



# SELECT COMMITTEE ON HUNTING NATIVE BIRDS – SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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**AUSTRALIA'S MOST SURPRISING  
CONSERVATIONISTS**





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document has been prepared by the office of Field & Game Australia in response to the South Australian Select Committee on Hunting Native Birds. The document aims to assist the Select Committee in understanding and reporting on the hunting of native birds, specifically focusing on various aspects such as community values, cultural and social aspects, sustainability and environmental considerations, economic factors, perspectives of First Nations people, management practices in other jurisdictions, and other relevant matters.

Field & Game Australia (FGA) is a prominent organisation dedicated to the promotion and preservation of sustainable hunting and conservation practices in Australia. FGA has a rich history dating back to the early days of game bird hunting and has played a significant role in advocating for responsible hunting, habitat conservation, and wildlife management. FGA has worked closely with hunters, conservationists, and government agencies to develop policies and initiatives that ensure the long-term sustainability of game bird populations and their habitats.

FGA has almost 16,000 members consisting of licensed hunters and target shooters, conservationists, and strategic partners. The organisation acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands and their ongoing stewardship of the environment. FGA accepts its custodial responsibility over natural resources, recognising that current and future generations benefit when these resources are managed well.

Community values surrounding hunting vary widely, reflecting diverse perspectives and cultural backgrounds within the South Australian community. Hunting holds deep-rooted cultural and historical significance for some, connecting individuals to their heritage and traditional practices. It may be viewed as a sustainable way to harvest food, promote self-sufficiency, and maintain a close relationship with nature. While some community members seek to prioritise animal welfare over traditional practices, and express concerns about the ethical implications of hunting, there is a growing community desire to establish a deeper connection to their food sources, leading to an increased interest in activities such as gardening, urban farming, and hunting. This desire reflects a broader cultural shift towards more conscious and responsible food choices, driven by concerns about food safety, sustainability, and a longing for a more authentic relationship with the food we consume.

In an era where humans are becoming increasingly disconnected from their food origins, and are justifiably cautious about their food's nutritional qualities, hunting represents significant community value as it fosters a unique connection to food sources, promotes self-reliance, and encourages ethical treatment of animals. Responsible hunting cultivates a sense of gratitude and promotes a more conscious and mindful approach to dietary choices.

Native game bird hunting in South Australia has cultural significance for many individuals and communities. It preserves cultural heritage, strengthens community bonds, and provides opportunities for knowledge transfer of animal and land care management from generation to generation through storytelling, active participation and advocacy. Indigenous perspectives on game bird hunting often emphasise the spiritual connection to the land, the respectful utilisation of resources, and the sharing of cultural knowledge. It is no co-incidence that this indigenous ethos speaks to the Ramsar Convention 1975 definition of 'wise use' of the land; an ethos all hunters understand and abide by.

Hunting has indisputable positive social impact on thousands of South Australians and visitors to the state, fostering a sense of community and camaraderie and respect for the abundance of this great land. It serves as a platform for the exchange of generational culture and knowledge, enabling the transfer of ethical hunting practices, wildlife conservation, and care for nature.





A wise person once said “we protect the things we love” and that is why FGA has been actively involved in preserving and developing native game bird habitats across Australia for over 60 years. Wetland restoration and conservation programs are essential for maintaining biodiversity and supporting more than 1300 species of flora and 450 species of fauna. FGA members play a crucial role in reporting changes in waterfowl habitat and behaviour, contributing to the protection and preservation of wetland ecosystems.

Native game bird hunting seasons are proven to be sustainable while contributing to the economic and social well-being of Australia. A national survey found that hunting and shooting activities contribute substantially to Australia's GDP, with a significant portion of expenditure benefiting rural and regional areas.

Other Australian jurisdictions permit and manage native bird hunting, challenging the notion that it is not permissible in most states and territories. Understanding how native bird hunting is managed in different jurisdictions can provide valuable insights for South Australia.

FGA is not only a voice for native game bird hunters, it is a best practice advocate for promoting responsible hunting, conservation programs, and sustainable initiatives which are essential for preserving Australia's game bird populations and their habitats. It is not in hunters' interests to plunder or misuse this abundant, renewable and valuable resource; rather, our organisation is dedicated to ensuring these environments thrive. In addition to our support for cultural heritage, community values, environmental sustainability and economic contributions, FGA is a leading voice in native game bird habitat preservation.

**In response to the Select Committee's Terms of Reference and in the interest of native game bird hunting and best practice management, Field & Game Australia is pleased to make the following key recommendations:**

#### **Recommendations for TOR #1**

- 1. The committee should recognise and acknowledge the value of hunting including:**
  - a. The unique connection to food sources that only hunting can provide.
  - b. That responsible hunting practices promote self-reliance and sustainable relationships with natural resources.
- 2. The committee should encourage controlled growth – especially as it relates to:**
  - a. Opportunities to recognise the importance of local sourcing of food.
  - b. Wise utilisation of otherwise unproductive land.
  - c. The cultural and social benefits of active participation in this pastime.
- 3. The committee should address the bias and misconceptions perpetrated by the media by:**
  - a. Holding organisations such as the RSPCA accountable when their campaigning against hunting strays across the line into activism.
  - b. Addressing bias within government departments such as recent ‘socially exclusive’ moves to ban hunting in South Australia’s South-East Lakes district, where hunting is being specifically touted as “not compatible with conservation objectives” when in fact the opposite is true.

#### **Recommendations for TOR #2**

- 1. The committee should recognise that hunting delivers significant benefits to the South Australian community both culturally and socially, including:**
  - a. The sense of wellbeing, self-efficacy, social networks, physical activity, and nutritional benefits associated with hunting and shooting.





- b. The importance of spending time outdoors and connecting with nature through hunting and shooting.
- c. Encouraging individuals to engage with the natural environment.

**2. The committee should encourage controlled growth:**

- a. Especially as it relates to opportunities to recognise the importance of local sourcing of food.
- b. Wise utilisation of otherwise unproductive land.
- c. The cultural and social benefits of active participation in this pastime.

**Recommendations for TOR #3**

**1. The committee should recommend that the South Australia government consider collaboration with other states/territories to develop and adopt a nation-wide adaptive harvest model.**

- a. Design 'fit for purpose' research tool(s) that provide accurate and reliable data to determine native game bird abundance and other related qualitative and quantitative metrics. These tools may include aerial and ground counts and other measures on an annual basis.
- b. Invite respected independent scientific researchers to form a working committee to help shape and develop this tool over time.
- c. Ensure that no Minister, singularly or collectively, has veto rights to ignore the data and override the hunting seasons.

**2. Implement greater accountability measures on local councils and town planning third parties.**

- a. Better educate property developers, owners and occupiers to be aware when residences and/or workplaces are proposed/exist in the vicinity of shooting ranges and State Game Reserves.
- b. Councils and developers should have a duty to protect vital wetland habitat from development.

**3. The committee should recommend the government adopt wounding reduction as a goal and foster engagement and education of hunters.**

- a. Review and update dispatch guides. The current code of practice for humane dispatch of ducks does not align with best practice in other states. This should be reviewed and addressed as required.
- b. Foster genuine hunter engagement with incentives to complete additional training or achieve higher scores in current Waterfowl Identification Tests.
- c. Encourage awareness and benefits of free-range harvesting as a sustainable practice.

**4. The committee should ensure that welfare considerations have clear requirements that are free from ideology and ethics.**

**Recommendations for TOR #4**

**1. The committee should recommend government pro-actively grow hunting in South Australia and the associated economic and social impact benefit.**

- a. Government bodies to recognise and endorse that shooting and recreational hunting has a positive impact on the community's social and economic outcomes.





- b. Actively remove barriers that new hunters face by rewarding compliance and engagement.
- c. Acknowledge and respect hunting as a valuable lifestyle and that the majority of hunters are compliant and mindful of their impact.
- d. Acknowledge that hunting and hunting groups play a significant role in improving the mental health and wellbeing of all Victorians.

**2. Recognition and promotion of hunting as a sustainable nutrition source.**

- a. Promote use of sustainable, free range, ethically sourced, low carbon milage, low fat, high protein game meat(s) as a valuable nutritional food source.
- b. Advocate and remove the stigma of game meats through education and awareness campaigns.
- c. Consider the utilisation of wild food to provide healthy sustenance to those disadvantaged in our communities such as the homeless through food banks, shelters, and community support groups.

**Recommendations for TOR #5**

Regarding the perspectives of First Nations:

**1. The committee should recommend consultation and collaboration.**

- a. Engage in meaningful consultation with First Nations Elders, leaders, and representatives to understand and respect their cultural and spiritual ties to the land. Their insights can provide valuable guidance on the cultural significance of native bird hunting and the importance of responsible land stewardship.

**2. Embrace the concept of Healing Country.**

- a. Recognise the concept of "Healing Country" expressed by First Nations communities, which involves restoring and preserving the natural environment. Acknowledge that groups such as Field & Game Australia, aligned with traditional practices, can actively contribute to the healing and revitalisation of the land.
- b. Involve First Nations communities in decision-making processes to leverage their knowledge and wisdom for effective land management strategies.

**3. The committee should recommend and incorporate active management practices:**

- a. Recognise the historical active land management practices of First Nations communities that promote biodiversity and ecosystem balance.
- b. Integrate traditional ecological knowledge into active management strategies for native bird populations, such as controlled burns, habitat restoration, and sustainable hunting practices.
- c. Recognise that the Traditional Owner objectives of managing for abundance and engaging in responsible resource utilisation can contribute to both species and their habitats being conserved.

**Recommendations for TOR #6**

When considering other jurisdictions, the committee should:





1. **Study how native bird hunting is managed in other jurisdictions with a view to developing best practice – not looking to just adopt what anyone else is doing. The committee should recommend consultation and collaboration in the future.**
  - a. Conduct research on the management of native bird hunting in different Australian jurisdictions, and overseas.
  - b. Consider collaboration with other states to inform decision-making and come up with a model that is similar to flyway management in North America that recognises the nomadic nature of Australian native birds and manages populations accordingly.
  - c. Learn from the experiences and outcomes of hunting management strategies in different contexts.





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# INTRODUCTION





## INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared by the office of Field & Game Australia in response to the South Australian Select Committee on Hunting Native Birds, and a call for submissions to assist the Select Committee to inquire into, understand and report on the operation of the annual (game) bird hunting season, with particular reference to:

- (a) Community values and perspectives;
- (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 people;
- (f) How native bird hunting is managed in other jurisdictions; and
- (g) Any other relevant matter.

### The role of Field & Game Australia

Field & Game Australia (FGA) is a prominent organisation dedicated to the promotion and preservation of sustainable hunting and conservation practices in Australia. With a rich history dating back to the early days of game bird hunting, FGA has played a significant role in advocating for responsible hunting, habitat conservation, and wildlife management. In South Australia, FGA has been actively involved in fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of game bird hunting while emphasising the importance of conservation efforts. Over the years, FGA has worked closely with hunters, conservationists, and government agencies to develop policies and initiatives that ensure the long-term sustainability of game bird populations and their habitats. By fostering a sense of community and providing opportunities for education, training, and advocacy, FGA has become a leading voice in the promotion of ethical hunting practices and the conservation of South Australia's game bird species.

Today, the organisation boasts almost 16,000 members as licensed hunters and target shooters, conservationists, and a number of strategic partners.

### Field & Game Australia and its Conservation Commitment

Field & Game Australia is a legitimate and verified steward in the conservation of wetland and other related habitats for the sustainable use by its communities which include but are not limited to hunters, naturists, and recreationalists who seek an authentic connection with nature. Through our own acquired wetland reserves and in collaboration with authorities in the preservation of State Game Reserves, Field & Game Australia's legacy has endured since 1958.

