- Two years ago, the Mount Alexander Shire Council voted to ban recreational native waterbird shooting in the Shire in favor of safer, more peaceful, and beneficial activities. Duck shooting is set to commence again soon and so it is urgent that the Council's decision is now implemented. Public waterways have been closed to shooting elsewhere for safety and public amenity reasons. The same must happen now in the Mount Alexander Shire before the Duck Shooting season begins. Please act to implement the wishes of the Council and the people of Mount Alexander Shire.
- We need to protect our bird species.
- To protect native waterbirds
- Safe places are necessary to ensure the survival of wildlife.
- We need sanctuaries
- Our birdlife needs as much help as we can give to sustain their very existence. Their beauty and presence brings well-being to the community in much need of healing places.
- For reasons of safety and public amenity
- A sanctuary will provide a home to threatened species of waterbirds. Ensuring a natural and safe habitat for a wide range of waterbirds is more important than allowing shooters access to this area. Death and destruction of our native wildlife is intolerable in this day and age and needs to stop. Designating Cairn Curran and the surrounding wetlands as a sanctuary will provide a much-needed protected area for otherwise endangered species of waterbirds.
- Waterbirds should be free to enjoy their life in the wetlands without being occasional targets in a pointless gun sport where none of the shooters actually need to eat them in order to survive. Let the shooters blaze away at clay pigeons that's ok.
- All wildlife needs a safe refuge, especially in an area surrounded by so much agricultural land.
- It will also create an ecotourism opportunity for the region.
- I have never visited Cairn Curran Reservoir, though in our local area, but now I will (TOURISTS!) for the nature and beautiful birds – the only creatures to whom this place truly belongs, not just us AND MOST CERTAINLY NOT BIRDSHOOTERS. Completely outraged and opposed to "recreational" bird shooting in the Shire. SHAME ON YOU YET ANOTHER MINISTER AGAINST THE ENVIRONMENT . We all

need the life support, peace and tranquillity of a healthy natural world, birds and humans alike. HUMANS FOR THE WATER THEY DRINK AND NEED TO GROW FOOD . What no one needs, and I don't understand the power of their minority, are bird shooters! Think about it for a minute or two people. Just one minute or two. What does bird shooting really actually achieve, and please let me know your answer. So sick of this shit to be honest really. Get it together people, with all due respect, I know it's hardly ever simple or easy, but it can be if you just: DO THE RIGHT THING!

- I believe our water birds need protection and a safe place to breed
- It is essential to preserve habitat
- Shooting is dangerous to other recreational users. Threatened species use the area.
- Slaughtering animals for fun is barbaric
- For the protection of vulnerable wildlife
- I enjoy being out in nature, even more so after months of lockdown. Sadly, we continue to lose important habitat everywhere for wildlife both big and small. It is so important to save & protect these habitats. I love to walk, admire the plants, watch & listen to the birds and frogs, to search for tiny insects and even nocturnal animals. There is such a range of bird species to be seen here. What a valuable resource such an area will be for both local residents and visitors.
- I thoroughly oppose the so called "recreational" shooting of our duck species with the death and destruction of other birds which contributes to a significant drop in numbers each year. Cairn Curran needs to be declared as a sanctuary, a haven for the many species of native and migratory birds so they can feed, flourish and live out their lives for the benefit and enjoyment of everybody.
- There is no benefit in shooting birds, only cruelty.
- Duck shooting is a risk to threatened species, creates contamination, and damages the local environment. Duck shooting is totally unnecessary and excludes use and enjoyment of Cairn Curran by community members.
- It is so important to protect the birdlife in this unique area
- In the face of climate change, loss of natural habitat and increasing population growth our local natural areas are under pressure and need protecting and conserving, not harvesting for "sport". Cairn Curran is an important site for many waterbird species, along with the ecology that supports them. Duck hunting does not fit with modern expectations, waterbird numbers are on the decrease according to Birdlife Australia and every year non-target species including protected birds are injured or shot. Not to mention the disturbance of their habitat by shooters' presence. I hear the "hunting" each season from my home, and am disturbed by the shooting, often beginning before the official start time. Our Shire would receive far greater economic benefit from passive and eco- based tourism than from seasonal duck hunters who "own" Cairn Curran during the hunting period.
- It is a key place for waterbirds (and other species) in our local area. I am part of a community group that does local bird surveys in the adjoining Muckleford Forest (part of a Biodiversity hotspot) on a quarterly basis to improve our biodiversity data - and we add our data to the Victoria Biodiversity Atlas.
- Slaughter of our native waterfowl is not recreation or sport. It is perpetrated by 0.04% of the population and brings an immeasurably small amount of revenue to MAS. Only some need to pass an ID test to participate leading to many 'non-target'

