

Our Ref: BNE438-17
BNE2006/14153
E/06/00242
Your Ref: 714-06

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliamentary Service
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 17 October 2006 concerning a petition received by the House on 11 October 2006 opposing the banning of recreational duck and quail hunting in Queensland.

The State Government has legislated to permanently ban recreational duck and quail hunting in Queensland.

This decision is based on clear evidence from the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries' Animal Welfare Advisory Committee that this form of recreational hunting is inhumane.

The State Government has received over 5000 individual public submissions supporting the decision to ban duck and quail hunting. At the same time, only 50 submissions have been received in support of this form of hunting.

Concerns that ending duck and quail hunting will have negative ecological consequences and that this form of hunting contributes to the conservation of these native birds are unfounded. Recreational duck and quail hunting plays no role in the conservation of any of the species of duck and quail that were subject to this practice. Hunting is not a natural regulatory process nor does it play any role in the management of these species. Recreational hunting is not used as a method of controlling ducks where they cause significant economic damage to crops. In these situations, any taking of ducks is carried out under a damage mitigation permit.

In fact, it is the shooting of these birds that has been identified as an unsustainable practice during periods of drought when ducks are unlikely to breed. As recently as 2003, the Environmental Protection Agency's Duck and Quail Management Advisory Committee (D&QMAC) recommended against declaring a hunting season on those grounds.

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I note the petitioners claim that the Government was negligent in not informing the D&QMAC of its intention to ban recreational duck and quail hunting. When the Duck and Quail Conservation Plan lapsed in 2005, members of the D&QMAC were notified that the Committee would be disbanded as its primary function (i.e. to provide advice on setting seasonal harvest periods) had become redundant. Therefore, the Committee no longer existed at the time the Government was preparing the Bill to permanently ban duck and quail hunting. Even if the Committee had still existed, its function was primarily advisory, not consultative, and it would not have had a role in determining Government direction on this matter.

In response to the claim that banning recreational duck and quail hunting only reflects an extreme viewpoint, I draw your attention to the national decline in interest in this form of hunting. It has already been banned in New South Wales and Western Australia on animal welfare grounds and has always been illegal in the ACT. The declining interest in duck and quail hunting in Queensland can also be gauged by the steady decline in the number of recreational hunting permits issued over the last 20 years; decreasing from 1800 permits in 1984 to 379 in 2004.

I also wish to allay the concerns of those petitioners who believe that the State Government's intended ban on recreational duck and quail hunting is part of a broader campaign to ban other activities, such as recreational fishing. This is not the case and the Government has no intention to ban this activity.

I hope this information is helpful to you.

Yours sincerely

Lindy Nelson-Carr MP
Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism