

# Push for ban on duck shooting

Lisa Dennis

Regional Victorians Opposed to Duck Shooting Inc has written to the state government, hoping to obtain an audience before any kind of shooting season is decided.

With just weeks until the 2023 recreational duck shooting season is scheduled in March, the RVOTDS has joined with 90 First Nations Clans, businesses, unions, animal welfare and environment groups representing hundreds of Victorians to urge the government to abandon the season.

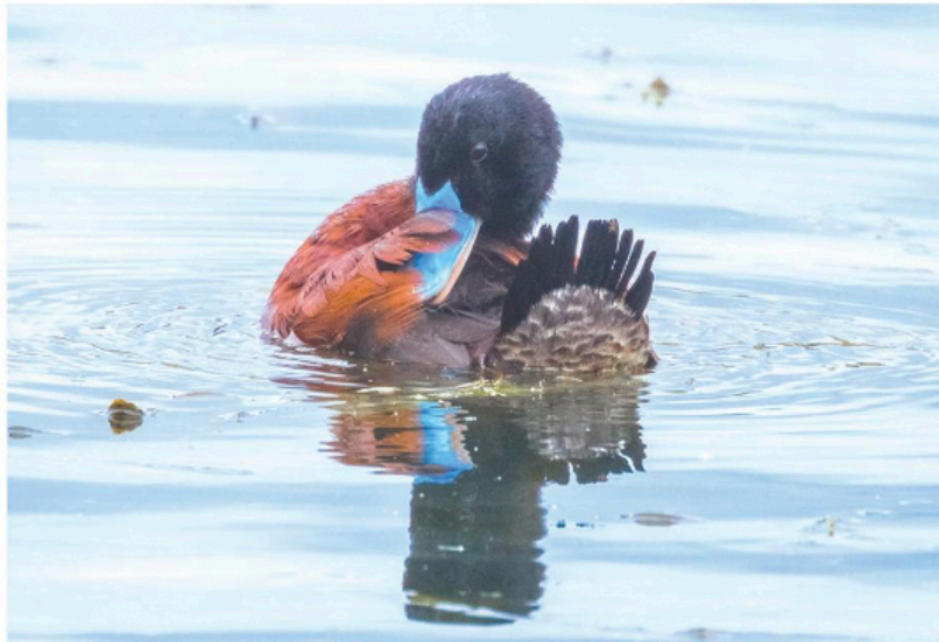
Recreational duck shooting has been banned in Western Australia for 33 years with the practice abandoned way back in 1990. New South Wales banned duck shooting in 1995 and Queensland followed suit in 2005. However, recreational duck shooting continues to be held annually in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania despite growing opposition.

A 'quiet petition' recently calling for a ban on duck shooting in Mount Alexander Shire received 498 signatures of support - most local - versus only 21 on a petition to the council two years ago wanting the practice to be retained, only 11 of these were local supporters.

The RVOTDS said they have received no response from council in relation to the petition and their concerns. However, they understand council has written to the state government urging them to make Mount Alexander Shire an 'exclusion zone'.

The government has reportedly advised that this power rests with Goulburn Murray Water.

The RVOTDS wants the state government and relevant authorities to stop passing the buck and take a stand on the issue once and for all.



The Blue-Billed Duck is one of the birds under threat. Photo: Nalini Scarfe.

The RVOTDS has also expressed concerns that despite the regulator being required under the Game Management Authority Act to research the social and economic factors of hunting, it has never considered the real and significant impacts to residents or other recreational users, and dismisses complaints raised by community.

RVOTDS Director Health and Safety Fiona Byrnes said it's important for ministers to know, there are serious impacts to residents' mental health having to see and hear the shotguns waging war on our native birdlife.

"You can't work from home. Animals run spooked through fences, children cry

and scream, people won't visit. There are blokes in public areas with shotguns in army fatigues. It's unfathomable no risk assessments have been carried out," she said.

The group is concerned the regulator is biased to shooting and will be seeking an inquiry into its operations.

They said the Game Management Authority's Season Considerations Document fails to mention the fact game ducks - as opposed to other waterbirds - aren't breeding despite wetland habitat improving the last three years.

The group said it also fails to mention anything about impacts to threatened species or regional communities - both equally important considerations too.