species being killed or injured and left. Poor practice with no financial gain for the region involving a very very small number of people yet having a big impact on native fauna. It must stop.

- I write as secretary of the XXXXX, Mount Alexander region. Our reasons for opposing duck shooting are laid out on our website.
- I don't agree with having bird shooting seasons in Victoria, especially at large wetlands like Cairn Curran that are homes and feeding grounds to many species of birds, local and migratory. I want the birds protected. It is a dated practice inhumane to birds injured, not as many birds around now as in past decades
- It is cruel to the injured birds and some species shouldn't be targeted at all. People shoot wrong species. The wetland is a large area and I think should be a non-shooting conservation area because it's good habitat for local and migratory wetland and shore birds. Even for humans, the sound of gunshots can be distressing when out enjoying the natural environment. The area is closed to human other uses when shooting is occurring.
- To protect the diversity of bird life and ensure safety of people.
- Duck shooting is barbaric.
- Avoiding cruelty to birdlife, enhancing the ecological protection of Australian species.
- To preserve native wildlife
- It is critical habitat for native biodiversity and an important place for people to experience the restorative benefits of nature. Duck hunting is a threat to both these functions.
- All creatures deserve to live in habitat which best provides their needs. What they don't need is to have life taken from them in the un-natural way of being shot by a man-made weapon. Outside the duck shooting season, Cairn Curran is peaceful and fulfils the needs of resident and visiting birds. May it continue to do so year-round.
- We live at a time of a biodiversity and extinction crisis, we need to create sanctuaries to save biodiversity, which in turn we need to live.
- A consistent shooter free environment generates more sustained economic benefits than a duck season
- I like to go to regional places for holidays and to undertake bird watching and nature photography ... I opposes the slaughter of our

native wildlife for recreational activities... duck opening this year was unethical given it occurred while there were young ducklings around still dependant on their parents for support ... so parent birds were slaughtered for recreational pleasure while young where left behind defenceless, this is both unethical and has a negative impact on follow on population stability... very poorly timed and managed ... combine this with all the unprofessional identification practices of the sport targeting and killing many endangered, vulnerable and miss identified species ... this sport brings no worth to regional community other than thugs, rubbish, wildlife torture and ugliness.

- We need to protect our flora and fauna

- There is so little land left for biodiversity, and with water a precious resource in the future, the birds and wildlife need all the help they can get to survive. If the environment is healthy, people are healthier too.
 - Cairn Curran is important for a large range of birds
 - We need the wetlands for migrating birds.
 - There needs to be a safe place for ducks to nest and breed, particularly for threatened species that are often indiscriminately shot during shooting season.
 - To protect rare bird species in the area.
 - I was amazed to see swans in the lake recently, and generally think recreational animal massacre is an exceptionally low form of human behaviour.
 - It's time intelligence was used, and man stops slaughtering the innocent
 - I love birds and thing they should be protected before people make them go extinct with their stupidity
 - It is the home of many beautiful birds we want to know are safe
 - We have to do all we can to halt biodiversity loss, valuing current and future generations human and non-human, within the shire whilst recognizing the benefits more globally. In order to sustain life, we must look to think globally while acting locally.
 - We need to preserve our wildlife and bush
 - Recreational shooting has no place in 2021.
 - b-b-b bird bird bird birds the word
-
- Ducks shouldn't be murdered
 - It is a precious area and these beautiful birds DO NOT DESERVE to barbarically be hunted!
 - Ecological reasons
 - We need to protect native flora and fauna and save habit from destruction and encroachment. Shooting wildlife is barbaric and unnecessary- we are not hunter gatherers and it not something to do for entertainment
 - Allowing ducks swans and other wildlife to flourish enhances our public spaces, bringing diversity and regeneration. It also adds to tourist appeal which benefits everyone
 - So the ducks can have a safe place to love
 - Duck shooting is disgraceful
 - Our wildlife is important for a healthy echo system.
 - Mount Alexander Shire and Cairn Curran Reservoir specifically, is home to threatened species such as the White-bellied Sea Eagle. Cairn Curran is important for a large range of waterbirds and raptors as well as a feeding ground on the flyways of migratory shore birds, many of which are in significant decline.
 - There is no good reason for recreational bird shooting to continue and council should be doing everything in its power to protect the environment.
 - We must preserve waterways that native and vulnerable species call home.
 - We need to care for our environment particularly the flora and fauna so future generations can enjoy them as well.
 - I strongly disagree with duck shooting and believe all birds need our protection. They need this beautiful area as a safe protected sanctuary.

