



Parliament of
South Australia

REPORT

OF THE

SELECT COMMITTEE

ON

HUNTING NATIVE BIRDS

*Authorised to be published and distributed by the President of the Legislative Council,
The Hon. T. J. Stephens MLC, on 14 December 2023,
pursuant to Resolution of the Legislative Council on 30 November 2023.*

*President of the Legislative
Council!*

14/12/23

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SELECT COMMITTEE ON HUNTING OF NATIVE BIRDS

The Select Committee on Hunting of Native Birds ('the Committee') is a Parliamentary Committee.

Members of the Committee

Hon. R. B. Martin MLC (Chair)

Hon. N. J. Centofanti MLC

Hon. T. A. Franks MLC

Hon. S. L. Game MLC

Hon. B. R. Hood MLC

Hon. I. K. Hunter MLC

Hon. F. Pangallo MLC

Committee Secretary

Ms L. Guy

Research Officer

Dr M. Brown

Contact Details

Address Select Committee on Hunting of Native Birds
 Parliament House
 North Terrace
 Adelaide SA 5000

Telephone (08) 8237 9498

Email scnativebirds@parliament.sa.gov.au

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 9 March 2023, a Select Committee of the Legislative Council (the Committee) was established to inquire into and report on Hunting of Native Birds in South Australia (the Inquiry).

The main reasons presented to the Committee for retaining native bird hunting were that:

- Native birds are an important food source that is organic and free range, is shared amongst family and friends, and there is pride associated with sourcing one's own food;
- Native bird hunting is more than just a sport or recreational activity, but a tradition that is inter-generational and cultural, as well as a philosophical, moral and lifestyle choice which is related to the "field-to-plate" ethos;
- Hunters provided benefits to the economy, particularly in regional areas;
- Native bird hunting is a sustainable activity and may be used as an important tool for game management;
- Many hunters undertook conservation activities, such as weeding, feral animal management, building and placing nest boxes, or owning land that is suitable habitat for wildlife;
- Physical and mental health benefits were gained which were often associated with the camaraderie aspects of hunting; and
- Hunters were concerned about animal welfare and that they spent time practising shooting so that they could ensure clean kills during open season.

The main reasons presented to the Committee for supporting a ban on native bird hunting were:

- Philosophical, moral or ethical opposition to native bird hunting;
- Wounding rates and/or welfare of wounded native birds;
- Native bird hunting for the purposes of recreation has been banned in other states, such as WA, Qld and NSW;
- Concerns about negative impacts native bird hunting has on populations of native birds;
- Negative environmental impacts from hunters, such as disturbing birds and other animals and leaving a mess, and/or negative impacts on locals, such as noise pollution and finding dead birds and empty cartridges on their properties;
- Poor shooter behaviour, such as inhumane killing or shooting non-target species, and/or lack of enforcement;
- Concerns that hunting is impacting upon the ability of ecotourism businesses to operate during open seasons and that ecotourism is preferable to open season hunting; and
- Hunting is not good for mental health and/or causes mental trauma to vets and rescuers.

The Committee made 11 recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After carefully considering the evidence, the Committee makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1:

The Committee recommends that:

- a) The Minister for Climate, Environment and Water retains the provision within the *National Parks & Wildlife Act 1972* (NPW Act) that allows for native bird hunting;
- b) Permit holders are required to wear a large, visible identity tag when hunting on Crown Land; and
- c) The Department for Environment and Water (DEW) consults with key stakeholders on the implementation of (b).

Recommendation 2:

The Committee recommends that a two (2) year transition and five (5) year review take place.

Recommendation 3:

The Committee recommends that animal welfare becomes a Term of Reference for the DEW stakeholder group that advises the Minister with respect of native bird hunting open season.

Recommendation 4:

The Committee recommends that:

- a) a review of the Code of Practice for the Humane Destruction of Birds by Shooting in South Australia (the Code of Practice) be conducted with input from key stakeholders;
- b) the Code of Practice contain clear definitions of acceptable methods of killing of native birds; and
- c) that a copy of the Code of Practice be supplied to all permit holders.

Recommendation 5:

The Committee recommends that breaches of the NPW Act should attract more serious penalties than currently exist and should include consideration of a suspension of hunting permit of up to two (2) years.

Recommendation 6:

The Committee recommends that:

- a) All native bird hunting permit holders must be a member of a recognised and registered shooting organisation; and
- b) A first time holder of a permit on their first shoot must be accompanied by an experienced member appointed by a registered shooting organisation.

Recommendation 7:

The Committee recommends that should a native bird hunting ban be enforced in Victoria, consideration should be given to preferencing South Australian residents in the issuing of native bird hunting permits.

Recommendation 8:

The Committee recommends that a system be developed by DEW for permit holders to be able to report on the number of birds shot and recovered.

Recommendation 9:

The Committee recommends increased funding for DEW to provide appropriate resourcing of compliance, including observing the open season.

Recommendation 10:

The Committee recommends that recognised and registered shooting organisations appoint Marshalls to assist other shooters on Crown Land during native bird hunting open season.

Recommendation 11:

The Committee recommends that use of lead shot be banned for all native bird hunting in South Australia.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACT	Australian Capital Territory
CHASA	Conservation and Hunting Alliance of SA
Committee	Select Committee on Hunting of Native Birds
DEW	South Australian Department for Environment and Water
EAWS	Eastern Australian Waterbird Aerial Survey – carried out by the University of NSW
Inquiry	Inquiry into Hunting of Native Birds in South Australia
Minister	SA Minister for Climate, Environment and Water
Native bird hunting	Game or recreational hunting of native birds (usually native duck and/or quail species) in South Australia, in accordance with s 53(1)(c) of the <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972</i> and the declaration by the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water of an open season
NSW	New South Wales
NPW Act	<i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972</i>
NT	Northern Territory
RSPCA (SA)	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (South Australian branch)
SA	South Australia(n)
SAPOL	South Australian Police
Qld	Queensland
Tas	Tasmania
Vic	Victoria
WA	Western Australia
WIT	Waterfowl Identification Test

INTRODUCTION

On 9 March 2023, a Select Committee of the Legislative Council (the Committee) was established to inquire into and report on Hunting of Native Birds in South Australia (the inquiry).

Background to native bird hunting in South Australia

Hunting is defined as: “to chase (game or other wild animals) for the purpose of catching or killing”¹. In Australia, most hunting is conducted for the purposes of wildlife management, usually as part of a pest mitigation program. In some Australian jurisdictions, including South Australia (SA), hunting is allowed in accordance with a declared open season (sometimes called game or recreational hunting). Some native birds (ducks and quail in SA) that are ordinarily protected in accordance with state legislation will become exempt from that legislation during the open season. This inquiry is concerned with native bird hunting in SA during a declared open season.

The hunting of native birds in SA during an open season (referred to in this inquiry as ‘native bird hunting’) is regulated by the SA Department for Environment and Water (DEW) in accordance with the:

- *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* (NPW Act);
- *National Parks and Wildlife (National Parks) Regulations 2016*;
- *National Parks and Wildlife (Hunting) Regulations 2011*;
- *Animal Welfare Act 1985* (AW Act); and
- *Animal Welfare Regulations 2012*.

The South Australian Police (SAPOL) regulates all forms firearm hunting in accordance with the *Firearms Act 2015* and *Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935* and associated regulations.

Licences and/or permits are required to undertake hunting of any kind in SA, but requirements for permits differ on what is being hunted and why, and who is doing the hunting. Native bird hunting requires:

- A firearms licence from SAPOL; and
- Hunting permit(s) and, possibly, camping permit(s) from DEW; and
- Passing the Waterfowl Identification Test (WIT).

Hunting on private land in SA requires written permission from the landowner/occupier.

The species of native birds that can be hunted in accordance with s 53(1)(c) of the NPW Act during an open season are:

- Grey teal (*Anas gracilis*)
- Chestnut teal (*Anas castanea*)
- Pacific black duck (*Anas superciliosa*)
- Australian shelduck (Mountain duck) (*Tadorna tadornoides*)
- Maned (Wood) duck (*Chenonetta jubata*)
- *Pink-eared duck (*Malacorhynchus membranaceus*)

¹ Macquarie Concise Dictionary (2008) (4th Edition), Macquarie Dictionary Publishers Pty Ltd, The University of Sydney, NSW, pg. 585

- *Hardhead (*Aythya australis*); and
- Stubble quail (*Coturnix pectoralis*).

*Exempt from the 2023 open season in SA.

Open season in SA generally lasts 14 weeks. The 2023 SA season commenced 18 March and closed 25 June for ducks and 29 April till 30 July for quail. The decision to declare an open season resides with the SA Minister for Climate, Environment and Water (the Minister), in accordance with s 52 of the NPW Act. The Minister in making their decision considers feedback from the community stakeholder group who evaluates the impacts of hunting on duck and quail abundance.

The technical or scientific criteria used for decision making about the sustainability of native bird hunting is data collected or collated by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW). For example:

Each year the department organises the 'Wetland and Waterfowl' surveys in the Fleurieu, Murraylands, Riverland, Coorong and South East Regions. These surveys occur in the last week of October and first week of November, with the aim of surveying at the same time as the EAWS [Eastern Australian Waterbird Aerial Survey] and South Australian aerial surveys ... these surveys have now run for 20 years. Data collected are used as indicators of trends in duck abundance and distribution, and wetland condition.

Correspondence from DEW received and published, pg. 2

Other data collated by DEW are from the Eastern Australian Waterbird Aerial Survey (EAWS) run by the University of New South Wales which provides data on waterbird abundance, distribution and breeding. Data from the Bureau of Meteorology and other remotely sensed climate and habitat condition information helps inform the setting of open season conditions and bag restrictions.

DEW made publicly available the [decision making process and information and data](#) that went into its Ministerial briefing package with respect to the 2023 open season.

A native bird hunting permit from DEW requires that hunters comply with the [Code of Practice for the Humane Destruction of Birds by Shooting in South Australia](#) (the Code of Practice). Also, [guidelines](#) that outline good hunting practises have been produced by DEW and the Conservation and Hunting Alliance of SA (CHASA). As of 24 May 2023, 1,281 duck hunting and 224 quail hunting permits were issued by DEW for the 2023 open season².

