



# Hunter Bird Observers Club

*Affiliated with BirdLife Australia*

Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc  
PO Box 24, New Lambton, NSW 2305  
[www.hboc.org.au](http://www.hboc.org.au)  
ABN 62 415 889 446

The Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio,  
Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change,  
Level 16, 8 Nicholson Street,  
East Melbourne,  
Victoria, 3002  
Sent by email to [lily.dambrosio@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:lily.dambrosio@parliament.vic.gov.au)

Dear Minister,

Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc. based in Newcastle, NSW, urges you to cancel the duck hunting season in Victoria for 2020 in view of the 90% decrease in waterbird numbers over time which has been exacerbated by climate change factors such as prolonged drought and wildfires – especially the devastating bushfires in Victoria - all leading to a lack of prime habitat and food resources.

NSW has been in prolonged drought for several years and most freshwater wetlands have been dry for extended periods of time. Waterfowl which would normally inhabit these wetlands have departed in search of better foraging opportunities and many hundreds would have flown to Victoria where conditions have been more suitable. As a result it may appear that waterfowl numbers are stable in Victoria but this may not necessarily be the case as numbers are likely to have been inflated by influx of birds from interstate. HBOC is aware that waterfowl numbers have dramatically declined in the latter part of 2019 in NSW. There is a very strong case for the precautionary principle to be applied here. After all duck hunting is a pastime, a sport or a hobby not a pillar of human necessity.

Waterbird species are already stressed as a result of poor conditions and food supply and we ask you to take this into consideration especially this year. Wildlife has suffered greatly in recent years from unprecedented drought and devastating wildfires and prohibiting hunting is a way of mitigating a further decrease in numbers.

Until an evidence-based assessment of the true and current situation becomes available, we urge you to cancel this year's duck hunting season. Waterbirds are in need of your support and respite from further harassment.

The wildlife of this country belongs to all Australians not a select few who pay a small fee to enjoy their pastime.

Yours faithfully,

Margaret Clarke, Secretary for Hunter Bird Observers Club 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2020