### Honouring the Past – Embracing the Future

Field & Game Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands, and their Elders past, present, and emerging who over many millennia have upheld the principle of respect for the land, its waters, animals, and plants. In doing so they have preserved a bountiful, totally renewable resource, and continue to teach us the importance and power of **Caring for Country**.

Field & Game Australia freely accept its custodial responsibility over these resources because current and future generations benefit when we do our job well.





## Field & Game Australia's Pledge

Field & Game Australia has, and always will be:

- The voice of reason for the continued practice of game hunting and environmental management, devoid of personal agendas, philosophies and opinions that often lead to failed strategies.
- A contributor of factual, science-based, balanced, and well-considered information.
- A champion for the harmonious preservation of Australian flora and fauna and the complex ecosystems in which they exist.
- A diligent pest controller because we understand their impact on our native wildlife, farmed animals, and crops.
- A prolific educator, especially of our highly intelligent member base, who want to know they are doing their part to protect and preserve this invaluable asset.
- Proactive in finding effective ways to do worthwhile work.





# TERMS OF REFERENCE # 1

COMMUNITY VALUES AND PERSPECTIVE





## 1. TERMS OF REFERENCE # 1 - COMMUNITY VALUES AND PERSPECTIVES

### 1.1 Community Values and Perspectives of Hunting

Community values surrounding hunting vary widely, reflecting the diverse perspectives and cultural backgrounds within the South Australian community. For some, hunting holds deep-rooted cultural and historical significance, connecting individuals to their heritage and traditional practices. It may be viewed as a sustainable way to harvest food, promote self-sufficiency, and maintain a close relationship with nature. Others may prioritise animal welfare, expressing concerns about the ethical implications of hunting. Individual ideologies play a large role in shaping attitudes towards hunting regulations and the role of hunters in wildlife management, and “welfare” regularly gets confused with “ethics”. Public perceptions of hunting are largely shaped by the availability of information, education, and the portrayal of hunting in media and public discourse.

Usually, the arguments for or against hunting can be based on logical reasoning supporting or ideological beliefs opposing. Proponents of hunting will highlight its benefits, such as wildlife management, population control, sustainable resource utilisation, and economic contributions. They point out that hunting can help maintain balanced ecosystems, provide food sources, and support conservation efforts through financial contributions. On the other hand, opponents of hunting argue from an ethical standpoint, asserting that it involves the unnecessary harm of animals. They may advocate for alternative forms of wildlife management, non-lethal methods of population control, and ethical considerations in human-animal relationships, usually without considerable consideration for the practicality of these arguments.

It is essential to engage in open and respectful dialogue to understand and address the diverse perspectives surrounding hunting in South Australia.

#### 1.1.1 Public sentiment as it relates to native game bird hunting

Game Bird hunting, specifically in South Australia, is pursued by only a small number of hunters (when compared to other states). Opponents argue this is a reason to ban it – apparently forgetting the role they usually claim to champion in standing up for persecuted minorities.

While there are some very vocal and militant anti-hunting groups active in South Australia, the South Australian public's perception of game bird hunting is generally apathetic. While some individuals may have a keen interest or support for hunting activities, most of the population do not actively engage or hold strong opinions regarding game bird hunting. This apathy may stem from a lack of awareness or direct experience with hunting, as well as a broader focus on other environmental or social issues. It also comes from a generational disconnect with the outdoors and a loss of cultural connection to a time when many were forced to live off the land.

It is important for government to engage in open and constructive dialogue, and through this process FGA hopes to raise awareness about the conservation benefits associated with responsible hunting practices and address any concerns or misconceptions that the public may have. By fostering





understanding and promoting responsible hunting, it is possible to create a more informed and engaged community.

### 1.1.2 Community values as they relate to connection with food

There is a growing desire among many individuals to establish a deeper connection to their food sources. People are increasingly seeking to understand and appreciate where their food comes from, how it is produced, and the impact it has on their health and the environment. This desire stems from a range of factors, including concerns about food safety, sustainability, and a longing for a more authentic and meaningful relationship with the food they consume.

As a result, there is a growing interest in activities such as gardening, urban farming, and even hunting, as people strive to reconnect with nature and participate in the process of sourcing their own food. This desire for a stronger connection to the food source reflects a broader cultural shift towards more conscious and responsible food choices.

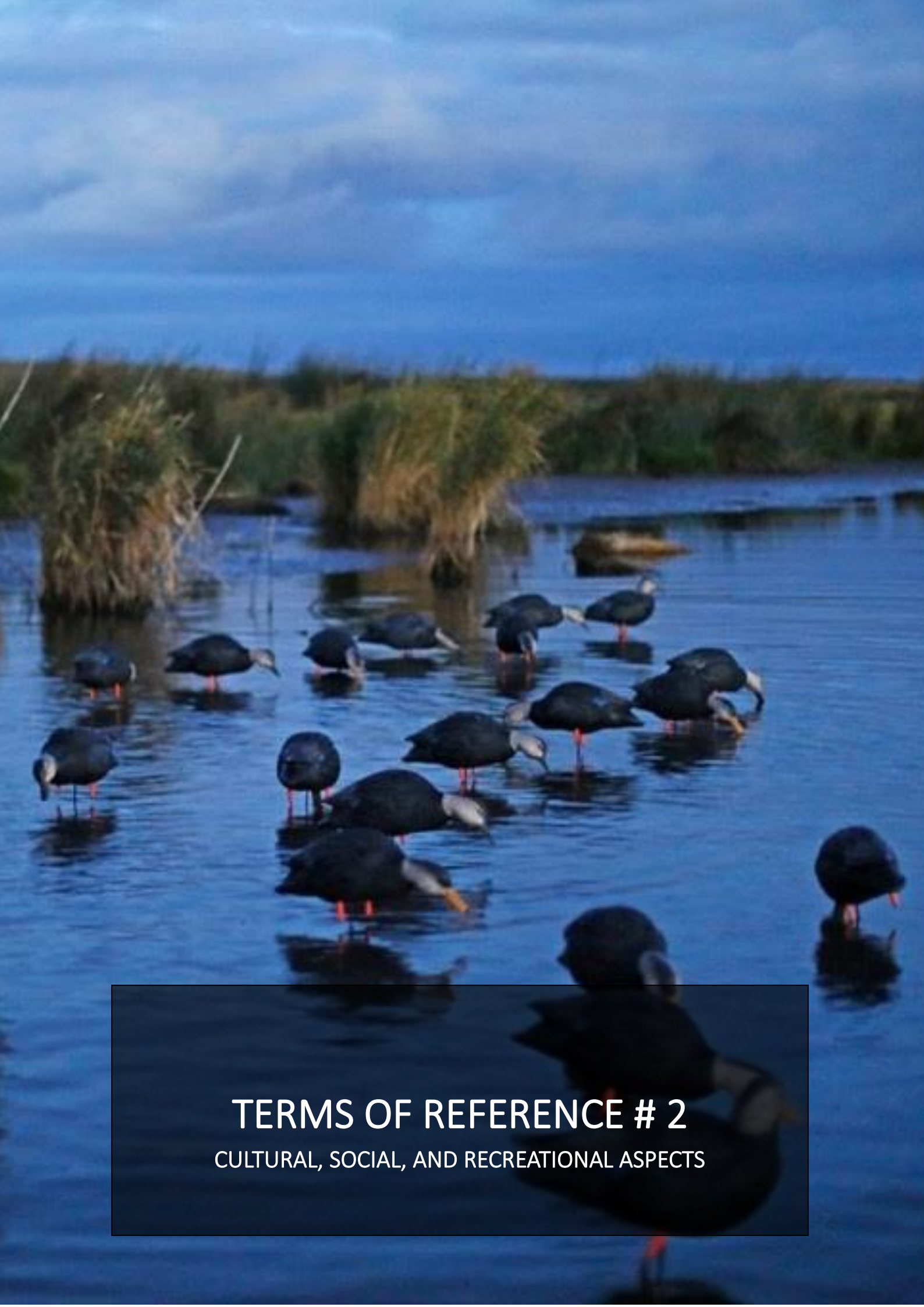
### 1.1.3 The value of hunting

Hunting holds public value as it fosters a unique connection to our food sources. Engaging in responsible hunting practices allows individuals to reconnect with nature, understand the cycle of life, and appreciate the sustenance provided by the land. By participating in the hunt, individuals gain a deeper understanding and respect for the food they consume. 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.

## 1.2 Recommendations for TOR #1

1. **The committee should recognise and acknowledge the value of hunting including:**
  - The unique connection to food sources that hunting provides.
  - Responsible hunting practices promote self-reliance and sustainable relationships with natural resources.
2. **The committee should encourage controlled growth – especially as it relates to:**
  - Opportunities to recognise the importance of local sourcing of food.
  - Wise utilisation of otherwise unproductive land.
  - The cultural and social benefits of active participation in this pastime.
3. **The committee should address the bias and misconceptions perpetrated by the media by:**
  - Holding organisations such as the RSPCA accountable when their campaigning against hunting strays across the line into activism.
  - Addressing bias within government departments such as recent ‘socially exclusive’ moves to ban hunting in South Australia’s South-East Lakes district, where hunting is being specifically touted as “not compatible with conservation objectives” when in fact the opposite is true.





## TERMS OF REFERENCE # 2

CULTURAL, SOCIAL, AND RECREATIONAL ASPECTS





## 2. TERMS OF REFERENCE # 2 - CULTURAL, SOCIAL, AND RECREATIONAL ASPECTS

### 2.1 Cultural Aspects of Hunting Native Birds

Native game bird hunting in South Australia holds cultural significance for many individuals and communities in the region. It has deep-rooted traditions and historical ties that have been passed down through generations. Game bird hunting fosters a connection with nature, preserves cultural heritage, and strengthens community bonds. For Field & Game Australia the culture of conservation and hunting are intertwined in over 70 years of tradition since the founding of Field and Game South Australia circa 1950.

#### 2.1.1 Time Honoured

For some South Australians, native game bird hunting represents a time-honored tradition that is cherished and celebrated. It provides an opportunity for families and friends to get together, share experiences, and pass on knowledge and skills from one generation to the next. Hunting trips often involve storytelling, shared meals, and camaraderie, reinforcing a sense of identity and belonging.

The cultural impact of native game bird hunting extends beyond the actual act of hunting itself. It encompasses rituals, customs, and traditional practices associated with preparation, cooking, and sharing of harvested game birds. These cultural elements are valued as a way to maintain connections with ancestral practices and foster a deeper appreciation for the natural environment.

#### 2.1.2 Indigenous considerations

Additionally, native game bird hunting contributes to the cultural fabric of Indigenous communities in South Australia. Indigenous peoples have hunted birds in Australia for over 35,000 years. They have long-standing relationships with the land and its wildlife, and hunting is an integral part of their cultural heritage. Indigenous perspectives on game bird hunting often emphasize the spiritual connection to the land, the respectful utilisation of resources, and the transmission of cultural knowledge (more in Term of Reference 5).

Importantly, FGA believes that shared values around hunting, caring for and healing country have the power to unite indigenous and non-indigenous hunters and make true progress toward treaty and reconciliation.





## 2.2 Social Impact of Hunting

### 2.2.1 Compelling Research – RMCG Economic and Social Impacts of Recreational Hunting and Shooting

The Australian Federal Government's Department of Health and Aged Care commissioned RMCG to design and administer a comprehensive research project to investigate the extent to which hunting and shooting contributed to social and economic impact in Australia.

Data was collected from March 2018 through to March 2019 by surveying 16,576 permitted recreational hunters and shooters, with the results presented in a detailed report in June 2020. The findings were explicit and compelling.

***“Recreational hunting and shooting play a substantial role in substantiating an individual’s wellbeing”.***

RMCG Report 2020 [www.health.gov.au/resources/publications](http://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications)

RMCG found that from the respondents surveyed, Victorian hunters and shooters represented 25% of the sample size; well in excess of other states and territories.