Terms of Reference

To inquire into and report on the Hunting of Native Birds in South Australia, with particular reference to:

- a) Community values and perspective;
- b) Cultural, social and recreational aspects;
- c) Sustainability, environmental and animal welfare aspects of native bird hunting;
- d) Economic considerations;
- e) Perspectives of First Nations;
- f) How native bird hunting is managed in other jurisdictions; and
- g) Any other relevant matter.

² Evidence, 24 May 2023, Ms L. Loan, DEW

Conduct of the Inquiry

The Committee advertised the inquiry in *The Australian*, *The Advertiser*, *InDaily*, and some regional newspapers. The Committee received written submissions from 1,651 interested stakeholders. Details of the submissions received and published are included in Appendix 1.

The Committee travelled to the Riverland on the 23 and 24 August 2023 and the South-East on 22 November. The Committee heard evidence from 9 witnesses in the Riverland and 12 in the South-East.

The Committee met in Adelaide on 6 occasions to hear evidence from 22 witnesses. A list of witnesses is included in Appendix 2.

A list of websites used in this report is included in Appendix 3.

Committee Hansard is cited throughout this report as: evidence, [date of hearing], [name of witness and/or organisation], [page reference in the Committee Hansard].

Submissions received by the Committee in bulk

The Committee received 563 emails via the [Do Gooder website](#). 561 emails supported a ban on native bird hunting in SA. Two of the emails did not oppose hunting. Although not dealt with individually in this report, issues raised by the emails supporting a ban on native bird hunting were:

- Philosophical opposition; e.g. it's cruel and unnecessary;
- Sustainability or conservation; e.g. populations of waterbirds are in long term decline;
- Tourism vs hunting; e.g. ecotourism is preferable to, and incompatible with, open season; and
- Animal welfare; e.g. the numbers of birds that are wounded, disturbed or killed inhumanely.

People who submitted via the Do Gooder website came from SA, Victoria, ACT and Queensland. A number of the emails sported regional SA postcodes; i.e. the Eyre and Yorke Peninsulas, the Riverland and South-East.

The Committee also received 501 emails that were short in nature supporting a ban on native bird hunting in SA. The numbers in brackets are the number of comments received and do not add up to 501 because many submitters mentioned more than one reason in their submission.

The main reasons for supporting a ban on native bird hunting were:

- Philosophical, moral or ethical opposition to native bird hunting; e.g. it's cruel, barbaric, inhumane, senseless, disgusting, unnecessary, etc. (464 emails);
- Wounding rates and/or welfare of wounded native birds (146 emails);
- Native bird hunting for the purposes of recreation has been banned in other states, such as WA, Qld and NSW (104 emails);
- Concerns about negative impacts native bird hunting has on populations of native birds (53 emails);
- Negative environmental impacts from hunters, such as disturbing birds and other animals and leaving a mess, and/or negative impacts on locals, such as noise pollution and finding dead birds and empty cartridges on their properties (51 emails);
- Poor shooter behaviour, such as inhumane killing or shooting non-target species, and/or lack of enforcement (41 emails);

- There is only a small minority of people wanting to hunt for native birds and/or the majority of the SA population would support a ban (37 emails);
- Concerns that hunting is impacting upon the ability of ecotourism businesses to operate during open seasons and that ecotourism is preferable to open season hunting (29 emails); and
- Hunting is not good for mental health and/or causes mental trauma to vets and rescuers (6 emails).

The Committee received 393 short submissions to support native bird hunting. Reasons stated in submissions to continue an open season each year were as follows:

- Native birds are an important food source that is organic and free range, is shared amongst family and friends, and there is pride associated with sourcing one's own food (203 emails);
- That native bird hunting is more than just a sport or recreational activity, but a tradition that is inter-generational and cultural, as well as a philosophical, moral and lifestyle choice which is related to the "field-to-plate" ethos (194 emails);
- Benefits to the economy (168 emails), particularly spending in regional areas;
- That native bird hunting is a sustainable activity and may be used as an important tool for game management (136 emails);
- Many hunters stated they undertook conservation activities, such as weeding, feral animal management, building and placing nest boxes, or owning land that is suitable habitat for wildlife (136 emails);
- Physical and mental health benefits (84 emails) which were often associated with the camaraderie aspects of hunting (97 emails); and
- Training of and spending time with gundogs which are sometimes used in conservation activities (28 emails).

Finally, thirty-nine (39) submitters stated that they were concerned about animal welfare and that they spent time practising shooting so that they could ensure clean kills during open season.

TERM OF REFERENCE 1: Community values and perspectives

The evidence received by the Committee demonstrated the deep divide in values and perspectives between the pro- and anti-hunting groups. The split was between those (referred to in this report as ‘pro-hunting’) who wanted to keep native bird hunting in SA, and those (‘anti-hunting’) who wanted to ban native bird hunting. This report provides a summary of submitters’ and witnesses’ reasons for retaining native bird hunting, and reasons for banning it.

Pro-hunting perspectives

Submitters who wanted to continue having an open season in SA were keen to highlight the legitimacy of their activities. Submitters and witnesses reminded the Committee that sustainable use of natural resources was enshrined in a variety of international conservation agreements:

Sustainable use is endorsed by the World Conservation Strategy produced by the World Conservation Union (formerly IUCN), The Parties to CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Submission #42 Conservation & Wildlife Research Trust, pg. 5

The Committee heard from Prof. B. Hiller that pro-hunting perspectives are aligned with a utilitarian view of natural resources that places importance on the sustainability of the whole waterfowl population rather than individuals within the population³. For example, Prof. Hiller argued in his submission that:

When conditions are favorable more ducks breed and a large number of ducks enter the population, when the conditions are not favorable a lot of ducks die as the population shrinks back to its core breeding size based on how much wetland habitat is available on the landscape. Ducks will die regardless and human hunting is one way to use those excess ducks produced during favorable conditions.

Submission #113 Prof. B. Hiller, pg. 3

Further, Prof. Hiller argued in his submission that banning open season will lead to a devaluing of the natural resource because it will likely convert to pest status:

This will in effect convert a currently valuable resources into an agricultural pest to be shot at will, either with or without a permit, without regard for species present ... the current system allows for regulated take when conditions are favorable. Pest management will take place whenever ducks are deemed a nuisance to a particular farmer, even during a breeding season.

Submission #113 Prof. B. Hiller, pg. 3

Pro-hunting submitters argued that native bird hunting is not a sport, but a lifestyle and a moral choice about the food they, their families and friends eat: i.e. “free-range” and “organic” food that has been harvested⁴, reflecting a “field-to-plate”⁵ ethos:

³ Evidence, 10 May 2023, Prof B. Hiller

⁴ Submissions #3, 11, 17, 32, 35, 46, 51, 56, 127, 151, 188 & 193

⁵ Submission #51 Field & Game Australia; see also submission #69

Hunting promotes self-reliance and a sustainable relationship with our natural resources. It encourages ethical and humane treatment of animals, ensuring that the food we harvest is obtained in a respectful and responsible manner. This connection to food through hunting helps cultivate a sense of gratitude and promotes a more conscious and mindful approach to our dietary choices.

Submission #51 Field & Game Australia, pg. 14

I'm not a cruel man or antiquated barbarian as certain extremist animal liberation members would label me, but simply just a bloke who enjoys the opportunity to get outside in our great outdoors with family and friends and harvest wild game as opposed to driving down to Coles or Woolworths and buying a packet of plastic wrapped sausages.

Submission #35 Mr S. Day, pp. 1&2

The philosophical viewpoint by pro-hunting submitters was perhaps best expressed by: “the gathering of wild food is an act of freedom that cannot be taken away”⁶ and “people expect and have a right to harvest fish and game when environmental conditions allow”⁷. Pro-hunting submitters spoke positively about being able to harvest and prepare food: “what a totally awesome experience ... to take the game you have harvested dress it down clean it up and take it home to cook there is no better feeling of self worth and independence ...”⁸.

Also, pro-hunting submitters felt that the suffering of animals being shot in the wild was less than those that are harvested commercially: “when compared to the suffering of confined factory raised animals my conscience is clear”⁹.

The Committee also heard that a survey conducted by CHASA indicated that: “over 90% of respondents are opposed to the banning of wild duck and quail hunting”¹⁰.

Pro-hunting submitters went on to admit that their values differ to some of those in the community¹¹, but argued that, as a society, we should appreciate diverse values and perspectives¹². There was also a strong belief from pro-hunting submitters that values belonging to anti-hunting groups should not be elevated over their own¹³.

Anti-hunting perspectives

With very few exceptions, anti-hunting submitters used words such as barbaric, cruel, inhumane, unnecessary, etc. to describe what they felt was the treatment of native birds by hunters during open season. All anti-hunting submitters called for a ban on native bird hunting, citing that further regulations would not help to reduce what they said was the animal suffering involved in the activity.

Submitters who opposed native bird hunting in SA argued that community values have shifted, and that native bird hunting no longer met community expectations¹⁴. This, they argue, is because community values towards natural resources have become more protectionist, and that wildlife should exist for its

⁶ Submission #108 Mr M. Louend, pg. 1

⁷ Submission #123 Mr P. Clancey, pg. 2

⁸ Submission #128 Mr H. Gotts, pg. 1

⁹ Submission #108 Mr M. Louend, pg. 1; evidence, 22 November 2023, South East Field and Game Association

¹⁰ Evidence, 6 September 2023, Mr R. West, CHASA, pg. 98

¹¹ Submission #5

¹² Submissions #39 & 51

¹³ Submissions #17, 33, 34, 42 & 62

¹⁴ Submissions #2, 4, 7, 20, 27, 31, 38, 40, 79, 105, 135, 137 & 142

own sake and not for how it can be used by humans (also known as intrinsic value)¹⁵: “the community at large places a high social value on native wildlife and its ongoing protection”¹⁶.

To support the argument that community attitudes towards native bird hunting have shifted, anti-hunting submitters referred to surveys that have been conducted to gauge community attitudes towards native bird hunting. The Australia Institute, in its submission, provided some statistics to support community consensus with a ban on duck and quail shooting: “76% of South Australians support a ban on duck and quail shooting, including 48% who “strongly agree” with the proposal”¹⁷. BirdsSA¹⁸ referred to a Household Omnibus Survey conducted by McGregor Tan in 2011 on native bird hunting which indicated that:

... 83% of respondents were opposed to shooting native ducks and quail. The number opposed rose from 61% to 83% once respondents were aware that some birds were wounded or maimed.