- So much natural habitat in the area has gone, wildlife needs all the help we can muster
 - A beautiful area for birds to live and breed. A wonderful ecosystem man can learn from. We do not need another area of nature destroyed and bullets echoing.
 - Need to preserve our wildlife
 - It is a precious shared area that both residents and visitors enjoy because of its safety and beauty.
 - Safety for people, environment for water birds. There's plenty of feral animals that need culling. Leave the water birds alone.
 - We need to protect the natural environment. I am totally against the slaughter of wildlife.
 - Birds need to be protected. We are so fortunate in this area to have them
 - Too many ducks and other endangered birds will once again be subject to the cruel and unthinkable
 - I want threatened bird species to survive. I want people accessing public space to be safe.
 - We need to protect our precious wildlife and ensure the safety of the people in the area
 - All of nature is under threat from Climate Change, and we need to protect All that we can.
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- The ducks need protection having numbers reduced by droughts and fires across Australia. Hunting is a cruel "sport" with many injured birds left to die a slow painful death.
 - We need to protect the waterways that are crucial to endangered wildlife
 - We need to conserve our wetlands and the precious wildlife in it. It's all connected.
 - Should not be killing threatened species
 - Want to protect all species of waterfowl within this habitat
 - The "sport" or "hobby" of shooting birds and animals is cruel and barbaric and has no place in a civilised modern society.
 - All life is precious. Shooting and hunting are violent, dangerous and scary so close to our peaceful community.
 - I prefer live wildlife to dead wildlife.
 - It is a naturally beautiful place, and it would be nice to see a refuge for our water birds.
 - In this era of increasing extinctions and pressure on wildlife everywhere, we need to do all we can to preserve and provide habitat for native water birds and all our native species
 - We must act to protect biodiversity
 - A safe haven for all the wildlife and protection of precious biodiversity.
 - I oppose duck shooting.
 - I love the beautiful wildlife and birds in our area. I think it's barbaric in this day and age to be shooting innocent birds in our beautiful tourist locality of Lake Cairn Curran.
 - Our wildlife needs to be preserved and encouraged to thrive in the years to come.
 - The waterbirds get decimated around Cairn Curran every year with duck shooting season. Soon there will be one left.

