

The Hon. David Llewellyn
Minister for Primary Industries and Water, and Energy
Parliament House
Hobart 7000

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Dear Mr Llewellyn,

Native ducks around Australia are living in times of great uncertainty. Their continued existence is determined by a range of factors. These include locating suitable places to feed, and finding the right habitat to raise their young. With the very dry conditions that have been occurring throughout eastern Australia, many waterbirds are unable to survive in areas that were once significant wetland habitats. Many important wetlands are dry or becoming dry across the eastern States.

Because the drought affected the mainland of Australia so seriously, native waterbirds were flying to Tasmania to seek refuge. All 'game' species of native ducks are known to fly in both directions over Bass Strait. Given the known movement of native ducks during dry times, we can reasonably expect that a proportion of the waterbirds in Tasmania move between other parts of the country.

Experts say a shooting season in Tasmania could significantly impact on bird numbers on the mainland. For species like Chestnut Teal and Mountain Ducks, whose numbers are among the lowest on record according to long-term aerial surveys, this could be a death sentence. There is insufficient data from the DPIW to properly assess how native ducks are faring in Tasmania, particularly given the large numbers being killed each year from duck-shooting. An open season would cause tens of thousands of ducks to be killed this year (based on previous years). This is totally unacceptable.

Decisions we make today will affect native waterbirds for a lifetime. Native ducks in Australia have been in decline for more than 25 years. They are severely stressed by habitat destruction, drought and the effects of climate change. This necessitates that we act cautiously. We need to act in a way that will help ensure the long-term survival of all waterbird species throughout this country. In line with current public opinion, you are urged to permanently end to duck shooting in Tasmania

Yours sincerely,