Submission #48 BirdsSA, pg. 13

Further support for community sentiment was provided by anti-hunting submitters citing ReachTEL’s survey in 2020 that found more than 70% of respondents across the electorates of Adelaide, King and Newland did not want hunting of native birds in SA and wanted their elected Members to end the activity¹⁹. Anti-hunting submitters also referred to “... a petition [in 1998] with over 52,000 signatures was presented to the South Australian Parliament demanding an end to duck shooting”²⁰.

The Committee heard evidence that a uComms poll conducted in 2023 in regional SA found that:

Regional SA was 5-3 in favour of a ban ... we also aligned this to party political voting intentions. Interestingly, Country Liberals were 5-3 in favour of a ban and SA-Best supporters were 5-3 in favour of a ban.

Evidence, 25 October 2023, Mr S. Langley, BirdsSA, pg. 136

Anti-hunting submitters also argued that there are decreasing numbers of hunters, approximately 0.06% of the population²¹, and that the locking up of public lakes and rivers to provide for the use of a very few takes away the rights of the majority (locals in particular) to enjoy public lands safely and peaceably²². The Committee heard evidence from the Animal Justice Party that:

... earlier this year [2023], Regional Victorians Opposed to Duck Shooting conducted a survey, which is one of the first to measure this impact on residents and communities. So 50 per cent of respondents identified that they had concerns for their safety due to duck or quail shooting nearby, 50 per cent identified that they had suffered stress or anxiety due to bird shooting, 82 per cent who had made a report to authorities were not satisfied that their concerns were appropriately responded to and over 90 per cent don’t believe that duck shooting has a net benefit to their community.

Before we just dismiss this as just a bunch of city slickers filling in surveys, nearly 40 per cent of the respondents lived within three kilometres of where duck shooting occurs ...

Evidence, 25 October 2023, Ms N. Kopas, Animal Justice Party, pg. 148

¹⁵ Submissions #41, 48 & 153

¹⁶ Submission #148 Geelong Duck Rescue, pg. 2

¹⁷ Submission #149 The Australia Institute, pg. 1; see also pg. 4

¹⁸ Submission #48

¹⁹ Submissions #38 & 135

²⁰ Submission #48 BirdsSA, pg. 13

²¹ Submissions #48 & 37

²² Submissions #134 & 148

Anti-hunting submitters referred to other jurisdictions (i.e. WA in 1990, NSW in 1995 and Qld in 2005) that had banned native bird hunting open seasons as evidence that Australian community attitudes towards native bird hunting had changed²³.

Finally, anti-hunting submitters argued that the inevitable wounding, and resultant bird suffering, inherent to native bird hunting renders the activity unethical and unacceptable, regardless of the conclusions drawn about its sustainability or environmental impact²⁴. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) and Australian Veterinary Association support a ban on open season in SA because of the inevitable wounding that occurs²⁵:

RSPCA nationally agreed policy is that we oppose the hunting of native birds because it causes unnecessary injury, pain, suffering, distress and death ... regardless of duck numbers ...

[and] ... ducks that are wounded and retrieved by hunters who fail to kill them quickly ... and humanely by acceptable methods.

Evidence, 21 June 2023, Mr M. Gehrig, RSPCA (SA), pg. 38.

Aspects of animal welfare are dealt with in more detail at TOR 3 (sustainability, environmental and animal welfare aspects of native bird hunting).

Committee's findings

The Committee found that:

1. Community values and perspectives on the hunting of native birds are divided between those who support native bird hunting and those who wish to see it banned;
2. The values held by the opposing parties are unlikely to ever be reconciled because they are so distinct and deeply held; and
3. There is conflicting evidence on whether the broader SA community supports or is against native bird hunting, with surveys showing different results.

Recommendation 1:

The Committee recommends that:

- a) The Minister retains the provision within the *National Parks & Wildlife Act 1972* that allows for native bird hunting;
- b) Permit holders are required to wear a large, visible identity tag when hunting on Crown Land; and
- c) DEW consults with key stakeholders on the implementation of (b).

Recommendation 2:

The Committee recommends that a two (2) year transition and five (5) year review take place.

²³ Submissions #2, 4, 14, 31, 79, 121, 135, 142, 147, 148 & 153

²⁴ Submissions #38 & 49

²⁵ Submissions #38 & 50

TERM OF REFERENCE 2: Cultural, social and recreational aspects

Pro-hunting

Pro-hunting submitters were keen to point out that hunting for native birds is a tradition that involves family and friends and is often inter-generational²⁶. For example:

My family has lived in the township of Stansbury, South Australia 5582, since the 1890's. We have always hunted the Native Birds for food ... it brings back memories to my Father of his hunting, his Father and Grand father.

Submission #1 Mr C.N. Roberts, pg. 1

Further, pro-hunting submitters pointed out that important social connections are made in hunting camps; connections that are made because of their shared interest in hunting native birds:

Hunting native birds is a special social occasion involving old friends, who meet around a campfire and discuss the hunt ahead of them and the special arrangements that are needed to be a proficient and legal hunter. Indeed, many of the campfire conversations are ones of a social nature, old friends, their lives, their families, the work, the weather etc. Often this meeting up again is an annual event and there is much to catch up on.

Submission #34 Mr L. Warneke, pg. 1

Significantly, pro-hunting submitters contended that native bird hunting has deep-rooted cultural and historical significance for some in the hunting community, connecting individuals to their heritage and traditional practices²⁷, such as harvesting and sharing food with family and friends²⁸. Pro-hunting submitters were keen to point out that native bird hunting allows hunters to maintain a close relationship with nature and an authentic relationship with food, as opposed to being disconnected from their foods' origins²⁹.

The Conservation & Wildlife Research Trust, in its submission, pointed out that: "actual hunting is only a small part of a complex recreational pursuit that involves travel, fellowship, camaraderie, community development, and provision of 'bush' food"³⁰.

Finally, pro-hunting submitters³¹ shared with the Committee what they believe to be benefits to their mental and physical health from native bird hunting. For example:

PTSD is a long-lasting debilitating mental health condition which can be greatly assisted through this form of healthy outdoor activity [native bird hunting]. Early morning solitude with just the company of your hunting dog, the beauty of dawn and a new day and the awakening wildlife is a big part of duck hunting. Camping with comrades who share the culture, and also veterans, is a non-threatening form of socializing that is important to the veteran community.

²⁶ Submissions #5, 13, 25, 26, 115, 131, 151 & 155

²⁷ Submissions #51, 113 & 183

²⁸ Submissions #3, 6, 8, 26, 115, 119, 120, 122, 151 & 152

²⁹ Submissions #51, 69, 87 & 113

³⁰ Submission #42 Conservation & Wildlife Research Trust, pg. 8

³¹ Submission #58

Submission #144 Mr M. von Berg MC OAM, Royal Australian Regiment Association (SA) Inc., pg. 1

Pro-hunting submitters also pointed out there was some evidence to support positive mental and physical wellbeing benefits, with 65% of hunters and shooters achieving or exceeding the minimum recommended weekly activity levels³². Also, that hunting provides an opportunity for respite from the modern digital world:

Waterfowl hunting is an outdoor activity that promotes good health by being out in the environment breathing in the fresh air, staring at the horizon, or river system, or creek, not staring at the iPad, computer, or smart phone. This promotes a sense of connection with our natural environment, which has huge beneficial flow on effects for our mental well being ...

Submission #110 Mr A. Zimmerman, pg. 1

Anti-hunting

The RSPCA pointed out, in its submission, that there are questionable benefits for mental health: "... the last thing you would want to give a person struggling with mental health is a shotgun"³³. The RSPCA goes on further to refer to literature³⁴ that finds hunting in the United States is associated with a broader culture of gun ownership that reinforces a historical and social relationship between guns, masculinities, and violence.

Other anti-hunting submissions highlighted that children should not be exposed to the killing of native birds, and that it is contradictory, in a society that abhors violence upon women and children, that children should be involved in hunting activities³⁵.

Anti-hunting submissions also highlighted the trauma to which duck rescuers and vets are exposed each open season³⁶:

The mental strain and compassion fatigue experienced by those involved in animal care and wildlife rescue is well documented. Not-for-profit organisation Wildlife Victoria, who has taken over the provision of duck triage services at the Victorian season opening in recent years, commit \$1.14 million towards volunteer services, with a prioritisation on mental health, in 2022 ...

the author [submission #104] has also personally witnessed the distress of watching birds, who were healthy minutes earlier, fall from the sky during duck shooting, as well as been confronted by the injuries and wasted life; the same can be said of the entire volunteer rescuer presence.

Submission #104 Dr B. Oppenheimer, pg. 5

Finally, the negative impact the sounds of shooting has upon locals, particularly those whose property borders wetlands³⁷, was evident from submissions: "those of us living adjacent to or near wetlands where shooting occurs feel unsafe and disturbed once the noise starts"³⁸. A local submitted that:

³² Submissions #51, 119 & 122

³³ Submission #38 RSPCA, pg. 7

³⁴ See submission #38, pg. 7: Hall-Sanchez, A.K. (2018). Male hunting subcultures and violence against women. In [The Routledge international handbook of violence studies](#) (Eds. W.S. DeKeseredy, C.M. Rennison & A.K. Hall-Sanchez) (pp. 329-338). Routledge, London

³⁵ Submissions #14, 48, 70, 137, 153, 167 & 182

³⁶ Submissions #2, 38, 65, 68, 98, 104, 137 & 185; evidence, 22 November 2023, Mr J. Thomson

³⁷ Submissions #38, 104 & 134

³⁸ Submission #134 St Arnaud Field Naturalist Club, pg. 1

- *We feel physically anxious as men in dinghies shoot all day in the river and creeks adjoining our property.*
- *Our dog pushed through the flyscreen door to find a place of safety from the noise of shotguns.*
- *There is no policing of the shooting zone. We have been required to personally intercept shooters in dinghies to advise them that they are shooting in illegal places.*

Submission #80 Personal information withheld, pg. 3

Committee's findings

The Committee found that:

4. There are deeply divergent opinions as to whether native bird hunting provides positive social, cultural or recreational benefits;
5. Native bird hunting has important historic, cultural and social ties for members of the hunting community, and that it helps form a desirable connection to the source of their food (the field-to-plate ethos); and
6. Attitudes towards mental health benefits depends upon individuals' perspectives, with hunters claiming positive mental health benefits through shared activities and socialising, and duck rescuers and vets claiming trauma from being exposed to injured and dying birds. Further, some locals reported negative mental health impacts from noise from shooting and being unable to peaceably enjoy their properties.

