

Duck hunting Victoria: Ban 'strongly considered' ahead of 2023 season

Duck shooting could be banned ahead of the 2023 season after sources say the Andrews government put the decision off last year due to the election.

Mitch Clarke and Kieran Rooney Herald Sun, 22 Jan 23

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Duck hunting could be banned in Victoria. Picture Yuri Kouzmin

The Andrews government is seriously considering [a complete ban on duck shooting](#) just weeks ahead of the 2023 season.

[Pressure has been mounting on the government](#) to outlaw the annual hunt for years, with growing internal pressure from Labor MPs and ministers to end the practice.

[“It was very close to coming to an end in 2022,](#) but it didn’t get over the line because it was an election year” one source close to discussions said.

“As an issue, there is a genuine split within the caucus and there are senior ministers who want it stopped. There is momentum there for a change.

“However, the premier has been reluctant to go ahead with a ban in the past and it is likely to come down to his call.”

A government spokeswoman would not rule out a ban and said discussions remained ongoing.

“A decision will be made on this year’s duck season after thorough consideration,” she said.

Now that the election has been won, it’s understood the government is open to revisiting the contentious issue.



A source said the ban didn’t get over the line last year because the election was coming up. Picture: Peter Ristevski

Although senior members of Cabinet are in favour of ending the practice, the government has previously been wary because of how the decision might be received in the regions.

A ban would bring Victoria into line with Queensland, New South Wales and Western Australia, which banned recreational duck shooting more than 30 years ago.

The Game Management Authority – which is the regulating body for game hunting in Victoria – recently submitted its recommendations to the government of what the potential 2023 season should look like.

Departmental advice will also be provided about the environmental and economic impacts of either decision.

The 2022 season, which was quietly announced shortly before the season commenced, went ahead for 90 days – 70 days longer than the year prior. A daily bag limit of four birds was enforced.

Animal Justice Party MP Georgie Purcell said whispers that a ban could be on the horizon is an “incredibly overdue but welcome announcement”.



The government has been worried about how the ban might be perceived in the regions. Picture Yuri Kouzmin

“With the overwhelming evidence against having a 2023 season from environmental groups, animal welfare charities and their own MPs – it’s clear the government has no other choice but to bring us into line with other states and legislate a ban,” she said.

“I would have loved to have seen this as an election announcement, because we have always known a ban is not only necessary, but politically popular.”

A recent survey from the RSPCA revealed that nine out of ten Victorians would never shoot a duck.

Just over 11,500 shooters were estimated to have taken part in the 2022 season, according to the GMA, who said 23,000 hunters were licensed last year.

Shooters, Fishers and Farmers MP Jeff Bourman said: "If the ban goes ahead it just shows that this government is not governing for all of Victoria, just an inner city trend - the chardonnay swilling dream elite."

"The government's own data says that duck hunting is sustainable, and if they ban it, they are just completely ignoring their own science."

The total harvest figure for last year's season was 262,567 ducks, however the RSPCA believes the wounding rate could be anywhere from six to 40 per cent, meaning up to 105,000 ducks may have been shot at but not killed last year.