- Our native fauna is under threat and needs protection.
 - So that it continues to flourish for my kids to enjoy
 - All animals should be safe to live their lives without fear of an unnatural death for the recreation or pleasure of humans
 - Birds should not be shot just for fun, in such a beautiful public amenity. Cruel and ruins the peace of this beautiful country area.
 - There are so many birds who visit, and they deserve to be encouraged and nurtured...not shot or shit at
 - Cairn Curran was a huge part of my life for 40yrs and somewhere I always come home to. The wildlife, particularly the bird life, permanent or migratory, is a wonder. This reservoir is hugely important for all creatures that use it and as a sanctuary it would be protected, cherished and also used to aid educational resource.
 - We need to protect the wildlife and stop the draconian sport of duck shooting.
 - Living ducks can be enjoyed by all. I'm also concerned that native duck populations will not be able to withstand climate change if shooting continues
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- It should be protected for the bird wildlife and for the community and visitors to enjoy.
 - Cairn Curran is a beautiful, tranquil place. The bird life enhances the experience of being in this environment. We need to protect places like this from those who want to exploit them for selfish measures.
 - It's an inappropriate location for duck shooting, given its other recreational value.
 - Habitat for many species is diminishing rapidly and we need to protect the little we have, particularly wetlands. We have a responsibility to future generations rather than continually meeting our own perceived needs instead of considering long term implications.
 - Duck hunting is abhorrent. Native wildlife must be protected.
 - I oppose recreational bird shooting anywhere, and especially in this case Cairn Curran, the home of so many waterbirds, raptors and a safe ground for migratory species.
 - It is a place of beauty for all to enjoy, safely.
 - safety
 - It is a unique area that deserves to be safe both for flora and fauna, but also for peaceful enjoyment by local residents and visitors, and not overrun by shooters.
 - Wildlife is precious.
 - The birdlife is beautiful and an important part of the eco system. I don't support bird shooting at all, and the shire should be implementing the ban that was put in place.
 - It is an important feeding ground for local and migratory birds. Birds are in serious decline across Australia. This is a major problem for our ecosystems as they perform roles in insect control and plant germination.
 - To preserve the bird life of the area and make it a safe environment for our community
 - To protect the local bird life and to have a safe and peaceful environment for people to enjoy the reservoir and its surrounds.
 - Ducks don't need culling
 - The birds and other wildlife that use this area need to have a haven. There are birds that are threatened species that visit Cairn Curran. Recent reports have shown that

Australia doesn't do enough to protect and encourage rebuilding of populations of threatened species. This is a way we can begin to turn that tide. In addition, migratory birds pass through on their migration. Climate change, drainage of swamps and marshes on farmland, removal of remnant vegetation put increased pressure on birds and other wildlife. Refugees and sanctuaries are needed for those who will breed, nest, eat, shelter, recover, within these environs. The local Council has already considered this issue and said it wants no shooting in the area. The majority of Victorians don't support recreational bird shooting.

- I regularly drive from my home in Rocklyn to go bird watching at Cairn Curran Reservoir and surrounding areas. I often shop in the local townships on the way, birders love bakery goods :) I also recommend the Mount Alexander Shire to other birders. Creating a sanctuary and working to stop recreational bird shooting will support the local Shire to attract bird watchers, naturalists and bushwalkers to visit the area.
- It really is special. Let's not take it for granted. Please preserve it for the future.
- It is home to threatened species, the White-bellied Sea Eagle. And because I support Mt Alexander Shire's decision to ban recreational native waterbird shooting.
- there is more value in live birds than dead ones, to be frank... the surrendering of our wildlife to provide amusement and 'sport' for a few gun owners is an obscenity which we should have grown out of by now...
- It's a wetland habitat and we should be protecting it!
- This area is vital for wetland birds to inhabit seasonally for both local and migratory species.
- it's important bird habitat and valued by many for this.
- The restoration of this area will create not only a healthier natural ecology but will create a place of gathering and leisure for visitors and residents. Absolutely brilliant project! Bring it on
- Currently it is full of weeds and not a nice place to be. Years of farming has left it desolate. We would like to see a really wonderful sanctuary for nature, native flora and fauna. Then our family would love to go there. Restrict noise and pollution that is currently a factor with the boats on there now.
- I want to visit there with my children anytime weather permits with peace of mind for our safety.
- I want to help protect the large range of waterbirds and raptors
- Duck shooting is cruel
- Regional Victorians value the diversity of our wild bird populations and other native animals as well. Duck shooters do not increase the economies of regional towns because they don't use the amenities or services. They leave lead pollution via spent cartridges, and they shoot anything in sight. It has been demonstrated year in year out that vulnerable species are shot as well as non-duck water birds such as swans and even pelicans.
- There is no place for this barbarism in 21st century Australia.
- To protect it from inappropriate use and to provide a safe place for our native wildlife
- Oppose duck shooting as cruel and unnecessary and having a negative effect on many bird species.

