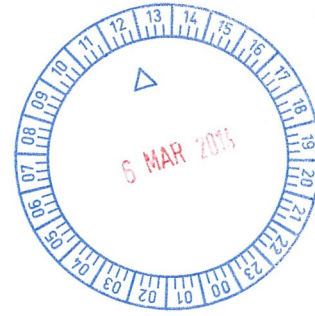


Waterbird Conservation Group, Inc



Replies to: The Secretary, 41 Preston Point Road, East Fremantle 6158

The Committee Clerk
Standing Committee on Public Administration
Legislative Council of WA, Perth, Western Australia 6000

Dear Committee Clerk, **Recreational Hunting Systems Inquiry**

The Waterbird Conservation Group wishes to make a submission on the above Inquiry. The Group which formed in 1984 and was one of the active WA Non Government Organizations against recreational shooting of waterbirds, strongly opposes any introduction of recreational shooting in WA's conservation reserves, such as National Parks and Nature Reserves.

Our experience in the late 1980's and early 1990's with recreational shooting was disturbing. Many waterbirds were shot for sport during the last (1990) recreational duck shooting season. Some were wounded and just left to die. This included species not on the shooting list such as swans and bush birds. Threatened species were also shot. The Group has a full statistical record of these events. The Department of Conservation and Land Management had little ability to police the nature reserves open to shooting over a 6 or 10 week season. Piles of rubbish including spent lead cartridges were left in the water and bush to be collected by volunteers. While some of the participants would have only shot and collected permitted species, and if wounded put them out of their misery, many failed to abide by these basic humane and responsible provisions. Most seemed to think they had the right to shoot for pleasure and flout the law with impunity.

The Group opposes any form of recreational shooting in conservation reserves. Such an activity is contrary to the intentions for which the reserve system was established. As well as being a danger to native fauna, recreational shooting (together with the drinking which usually accompanies such activities) is also a danger to any legitimate user of the conservation reserves. It would be naïve to think that there would not be casualties should such a foolish and irresponsible proposition proceed. Any Government who advocated such a proposition would be held fully accountable for casualties/fatalities.

The Group **does not** oppose shooting of feral animals in conservation reserves. Such activities however must be planned, overseen and controlled by the Dept. of Parks and Wildlife which has considerable experience in the procedures. Shooting must be by Professional Shooters. The Group has confidence in the Department's ability to achieve positive outcomes.

There are no short cuts to controlling feral animals. The Government is accountable to the community for ensuring that programs to control/eradicate feral animals are scientifically based, well planned and humane.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Helen Barnes, President

3rd March, 2014