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Duck hunt costing Victorians

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ECONOMICALLY duck shooting is shot.

In 2021, the Parliamentary Budget Office put its net impact at just \$10 million to all of Victoria.

For context, Phillip Island Nature Parks - where they shoot penguins with cameras - brings \$120 million and 800 jobs just to the Bass Coast Shire.

The \$10 million from duck shooting is without accounting for its cost to taxpayers.

Factor in the cost of law enforcement, helicopter bird counts and lost tourism - studies show bird hunting deters tourists - and it's likely the impact is negative.

According to Game Management Authority data, most electorates have between 0-0.5 per cent of their voters who shoot ducks.

Professional polls continue to show most Victorians want the practice banned.

From a sustainability perspective, the most robust long-term science available to track duck abundance trends is the East Australian Annual Waterbird Survey, showing duck numbers have crashed to just 25pc of their long-term average.

[That's] not good - for one thing because ducks eat liverfluke, saving the need for expensive sheep drenches.

But perhaps what's most

concerning to the farming community is the tonnes of toxic lead pumped into our environments from recreational duck and quail shooters.

It's illegal to use lead in duck shooting but there are reports of it used almost every year.

It's still legal to use lead ammunition in quail shooting, including on food-producing fields.

Each shotgun cartridge holds numerous pellets.

Most don't hit the target but fall into the environment.

Multiply 30 grams of lead in each cartridge by the average of 175,000 quail bagged each year, and one gets a staggering 5t of lead pumped into our environments each quail season, without even accounting for missed shots.

And lead isn't the only environmental concern.

A GMA Board Paper recently released under freedom of information suggests 2.2 million plastic shotgun shells and wads are sent into the environment each year from duck shooters.

Like lead which is toxic even in tiny traces, plastics

can take hundreds of years to break down, ending up in the food chain as micro plastics and posing a serious risk to people and animals.

The farming community is stressed enough from hunters' trespass without the added stresses of lead and micro-plastics.

These matters can serious-

ly disrupt livelihoods.

If the Victorian government cares for our regions, it will follow the lead of other states and ban recreational bird shooting post-haste.