TERM OF REFERENCE 3: Sustainability, environmental and animal welfare aspects of native bird hunting

Pro-hunting

Sustainability and conservation

Pro-hunting submitters argued that native bird hunting is a sustainable activity under the current strict regulations³⁹, and that it is in the interests of hunters to ensure sustainability to provide opportunities for future generations of hunters⁴⁰.

Pro-hunting submitters also pointed out that Australia's primary environmental legislation, the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* promotes the ecologically sustainable use of natural resources⁴¹. Pursuant to this principle, the Committee heard that waterbirds, i.e. ducks, breed irruptively when conditions are good and that duck numbers at these times are likely to exceed the habitats' ecological carrying capacity⁴². This means that individual ducks, in excess of the habitats' carrying capacity (i.e. surplus ducks), will die⁴³ and, that when this is the case, an inability to collect native birds for food is a waste of a natural resource.

The Committee heard from DEW officers that 1,281 duck hunting and 224 quail hunting permits were issued for the 2023 open season and a daily bag limit of eight (8) ducks/day and 25 quail/day⁴⁴. The Committee also heard evidence that the total harvest of waterfowl would likely represent less than 5% of the total population⁴⁵.

Pro-hunting submitters supported an adaptive management program for gamebirds, pointing out that the current way of managing waterfowl in SA is reactive, and that current waterbird surveys were not really designed or intended for gamebird management⁴⁶. Pro-hunting submitters⁴⁷ expressed a desire to move towards an adaptive harvest management policy (similar to Victoria's) to manage native waterbirds and the need for fit-for-purpose accurate and reliable data to determine abundance and other metrics.

Pro-hunting submitters were keen to point out that an unintended consequence of banning native bird hunting will be a reduction in conservation effort⁴⁸. The hunting community has been involved in:

³⁹ Submissions #11, 46, 114, 115, 122 & 131

⁴⁰ Submissions #13 & 16

⁴¹ Submission #42

⁴² Evidence, 10 May 2023, Prof. B. Hiller, Bemidji State University; submission #113; Hall, G.P. (2021) Exploring the current and future sustainability of duck and quail hunting in Australia. SSAA Inc, Unley SA.

⁴³ Submissions #17 & 24

⁴⁴ Evidence, 24 May 2023, Ms L. Loan, DEW

⁴⁵ Evidence, 22 November 2023, Lake Bonney Sporting Clays

⁴⁶ Submissions #42 & 51; Hall, G.P. (2021) Exploring the current and future sustainability of duck and quail hunting in Australia. SSAA Inc, Unley SA.

⁴⁷ Submissions #42, 51 & 113

⁴⁸ Submissions #11, 32, 102 & 113

- building and maintaining nest boxes, planting trees, clearing rubbish, and have an interest in preserving wetlands for native waterbird habitat⁴⁹;
- feral management programs, such as [Bounceback](#)⁵⁰;
- helping DEW rangers with frog, and other species, surveys⁵¹;
- managing the Loveday wetland complex⁵² and provision of funding to Tolderol Game Reserve⁵³; and
- private ownership and/or management of land that is dedicated to conservation⁵⁴.

The Barmera Moorook Field & Game submission⁵⁵ pointed out that one of their members, Mr Peter Schramm, was bestowed the Order of Australia Medal for his work on wetland rehabilitation and managing the Loveday wetland complex. Wetlands & Wildlife pointed out in its submission⁵⁶ that, as a private conservation organisation, it manages 27,000 hectares of wetlands and native terrestrial areas.

Further, “creation of new or pre-existing wetland habitat has largely been brought about through demand from hunting groups and individuals. The great bird watching areas of Bool Lagoon and Tolderol Game Reserves would not exist if not for the hunting fraternity”⁵⁷.

Finally, the Working Gundog Association of Australia Inc (SA)⁵⁸ stated the use of gundogs in conservation work would be lost if a ban on native bird hunting was enacted:

The traits found in Working Gundogs make them a vital resource for conservation groups around Australia for detection of endangered animals, invasive weeds and pest detection ... South Australia[n] Working Gundog breeders are one of the main resources for these Conservation organisations; without the ability to breed and select from a pool of true Working Gundogs which are actively used in the hunting field this home grown resource as a valuable Conservation tool would be lost.

Submission #117 Working Gundog Association of Australia Inc (SA), pg. 2

Welfare

Pro-hunting submitters were keen to point out that they always aim for clean quick kills and that there is nothing to be gained by not killing in the most humane way possible⁵⁹. Further, Prof. B. Hiller, in his submission, pointed out that: “an individual who undertakes [a] protracted, expensive and difficult process [to get the necessary permits] is highly unlikely to intentionally shoot ducks and leave them unused on the landscape”⁶⁰.

⁴⁹ Submissions #5, 22, 29 & 102

⁵⁰ Submission #28

⁵¹ Submissions #36, 46 & 154

⁵² Submission #46

⁵³ Submission #42

⁵⁴ Submissions #37, 55 & 62

⁵⁵ Submission #46

⁵⁶ Submission #55

⁵⁷ Submission #106, Mr R. Storr, pg. 1

⁵⁸ Submission #117

⁵⁹ Submissions #25 & 122

⁶⁰ Submission #113, Prof. B. Hiller, Bemidji State University, pg. 3

Further, the use of decoys⁶¹ and retrieving dogs⁶², carefully judged distances from birds⁶³ and clay shooting practice during non-open season⁶⁴ all assist in keeping the numbers of birds wounded to a minimum.

Pro-hunting submitters pointed out that the wounding of animals during legitimate hunting activities can be minimised, but not avoided altogether, but that the percentage of wounded birds has steadily decreased as hunter education has increased⁶⁵. A [recent x-ray study \(2022\) undertaken by the Game Management Authority in Victoria](#) (referred to by Mr West, CHASA⁶⁶, while giving his evidence) stated that 3.4% (n=20) of captured ducks (N=596) had embedded pellets (i.e. ducks that were wounded and survived).

Pro-hunting submitters⁶⁷ were also keen to point out that hunting ducks as pests (as is carried out in all states) also likely has a wounding rate, but without the regulation surrounding native bird hunting during a declared open season. Mr E. Toskas pointed out, in his submission, that: “rather than taking the approach of other states and treating ducks as pests, South Australia takes the approach of treating ducks as a valuable food resource”⁶⁸.

Anti-hunting

Sustainability and conservation

The Committee heard evidence from Mr C. Purnell, BirdLife Australia, that populations of waterbirds were in decline. Mr Purnell explained that the Australian Waterbird Index took approximately: “... four million records from 25 databases including state-based databases ... [generating] over 9,800 trends at different scales, temporally and spatially”⁶⁹. He went on further to explain that:

The results were not great ... across the board nationally we had observed, through this data ... over 50 per cent of water species that had trends available were declining ... where there were available datasets, six of the eight game species showed long-term downward trends ... and the remaining two—hardhead and pink-eared duck—demonstrated short-term downward trends.

Evidence, 20 September 2023, Mr C. Purnell, BirdLife Australia, pg. 129

Mr Purnell explained to the Committee, during his evidence, that native waterbirds respond to water availability within the landscape at different spatial and temporal scales, and that there is still a lot that needs to be understood about native waterbirds’ population structures and movements across the landscape⁷⁰.

The biggest threat to native waterbird abundance has been identified as habitat loss, wetland areas surveyed have declined by approximately 200,000 hectares (43%)⁷¹, mainly through land use change (from wetlands to primary production) and climate change⁷². Mr Purnell explained to the Committee

⁶¹ Submission #5

⁶² Submissions #11, 32, 71 & 73

⁶³ Submission #5

⁶⁴ Submissions #30 & 32

⁶⁵ Submission #42

⁶⁶ Evidence, 6 September 2023, Mr R. West, CHASA, pg. 113

⁶⁷ Submission #42 & 183

⁶⁸ Submission #183 Mr E. Toskas, pg. 3

⁶⁹ Evidence, 20 September 2023, Mr C. Purnell, BirdLife Australia, pg. 129

⁷⁰ Evidence, 20 September 2023, Mr C. Purnell, BirdLife Australia

⁷¹ Submissions #48 & 142

⁷² Submissions #38, 132, 134 & 135

that: “these large and pervasive effects on populations, which are difficult to change, are multiplied by smaller threats like hunting and feral predators”⁷³.

Anti-hunting submitters maintained that banning native bird hunting would have an immediate positive impact on waterfowl populations:

... South Australians have taken between 12,000 and 80,000 ducks out of the system each year since 2015. Victorians took 350,000 ducks out of the system. So we know that just through stopping hunting, they are the declines we can immediately redress.

Evidence, 20 September 2023, Mr C. Purnell, BirdLife Australia, pg. 131

Of further concern to anti-hunting submitters was the evidence that non-target species of birds (such as Grebes, Eurasian coots, Welcome swallows, Western swamphens, and Blue-winged shovelers), and threatened species of birds (such as Freckled and Blue-billed ducks)⁷⁴, have been shot⁷⁵, or disturbed by hunters:

The presence of humans and noise of gunfire within resident waterbodies and in surrounding natural areas is aversive to many native species, both waterbirds and otherwise. This less direct influence was exemplified in 2022, with Victorian rescuers documenting at least six Black Swan nests abandoned by parent birds due to the disruption caused by duck shooters.

Submission #104 Dr B. Oppenheimer, pg. 7

Finally, the Committee heard that it is contradictory to provide funding for conservation for threatened species at a Federal government level, only for some states to keep allowing an anthropogenic threat, such as hunting, to occur⁷⁶.

Welfare

To anti-hunting submitters, any level of wounding of birds is unacceptable: “rather than quibbling about wounding rates, we submit that any number of birds injured but not killed outright is unacceptably high on welfare grounds”⁷⁷.

