

## **DUCK-SHOOTING CRUELTY NEEDS TO END NOW**

THE start of this year's duck-shooting season, due in the next few weeks, brought back this memory.

Some years ago, I visited Lake Modewarre on the first day of the duck-shooting season.

A line of men was across the shallows, clad in camouflage dress, shotguns ready for some unfortunate bird to fly past.

On the shore was another hunter in "classic" pose, sitting on a wooden stool in a hide, gun at the ready, dog obediently at his side.

The image could have come from some 19th century painting.

He was waiting, I suppose, for a bird to swerve around the exposed hunters and come within range of his shotgun.

But 10m or so behind him was a wounded shelduck, its shattered wing hanging loose.

The hunter and his dog ignored it – maybe it wasn't his bird, or perhaps to take and kill it would be added to his "bag", after all

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shelducks are the least desirable of the many species otherwise available.

I went towards the bird but it fluttered away and I was

unprepared to catch it, so I left, returning later with a net to capture it and have the injuries treated if possible by a vet.

Of course, that was illegal but it was the best I could do.

But the duck, hunter, dog and hide had vanished – maybe a shelduck was better than nothing!

This is the sort of cruelty inherent in duck shooting, wounded birds left because they fell out of reach or were simply not what the hunter wanted.

How many are left to die from their injuries it is too difficult to count – one conservative figure from the RSPCA suggests the "wounding rate" is 26 per cent.

For every three ducks "harvested", a fourth is left to die from its injuries.

How can we allow this to happen at a time when all cruelty is abhorred?

**Trevor Pescott, Belmont**



Pacific Black duck Eleanor Dilley