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Nature-based tourism reaps bigger dollars



MOST people have no issue with clay target shooting, an Olympic sport. But polls show most believe native duck shooting — practised by less than half of 1 per cent of the population and worth a pittance to our economy — should be banned.

From an economic perspective, tourism typically contributes more to Australia's economy than agriculture, forestry, fishing, IT, media and communications combined. Nature-based tourism is the fastest growing component.

According to a study by Griffith University for Tourism Australia, our wildlife is our No.1 attraction. In 2019 there were more than 1.4 million tourists who birdwatched in our country and spent a whopping \$2.88bn. More overnight domestic tourists birdwatched than visited the reef

and the number of international tourists who birdwatched was more than double those who fished.

The untapped potential to our small rural towns which are blessed with fabulous waterways and waterbirds is ready and waiting, with no infrastructure investment required.

The stunning Kerang wetlands are listed as internationally significant, while the beautiful wetlands of Boort and Corangamite are rich in the oldest culture on earth. Most of our tucked-away rural wetlands each have a unique story to tell, and none are hard to market. All we need do is stop the recreational killing of our birds.

**Sue Williams,
Regional Victorians
Opposed to Duck Shooting
Inc.**