Respondents indicated that the pursuit of these activities delivered a distinctive sense of ‘wellbeing’ and the research interpreted this as an important indicator of social impact. What also emerged were specific identified pathways as stated below:

- **Nature connection**

Spending time outdoors and spending time in nature are very important to more than three in four hunters and shooters, and it is likely that the connection to outdoor places and natural places achieved through hunting and shooting contributes positively to wellbeing.

- **Self-efficacy (challenge, skills)**

Learning new skills, feeling achievement, and experiencing challenge were very important aspects of the hunting or shooting experience. These are indicators that hunting and shooting may contribute to a greater sense of self-efficacy, defined as having confidence that you can achieve the things you wish to and will be successful when attempting specific tasks or actions (Bandura 1982). Self-efficacy is strongly predictive of wellbeing – people who feel more confident in their ability to achieve tasks and meet challenges typically have higher wellbeing and resilience.

Australian native game birds are highly intelligent and evasive creatures requiring hunters to possess highly tuned expertise if they are to return a successful harvest. They are a more than worthy and challenging pursuit.





- **Social networks**

Hunting and shooting provide important opportunities to maintain and strengthen social bonding with family and friends, which in turn is an important contributor to wellbeing. Each year in Victoria, thousands of groups gather to enjoy the companionship and sense of belonging that annual native (bird) hunting season promises.

Hunters and shooters are community members just like everyone else and enjoy the unique and enriching cultural experience that comes with sharing stories around a campfire, preparing meals together, guiding younger generations to be respectful, responsible, and capable human beings who will mature into the leaders of tomorrow. This is our tradition and it's worth working for.

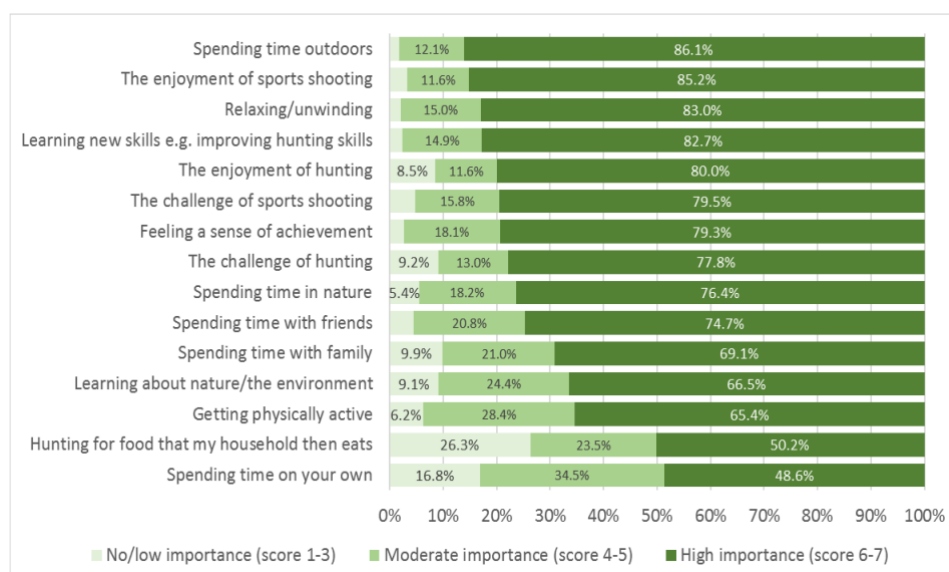
- **Physical activity**

Hunters and shooters have been identified as more likely to be active than the general population. Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Adults recommends adults should do a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate physical activity or 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity each week, ideally including five activity sessions (Department of Health 2017). Data shows that 65% of hunters and shooters achieve or exceed the minimum recommended weekly activity levels.

- **Nutrition**

Hunting contributes to helping households achieve some aspects of nutrition, such as protein-dense foods. In an era where we are subjected to overprocessed foods, untold additives and preservatives, and even harmful substances, game foods represent immense nutritional value.

Despite an abundance of scientific evidence, a stigma exists for game foods and does little to promote the outstanding nutritional benefits of free range, organic game meats, which hunters and their families regularly benefit from.



**Figure 1** RMCG 2018-19 Survey 'How Important Are the Following Aspects of Hunting/Shooting to You? – Importance Rating.





Field & Game Australia concurs with the data presented in Figure 1 and the stated contribution towards the physical, functional, and psychosocial wellbeing that hunting and shooting delivers for hundreds of thousands of Australians, directly and indirectly.

### 2.2.2 Mental Health and Wellbeing

According to the RMCG report, hunters and shooters are proven to have higher levels of well-being than the general population (Figure 2, below). This compelling insight strongly correlates with what we all understand to infer the presence of good ‘mental health’.

The report goes on to state that “a person’s ‘wellbeing’ refers to their overall quality of life” and that we are becoming ever mindful of the importance of a person’s overall wellbeing to their life outcomes. A person with high subjective wellbeing according to Diener et al. 1998, Diener 2000 will:

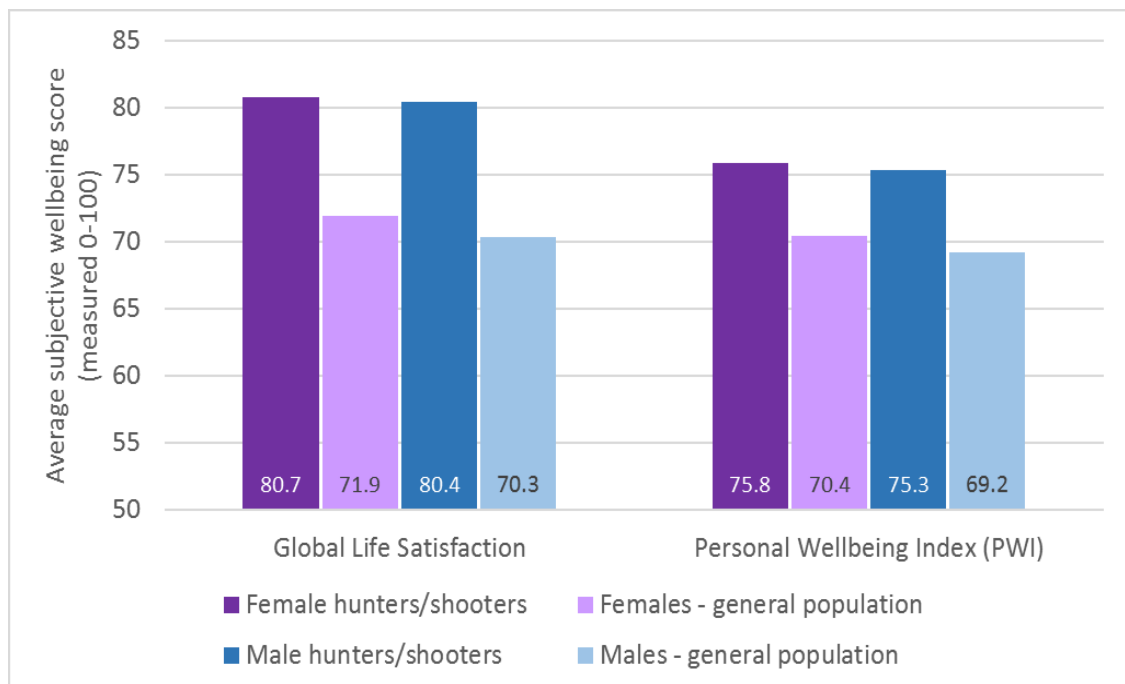
- typically live longer
- have fewer health problems
- make reduced demand on health services and
- will be better able to contribute to their community, work, and family.

‘Subjective wellbeing’ refers to a person’s self-evaluation of their wellbeing using standardised validated measures from the field of wellbeing research. These subjective wellbeing measures are now widely used to measure overall quality of life and wellbeing, as important health and wellbeing measures in their own right, and form part of measures of societal progress used by organisations such as the United Nations and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (OCED 2011, Sachs et al. 2018).

Multiple studies, meanwhile, have shown that gentle exercise that occurs in outdoor settings has greater overall benefits for health and wellbeing compared to exercise occurring in an indoor setting such as a gym (Fuegen and Breitenbecher 2018). More broadly, the psychological benefits of spending time in natural settings are now well established, with multiple studies demonstrating health and wellbeing benefits from spending time in natural outdoor places, particularly in relation to taking part in outdoor recreational activities (see for example Nisbet et al. 2011, Wolsko and Lindberg 2013, Capaldi et al. 2014, Ives et al. 2017).

Hunting and shooting can contribute to physical activity, to nature connection, and to maintaining and growing meaningful social networks that support wellbeing. It has potential to positively contribute to wellbeing, particularly given that many hunters are male – with men being at greater risk of health risks from social isolation compared to women – and older, with older people at greater risk of health problems related to physical inactivity compared to younger people.





**Figure 2** Average Wellbeing of Hunters/Shooters Compared to General Population - by Gender.

## 2.3 Community

Game bird hunting has social impacts that extend beyond the act of hunting itself. It brings people together, fostering a sense of community and camaraderie among hunters. Hunting trips and shared experiences create opportunities for social bonding, storytelling, and the passing down of knowledge from one generation to the next. In the 1950s many immigrant families found hunting to be a common thread that tied them together and gave them connection to their new country.

Earlier still – during the great depression of the 1930s and 1940s many Australian families survived on meagre pickings and relied heavily on hunted game and pest animals. In South Australia, this was largely ducks and rabbits. That connection to the land and the ability to feed a population is largely lost today. The COVID 19 outbreak has seen interest in hunting re-kindled as many realised that in the same circumstances today, families would simply not be able to fend for themselves.

Game bird hunting also promotes outdoor recreation and engagement with nature, allowing individuals to connect with the natural environment and appreciate its beauty. Additionally, game bird hunting contributes to the local economy through tourism and the sale of hunting licences and equipment, supporting businesses and creating employment opportunities. Overall, game bird hunting in South Australia has social benefits that include community cohesion, cultural preservation, outdoor recreation, and economic contributions.





### 2.3.1 Generational Cultural Knowledge exchange

Hunting serves as a platform for the exchange of generational cultural knowledge. It provides a unique opportunity for older generations to pass down their wisdom, skills, and traditions to younger family members. Through hunting experiences, elders can teach younger individuals about ethical hunting practices, wildlife conservation, and the importance of respecting nature.

Generational cultural knowledge exchange in hunting involves sharing stories, teaching hunting techniques, and instilling a deep appreciation for the natural world. This transfer of knowledge helps preserve cultural heritage, strengthen family bonds, and ensure the continuity of traditions across generations.

In an increasingly digital world, disconnecting from a screen and engaging with older family members is often difficult. Hunting facilitates the exchange of cultural knowledge and a sense of identity and belonging. Younger individuals learn about their ancestors' connection to the land, their values, and their respect for wildlife. This knowledge instills a sense of pride and responsibility, contributing to the preservation of cultural values and practices.

Overall, hunting serves as a conduit for the intergenerational transfer of cultural knowledge, allowing traditions and values to be passed down from one generation to the next. It fosters a sense of identity, strengthens family ties, and ensures the preservation of cultural heritage in the context of hunting and nature.

## 2.4 Recreational aspects of Native Bird Hunting

Often anti-hunters cast aspersions on recreational hunters with comments such as “they just kill for fun”. This demonstrates a complete lack of understanding of the true meaning of recreation.

Recreational activities encompass more than just “fun” and typically involve engaging in enjoyable and meaningful pursuits for personal satisfaction, relaxation, and personal growth. Recreation is characterised by activities that bring individuals pleasure, provide a sense of fulfillment, and contribute to overall wellbeing.

### 2.4.1 Not just “for fun”

The recreational aspects of native bird hunting include the thrill of the chase, the anticipation of a successful harvest, and the satisfaction of achieving personal goals. It provides an opportunity to immerse oneself in the natural environment, appreciating its beauty and observing wildlife in their natural habitats. Moreover, the immersive nature of hunting can serve as a form of escape from the demands of everyday life. It demands individuals disconnect from technology, embrace solitude or share the experience with like-minded companions, and find solace in the tranquility of nature.





