

# Community urged to voice concerns about duck shooting

The parliamentary inquiry into Victoria's recreational native bird shooting has commenced, in what is likely to be the best chance for Victoria to align with other states and change the plight of native duck and quail.

In Victoria, less than half of one per cent of the population shoot ducks and quail. Professional polls show most Victorians, particularly regional residents, wish to see the end of annual shoots, hoping this year is the last.

As the commencement of the 2023 shooting season looms, many Victorians say they are filled with dread for the impending intrusive behavior and noise generated by shooters and the needless killing of native wildlife. Many say their ability to work from home is impacted, as is their ability to enjoy outdoor activities such as fishing, boating, and birdwatching at the countless public sites around the state where shooters are allowed. Most public shooting sites are neither sign-posted nor monitored by authorities and no risk assessments have been done.

As of April 24, eleven wetlands out of thousands of public lakes, streams, rivers, and reservoirs open to duck shooters, have been closed to shooting this year due to the presence of threatened species.

The wetland where avian botulism infected hundreds of birds in Central Victoria remains open to shooting, as do other wetlands in close proximity to residents' homes where the community has repeatedly requested exclusion zones.

Recently the Australian Veterinary Association joined the RSPCA in public condemnation of the pastime for animal welfare reasons. Aside from a high wounding rate - where birds are shot but not killed - there is a growing concern for adverse environmental impacts.

Regional Victorians Opposed to Duck Shooting (RVOTDS) Project Officer Sue Williams said that now is our chance, the government is listening.

"Please take a few minutes to lend your voice for the protection of our native birds who cannot speak for themselves, and for the risk-exposed communities who love being home to them," Sue said.

The parliamentary Inquiry is open for public comment until May 8 and RVOTDS is calling for anyone who has been negatively affected by a duck or quail shooting in any way, to complete a short survey by May 3, so important statistics can be gathered for their group submission.

Further details can be found at [www.regionalvictoriansotds.com/parliamentary-inquiry-2023](http://www.regionalvictoriansotds.com/parliamentary-inquiry-2023).