- Cruel and barbaric sport killing innocent birds from a variety of species
- I'm completely opposed to this senseless activity and want to see this beautiful area preserved for all to enjoy safely, birds and people together
- Ducks do not deserve to be killed.
- Ducks deserve our protection - we have no right to shoot them for our pleasure.
- The birds & animals deserve to live peacefully as do visiting humans. Shooting isn't a recreational sport, it's killing innocent beings & driving tourism away.
- Ducks need protection.
- There are already so many pressures on native duck and other bird populations, that ANYTHING we can do to provide safe habitat for them ought to be a top priority.
- Protect wildlife
- It's our closest large body of water, but I don't feel safe going there during hunting season. I would like to see wildlife protected and biodiversity supported.
- It's where the duck lives and everyone should feel safe in their home
- Shooting animals is not a sport but an expression of intellectual and emotional inadequacy.
- I believe that our native animals should not be shot for recreational activities and that they are already struggling to survive.
- We should not be the cause of more extinctions or near extinctions. Drought, fires and land clearing have drastically reduced numbers of water birds.
- I would hate shooters allowed.
- I believe our native birdlife should be protected and our beautiful natural areas should be available for passive enjoyment and recreation by local residents visitors alike. Shot gunning birds is inherently cruel and shooting is permitted in so many of our wetlands and waterways that it seems fitting to provide some safe havens for both game species and those wishing to enjoy our natural assets in peace.
- Many bird species are in significant decline across the region why would we encourage a practice that hastens this travesty on our communities.
- Simply put, they need Somewhere safe, and it will enhance the overall attractiveness and appeal to the otherwise fairly uninspiring look of the lake
- Our wildlife needs to be protected
- Killing placid animals is the exact opposite of a sanctuary!
- Our wildlife is vulnerable.
- Duck shooting for sport is a barbaric practice.
- Ducks and other animals must be protected.
- We need less urban sprawl and Farmland and more sanctuaries and rewilding

ATTACHMENT C – Home and business under siege.

I am one of the forgotten victims of duck shooting.

My land has been vandalized. I have been shot at and abused. I've had to stand by and watch groups of army clad men with guns, speed up and down the waterway in boats, shooting only meters from my house.

Shooters have hidden in tree stumps and bushes meters from my house and shot bullets towards me. I have cried seeing many baby ducklings without mothers left to fend for themselves. The poor things are only golf ball size. Their mothers shot dead in front of them, while some are injured, taking days to die. Feathers, guts, body parts are left along the banks of [the wetland].

Human faeces have littered my property with toilet paper strewn on top and alongside.

Trees have been cut down. Bullet cartridges left on the land and in the water.

I have been advised by the police to stay inside my house during the siege. But I refuse to hide in my house while duck shooters wreak havoc in my immediate surrounds and on my private property.

I have witnessed the hundreds of native water birds that lived here, fly confused amidst thousands shot. They are all but gone now.

I am a land owner and I make my living from this land as do other farmers along the banks of [this wetland].

I have witnessed blatant disregard and disrespect for this Cultural site. My land is a Wollithica Burial ground and I the keeper.

I have witnessed the blatant disregard for the law. Shooting on private property and carrying firearms on private property without permission.

I have been bullied, intimidated, forced to retaliate and put into a corner with no other means of justice.

Farmers and landowners such as myself are tired of the strong gun lobby groups that exercise their power along the peaceful waterways.

All farmers know about guns, we use them in our daily living to rid our lands of pest animal species like rabbits, foxes and feral cats and to put down sick and dying farm stock and animals. We know about guns.

I have witnessed the total waste of taxpayers money to monitor and negotiate situations with duck shooters and landowners.

The mass carnage and killing orgy of native bird species is abominable and repulsive and does not sit congruently with the landowner's responsibility of caring for country and sustainable farm practise. _ Our Lagoon like many wetlands, are living museums of nature and history. They are being desecrated by a bunch of red necks that think that they can come from the city and blast away all life and nature, shit on the land and then leave to go home on Sunday afternoon.

I have complained to the authorities and to GMA to no avail.

For our children and our grand children, policy makers must listen.

Nanna Against Duck Shooting

Recreational native duck shooting is allowed at thousands of public waterways around Victoria.

There has never been any risk assessment nor consultation with nearby residents.

More of what regional Victorians have to say about being victims of Victoria's annual recreational native duck shoot can be seen at <https://www.regionalvictoriansotds.com/rural-voices>