#### 2.4.2 Personal Growth

Recreational hunting also encourages personal growth and self-improvement. It requires patience, discipline, and problem-solving skills. Participants learn about wildlife behaviour, habitat conservation, and the importance of ethical hunting practices. These experiences contribute to personal development, environmental awareness, and a deeper understanding of the natural world.

#### 2.4.3 Engagement with the environment and the birds we hunt

In the case of native bird hunting there are several different approaches – all with their own recreational benefits. If calling or decoying ducks, hunters require an intimate knowledge of duck behaviours in order to convince the ducks to land in an artificial “spread” of decoys. All aspects of calling, laying out a decoy spread, and engaging ducks have degrees of difficulty and take significant investment in time to perfect.

Hunting quail often also requires an understanding of bird behaviour. Their likely location in the landscape, and the likely escape routes they will try to take when disturbed.

#### 2.4.4 Dogs

The use of trained dogs when hunting ducks or quail is common and encouraged by FGA. These dogs are utilised for multiple reasons, but they add a significant amount of value to the social, cultural and recreational aspects of hunting.

A well trained retriever or rouser/pointer takes many hours of training, and during that time dog and handler will inevitably form a bond much deeper than anyone with “pets” will understand. When hunting, dog and handler must have a connection that enables each to anticipate and counter for the other’s behaviour and must anticipate each other’s movements. The culmination of a successful hunt with a dog raised and trained by the handler is unparalleled by any other animal/handler relationship.

It is important to note that retrievers have been bred and trained for generations to have a favourable trait referred to as a “soft mouth”. These dogs know exactly how firmly to hold an object (or bird) in such a way that it is not causing harm. This trait is vital as hunters want birds returned to them in a condition that they can be harvested and eaten – not chewed up by a dog. Any reference or implication that a retriever is “mauling or maiming” an animal while retrieving it is entirely false and shows a complete misunderstanding of the role of a retriever. It is undesirable that a retriever even views a game bird as food; they view the birds as something to be retrieved and returned to their handler – not something to be eaten.

Field & Game Australia encourages hunters to make use of a trained retriever, as these dogs vastly increase the reliable retrieval of ducks and quail – especially in light cover where downed birds can be difficult to see.





## 2.5 Recommendations for TOR 2

1. **The committee should recognise that hunting delivers significant benefits to the South Australian community both culturally and socially, including:**
  - a. The sense of wellbeing, self-efficacy, social networks, physical activity, and nutritional benefits associated with hunting and shooting.
  - b. The importance of spending time outdoors and connecting with nature through hunting and shooting.
  - c. Encouraging individuals to engage with the natural environment.
2. **The committee should encourage controlled growth:**
  - a. Especially as it relates to opportunities to recognise the importance of local sourcing of food.
  - b. To promote wise utilisation of otherwise unproductive land.
  - c. To allow community members to enjoy the cultural and social benefits of active participation in this valuable pastime.





# **TERMS OF REFERENCE # 3**

**SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENTAL AND ANIMAL WELFARE  
ASPECTS OF NATIVE BIRD HUNTING**





### 3. TERMS OF REFERENCE # 3- SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENTAL AND ANIMAL WELFARE ASPECTS OF NATIVE BIRD HUNTING

#### 3.1 Environmental Sustainability

##### 3.1.1 South Australia Wetlands

South Australia is known for being the driest of all Australian states, with 75% of the state receiving less than 200mm of rain per year. Despite this, and because of the fact that South Australia receives significant inflows of water from other states throughout the Lake Eyre Basin and other systems, SA often has significant available surface water. Contrary to popular belief, ducks don't need rain – they just need water area; so, at times of water inflow, SA boasts some of the most productive duck breeding grounds in the country.

The Lake Eyre basin, along with the Marry-Darling Basin in NSW and Victoria are often referred to as the duck factories of Australia. For this to be sustained though, important areas need to be maintained, and the balance of irrigation and environmental water flows must be maintained.

<https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/water/wetlands> has the following to say about Wetlands:

*“Wetlands are one of South Australia's most important natural assets. We've already lost 70% of our wetlands, so the conservation, sustainable management and restoration of the remaining ones are key issues for our state.”*

SA wetlands strategy

The **Wetlands Strategy For South Australia** provides a framework for the sustainable use of our wetland ecosystems. Its goal is to see wetlands recognised and managed as ecological and community assets for the benefit of present and future generations.

The practical objectives are to:

- Manage wetlands as integrated parts of natural resource management at local, regional, state, national and international scales.
- Support the care, rehabilitation, restoration or creation, of wetlands by the private and public sectors.
- Improve community understanding of wetlands as natural assets.
- Identify wetlands which are important at the regional, state, national and international levels, and make sure they are appropriately managed and protected.
- Develop, maintain, and make readily accessible to all, a **comprehensive inventory of South Australia's wetlands**.





### 3.1.2 Defining Environmental Sustainability

For the purposes of this paper Environmental Sustainability has been formally defined as:

***“The responsibility to preserve and protect natural resources and delicate ecosystems with a harmonious human health and wellbeing outcome, now and in the future”.***

Simultaneously, the hunting fraternity holds sacred the following statement as it embodies the respect and gratitude they have for the bounty they take, and underpins the principles that drive hunter behaviour:

***“The wildlife of today is not ours to dispose of as we please. We have it in trust. We must account for it to those who come after.” – King George VI***

### 3.1.3 Native Game Birds – A Sustainable Resource

In OECD countries, where animal welfare is considered of the utmost importance, hunting co-exists in harmony. This mature and responsible approach has proven to be sustainable.

Back in Australia, a compelling and growing body of evidence continues to mount against repealing recreational native game bird hunting seasons, confirming that doing so will deliver absolutely no benefit to our natural environments.

For decades, the EAWS (Eastern Australia Waterbird Survey 1983-2020) has been acknowledged as the go-to source of data that authorities have used to help determine annual native game bird abundance and set corresponding season controls.

However, Brian Hiller Assoc. Professor Biology and Wildlife, Bemidji State University, Minnesota states:

***“Whist the data provided by EAWS has captured native bird abundance well, it was not originally developed to measure specific native game bird abundance and therefore all inferences gained to inform native game bird hunting activities must be deemed inaccurate and invalid.”***

Brian Hiller – Assoc. Professor Biology and Wildlife, Bemidji State University, Minnesota

In short, **EAWS was never designed to estimate game bird** abundance.

More specifically, the data sets most commonly referred to, and conclusions drawn, included “pooled groups” of native game and non-game bird species. What is clearly missing is an exclusive segmented native game bird data set, devoid of all other species.

In a comprehensive analysis of EAWS waterbird data, Paul Brown - Principal and owner of Fisheries and Wetlands Consulting, in his paper *On Analysing Trends in EAS Game Duck and Waterbird Count Data*, discusses that “whilst there is evidence in the EAWS data of a highly significant downward trend





in waterbird counts from 1983 – 2020 in Victorian and NSW survey bands, most of this effect is due to a significant decline of 66 species of non-game waterbirds.”

To make better use of the EAWS data Mr Brown re-consolidated the findings into more appropriate segments to arrive at the following compelling findings:

1. Following the repeal of a legislated native game bird hunting season in NSW, the downward trend in *abundance levels of native game birds was shown to be insignificant*; however, *non-game native water bird abundance certainly experienced a **significant decrease***;
2. Moreover, in NSW specifically, *no significant recovery of game and non-game birds has occurred in the absence of hunting*; yet, in stark contrast,
3. In Victoria and South Australia where a legislated native game bird hunting season continues to exist, revised EAWS data showed *no statistical negative or positive trend in the 1983 – 2020 period*.

These results suggests that despite the existence of a legislated native game bird hunting season in South Australia and Victoria, the long-term abundance of native game birds is in no way impacted. In fact, Field & Game Australia confidently argues that it is the presence of this hunting season that facilitates the protection and preservation of native game birds.

***The evidence is compelling and a suggestion that South Australia’s native game bird hunting season should be banned is incredulous and counter-productive to the long-term sustainability of our natural environments.***

The knowledge Field & Game Australia has contributed, and the work its dedicated members, volunteers and partners have done to rehabilitate entire wetlands over many decades cannot be understated. These environments are complex, biodiverse, interconnected ecosystems that rely on human intervention to maintain the optimal conditions that allow them to survive.

Where there is no licensed native game bird hunting season, such as in NSW, QLD, and WA, the focus switches from ‘conservation’ to ‘control’ of populations, and so too does the impetus away from protecting and preserving.

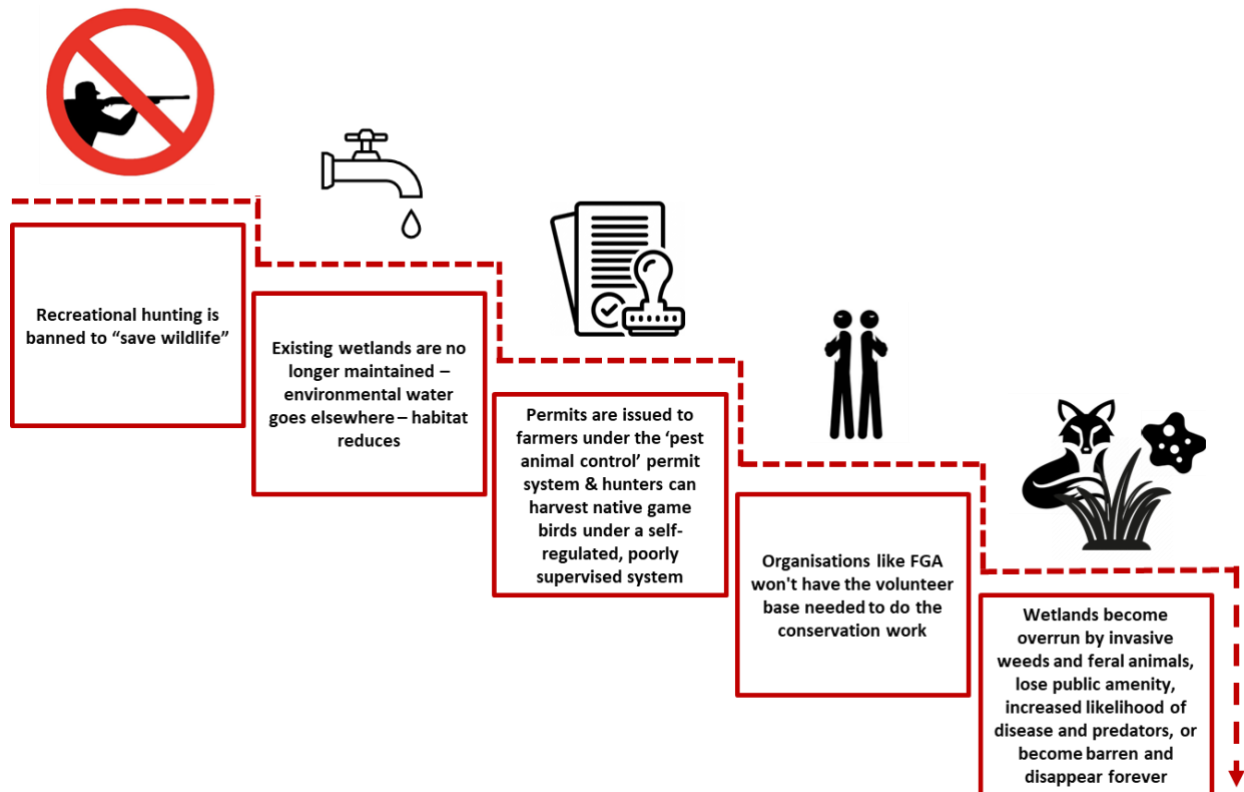
The net result is less focus on habitat construction for the sole use of native birds, and more focus on “controlling” pest birds (which become an agricultural or urban pest due to lack of suitable habitat). The consequences on an entire species and ecosystems are dire and have significant downward results for overall sustainability.