Animal welfare was cited by anti-hunting submitters as being the main reason for banning the activity. Submitters⁷⁸ referred to the position taken by the RSPCA and Australian Veterinary Association that native bird hunting should be banned on animal welfare grounds. The Committee heard and saw evidence that birds have been wounded and not retrieved and dispatched by hunters:

This is a slide of a cripple. This poor little wood duck was found five days after the close of shooting in Victoria just bobbing on the water. It couldn't fly. It was taken to the vet and X-rayed and it had these five pellets embedded in its body. It had to be euthanised because it was in a poor state. This duck had not been picked up.

Evidence, 21 June 2023, Dr S. Pope, South Aussies for Animals, pg. 51

⁷³ Evidence, 20 September 2023, Mr C. Purnell, BirdLife Australia, pg. 131

⁷⁴ Listed as threatened in Victoria: https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0021/655410/FFG-Threatened-List-June-2023.pdf

⁷⁵ Submission #104 Dr B. Oppenheimer, pp. 9-21; see also submissions #148, 153 & 191

⁷⁶ Evidence, 20 September 2023, Mr C. Purnell, BirdLife Australia; see also submissions #81 & 148

⁷⁷ Evidence, 20 September 2023, Dr R. Elliott, Sentient, pg. 124

⁷⁸ Submissions #104 & 121

The RSPCA, in its submission, quotes Australian⁷⁹ and overseas⁸⁰ studies that refer to wounding rates in waterfowl:

- a) *A Victorian based study of recreational hunting reported 14%-33% of birds were wounded but not retrieved.*
- b) *An earlier study by the same academics x-rayed trapped live ducks (mixed species) in Victoria (1957-1973) and reported between 6% and 19% of ducks contained embedded shot.*
- c) *A Minnesota (USA) based study reported approximately 33% of ducks were injured but escaped the shooter.*

Submission #38 RSPCA SA, pp. 11-12

The Committee also heard evidence that target and non-target ducks can be injured and not killed outright by shotgun pellets because of the random nature of the shotgun pellet spread:

A shooter could be a very good shot and get very, very close to the duck, get the duck pretty close to the centre of the pattern, and the duck will not fall out of the sky, but it will get hit ... those white regions show how easy it is for a duck to be very close to the centre of the shotgun pattern and not be brought down ... a good clay target shooter will always get close enough to wound a duck but whether the duck is killed or not isn't a matter of skill, it's a matter of luck where the pellets hit that duck ... it's a matter of luck whether you hit the vital organs.

Evidence, 20 September 2023, Mr G. Russell, Protect Our Native Ducks, pp. 117-118

The Committee also heard that there is a fine line between getting the shotgun pattern of pellets dense enough to hit a vital part of the duck, and achieve a clean kill, and missing the duck altogether:

Anything you can do to increase the choke density, increase the pattern density, will definitely reduce the amount of wounding you have got, but when you do that it makes the ducks harder to hit. It is like shooting with a rifle. As the density gets tighter, the pattern is smaller and it's much harder to hit the duck ... you have to be far enough away for the pattern to have spread out for you to have a chance of hitting the duck.

Most of the studies that Winchester and other people did used full-choke shotguns, it is quite a dense pattern ... lots of shooters will use a much more open pattern, because they are not good enough to get close enough with a dense pattern and they will wound more ducks.

Evidence, 20 September 2023, Mr G. Russell, Protect Our Native Ducks, pg. 121

Other concerns⁸¹, heard by the Committee relating to animal welfare, were that hunters have been documented as using inappropriate methods to try and kill ducks, as well as not checking that ducks are deceased before leaving them unattended. For example:

[Video evidence to the Committee] *At the point where the shooter is throwing the decoy, the duck then ... starts to flap and struggle continuously. The key here is that the shooter makes no attempt to humanely kill the duck or to end its suffering. He later twirls the duck around a few times by the head, which is*

⁷⁹ Australian studies by Norman F.I. & Powell D.G.M. (1981) Rates of recovery of bands, harvest patterns and estimates for black duck, chestnut teal, grey teal and mountain duck shot during Victorian open seasons, 1953-77. *Australian Wildlife Research* 8:659-664; and Norman F.I. (1976) The incidence of lead shotgun pellets in waterfowl (Anatidae and Rallidae) examined in south-eastern Australia between 1957 and 1973. *Australian Wildlife Research* 3:61-71

⁸⁰ USA study by Szymanski, M. & Afton, A. (2005). Effects of spinning-wing decoys on flock behaviour and hunting vulnerability of mallards in Minnesota. *Wildlife Society Bulletin*, 33 (3) 993-1001

⁸¹ Submissions #44, 48, 49 & 146

neither humane nor reliable method of killing wounded waterbirds, and as this occurs the bird is still flapping and is still alive.

Evidence, 20 September 2023, Dr R. Elliott, Sentient, pg. 126

It was also pointed out by Animal Liberation in their submission⁸² that animal welfare is not focus of the regulators' compliance operations, and that regulations focus on the science of projectiles (ballistics), rather than the outcomes of firearms on animal welfare.

Finally, the Australian Veterinary Association highlighted in its submission⁸³ that SA has a reputation of having good animal welfare practices and that continuing to support native bird hunting risks that reputation⁸⁴.

Findings

The Committee found that:

7. Although it is unlikely that native bird hunting in SA has directly caused the decline in populations of native bird species, it is an anthropogenic impact that should be carefully managed.
8. A lack of data on the biology, abundance and distribution of species of native gamebirds is hampering efforts to ensure that there is a sustainable harvest during open season.
9. Although efforts have been made by hunters to reduce wounding, it is not known how many birds are wounded and how many die from shotgun wounds but are not retrieved by hunters. It is also not known whether the SA public is supportive of some level of wounding of native birds or whether there is zero tolerance of shotgun wounding during open season.

Recommendation 3:

The Committee recommends that animal welfare becomes a Term of Reference for the DEW stakeholder group that advises the Minister with respect of native bird hunting open season.

Recommendation 4:

The Committee recommends that:

- a) a review of the Code of Practice for the Humane Destruction of Birds by Shooting in South Australia (the Code of Practice) be conducted with input from key stakeholders;
- b) the Code of Practice contain clear definitions of acceptable methods of killing of native birds; and
- c) that a copy of the Code of Practice be supplied to all permit holders.

⁸² Submission #41; see also submissions #38 & 135

⁸³ Submission #50

⁸⁴ Submission #187

TERM OF REFERENCE 4: Economic considerations

Pro-hunting

Pro-hunting submitters were keen to point out that they spend considerable amounts of money in regional areas. For example, approximately 300 hunters attended the duck season opening shoot in the Upper South-East, boosting regional economies⁸⁵. For example, Mr C. and Mrs H. Tester stated in their respective submissions that their family's spend during an open season was \$8,460⁸⁶.

Pro-hunting submitters⁸⁷ referred to a [Department of Health and Aged Care 2019 report](#) that estimated recreational hunting and shooting sports contributed a gross expenditure in 2018 of \$169 million in SA, with total estimated contribution to the SA economy of \$177 million⁸⁸. Further, that the recreational hunting and sports shooting gross contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Australia was estimated to be \$2.4 billion⁸⁹. A [Game Management Authority 2020 report](#) revealed an annual expenditure in Victoria by duck and quail hunters of \$87 million⁹⁰.

Also, the Committee heard evidence from Mr T. Sharley⁹¹, CHASA and Murray River Trails, that native bird hunting has not negatively impacted his ecotourism business, Murray River Trails. He stated that:

When there is hunting occurring in the game reserves on the river ... what I have done is briefed our guests on the fact that they may hear some noise and this is what is going on ... the majority of people are very comfortable with that ... I'm also mindful of when hunting is most likely to be happening: early in the morning or in the evenings. They are times when I just simply avoid those areas.

Evidence, 24 August 2023, Mr T. Sharley, CHASA and Murray River Trails, pg. 60

Anti-hunting

Anti-hunting submitters were keen to point out that there would be little impact on SA regional economies if native bird hunting was banned⁹². For example, The Australia Institute, in its submission, highlighted statistics that showed:

... a ban on native bird hunting would simply see hunters shift to other activities with similar spending patterns ... overall, 91% of hunter respondents selected another activity for which they would likely opt; only 9% said they would not substitute any of the suggested activities.

Submission #149 The Australia Institute, pg. 5

⁸⁵ Submission #24

⁸⁶ Submissions #11 & 32

⁸⁷ Submissions #28 & 42

⁸⁸ Submission #28

⁸⁹ Submission #42

⁹⁰ Submission #113

⁹¹ Evidence, 24 August 2023, Mr T. Sharley, CHASA and Murray River Trails

⁹² Submissions #44, 137 & 149

Anti-hunting submitters⁹³ were keen to point out that native bird hunters negatively impacted ecotourism, and that ecotourism was a preferable option for benefitting the SA economy. For example, anti-hunting submitters⁹⁴ argued that:

Duck shooting is ... inherently incompatible with tourism activities such as bushwalking, and critically, birdwatching. Birdwatching in particular is a booming industry, with a BirdLife Australia report finding an estimated economic contribution of \$283 million nationally by domestic birdwatching in 2022, with a large proportion of spending in regional communities. With birdwatching at wetlands and duck shooting unable to happen concurrently, the economics of disallowing nature-based tourism in favour of duck shooting cannot be reasonably justified.

Submission #104 Dr B. Oppenheimer, pg. 7

BirdsSA⁹⁵, in its submission, stated that data from Tourism Australia and its own survey estimated birdwatching day trips (in 2019) were incorporated in the tourism activities of 516,000 people and involved 331,000 overnight stays, including an average spend of \$181 per night. Dr D. Evans, in their submission, pointed out that ecotourism was a more sustainable activity than native bird hunting because: “native bird shooting involves a minority of people over a short period of time whereas promoting eco-based tourism year round attracts a consistent flow of people to support local businesses and communities”⁹⁶.

Submissions were received from ecotourism operators who were concerned that their businesses were adversely impacted by native bird hunting⁹⁷. At least one submitter⁹⁸ pointed out that its business lost around \$35,000 each year because of having to stop hiring kayaks to guests during open season. Other submitters⁹⁹ spoke of the dangers of having campers and kayakers/canoists in the same area as hunters during open season, often advising their clients not to camp or paddle around Loch Luna and Chowilla Game Reserves in the Riverland¹⁰⁰. The Australia Institute, in its submission, stated that: “... 71% of non-hunter respondents said they would be deterred from visiting an area if duck and quail shooters were present ...”¹⁰¹.

