



For immediate release

Wildlife Victoria warns of taxpayer waste and unrest on the wetlands

On Monday 29 January, Wildlife Victoria, along with the Victorian public learnt that native birds will continue to be needlessly killed and caused pain and suffering due to the Allan Government's decision to continue duck hunting.

The Allan Government has chosen to continue duck and quail hunting, a stance which flies directly in the face of the government's own taxpayer funded Parliamentary Inquiry, and the majority of Victorians who support a ban.

Doubling down on the unpopular decision, the Allan Government also decided to spend 10.1 million dollars of taxpayers' money propping up the cruel and out of touch duck shooting program.

Wildlife Victoria highlights that 10.1 million is a very significant investment for the Allan government to be making for one single activity with very limited participation or appeal. By comparison, and to put the funding into perspective, Wildlife Victoria receives \$500,000 per year to run a 24-hour, seven day a week statewide wildlife Emergency Response Service. The service managed over 136,000 calls for help from the Victorian public in 2023 and assisted over 86,000 native animals. The government funding covers less than 10% of the total operating costs for Wildlife Victoria in providing this vital and free service to the State.

"10.1 million dollars for 12,000 shooters to kill ducks for eight weeks a year, versus the funding Wildlife Victoria gets: \$500,000 to try to look after every sick, injured or orphaned native animal. It is an absolute disgrace. The Allan Government should be ashamed of itself." Lisa Palma, CEO of Wildlife Victoria

Wildlife Victoria is taking this as a sign of what is to come for our native animals, and is preparing for wildlife to be under sustained attack while Premier Allan has her finger on the trigger.

Last week, police found around a dozen galahs that had been shot and prepared for human consumption on wetlands in northern Victoria. With the Allan Government proving to be highly pro-shooting, Wildlife Victoria is expecting to see more and more hunters coming to Victorian wetlands for both legal and illegal shooting. Victoria is now positioned to become a haven for shooters and their behaviours.

"Duck shooters will be emboldened by this decision. They will have even less regard for the laws, and we will see more wounding and threatened species being shot this season. We also know that duck rescuers will be feeling increased anxiety over shooter behaviour. We are warning the government that the



wetlands this season could be a bloodbath for our native bird species” **Lisa Palma, CEO of Wildlife Victoria**

Wildlife Victoria joins the public sentiment that trust in the Allan Government and the Labor party was completely undermined on Monday. The measures that are planned for implementation by the Allan Government to purportedly reduce wounding rates are intrinsically flawed and guaranteed to fail. For example, with shooting allowed on thousands of wetlands across the state, it is impossible for the Allan Government to monitor every wetland and observe every single shooter.

Wildlife Victoria and many other animal welfare groups are absolutely committed to fighting against recreational native bird hunting until there is a permanent ban. The government can expect to see an escalation of this issue over the coming months.

“Wildlife Victoria would also like to send our thoughts out to the thousands of Victorians who have shown their support for a ban. We would like to acknowledge all the work all volunteer wildlife rescue and rehabilitators do, and we share the pain you are feeling now in hearing this news. This is a slap in the face for every caring Victorian and the hardworking wildlife rescue volunteers who turn out day after day in their communities attending to wildlife in need.” **Lisa Palma, CEO of Wildlife Victoria**

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For additional information or interview requests, contact Wildlife Victoria’s media team at 0447 193 121 or email media@wildlifestvictoria.org.au