In South Australia the Department of Environment and Water currently issues permits to destroy wildlife that allow the control of pest ducks outside of the recreational season. These permits are issued annually and in the past decade have resulted in the destruction of between 500 and 1500 maned (wood) duck annually, and an undisclosed number of other game duck species. These are not only agricultural pests, but are also controlled due to the risk to civilian aircraft at airports.

In the absence of a recreational season the requirement for these permits would increase – and the emphasis for wildlife control is always downward population pressure, not managing for abundance.



The following is diagrammatical depiction of what most likely actions and implications have been proven to follow:



**Figure 3** Flow-On Effect of Repealed Native Game Bird Hunting.

### 3.1.4 Land Conservation, Rehabilitation and Transformation Initiatives

For more than 60 years Field & Game Australia has worked tirelessly to preserve, restore, and develop native game bird habitat across Australia. Hunters are acutely aware of the importance of our wetlands and the biodiversity they support. Field & Game Australia members are often the first to notice changes in waterfowl habitat, abundance and behaviour and are diligent in reporting them.

If we are going to be serious about protecting and preserving our natural environments then we must turn our attention to the impact of human encroachment and the loss of habitat. Wildlife scientists state that loss of habitat is the single greatest threat to all native birds, because without adequate habitats they won't breed.

Several species of native game birds including the Hardhead, Blue-wing Shoveler, Blue-billed Duck, and the Musk Duck have been considerably affected through the alteration or loss of habitat, reflecting a continuing need for Field & Game Australia's wetland restoration and conservation programs.

Unbeknownst to many, Field & Game Australia has been at the forefront of many enduring and challenging efforts to save wetlands. Hundreds of species of flora and fauna depend upon these wetland habitats for their very survival. More specifically, the benefits extend far beyond native game birds to at least 66 native non-game birds such as the Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) and the Brolga (*Grus rubicundus*).





### 3.1.5 Ramsar Convention and Principles

In 1975, the Convention on Wetlands was of international importance, especially as awareness grew of waterfowl habitat. This international treaty, commonly known as the Ramsar Convention, centred on the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, and recognises the role that wetlands play in our economies, culture, science, and recreation.

Australia has **65 Ramsar wetlands of international importance**. There are six in South Australia:

- **Coorong, Lakes Albert and Lake Alexandrina** (DEWNR is managing the drought recovery of this site through **Coorong, Murray Mouth and Lower Lakes** projects)
- **Bool and Hacks Lagoons**
- **Riverland** (of which the **Chowilla Floodplain** is a part)
- **Coongie Lakes**
- **Piccaninnie Ponds**
- **Banrock Station Wetland Complex** (the only one in South Australia that is held completely in private ownership).

Initially, the 1971 Convention did not include a definition of ‘wise use’ of wetlands however, it is clear that the term was being employed in the same sense and called for the “wise use of migratory stocks of waterfowl”. In modern terms this meant ‘sustainable exploitation’.

This controversial yet progressive provision to include ‘habitat’ in the Convention was well ahead of its time, when the order of the day (since the 1950s) was one of negative protectionism – i.e. to safeguard a natural environment all human activity must be removed.

As humankind progressed and increasingly became more and more pervasive it was obvious that removing our influence was impossible and the focus shifted to proactive, well-informed intervention through preservation, conservation, and the maintenance of an area (or a species).

A definition of wise use was adopted by the Parties in 1987 and was updated in 2005. This definition states:

**‘Wise use of wetlands is the maintenance of their ecological character, achieved through the implementation of ecosystem approaches, within the context of sustainable development.’**

Ramsar Convention 1975





There are three key elements of the definition of ‘wise use’:

- **Ecological character**, which is the combination of the ecosystem components, processes and benefits/services that characterise the wetland at a given point in time.
- **Ecosystem approaches**, which consider the complex relationships between every element of an ecosystem, and promote the integrated management of land, water and living resources (including humans).
- **Sustainable development**, which is a pattern of resource use that aims to meet human needs while preserving the environment so that these needs can be met not only in the present, but also for generations to come.

Sustainable and recreational hunting was always imbedded in the “wise use” ethos. It is a complementary and constructive element that underpins the Ramsar principles.

Australia is a signatory to the Ramsar Convention and boasts over 8.3 million hectares of Ramsar-listed wetlands. It has been argued that hunting goes against the Ramsar principles; however, amongst Australia’s wetlands of importance are areas which are (wholly, or partly) declared State Game Reserves: the Kerang Wetlands, Gunbower Forest, and the greater Gippsland Lakes wetland system.

Recognition of these areas, where hunting takes place during the legislated seasons, is important, as the Ramsar Convention defines *wise use as ‘the sustainable use of wetland resources in such a way as to benefit the human community while maintaining their potential to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations.’*

### 3.1.6 Blue Carbon Credits and Sequestration Benefits

Wetlands that benefit from the contribution of Field & Game Australia branches and volunteers, owned or in collaboration with other parties, have the unique ability to sequester higher carbon volumes, mitigating climate risk, improving livelihoods, and safeguarding biodiversity.

At a conceptual level, opportunity exists for Field & Game Australia to develop world class carbon sequestration projects, integrating with existing projects and activities. By working with likeminded organisations, domestically and internationally, it would be possible to support these initiatives and significantly enhance the conservation benefit. In doing so, we could dramatically improve water quality, and elevate the global reputation of our already renowned natural wetlands.

## 3.2 Animal Welfare

In his 2022 TEDx talk entitled “*Do Cows think Grass tastes Good?*” Associate Professor David Beggs - Veterinary Clinical Sciences – University of Melbourne, proports that “**animal welfare is not about length of life but rather quality of life.**”

Animals in the wild will undoubtedly suffer many risks and fates, such as but not limited to predation, disease, infection, starvation/dehydration, that will significantly and abruptly reduce lifespan. Professor Beggs believes what’s more important is helping them live a life worth living.





Acknowledging the habitat creation and other conservation work that Field & Game Australia and its partners and volunteers do every year to improve the prospects of birds in the wild having safe nesting places and the ability to reproduce and thrive, and the best practice approach to ethical and humane native game bird harvest, the continuance of a legislated native game bird hunting season by far delivers the optimal animal welfare outcome!

### 3.2.1 Understanding the Wounding Argument

Wounding is an unintentional consequence of hunting. All hunters aim to dispatch their quarry as quickly as possible, and ideally every bird shot at would be immediately dispatched. However, the fact is that despite hunters' best efforts wounding may sometimes occur.

Field & Game Australia has a long and proud history of educating and engaging hunters to reduce the occurrences of unintentional wounding. Specialists in the fields of ecology and wildlife management agree that this as the most effective way to drive improvements in hunting outcomes.

### 3.2.2 Cruelty and Welfare Considerations

According to the Collins Dictionary the definition of cruelty is:

**“Behaviour that deliberately causes pain or distress to people or animals”.**

Hunters are required by legislation to dispatch birds as quickly as possible to alleviate any suffering. This should also be true of protestors. When protestors 'steal' birds, often severely wounded, from hunters, and choose not to dispatch them but instead to parade them before the press, and/or be photographed and filmed for social media purposes and the like, they are in fact contributing to the pain and suffering of that animal. This behaviour is cruel and illegal, and they must be charged in accordance with South Australian laws.

***Controlled native game bird management, where a bird is shot, recovered, and immediately dispatched, results in very little pain as compared to some of the hardships that animal would face in the wild.***

### 3.2.3 Definition of Wounding

Wounding by its literal meaning is defined as:

***“the act of injuring” or “to inflict an injury”.***

Current definitions of wounding are ambiguous and serve to either over-simplify or over-complicate the discussion.





### 3.2.4 Degrees of wounding

The underlining issue here is the complete absence of any objective and reliable method of measuring the extent of bird wounding where shot, but not recovered. If we cannot trust the measurement tool how can we trust the data?

The result of unreliable data is an untenable aspersion, in this case, that every bird not recovered should be counted as wounded. This presumption serves to rationalise the ethical concerns of anti-hunting groups and their issue with the likelihood of survival of wounded birds. It does little to capture actual wounding occurrences with any great certainty.

To outline the ambiguous nature of the current definition, consider this:

- “A bird struck by shotgun pellets” could encompass anything from pellets striking but failing to penetrate the bird’s plumage – thus causing no injury at all, to
- An instantly dispatched bird, that is deceased before it even hits the ground, but due to a myriad of reasons is not recovered by the hunter.

When considering the possible outcomes of each shot it is prudent and appropriate to consider the full spectrum of variables rather than just ‘killed’ or ‘injured’. Some idea of a spectrum of wounding would be:

1. **Killed outright** – The bird is dispatched on impact.
2. **Mortally wounded/downed** – The bird loses the ability to fly immediately but may need to be dispatched on the ground/water by a second shot or manual process. This bird would not survive more than a minute or two regardless of hunter dispatch.
3. **Mortal wounding – crippled.** The bird is unconscious, but when checked is identified as having vital signs – required dispatching by manual method.  
NB: bird would not survive longer than a few minutes and has not suffered.
4. **Non-mortal wounding** – the bird will not die of its injuries but due to its injury it faces some detriment and may now be more susceptible to “natural attrition”. Importantly, birds in this category can still be VERY mobile, and hard to recover.
5. **Superficial wound** – Bird suffers only a minor wound and will survive with little hardship.
6. **Minor wound** – inconsequential physical injury that causes nothing more than minor inconvenience. Bird will survive without any affliction.
7. **Struck but not wounded** – The bird suffers only the shock of being struck but does not sustain any physical injury.
8. **Clean miss** – the bird is fired at but not struck at all.

**NB:** Only birds in levels 2 and 4 are affected by whether or not they are recovered.





### 3.2.5 Reasons Birds May Not Be Recovered

For disclosure purposes, there are several genuine reasons why a game bird may not be recovered:

- **Evasive Ground Behaviour**

When a game bird is *brought to* or *chooses to* go to ground or water they will instinctively take cover, hiding away deep in grasses and reeds, making further detection extremely difficult, even with the assistance of a gun dog. The surrounding terrain will contribute to this, as is the nature of the bird e.g. in the case of stubble quail, whether shot and wounded or not will instinctively scurry away, then stay put to avoid detection.

- **Evasive Airborne Behaviour**

Whilst it is undesirable and unintentional to wound and not kill a native game bird, and acknowledging that hunters go to painstaking effort to minimise this occurring, wounded game birds may descend initially then take flight once again to further distance themselves from a threat.

- **Auto Motor-Neuron Response**

Mortally wounded birds have an ability to exhibit uncharacteristic behaviour such as to 'kite'. This is where the bird's wings lock in an extended position and the bird may glide long distances despite being deceased. This can make tracking and recovery difficult even with a gun dog and/or terrain challenges.

- **Terrain Challenges**

The terrain in which hunters operate is physically challenging, be it the water-abundant wetlands that game ducks inhabit or dry flats where stubble quail exist. Visibility, accessibility, and other factors can make retrieval difficult.

**On the subject of wounding, the definition is ambiguous and unreasonable because of several factors:**

- **A Life Worth Living**

This implies that wounded birds did not go on to live a good or long life. Native game birds can absolutely live a normal life post-wounding and no data exists to substantiate otherwise.

- **Body Mass**

Furthermore, the current definition does not take into consideration that a larger species of game bird, such as a Pacific black duck rather than a grey teal, is more likely to survive as a result of taking a shot due to their greater body mass and related ability to carry shot.

- **Double Counting**

The wounding count is not an accurate indicator of actual wounding rates, due to the possibility of double counting. What if a bird is struck and downed by hunter (A) and it then swims downstream where it is shot by hunter (B) who claims the bird? Hunter (A) calls the game bird unrecovered, and according to the definition it is counted as 'wounded' which is inaccurate. Then if hunter (B) also fails to recover the bird, this again counts as a 'wounding' and contributes to a 'double count' of wounding.



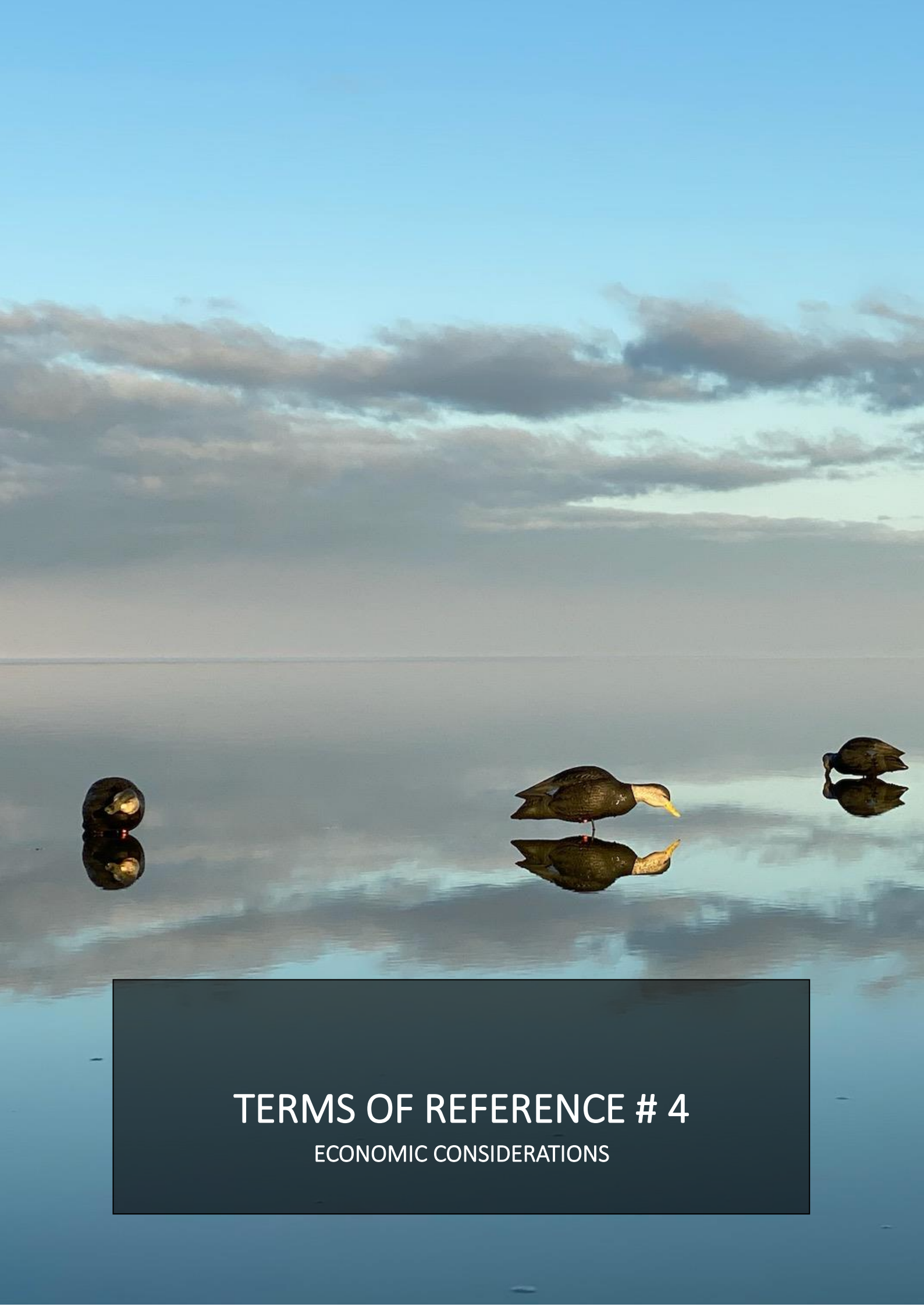


Field & Game Australia is a core member working in the Victorian **Wounding Reduction Action Plan Committee**, which consists of a cohort of invested stakeholders (Sporting Shooters Association Australia, Beretta Australia, RSPCA and more) and have established an agreed **Wounding Reduction Action Plan** which was presented to the Minister for Agriculture in September 2022, and the Minister for Outdoor Recreation in December 2022, for approval and implementation.

### 3.3 Recommendations for TOR 3#

- 1. The committee should recommend that the South Australia government consider collaboration with other states/territories to develop and adopt a nation-wide adaptive harvest model.**
  - a. Design 'fit for purpose' research tool(s) that provide accurate and reliable data to determine native game bird abundance and other related qualitative and quantitative metrics. These tools may include aerial and ground counts and other measures on an annual basis.
  - b. Invite respected independent scientific researchers to form a working committee to help shape and develop this tool over time.
  - c. Ensure that no Minister, singularly or collectively, has veto rights to ignore the data and override the hunting seasons.
- 2. Implement greater accountability on local councils and town planning third parties.**
  - a. Better educate property developers, owners and occupiers aware when residences and/or workplaces are proposed/exist in the vicinity of shooting ranges and State Game Reserves.
  - b. Councils and developers should have a duty to protect vital wetland habitat from development.
- 3. The committee should recommend the government Adopt wounding reduction as a goal and foster engagement and education of hunters.**
  - a. Review and update dispatch guides. The current code of practice for humane dispatch of ducks does not align with best practice in other states. This should be reviewed and addressed as required.
  - b. Foster genuine hunter engagement with incentives to complete additional training or scoring higher in current WIT tests.
  - c. Encouraging awareness and benefits of free-range harvesting as a sustainable practice.
- 4. The committee should ensure Welfare considerations should be clear on their requirements, free from ideology and ethics.**





# TERMS OF REFERENCE # 4

ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS





## 4. TERMS OF REFERENCE # 4 - ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

### 4.1 Economic Impact

#### 4.1.1 Significant Contribution Australia's GDP

A national survey designed and administered by RMCG 2018-19 [Dept Health Publications](#) analysed the direct and indirect economic impact of hunting and shooting on a national scale and found it to be substantial.

***The gross contribution to GDP  
= A\$2.4 billion***

***South Australia contributes a  
min.  
= A\$169 million***

Economic activity contribution was measured as both direct and indirect inputs, indirect being as a result of flow-on from normal hunting activities. When dissected, direct contribution was A\$0.8 billion, with a further A\$1.6 billion in indirect contribution. Other considerations from the RMCG survey acknowledged economic contribution occurs through on-trip and off-trip expenditure.

#### 4.1.2 Rural vs Metropolitan

While the survey showed a reasonably equitable split between hunters living in metro areas of South Australia and hunters living in rural areas – obviously most hunting occurs in rural regions. This would suggest that the vast majority of the \$59m spent by hunters while on hunting trips would go to regional areas. This de-centralisation of expenditure out of metro and into regional and rural areas is vital for the regional economies.

Also note – these figures were only for SA residents and didn't consider tourist hunters also coming into the state. FGA estimates an additional 30% or more could be added to these figures when considering those that travel into the state of South Australia on hunting trips.



CATEGORY	Expenditure (\$M)	PROPORTION OF TOTAL (%)
Fuel	173	9%
Groceries (including dog food), and drinks for self-catering/consumption at your accommodation	127	7%
Ammunition	76	4%
Takeaways and restaurant meals	75	4%
Hunting equipment (e.g. decoys, clothing)	60	3%
Accommodation	86	4%
Fees to landowners	32	2%
Vehicle/motorbike/boat repairs	45	2%
Other items	47	2%
<b>Sub-total (on-trip)</b>	<b>721</b>	<b>37%</b>
Firearms, bows, other firearm equipment and ammunition	664	34%
Hunting/target shooting club memberships	107	6%
Licenses/permits (e.g. firearm licences, game hunting licences/permits, etc.)	92	5%
Training to support your hunting/target shooting activities (e.g. target practice)	80	4%

**Table** Expenditure by Category

#### 4.1.3 Economic Inflow from Other States and Territories

In 2023 Department of Environment and land stats showed that of the roughly 1200 permits issued to duck hunters in SA, roughly 35% were from interstate (primarily Victoria). This represents a significant additional revenue flow – and this money would go almost exclusively to regional and/or rural communities.

Especially given the draconian restrictions on Victoria’s season in 2023 – many Victorian hunters will likely visit SA several times in the 2023 season.

Some recent anti-hunting “economic analysis” scoffs at the figures presented and claims there is no possible way hunters spend as much as they claim to on hunting trips, so to make it easier to understand, here is an example of one hunter’s expenditure as supplied in 2023:



Example money spent in SA by visiting hunter(s)	
Expenses for 3 day trip to SA opening weekend	
Fuel to travel from central vic - return	\$340
Groceries for 2 people, 2 days	\$250
Takeaway during travel over/back	\$100
Drinks	\$80
Licences	\$128.50
Accommodation (powered camp site - 2 nights)	\$150
Ammunition	\$30
Emergency boat repair	\$95
	\$1,174
Ducks taken home	5
Cost per duck	<b>\$234.70</b>

This demonstrates not only the \$1000+ per trip that hunters (and their partners) will spend – but also that the return per duck makes it VERY expensive meat.

Hunters are prepared to invest in their hunting experiences for more than just the harvest! It's not JUST about the meat, but the harvest is an important aspect.

The cost increases the appreciation of the animal and drives up the respect for responsible utilisation. Considering that a native duck may only yield 200 grams of meat, the dishes prepared by hunters then must be prepared in such a way as to celebrate that harvest – and pay respect to it.

#### 4.1.4 Substitution

Other economic analysis of hunting expenditure confidently proclaims that "if you ban hunting, hunters would spend that money anyway and so it won't have any economic effect".

This "substitution" completely misses the point that the experience of hunting and harvesting wild meat cannot be replaced by a local four-wheel-drive trip.

If hunting is banned hunters would find other ways to spend – but it would likely be on interstate or international hunting trips, or on other pastimes that take money out of South Australia, and directly out of the pocket of small regional economies.

## 4.2 Recommendations for TOR 4#

1. **The committee should recommend government proactively grow hunting in South Australia and the associated economic and social impact benefit.**
  - a. Government bodies to recognise and endorse that shooting and recreational hunting has a positive impact on the community's social and economic outcome.
  - b. Actively remove barriers that new hunters face by rewarding compliance and engagement.





- c. Acknowledge and respect hunting as a valuable lifestyle and that the majority of hunters are compliant and mindful of their impact.
- d. Recognise that hunting and hunting groups play a significant role in improving the mental health and wellbeing of all South Australians.

**2. Recognition and promotion of hunting as a sustainable nutrition source.**

- a. Promoting use of sustainable, free range, ethically sourced, low carbon milage, low fat, high protein game meat(s) as a nutritional food source.
- b. Advocate and remove the stigma of game meats through education and awareness campaigns.
- c. Consider the utilisation of wild food to provide healthy sustenance to those disadvantaged in our communities such as the homeless through food banks, shelters and community support groups.





# TERMS OF REFERENCE # 5

PERSPECTIVES OF FIRST NATIONS





## 5. TERMS OF REFERENCE # 5 - PERSPECTIVES OF FIRST NATIONS

### 5.1 Perspectives of First Nations

When considering native bird hunting in South Australia, it is crucial to give careful attention to First Nations considerations. Indigenous communities have deep connections to the land and a profound understanding of sustainable practices. The following factors should be considered:

Field & Game Australia contends that many modern hunters share a deep understanding of First Nations peoples' intimate connection to the land, including the habitats where native birds reside. Their cultural and spiritual ties to the land should be respected and acknowledged. Consulting with First Nations Elders, leaders, and representatives can provide insights into the cultural significance of native bird hunting and the importance of responsible stewardship of the land.