Finally, it was pointed out by Dr B. Oppenheimer in their submission¹⁰² that all on-site rescue and veterinary care provided for native birds during open season is voluntary and provided gratis:

... the cost of a consultation to assess an animal is \$80 and the cost of euthanasia of a bird is \$93.50 at the time of writing. Not including the cost of treatments and hospital care of the 15 surviving birds, nor the cost for a veterinary team to travel and provide care at a remote location, this means our veterinary team has provided \$16,334 worth of veterinary services if billed commercially, without any compensation.

Submission #104 Dr B. Oppenheimer, pg. 4

⁹³ Submissions #27, 49 & 132

⁹⁴ Submissions #170 & 177

⁹⁵ Submission #48; see also Steven, R. (2022) [Bird and Nature Tourism in Australia](#), Murdoch University

⁹⁶ Submission #182 Dr D. Evans, pg. 3

⁹⁷ Submissions #80, 94 & 170

⁹⁸ Submission #80

⁹⁹ Submission #170

¹⁰⁰ Submissions #94 & 170

¹⁰¹ Submission #149 The Australia Institute, pg. 5

¹⁰² Submission #104

New Life For Animals Rehoming Centre Inc. stated in its submission that: “the Government should ... provide specific funding to wildlife rescue teams and shelters, as well [as] remunerate the veterinary clinics, for their rescue work ...”¹⁰³.

Findings

The Committee found that:

10. Native bird hunting provides an economic injection into regional communities during open season.
11. Eco tourism, particularly birdwatching, is a sustainable industry providing long term economic benefits to regional communities.
12. The cost of caring for or euthanising injured birds is absorbed by individuals who provide their time and labour gratis.

¹⁰³ Submission #172 New Life For Animals Rehoming Centre Inc., pg. 2

TERM OF REFERENCE 5: Perspectives of First Nations

In accordance with s 68D(1)-(6) of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* (NPW Act) hunting and food gathering by Aboriginal persons may be conducted provided it is in accordance with the proclamation for the reserve or park and that it is for the purpose of food for dependents or cultural purposes. Further, an Aboriginal person is generally exempt from holding a permit as per s 68A of the NPW Act. The potential banning of open season for native bird hunting will affect neither s 68D nor s 68E of the NPW Act.

The Committee heard from Mr E. Cook, Erawirung Elder and Administrator, River Murray and Mallee Aboriginal Corporation, who supported native bird hunting:

All my relatives, my father, my grandfathers and their grandfathers, hunted all along the river, hunted ducks, fish, swans, anything they could eat. Obviously, in the day we had to hunt ... to survive of course ... we don't do that with nets and boomerangs anymore, of course. It's shotguns, and it's easier and quicker ...

Evidence, 24 August 2023, Mr E. Cook, River Murray and Mallee Aboriginal Corporation, pg. 75

Mr D. Rowberry pointed out in his submission that hunting helps him connect with his identity, culture, and country:

Additionally as an Aboriginal man, hunting helps me to maintain my connection with the land in a way that cannot be put into words. It is a large part of who I am, and it has been a tradition in both sides of my family for countless generations. Hunting allows me to maintain a close connection with nature and to honour the traditions of my ancestors, both Aboriginal and White.

Submission #54 Mr D. Rowberry, pg. 1

The Committee also heard from Mr M. Koolmatrie, CHASA, who supported native bird hunting on the grounds that it may cause division in the community if open season is banned for some of the community and not others:

By stopping our people from practising our cultural right really worries me. And yes, it might be, 'Well, okay, the Aboriginal people can hunt,' but if it's closed down in one area then—you know, we are going into the Voice very soon. We are asking people to unify. If we are able to do something and the rest of Australia is not, or in this case the rest of South Australia, it is going to divide us even more so than we are today.

Evidence, 6 September 2023, Mr M. Koolmatrie, CHASA, pg. 104

Mr J. West, who identified as an Aboriginal hunter, pointed out in his submission that it is inconsistent to allow Aboriginal people to continue hunting but deny native bird hunting to other people: “reversed racism or what...”¹⁰⁴.

¹⁰⁴ Submission #53

Findings

The Committee found that:

13. First Nations hunting should not be impacted upon by banning of open season in SA.
14. There is potential for perceived or actual division within the community in banning open season.

TERM OF REFERENCE 6: How native bird hunting is managed in other jurisdictions

Each jurisdiction has its own legislation concerning hunting of native and non-native species of bird. As shown in Table 1. below, all jurisdictions allow hunting for the purposes of abundant or pest species management, but only Northern Territory, SA, Victoria and Tasmania permit game or recreational hunting of native birds. A [parliamentary inquiry into native bird hunting in Victoria](#) recommended a ban on open season in Victoria.

Table 1. Matrix of jurisdictions allowing different types of hunting of native and non-native birds

Type of hunting	ACT	NSW	NT	Qld	SA	Vic	WA	Tas
Game or recreation (e.g. open season)	x	x	✓	x	✓	✓*	x	✓
Lethal management of native birds (either via destruction permits or as part of a pest mitigation strategy)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lethal management of non-native birds	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Provisions in legislation for First Nations hunting of native birds	x**	x**	✓	x**	✓	x	✓	x

*a [Victorian select committee inquiry \(2023\)](#) has recommended a ban on game hunting

**exemptions apply

Native bird hunting can be undertaken in other jurisdictions within the jurisdiction’s legislative framework for pest management. Native bird hunting for recreation was banned in WA in 1990, NSW in 1995 and Qld in 2005¹⁰⁵.

Regulations for native bird hunting are quite similar across Victoria, Tasmania and SA. For example, in each of these three jurisdictions, hunters are required to pass a Waterfowl Identification Test (WIT), waterfowl may only be shot with a shotgun not exceeding 12 gauges, and only non-toxic shot may be used in waterways.

Victoria has implemented an adaptive harvest model with respect to the management of native bird hunting that pro-hunting submitters suggested would be successful in SA, but: “... every effort should be made to improve the resolution of the data so the model more accurately accounts for breeding cycles, bird distribution and seasonal movements”¹⁰⁶.

Victoria made some policy shifts to reduce tensions between pro- and anti-hunting groups: “the shift to mid-week opening in Victoria has generally not been welcomed by hunters but can be considered a policy success. The shift has removed some of the unwanted risk as fewer hunters and the coalition against duck hunting engage across wetlands than would be the case on a traditional opening morning”¹⁰⁷.

Further, the Game Management Authority in Victoria introduced a later start time:

¹⁰⁵ Submissions #2, 4, 14, 31, 79, 121, 135, 142, 147 & 148

¹⁰⁶ Submission #178 Mr M. Bluml, pg. 3

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, pg. 3

The change to a start time of 8am in Victoria has also been negatively received by hunters. Bird movement is more common at dawn and dusk and subsequently provide greater opportunity for a successful hunt, so the later start time can impact bags. Nevertheless, changes to hunting practices such as hunting less frequented wetlands, using decoys and calls can overcome some of these challenges.

Submission #178 Mr M. Bluml, pg. 3

Findings

The Committee found that:

15. A ban on native bird hunting would not be out of line with the other states, but that reducing native waterfowl to pest status was not an acceptable solution.
16. Victoria's policies on managing native bird hunting should be investigated further as policy solutions to some of the issues in SA.

TERM OF REFERENCE 7: Any other related matter

Pro-hunting

Regulations in SA and compliance

Pro-hunting submitters were keen to highlight that hunting of native birds during an open season was heavily regulated in terms of having bag limits and tests (the Waterfowl Identification Test) to ensure hunters are accountable, whereas hunting of native birds for pest management was much less heavily regulated¹⁰⁸. Further, that the regulatory hurdles tend to deter all but the most committed hunters¹⁰⁹.

Pro-hunting submitters were, however, keen to have decisions regarding open season conditions be transparent and based on science and argued that no Minister should have the right to decide with respect to open season conditions in contradiction to the data¹¹⁰. Also, to the detriment of the hunting and broader community, that Australia has no national coordinated policy on hunting of native birds¹¹¹.

Pro-hunting submitters¹¹² were concerned to distance themselves from shooters who behaved irresponsibly: “responsible participants should not be penalised because of any inappropriate actions by others”¹¹³. Further, suggesting that compulsory membership of an appropriate hunting organisation could potentially reduce the risks involved with native bird hunting¹¹⁴, updating the Code of Practice¹¹⁵, as well as “a simple training course that teaches hunters what the effective range of their shotgun is and how to bring ducks into that range will significantly reduce wounding”¹¹⁶. The Committee heard that the Game Management Authority in Victoria has hunter training, but this is not currently available in SA¹¹⁷.

Mr M. Bluml (submission #178) in his submission pointed out that:

Public safety on waterways rests with the hunter and there is a long history of shared recreational use and firearm/hunter education to ensure public safety. Only rare incidents have been reported ... of greater recent concern has been the more active segments of those who oppose duck hunting who engage with hunters during the season ... this impacts the efforts of hunters [to] establish a safe hunting area and can substantially increase the risk of injury when they [anti-hunting protestors] enter a hunter's safe zone without warning.

Submission #178 Mr M. Bluml, pg. 2

Finally, pro-hunting submitters argued that compliance amongst hunters was high, and that rules and regulations were important to protect the reputation of the broader hunting community:

¹⁰⁸ Submission #12

¹⁰⁹ Submission #17

¹¹⁰ Submission #51

¹¹¹ Submission #114

¹¹² Submissions #150, 186 & 192

¹¹³ Submission #150 Hon. D. van Holst Pellekaan, pg. 1

¹¹⁴ Submission #150

¹¹⁵ Evidence, 22 November 2023, South East Field and Game Association

¹¹⁶ Submission #155 Mr R. West, pg. 2

¹¹⁷ Evidence, 22 November 2023, South East Field and Game Association

But the most important thing is we've got laws to prosecute, or investigate, and that absolutely needs to happen because we, too, want to make sure that hunters are responsible because our future depends on our reputation as we ... conduct hunting.

Evidence, 24 August 2023, Mr T. Sharley, CHASA and Murray River Trails, pg. 66

Anti-hunting

Regulations in SA and compliance

One of the main concerns for anti-hunting submitters was native bird hunters' compliance with regulations and subordinate legislation, particularly the Code of Practice for the Humane Destruction of Birds by Shooting (the Code of Practice).

