

## ATTACHMENT 3

## Summary: stakeholder views on 2024 duck season arrangements

Organisation	Recommendation	Comments
Animals Australia (AA)	Implement the Select Committee recommendation and <b>cancel the 2024 duck season</b>	<p>AA highlights concerns regarding the following claims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The uptick in game duck abundance across eastern Australia was weaker than previous rebounds.</li> <li>- Five of the eight game duck species remain in long-term decline.</li> <li>- A sixth species (Chestnut Teal) recently left the long-term decline list, but its recovery is confined to Victoria. It will be at risk if shooting proceeds.</li> <li>- A seventh species (Hardhead) has been below average for the past 11 consecutive years; it only avoids the “long-term” decline list because it was resilient last century.</li> <li>- Loss of habitat (e.g., water diversions, irrigation schemes) is recognized as the prime cause of long-term species decline. This cannot be easily reversed. It is therefore all the more urgent and critical to remove avoidable threats.</li> <li>- Wounding reduction proposals cannot remove this unacceptable cruelty. Duck shooters have shown little interest in training, but even if the wounding rate could eventually be reduced to 10 per cent (as seen in Denmark after several decades of training), that would be ~32,000 birds in pain and distress every year – and completely contrary to any “social licence” that hunters claim.</li> <li>- GMA’s ‘Considerations’ for the 2024 season seem to reflect shooters’ focus on short-term upticks in waterbirds in Victoria rather than long-term decline and sustainability across eastern states.</li> <li>- AA contends that the IHM is not fit for purpose as a predictor of game duck settings. AA questions the due diligence exercised by the GMA and opposes its use to decide or defend GMA recommendations for duck seasons as it has not been peer-reviewed, bases its modelling on historic decision-making patterns that pre-date climate and land use changes and not accurately reflecting the history on which it is based.</li> <li>- No public information has been provided on whether the inadequacies concerning the helicopter survey, identified by the 2021 Kingsford-Prowse peer review, have been addressed. AA recommends a further peer assessment before any public confidence can be placed in the survey results.</li> <li>- The GMA’s Considerations 2023 document is misleading in its emphasis on ‘rebounding’ duck numbers and that no commentary is provided about game duck breeding or long-term declines of individual species of game ducks.</li> <li>- Misuse of science: AA is concerned by the manner in which the GMA has presented the relevant scientific reports to justify continued recreational hunting of native waterbirds.</li> <li>- The Victorian Abundance Survey is inaccurate and slanted to provide the highest possible estimate of abundance.</li> <li>- The harvest survey results from 2023 show that the Kingsford-Klassen model approach of using bag limits and not season length to moderate harvest is flawed.</li> <li>- Many of our supporters live in regional Victoria and are concerned about GMA’s lack of engagement with non-duck-shooters. They have serious concerns about cruelty, sustainability, community safety, and loss of local amenity. GMA continues to ignore the impact of duck hunting on regional residents.</li> </ul>
BirdLife Australia	No submission / comments provided	N/A

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Coalition Against Duck Shooting (CADS)	<b>Cancel</b> the 2024 duck season and implement the ban on hunting as per the Parliamentary inquiry report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CADS recommends a cancelled season for 2024, citing climate change, illegal shooting of threatened species and duck welfare concerns.</li> <li>- The inability for the practice to be regulated.</li> <li>- The destruction of Traditional Owner heritage on wetlands.</li> </ul>
Duck and Quail Hunting Australia (DQHA)	<b>Full 12-week duck season</b> <b>- commencing at 7am on the traditional third Saturday of March</b> <b>- all the 8 Game species to be hunted throughout the season</b> <b>- ten bird per day bag limit including an additional two Blue-winged Shoveler</b> <b>- plus an additional 5 game species ducks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Letter provided prior to the information pack being distributed.</li> <li>- If the duck season is to be altered from what is already legislated, it should be announced in a timely fashion 2-3 months before the season commences to allow hunters and business owners time to prepare for the forthcoming duck season.</li> </ul>
Field and Game Australia (FGA)	<b>Supports the interim harvest model</b>  <b>Prefers a traditional Saturday opening</b>  <b>Return to prescribed opening times for each day of the season</b>	FGA makes the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seasons should be based on the best available scientific and objective models.</li> <li>- Supports the development of the adaptive harvest management.</li> <li>- Expectation of prompt season announcements.</li> <li>- Requests improved stakeholder engagement, in particular a post season review process.</li> <li>- Support education and training in hunting practices that prioritise animal welfare and ethical standards.</li> </ul>
Regional Victorian Opposed to Duck Shooting (RVOTDS)	<b>The GMA should, in line with its functions and obligations under the GMA Act, recommend closure of the 2024 duck and quail shooting seasons until all of the</b>	RVOTDS recommends the <b>2024 season be cancelled</b> and based its position on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continued and long-term declines in game ducks.</li> <li>- Continued lack of breeding in game ducks.</li> <li>- Significant adverse impacts of hunting on protected species and regional communities (RVOTDS claims this has not yet been adequately investigated by the GMA).</li> </ul> RVOTDS claims that the GMA's representation of the IHM as a basis for its recommendations is flawed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The models does not factor in climate change.</li> </ul>