FGA also deeply understands the concept of Healing Country: First Nations communities often express the concept of "Healing Country", which encompasses the restoration and preservation of the natural environment.

Native bird hunting, when managed sustainably and in accordance with traditional practices, can be seen to actively participate in the healing and revitalisation of the land. By involving First Nations communities in decision-making processes, their knowledge and wisdom can contribute to effective land management strategies. FGA is currently engaged in conversations with multiple Traditional Owner groups in both Victoria and South Australia, and we are looking forward to sharing our knowledge of wetland management with Traditional Owner groups.

FGA and Traditional Owners agree on and understand the requirement for active management: First Nations communities have a history of active land management practices that promote biodiversity and balance within ecosystems. Their traditional ecological knowledge can inform active management strategies for native bird populations, such as controlled burns, habitat restoration, and the implementation of sustainable hunting practices. Incorporating these practices into the management of native bird hunting can contribute to the conservation of both the species and their habitats. Active utilisation of the resource and managing for abundance are key drivers of FGA that flow directly back into the beliefs and cultures of First Nations peoples. FGA practices what we preach and would never aim to deplete a resource beyond recovery. Indeed, managing for abundance but harvesting sparingly makes for the best possible harvest outcomes.

FGA member and indigenous anthropologist Mick O'Kane is actively working with FGA to engage with and extend our accessibility to Traditional Owners both regionally and in metropolitan regions.

By incorporating First Nations considerations, including their deep connection to country, the healing of land, and active management practices, the management of native bird hunting in South Australia can be enhanced. This collaborative approach ensures the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and perspectives, leading to more sustainable and culturally **respectful practices that benefit both the environment and the First Nations communities.**



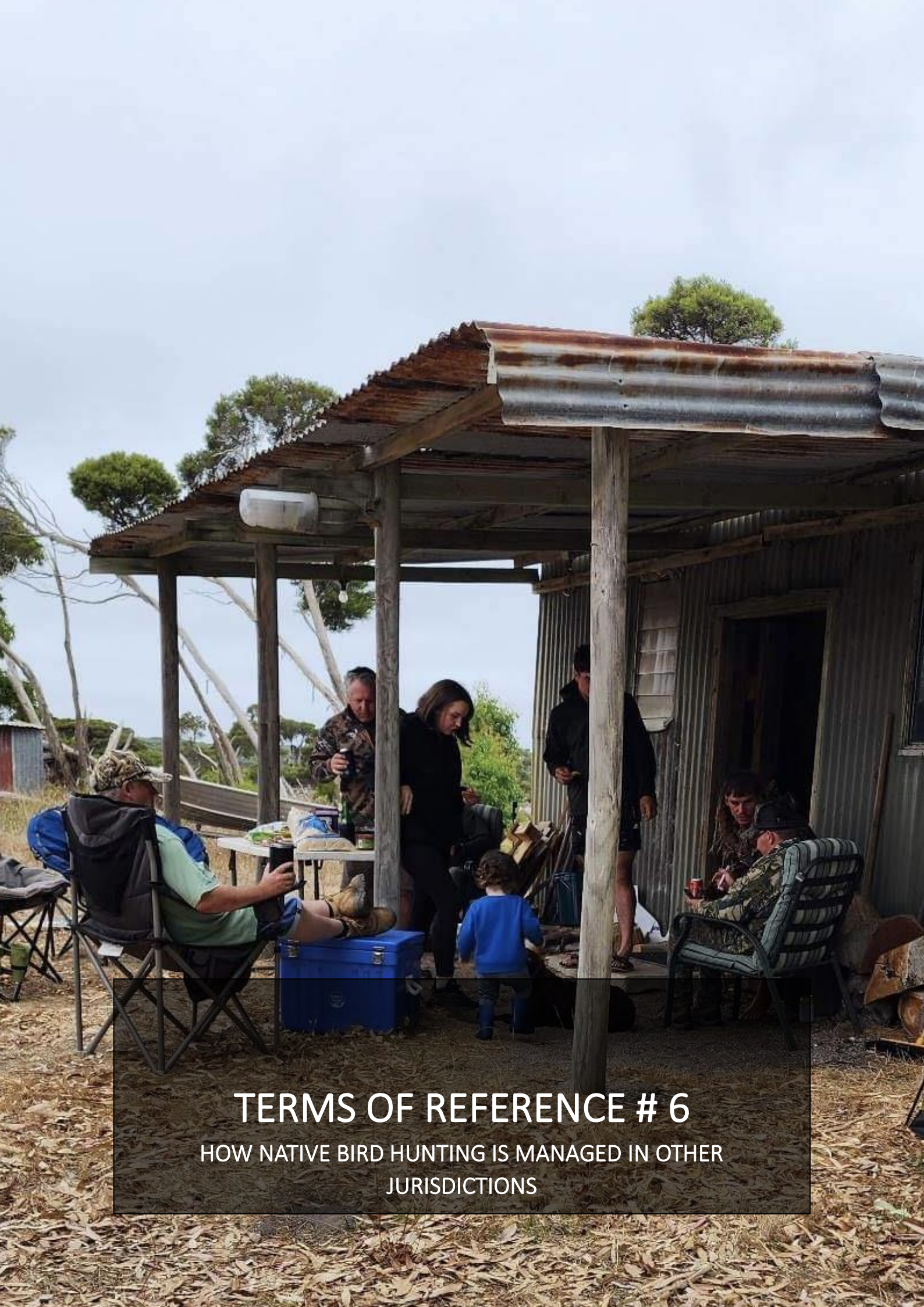


## 5.2 Recommendations for TOR #5

Regarding the perspectives of First Nations:

1. The committee should recommend consultation and collaboration.
  - a. Engage in meaningful consultation with First Nations Elders, leaders, and representatives to understand and respect their cultural and spiritual ties to the land. Their insights can provide valuable guidance on the cultural significance of native bird hunting and the importance of responsible land stewardship.
2. Embrace the concept of Healing Country.
  - a. Recognise the concept of "Healing Country" expressed by First Nations communities, which involves restoring and preserving the natural environment. Acknowledge that groups such as Field & Game Australia, aligned with traditional practices, can actively contribute to the healing and revitalisation of the land.
  - b. Involve First Nations communities in decision-making processes to leverage their knowledge and wisdom for effective land management strategies.
3. The committee should recommend and incorporate active management practices.
  - a. Recognise the historical active land management practices of First Nations communities that promote biodiversity and ecosystem balance.
  - b. Integrate traditional ecological knowledge into active management strategies for native bird populations, such as controlled burns, habitat restoration, and sustainable hunting practices.
  - c. Recognise that the Traditional Owner objectives of managing for abundance and engaging in responsible resource utilisation can contribute to native species and their habitats being conserved.





## TERMS OF REFERENCE # 6

HOW NATIVE BIRD HUNTING IS MANAGED IN OTHER  
JURISDICTIONS





## 6. TERMS OF REFERENCE # 6 - HOW NATIVE BIRD HUNTING IS MANAGED IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS

### 6.1 Australian Jurisdictions

Staunch opponents of recreational native game bird hunting would have the public believe that duck hunting is not permissible and does not occur in most Australian states and territories, but this information is incorrect and misleading.

In 2023, the only territory where ducks cannot be hunted is ACT:

- There is an annually regulated and legislated recreational hunting season in Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, and the Northern Territory.
- There is an (arguably a less well-regulated) agricultural pest-control system in NSW where ducks are legally shot by recreational hunters, on private property, under licence.
- There are also provisions for ducks to be hunted in south-west Western Australia and in Queensland on private property as part of crop mitigation schemes.

Until recently, Victoria was progressing towards world-best wildlife management practice by making steps to implement an ‘Adaptive Harvest Model,’ a science-led information model that informs responsible harvesting of this entirely renewable resource.

A key point to note is that the South Australian hunting season generally opens on the same weekend as Victoria. However, the 2023 Victorian season was postponed to midweek several weeks later, and this motivated many hunters to take advantage of the neighbouring state’s earlier start.

See the table below for an outline of the regulations in each state and territory.

STATE / TERRITORY	REGULATIONS – LEGISLATED/CONTROLLED/ GAZETTED	LOCATION DETAILS
Victoria	Legislated recreational native game bird hunting season	<a href="https://www.gma.vic.gov.au/media-releases/2023/2023-duck-hunting-season-arrangements">https://www.gma.vic.gov.au/media-releases/2023/2023-duck-hunting-season-arrangements</a>
SA	Gazetted recreational native game bird hunting season	<a href="https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/plants-and-animals/sustainable-use-of-animals-and-plants/hunting-information/open-season/duck-hunting">https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/plants-and-animals/sustainable-use-of-animals-and-plants/hunting-information/open-season/duck-hunting</a>
Tasmania	Legislated recreational native game bird hunting season	<a href="https://nre.tas.gov.au/wildlife-management/management-of-wildlife/game-management/species-of-game">https://nre.tas.gov.au/wildlife-management/management-of-wildlife/game-management/species-of-game</a>





NSW	Controlled	<a href="https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/hunting/game-and-pests/native-game-birds">https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/hunting/game-and-pests/native-game-birds</a>
QLD	Controlled	<a href="https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/licences-permits/plants-animals/damage-mitigation-permits">https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/licences-permits/plants-animals/damage-mitigation-permits</a>
W.A	Controlled	<a href="https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/plants-and-animals/licences-and-authorities?showall=&amp;start=4">https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/plants-and-animals/licences-and-authorities?showall=&amp;start=4</a>
N.T	Legislated recreational native game bird hunting season	<a href="https://nt.gov.au/leisure/hunting-and-shooting/magpie-geese-and-waterfowl/magpie-geese-and-waterfowl-season-dates">https://nt.gov.au/leisure/hunting-and-shooting/magpie-geese-and-waterfowl/magpie-geese-and-waterfowl-season-dates</a>

**TABLE 1** Australian state and territory Jurisdiction Legislation

## 6.2 Recommendations for TOR #6

When considering other jurisdictions, the committee should:

- 1. Study how native bird hunting is managed in other jurisdictions with a view to developing best practice – not looking to just adopt what anyone else is doing. The committee should recommend consultation and collaboration in the future.**
  - a. Conduct research on the management of native bird hunting in different Australian jurisdictions, and overseas.
  - b. Consider collaboration with other states to inform decision-making and come up with a model more similar to flyway management in North America that recognises the nomadic nature of Australian Native birds and manages populations accordingly.
  - c. Learn from the experiences and outcomes of hunting management strategies in different contexts.





## TERMS OF REFERENCE # 7

OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS





## 7. TERMS OF REFERENCE # 7 - OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS

### 7.1 Fast Facts – Native Game Bird and Hunting in South Australia

The following information has been compiled to assist the Select Committee members to navigate some of the common aspects of:

- a) native game bird behaviour, characteristics, breeding, lifespan, welfare, and abundance; and
- b) hunting season, regulation, conservation of wetlands and dry lands, competency, and ballistics.