Anti-hunting submitters¹¹⁸ expressed concern that native bird hunters were not adequately policed because some hunting occurs on private property, as well as the geographic spread of game reserves, and limited regulatory resources to cover those reserves during open season: "for taxpayers to fund more compliance officers to police duck season ... would ... not be an equitable use of taxpayer funds, considering the very small proportion of the state's population who engage in duck hunting, compared to the resources needed to appropriately police it"¹¹⁹.

The Committee heard from Mr M. Gehrig, RSPCA (SA), that regulators tend to focus their efforts on opening and closing weekends, and that "... officers are not focused on monitoring the actual shooting or detecting of animal welfare-related breaches"¹²⁰.

Concerns also centred around the difficulties of regulating for compliance with the *Animal Welfare Act 1985* and the Code of Practice. There is currently no test to ensure that native bird hunters understand how to comply with the *Animal Welfare Act 1985* and humanely dispatch a wounded bird, and no publicly available data on compliance with the Code of Practice¹²¹. South Aussies for Animals¹²² showed the Committee video footage taken on 18 March 2023 of hunters not far from Beachport in SA's South-East failing to kill wounded birds promptly and humanely, and BirdsSA¹²³ provided the Committee with a list of alleged breaches.

Anti-hunting submitters also pointed out that the Waterfowl Identification Test is a once-off test that does not test whether a hunter's skills have drifted over time and that the test does not replicate real-world conditions¹²⁴.

Finally, submission #80 (personal information withheld) cited unsafe behaviour by native bird hunters posing a risk to the public. For example, the submitter stated their neighbours have found shot pellets on their roof, as well as incidents of hunters shooting towards tourists and their accommodation¹²⁵.

Other related matters

¹¹⁸ Submissions #23, 38, 48, 79, 135, 137, 142 & 182

¹¹⁹ Submission #148 Geelong Duck Rescue, pg. 24

¹²⁰ Evidence, 21 June 2023, Mr M. Gehrig, RSPCA, pg. 38

¹²¹ Submissions #79 & 135

¹²² Evidence, 21 June 2023, South Aussies for Animals

¹²³ Evidence, 25 October 2023, BirdsSA

¹²⁴ Submissions #104 & 148

¹²⁵ Submission #80 Personal information withheld

Loss of wetland habitat

Of particular concern to the Committee was the evidence presented to it on the loss of wetland habitat across SA, and more broadly across south-eastern Australia¹²⁶. Although native bird hunting is the primary focus of this Committee's investigations, it was pointed out to the Committee that there are landscape-scale issues that need consideration, and that state government policy over the past 150 years had facilitated the observed decline in wetlands through drainage for agriculture:

In my view, the state does have a responsibility. Decisions were made to facilitate development with the best of economic intent ...

But the state drove that trend of change in the landscape and there is a responsibility for us to be smart about how the state could put in place measures to help in some modest way reverse that trend so that, alongside whatever decisions you make about activities that address a matter for the small cohort of wetland-dependent species like ducks ... we are actually thinking about the bigger picture that drives productivity of our wetland ecosystems and all the dependent species. When we restore a wetland, it's not just the threatened birds that turn up; it's those other taxonomic groups.

Evidence, 22 November 2023, Mr M. Bachmann, Nature Glenelg Trust, pg. 209

As has already been highlighted in this report (see TOR 3) the trend towards drainage to allow for primary production across south-eastern SA has highly modified the landscape, reducing habitat for waterfowl. As has already been highlighted in this report (see TOR 3) the trend towards drainage to allow for primary production across south-eastern SA has highly modified the landscape, reducing habitat for waterfowl. The Committee heard evidence that restoring wetlands is achievable with good outcomes for waterfowl, but works best when a diverse range of wetland types are restored:

I guess the key thing that I want to emphasise is the variety of wetlands that you really need to achieve a good outcome for all these birds and to get people thinking about the fact that wetlands, the most productive ones, aren't always wet: they are wet and dry. You get the greatest productivity from those that are quite diverse in their habitats, that have water coming and going on an annual basis in all sorts of varied ways, and it's those that give you the tremendous food sources that these birds need in order to reproduce.

Evidence, 22 November 2023, Dr G. Kerr, Nature Glenelg Trust, pg. 201

The Committee was pleased to hear evidence of the efforts of volunteers in rehabilitating and restoring thousands of hectares of wetland areas across south-eastern Australia¹²⁷.

Public safety and risk

Geelong Duck Rescue (submission #148) suggested that risk assessments for safety of the public be undertaken at some sites with mitigating actions to reduce risk, such as signage in areas where hunters are present¹²⁸.

Geelong Duck Rescue (submission #148) was also keen to point out that although lead shot use has been banned in waterways, quail may still be hunted using lead shot which may lead to human health issues¹²⁹.

¹²⁶ Evidence, 22 November 2023, Nature Glenelg Trust

¹²⁷ Ibid

¹²⁸ Submission #148

¹²⁹ Ibid

Zoonotic diseases and humans: “while biosecurity methods exist for animal farming and thus require safe handling techniques, no one is ensuring the duck shooters are complying with safe handling methods or good hygiene when they are handling dead birds”¹³⁰. Finally, that mosquitoes can transmit diseases to humans and tend to inhabit wetland areas¹³¹.

Litter

Although anyone who camps in natural areas can leave litter: “the activity of recreational shooting of native birds leaves a unique form of litter across the wetlands and rivers of South Australia: the shotgun cartridge ... a non-biodegradable plastic casing with metal base”¹³². Geelong Duck Rescue included a photograph in its submission of: “two live shotgun cartridges left on a fence post on Whitehorse Road, Moolap [Victoria] in 2022”¹³³.

Geelong Duck Rescue also included in its submission two further photographs and video footage of shotgun shells that had been collected by rescuers: “under FOI requests, [the Game Management Authority] GMA estimates that 2.2 million shotgun shells and wadding are left on wetlands each season across Victoria”¹³⁴.

Committee’s findings

The Committee found that:

17. Compliance is difficult to enforce because of the geographic spread of game reserves and private property on which native bird hunting takes place.
18. Incidents of compliance involving animal welfare were also difficult to police.
19. There were broader landscape-scale considerations about loss of wetland habitat that are beyond the scope of native bird hunting.
20. There are unacceptable risks to public safety due to hunters not being aware of the presence of tourists or protestors.
21. Shotgun litter is unacceptably high and that lead shot is still entering the environment through quail hunting.

Recommendation 5:

The Committee recommends that breaches of the NPW Act should attract more serious penalties than currently exist and should include consideration of a suspension of hunting permit of up to two (2) years.

Recommendation 6:

The Committee recommends that:

- a) All native bird hunting permit holders must be a member of a recognised and registered shooting organisation; and

¹³⁰ Ibid, pg. 32

¹³¹ Ibid

¹³² Submission #177 Mr D. Mould, pg. 3

¹³³ Submission #148 Geelong Duck Rescue, pg. 4

¹³⁴ Ibid, pg. 25

- b) A first time holder of a permit on their first shoot must be accompanied by an experienced member appointed by a registered shooting organisation.

Recommendation 7:

The Committee recommends that should a native bird hunting ban be enforced in Victoria, consideration should be given to preferencing South Australian residents in the issuing of native bird hunting permits.

Recommendation 8:

The Committee recommends that a system be developed by DEW for permit holders to be able to report on the number of birds shot and recovered.

Recommendation 9:

The Committee recommends increased funding for DEW to provide appropriate resourcing of compliance, including observing the open season.

Recommendation 10:

The Committee recommends that recognised and registered shooting organisations appoint Marshalls to assist other shooters on Crown Land during native bird hunting open season.

Recommendation 11:

The Committee recommends that use of lead shot be banned for all native bird hunting in South Australia.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Committee extends its thanks to those who have provided information and evidence to its Inquiry.



The Hon. Reggie Martin MLC
Chair
Select Committee on Hunting Native Birds

APPENDIX 1 – Submissions

The following persons and organisations made written submissions to the Committee which were resolved to be published by the Committee:

01. Clinton Roberts	31. Aura Valli	62. John Peek
02. G &H Manos	32. Helen Tester	63. Jan Kendall
03. Geoff Watts	33. Bob Clark	64. Frank Lacey
04. Maria Paola Torti	34. Lee Warneke	65. Penny McMullin
05. Royce Horsfall	35. Steve Day	66. Paul Sharp
06. Steven Watts	36. Ken Carey	67. Jania Williams
07. H Solyom & J Sheffield	37. Miles Doddridge	68. David Langdon
08. Andrew Smith	38. RSPCA	69. Scott Marshall
09. Wendy Phillips	39. CHASA	70. Dr Gonzalo Villanueva
10. Vanessa Hollowell	40. Humane Society Intl.	71. John Nairn
11. Colin Tester	41. Animal Liberation	72. Malcolm Racz
12. Nathan Demasi	42. Conservation and Wildlife Research Trust	73. Jadine MacKenzie
13. Paul Brown	43. Birdlife Australia	74. Horace Zerafa
14. Anni Foster	44. Animals Australia	75. Michael Cook
15. Melinda Harley	46. Barmera Moorook Field and Game	76. Elizabeth Wamock
16. Simon Burnside	47. Working Gundog Association of Aust (Tas)	77. Gayle Williams
17. R Hale	48. Birds SA	78. Deanna Carbone
18. David Foster	49. South Aussies for Animals	79. Charles Davis
19. Paul Parsons	50. Australian Veterinary Assoc.	80. Ruth Roberts confidential
20. Nastasja Agerman	51. Field and Game	81. Dr Donna Belder
21. Anne Lonie	52. Dylan Pix	82. Russell Edwards
22. Luca Forza	53. Jason West	83. Deborah Rees
23. Robyn Keall	54. David Rowberry	84. Alexandra Stephens
24. Philip Nolan	55. Wetlands and Wildlife	85. Susan O'Toole
25. Steve Heyes	56. Josh Stillwell	86. Dave Barnes
26. Andrew Ameduri	57. Kim Barry	87. Paul Zervides
27. Anne Sanders	58. Joseph Densley	88. Rosalie Auricht
28. Robert Baker	59. Diane Kastel	89. Dr Melanie Latter
29. Graeme Saunders	60. John Paitaridis	90. Elizabeth Attard
30. Michael Foster	61. Susan Meyer	91. Rupert Macgregor

APPENDIX 1 – Submissions cont.

92.	Lynden Macgregor	123.	Paul Clancey	154.	Christian West
93.	Meredith Reardon	124.	John Torresan	155.	Robert West
94.	Stu Horseman	125.	Alison Teare	156.	Georgina Michael
95.	Protect Our Native Ducks	126.	Leo Bateman	157.	James Warboys
96.	John Francis	127.	Andrew Fielke	158.	Anonymous
97.	Jared Siviour	128.	Heath Gotts	159.	Panagiotis Konidaris
98.	Heather Barnes	129.	Thomas Chick	160.	Jason Mitchell
99.	Rick Gibbs	130.	Mark Daley	161.	Ryan Baum
100.	Peter Heylen	131.	Sth Aust Field and Game – Sth Branch	162.	Kate Bossence
101.	Robert Baranello	132.	Conservation SA	163.	John Byers
102.	Paul Brown	133.	Lee McKay	164.	Andy Haralampopoulos
103.	Wendy Davey	134.	St Arnaud Field Naturalist Club	165.	Michelle Crilly
104.	Dr Belinda Oppenheimer	135.	Sentient	166.	Dr Todd Wallace
105.	Gun Control Australia	136.	Nathan Butler	167.	Annalisa Cranby
106.	Robin Storr	137.	Coalition Against Duck Shooting	168.	James Desyllas
107.	Peter Anderson	138.	Lucy Fox	169.	Peter Hawker
108.	Michael Louend	139.	Dino Oliviero	170.	Kym Werner
109.	Lea McBride	140.	Friends of Bats and Bushcare	171.	Lucas Cooke
110.	Andrew Zimmermann	141.	Thorson McRae	172.	New Life for Animals
111.	Louise Pike	142.	Animal Justice Party	173.	Don Mount
112.	Adam Carson	143.	Riverland Field and Game	174.	Mary De Marchi
113.	Prof. Brian Hiller	144.	Royal Australian Regiment Association	175.	Daryl Snowden
114.	David Hawker AO	145.	Dane Hastings	176.	Trent Leen
115.	Lake Bonney Sporting Clays	146.	Anonymous	177.	David Mould
116.	Alison Firth	147.	Rigel Best	178.	Martin Bluml
117.	Working Gundog Association of Aust (SA)	148.	Geelong Duck Rescue	179.	Jamie McDonald
118.	Christopher Warwick	149.	Australia Institute	180.	Ann Blythe
119.	Patrick Torrens	150.	Dan van Holst Pellekaan	181.	Dr Mike Bossley
120.	Assoc. Prof. Tim Thomas	151.	Hellenic Shooting Sports Assoc. of SA	182.	Dr Di Evans
121.	Fauna Recue of SA	152.	Peter Heylen	183.	Evangelos Toskas
122.	South East Field & Game Assoc.	153.	Anonymous	184.	Tim Lloyd

APPENDIX 1 – Submissions cont.

- 185. Dr Keith Smith
- 186. Samuel Wood
- 187. Dr Brian Barrett
- 188. Andrew Jeffery
- 189. Philip Small
- 190. Matthew Godson
- 191. Susan Metcalfe
- 192. Greg Hill
- 193. Trevor Sinclair

APPENDIX 2 – Index to witnesses

Public evidence was received from the following persons and organisations:

10 May 2023

1. Professor Brian Hiller
2. Mr Lucas Cooke, Chief Executive Officer, Field and Game Australia

24 May 2023

1. Department for Environment and Water
 - Mike Williams, Executive Director, National Parks and Wildlife Services
 - Lisien Loan, Director, Conservation and Wildlife
 - Dr Karl Hillyard, Principal Ecologist, Wildlife Management

21 June 2023

1. RSPCA of South Australia
 - Marcus Gehrig, Chief Executive Officer
 - Andrea Lewis, Head of Animal Welfare
 - Dr Rebekah Eyers, Animal Welfare Advocate
2. South Aussies for Animals
 - Dr Suzanne Pope
 - Dr Trudy Seidel

24 August 2023

1. Tony Sharley, CHASA/Murray River Trails
2. Riverland Field and Game
 - Tony Trevorrow, President
 - Rick Gibbs, Hunting and Habitat Officer
 - Giuseppe Catalano
3. Eric Cook
4. Barmera Moorook Field and Game
 - Rob West
 - Don Mount
5. Birds SA members
 - Kevin Smith
 - Peter Freeman

6 September 2023

1. Conservation and Hunting Alliance of South Australia
 - Graham Stopp, President
 - Rob West, Vice President/ Duck Hunting
 - John Peek, Firearms Training
 - Mark Koolmatrie

20 September 2023

1. Geoff Russell, Protect Our Native Ducks
2. Dr Rosemary Elliot, President, Sentient
3. Chris Purnell, Wetland Birds Program Manager, Birdlife Australia

APPENDIX 2 – Index to witnesses cont.

25 October 2023

1. Birds SA
 - Steven Langley, President
 - Jeff Groves, Vice President
2. Animal Justice Party
 - Natalie Kopas, Victorian Advocacy Manager
 - Louise Pfeiffer, Vice President
 - Miranda Smith, SA Convenor

22 November 2023

1. James Thomson
2. South East Field and Game Association
 - Charles Wallis (president)
 - John Kentish
3. Vicki Fabris
4. Katie Nesbitt, Animal Justice Party
5. Wetlands and Wildlife/Keith Field and Game
 - David Rehn
 - Geoff Watts
6. Donald Johns
7. Lake Bonney Sporting Clays/CHASA
 - Mark Fabris
 - Tom Weir

APPENDIX 3 – List of websites

Department of Health and Aged Care (2019) Economic and social impacts of recreational hunting and shooting (accessed 8 November 2023)

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/economic-and-social-impacts-of-recreational-hunting-and-shooting>

Department for Environment & Water (2007). The Code of Practice for the Humane Destruction of Birds by Shooting in South Australia, Adelaide SA (accessed 17 October 2023)

https://cdn.environment.sa.gov.au/environment/docs/cop_humanedestructionbirds.pdf

Department for Environment & Water (2022). 2022 Waterfowl, Environment and Climate Conditions and Forecasts Report (accessed 17 October 2023)

https://cdn.environment.sa.gov.au/environment/images/2022-Conditions_Forecasts_Report.pdf

Department for Environment & Water and Conservation and Hunting Alliance of SA (2018). Modern Hunting in SA. A Guide for Responsible and Sustainable Hunting, Adelaide SA (accessed 17 October 2023)

<https://cdn.environment.sa.gov.au/environment/docs/modern-hunting-in-sa.pdf>

Eastern Australian Waterbird Aerial Survey, Centre for Ecosystem Science, University of New South Wales (accessed 1 November 2023)

<https://www.unsw.edu.au/research/ecosystem/our-research/rivers-and-wetlands/national-waterbird-survey>

Game Management Authority (2020) Economic contribution of recreational hunting in Victoria (accessed 8 November 2023)

https://www.gma.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/852594/v.4Economic-contribution-of-recreational-hunting-in-Victoria-accessible.pdf

Landscape SA – SA Arid Lands: Bounceback program (accessed 7 November 2023)

<https://www.landscape.sa.gov.au/saal/plants-and-animals/native-plants-and-animals/bounceback#:~:text=Bounceback%20is%20a%20landscape%20scale,private%20sanctuaries%2C%20and%20pastoral%20lands>

Parliament of Victoria (2023). Select Committee on Victoria's Recreational Native Bird Hunting Arrangements (accessed 1 November 2023)

https://new.parliament.vic.gov.au/4a5c51/contentassets/1dbd275555b9401a93f298ec115c421f/lc-native-birds-60-01_vic_rec_nativebirdhunting.pdf



Parliament of
South Australia



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PARLIAMENT HOUSE
ADELAIDE, S.A. 5000

Dissenting Statement

Select Committee on the Hunting of Native Birds

Evidence provided to the Committee, from advocates for duck and quail hunting and opponents, make it clear that birds are wounded and not recovered every hunting season.

There is disagreement on the extent of that wounding and not recovered number – but estimates provided to the committee vary from 6–40% (#95 Sentient, p.6) to 30% (#95 POND, p.33). CHASA, in oral evidence, agreed that 6% of animals are wounded and not retrieved (Mr Rob West, CHASA, transcript of evidence 06 September 2023).

Whether the lowest or highest estimate is accepted, hundreds, perhaps thousands of animals are shot, wounded, and not humanely killed every duck and quail hunting season.

I conclude that to support duck and quail hunting necessarily means supporting deliberate cruelty to animals which are wounded and left to suffer a slow and agonising death or crippled.

Duck and quail hunting in South Australia should be made illegal.

IAN HUNTER MLC
Member of the Legislative Council

12 December 2023

DISSENTING STATEMENT FOR THE HON. S. L. GAME MLC

Considering the evidence and submissions, I broadly support the body of the report the Committee is presenting. However, in my opinion, visible identity tags as outlined in Recommendation 1 (b) need not be so large as to obstruct the necessary ability for hunters to camouflage. Under Recommendation 5, I believe the increase in penalties for breaching the *NPW Act* need not be excessive given the relatively low levels of recorded offending. Concerning Marshalls appointed as outlined under Recommendation 10, in my opinion, they should be afforded protection from prosecution for the actions of others.



Hon. Sarah Game MLC


DISSENTING STATEMENT FOR TAMMY FRANKS MLC

Animal welfare standards emerged as the key reason to end native bird hunting practices. With the unavoidable cruelty of the injuries and prolonged deaths of native birds that is associated with the use of shot (containing dozens of pellets) for those birds not killed in the air or quickly retrieved and dispatched a key factor.

Wounding occurs when a bird is subject to a shot that does not result in immediate death. Wounding typically involves the prolonged suffering of birds and causes slow and painful deaths from injury and starvation.

Reasonable measures to increase visibility of birds for shot or retrieval or assist better monitoring by the Department were rejected. While some measures to assist enforcement of compliance were made none of these will significantly minimise the wounding rates and the consequent inevitable inherent cruelty.

Native duck and quail hunting in South Australia should be made illegal.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tammy Franks". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with large loops and a long horizontal stroke connecting the first and last names.

Hon. Tammy Franks MLC