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	<b>serious adverse impacts evidenced in the submission are effectively removed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The model requires due diligence- which the GMA is not doing.</li> <li>- The model failed in 2023 with the harvest 68% above the sustainable limit.</li> <li>- The model does not factor in wounding.</li> <li>- The Priority Waterbird Counts are flawed.</li> </ul> <p>RVOTDS claims that the GMA has not given due consideration to the following factors in the season considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Long-term effects of climate change which are predicted to worsen.</li> <li>- Birds' susceptibility to climate change.</li> <li>- Pollution from hunting - plastic and lead.</li> <li>- Threat to migratory birds already experiencing significant decline.</li> <li>- Detrimental impact to bird populations of shooting monogamous bird species.</li> <li>- Adverse impacts of lead shot which is still used legally and illegally.</li> <li>- Lack of data regarding bird species present on wetlands prior to shooting.</li> <li>- Lack of data of birds shot during season.</li> <li>- Impact of shooting on protected and threatened species and a lack of diligence in collecting data.</li> <li>- Shooters' critical knowledge gaps as proven by recent tests.</li> <li>- Animal cruelty and unacceptable rates of wounding.</li> <li>- Lack of social / economic impact studies of bird shooting on the wider community, including lost tourism, inability to work from home, and health and safety implications including noise pollution.</li> <li>- No costs benefit analysis of hunting.</li> <li>- Community safety impacted by hunting including the stress caused by residents exposed to hours of gunfire.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- RVOTDS provided downward trendline projections of game ducks becoming extinct by 2030.</li> <li>- RVOTDS also provided attachment links in its submission that relate to a 2018 survey of regional residents and a 2021 petition comments link regarding closing a public waterway to shooting in central Victoria.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- RVOTDS also recommended that the 2023 quail hunting season be cancelled due to a claimed decline in Stubble Quail abundance.</li> </ul>
RSPCA	No submission / comments provided	N/A
Shooting Sports Council of Victoria	No submission / comments provided	N/A
Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Vic)	<b>Supports the interim harvest model</b>	<p>Letter only - No submission/analysis provided</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SSAA Victoria would like to see a more proactive approach taken to stakeholder engagement, including a post-season review process to allow improvements to the administration of seasons to be adequately considered and implemented.</li> </ul>

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Victorian Duck Hunters Association (VDHA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Full season</b></li> <li>- <b>10 bird bag limit with no more than 2 Blue Winged Shoveler</b></li> <li>- <b>Season should open on the regulated Saturday or on the Friday before.</b></li> <li>- <b>Opening two-day's bag limit of 15 birds and for rest of season an additional wood duck (effectively a 10 bird bag plus one additional wood duck)</b></li> <li>- <b>First three day of season to open at 7:30am and close at 7:30pm</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Duck numbers have increased by orders of magnitude and recent rain will trigger a breeding response.</li> <li>- EAWS only reports on a small number of wetlands.</li> <li>- Vic abundance up by 195%.</li> <li>- NSW abundance up by 345% and given this survey was in May June 2023, the numbers will have increased further following a usual spring breed.</li> <li>- Has been a population explosion of wood duck and based on the Prowse report of a sustainable harvest being between 10-30%, a larger bag for wood duck could be set.</li> <li>- Rhetoric around wounding rates is emotive and highly erroneous.</li> <li>- Based on comparison of the results of Normans' study x-raying birds in the 1970s, and the results of the recent GMA studies, wounding has decreased by 150-691%.</li> <li>- Further training and education, not regulation, should be applied to further reduce wounding rates.</li> <li>- No wetland closures should occur without scientific process and consultation with hunting stakeholders.</li> </ul>
Wildlife Victoria (WV)	Wildlife Victoria recommends that the Victorian Government <b>end the annual recreational native bird hunting season opening on all public and private land from 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wildlife Victoria expects the Victorian government to respect the outcomes from the Parliamentary Inquiry and implement the findings made by the Select Committee.</li> <li>- Responding in field to shot and injured native waterbirds during duck shooting season, as well as the substantive resource demand on Wildlife Victoria to persistently advocate and provide data to highlight the suffering of Victoria's native waterbirds, is an unreasonable impost on a charity.</li> <li>- Wildlife Victoria calls to attention the accumulative evidence of long-term declines in waterbird populations and asserts the continuation of an annual duck shooting season exacerbates the downward trend in population numbers.</li> <li>- Wildlife Victoria asserts that the continuation of an annual duck shooting season is incompatible with the proposed new animal welfare laws.</li> <li>- Wildlife Victoria contends that the GMA's ability to effectively monitor and enforce shooter compliance throughout an annual duck hunting season is extremely limited. If the annual duck shooting season is continued the GMA must be able to demonstrate the effective monitoring and compliance of a statewide hunting program.</li> <li>- Wildlife Victoria underscores a pronounced disparity in public opinion regarding ducks shooting, with the majority of Victorians expressing opposition to its continuation and less than 0.5% of the state's residents actively engaging in the activity.</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Wildlife Victoria asserts that the economic benefit of duck hunting cannot be verified and contends that it is insignificant given the very small number of Victorians that participate in the activity (less than 0.5% of the population).</li><li>- Duck hunting represents an unacceptable risk to threatened and non-game species with evidence collected by Wildlife Victoria that shooters are unable or unwilling to identify and refrain from shooting threatened and non-game waterbirds.</li></ul>