FAST FACT	STATEMENT
1. How long does the South Australian game duck and stubble quail season run?	<p><b>THIS IS THE VICTORIAN INFORMATION:</b></p> <p>Wildlife (Game) Regulations 2012 set out:</p> <p><b>Part 2 – Indigenous game birds (quail)</b></p> <p>Start 30 minutes before sunrise on the first Saturday in April until 30 minutes after sunset on 30 June in each year (in 2023 – 90 days).</p> <p><b>Part 3 – Indigenous game birds (waterfowl)</b></p> <p>From the beginning of the third Saturday in March in each year until 30 minutes after sunset on the second Monday in June in each year (in 2023 – 88 days).</p> <p>The regulations also stipulate bag size of:</p> <p><b>Stubble quail</b> - A maximum of twenty on any day during an open season.</p> <p><b>Ducks:</b> A maximum of ten ducks, which may include no more than two Australasian (Blue- winged) Shovelers, on any day during an open season.</p> <p><b>Section 86</b> of the Wildlife Act 1975 allows the appropriate Minister to make modifications to the above season conditions and bag size.</p> <p>This availability for Ministerial interference is possibly the most contentious point (beyond the decision to have a season) and is vehemently opposed by Field &amp; Game Australia.</p>
2. What is the average lifespan of a native Australian duck?	<p>The average lifespan of a native Australian duck in the wild can be as low as 2 years but is generally considered to be 3-5 years. These birds live a challenging life where permanent and cyclical habitat reduction, competition for food, predator activity, and diseases play a compounding role on population abundance. In fact, studies have shown that as many as 50% of ducks will not survive beyond 12 months, and as few as 20% will reach 2 years old.</p> <p>Hunting mortality plays little part in this, with survival rates being similar in both heavily hunted, and sparsely hunted areas.</p>
3. How should we consider the welfare of ducks?	<p>Associate Professor David Beggs - University of Melbourne informs that “animal welfare’ is a precise science,” and not a fluffy concept.</p>





	<p>We must qualify animal welfare based on the “sum of life experiences” of an animal, not simply when or how it came to its end-of-life moment. Our goal should therefore be to help them “live a life worth living”.</p> <p>The vast majority of anti-hunting rhetoric is based on ethics of hunting, namely “how humans feel about what they do to and with animals.” The Professor adamantly states this has nothing to do with the animal’s actual welfare and everything to do with the personal beliefs and opinions of individuals.</p> <p>Whilst beliefs and opinions are important, they do little to ensure the welfare of the native game birds.</p>
<p><b>4. What is the leading cause of declining duck abundance?</b></p>	<p>It is important to note that whilst various bodies refer to native game bird longitudinal studies as a source of truth, Field &amp; Game Australia disputes their application to native game bird abundance.</p> <p>The data collection method includes the repeated observations of consistent variables in the same locations over consecutive years. This ignores the instinctive and reactive behavioural nature of these animals when challenged by climate, predation, competition, and water quality.</p> <p>When conditions are unfavourable, native game bird abundance is not necessarily less, but rather, less in the geographies where they historically reside. Native game birds are highly reactive and instinctive animals and as such will seek alternative waterways, including manmade sources, when traditional water sources are unavailable.</p> <p>Brian Hiller - Associate Professor of Biology and Wildlife at Bemidji State University, Minnesota, and numerous other renowned scientists, know emphatically that loss of habitat is the single greatest driver of declining native animal abundance anywhere in the world, and native game birds are no exception.</p> <p>The most significant cause of habitat loss is the pervasiveness of agricultural activity and human urbanisation. Paired with seasonal boom-bust climatic cycles, wetland conditions will vary dramatically, affecting the land’s capacity to sustain birdlife.</p>
<p><b>5. What is the definition of wounding?</b></p>	<p>Not all birds counted as ‘wounded’ suffer and die. The definition of a ‘wounded’ game bird is the subject of great debate and is addressed earlier in this document.</p>
<p><b>6. What impact does rainfall have on duck abundance?</b></p>	<p>Annual rainfall, and subsequent streamflow and water catchment within wetlands are the key drivers of thriving native game bird populations. The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) data is heavily relied upon as one of the lead indicators of forecast duck abundance.</p> <p>In periods when rainfall is high and increasing, such as from 2020 to 2023, the inference is that native game bird abundance will also increase, and harvestable percentages should also increase accordingly.</p>
<p><b>7. What data is collected to determine native game bird</b></p>	<p>The season declarations follow an assessment of climate data and forecasts, landscape and wetland conditions, and waterfowl abundance. The potential impacts of hunting activities on the conservation and</p>



<b>abundance and inform seasonal arrangements for hunting?</b>	sustainability of waterfowl populations and stakeholder feedback are also considered as part of the assessment. The information used in the assessment includes data from: The Bureau of Meteorology; DEW wetland and waterfowl surveys; the EAWS; stubble quail surveys undertaken by the Conservation and Hunting Alliance of South Australia; and various remotely sensed landscape condition data.
<b>8. How many ducks and stubble quail are harvested each year?</b>	Current practice aims to ensure less than 10 per cent of the native game bird abundance is harvested.
<b>9. How many native game duck species are there in South Australia?</b>	In normal years eight species of game duck may be hunted: Blue-winged Shoveler, Grey Teal, Chestnut Teal, Hardhead, Mountain Duck, Pink-eared Duck, Pacific Black Duck and Wood Duck.
<b>10. What other native game birds can be hunted in South Australia?</b>	Stubble quail are small, incredibly hardy native game birds that dwells on the ground and feeds on the stubble from cereal crops. They are extremely evasive and challenging to hunt and a prolific breeders.
<b>11. When does breeding occur?</b>	Australian native ducks will commence breeding when conditions are suitable, ordinarily late July-early August and will continue breeding whilst conditions are suitable, having 2-3 clutches, and conclude breeding by March the following year.  Duck hunting season is determined to align with the breeding season and encourage this resource responsibly and sustainably.
<b>12. How many permitted members does the Field &amp; Game Australia have and why does this matter?</b>	Field & Game Australia represents approximately 16,000 permitted members.  Our native wetlands, game and non-game animals, and the community at large benefit greatly when Field & Game Australia's member base grows because more members equate to more active volunteers and funding.  More volunteers mean more resources to monitor and manage our remarkable resources. Fees generated from members help Field & Game Australia to better organise and manage its vital work in scientific research, conservation, and recreation at a world's best practice level.
<b>13. How do animals, including native game birds, react to hunting season?</b>	Native Australian animals, in this case native game birds, are astoundingly resilient. When hunting season commences, ducks and other non-game wetland species intuitively adjust by temporarily locating to adjacent areas where hunting pressure is less prevalent, only to return without long term impact. Ultimately, native game birds react the same as they would to any predator; take flight, seek out alternative sanctuary, land and settle once again.
<b>14. Don't wetland environments take care of themselves?</b>	Left unattended, many of our most treasured wetlands would become overgrown, overpopulated (in optimal conditions), inaccessible, unattractive, and unused by the community.  Professor Richard Kingsford stated on February 1 in an interview on ABC <i>Country Hour</i> radio, that he identified widespread breeding and expected a 'bounce back' in





	<p>duck numbers, and raised concerns a ban would remove the public focus on data collection and the sustainability of ducks. People value what they can use.</p> <p>If not for the tireless work of Field &amp; Game Australia and countless volunteers since 1958, many would have been lost through commercial development or total abandonment.</p> <p>Our vision of the future is one where everyone can enjoy the splendour of abundant, flourishing wetland ecosystems. Our role as an <b>environmental advocate and champion</b> of wetland preservation is demonstrable through more than 20 wetland environments we care for.</p> <p>This is our contribution to <b>Caring for Country</b> in the way our <b>Traditional Owners practised so prudently</b>.</p>
<p><b>15. Other than preserving game duck hunting what other benefits does Field &amp; Game Australia deliver?</b></p>	<p>Field &amp; Game Australia's conservation effort is vital for non-game fauna and flora.</p> <p>A wide range of threatened plants and animals depend on healthy wetlands for their survival. These wetlands provide refuge and critical habitat.</p> <p>Field &amp; Game Australia continues to contribute to an extensive body of knowledge that is contributing to many vital global scientific research projects such as Avian Flu research and others.</p> <p><a href="https://www.exploreunderwatervictoria.org.au/glossary/habitat/-:~:text=Eleven%20of%20Victoria%27s%20wetlands%20are,than%20100%20species%20of%20waterbirds.">https://www.exploreunderwatervictoria.org.au/glossary/habitat/-:~:text=Eleven%20of%20Victoria%27s%20wetlands%20are,than%20100%20species%20of%20waterbirds.</a></p>
<p><b>16. How competent are hunters at determining game birds from non-game birds?</b></p>	<p>Australia's native (game and non-game) bird species are all uniquely different. The rigorous education and permitting process hunters must undergo through the Wildlife Identification Test (WIT) furnishes hunters with the ability to instantly distinguish their quarry in all hunting conditions.</p> <p>Distinguishing features include appearance (size, shape, colour, markings), sound/voicing, flight characteristics, speed of flight, location they inhabit and more.</p> <p>Hunters hone their identification and marksmanship skills in the off-season through regular Field &amp; Game Australia communication, shooting range participation and personal research.</p>
<p><b>17. Why hunt native game birds i.e. ducks?</b></p>	<p>Native game birds or ducks in this instance, are a highly coveted game species for many reasons. As a source of nourishment, they provide an abundant, healthy, free range food source that humankind has relied upon in famines, wars, and affluent times alike.</p> <p>But game ducks are no pushover. They are highly respected and desired for their evasive and survival capabilities, and challenge hunters to be on top of their game before earning their reward. For this reason, hunters are ever respectful and grateful for access to such a resource.</p> <p>Australia is blessed with a natural abundance of ducks and Field &amp; Game Australia is ensuring this natural resource is there to enjoy for generations to come.</p>





## 8. CONCLUSION

**The South Australia select committee should endorse native bird hunting based on the following factors:**

**(a) Community values and perspective:**

Native bird hunting has long been a part of the cultural fabric of South Australia's communities. It is important to consider the values and perspectives of the local regional communities that benefit the most and would have the most to lose. Many of these communities have a deep connection to the land and wildlife.

The community's growing concern about responsible, sustainable food sourcing is only going to continue to increase, and effective management of this abundant resource will stand South Australia in good stead to embrace the locally-sourced free-caught food movement

**(b) Cultural, social, and recreational aspects:**

Native bird hunting holds cultural significance and serves as a recreational activity that connects individuals with nature. It provides opportunities for social interaction, community bonding, and the passing down of generational knowledge. Acknowledging and supporting these cultural, social, and recreational aspects can help preserve traditions, promote well-being, and strengthen community ties. Hunting is an essential tie between First Nations communities and contemporary hunters and will foster reconciliation and mutual connection to country.

**(c) Sustainability, environmental, and animal welfare aspects:**

Responsible hunting practices contribute to sustainability by maintaining balanced ecosystems, controlling populations, and promoting habitat conservation. Ethical hunters prioritise animal welfare, ensuring a quick and humane harvest.

They also serve a vital role in pest control and predator management. Proper, effective management and regulation of native bird hunting can help mitigate negative environmental impacts and ensure the long-term sustainability of bird populations.

**(d) Economic considerations:**

Native bird hunting has immense positive economic impacts through tourism, the sale of licences, equipment, and related services. It can stimulate local businesses, create employment opportunities, and contribute to the regional economy. Economic considerations should be considered when evaluating the benefits of endorsing native bird hunting.

**(e) Perspectives of First Nations:**

It is crucial to seek and incorporate the perspectives of First Nations communities, who hold deep cultural ties and traditional knowledge related to hunting practices. Their insights can provide valuable guidance in understanding the cultural, spiritual, and environmental significance of native bird hunting and help inform decision-making processes.

**(f) Management practices in other jurisdictions:**

Studying how native bird hunting is managed in other jurisdictions can offer insights into successful regulatory frameworks, sustainable practices, and effective wildlife management strategies. Learning from these experiences can help shape responsible and effective management approaches within South Australia.





Considering these factors can provide a comprehensive and balanced understanding of native bird hunting and inform the South Australia Select Committee's decision-making process. It allows for a holistic assessment of the cultural, social, economic, environmental, and First Nations perspectives, ensuring that any endorsement of native bird hunting aligns with community values, sustainability, and responsible wildlife management practices.

Native bird hunting in South Australia has the opportunity to follow world's best practice and create the ideal balance between maintenance and management of a sustainable natural resource, animal wellbeing, and the combined benefits to the community.

Field & Game Australia is pleased to have been part of the process so far, and looks forward to the opportunity to address the committee to address any questions the members may have.





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