



## **Bird Observation & Conservation Australia**

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24<sup>th</sup> November 2008

The Hon. Gavin Jennings  
Minister for Environment and Climate Change  
8 Nicholson St  
East Melbourne 3002

Dear Minister

### **Property Based Game Management**

BOCA (Bird Observation & Conservation Australia) and Birds Australia are strongly opposed to the proposal by the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment to develop a “property based game management project” through which private landowners can be paid by shooters to kill duck and quail on their properties.

The native duck and quail “game species” which occur on, or will be attracted to private land are part of the national population and must not be treated separately for the purpose of conservation. As you know Australia’s duck population is at a very low level and it is widely believed that quail populations have also suffered as a result of the long drought, climate change and changes to agricultural practices.

The project, if implemented, would be privatising native wildlife – giving landowners the right to charge for shooting native species. This would be an extraordinary policy decision.

Landowners who have their properties registered under the scheme could encourage ducks and quail to their land through artificial feeding as well as habitat enhancement. Having invested financially in attracting native game birds to their properties, they will demand that an open season be held each year, regardless of overall numbers in the population.

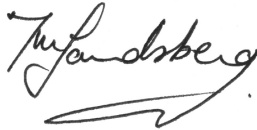
Who will enforce the wildlife regulations relating to protected species, bag limits, shooting times, etc. on the private land? There is inadequate enforcement now on public land, so it is highly likely that these issues will not receive attention on private land.

While it is recognised that shooting of ducks and quail occurs on private property under current legislation, it is the concept of privatising and commercialising native wildlife that is of greatest concern. Implementation of the scheme would make it much more difficult for the Government to make a decision statewide to not have an open season because of the commercial pressures which will be brought to bear, possibly through farming organisations as well as shooters and the landowners involved.

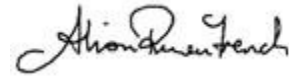
Both BOCA and Birds Australia oppose the recreational hunting of native birds. This new “initiative” by DSE strengthens the resolve of our organisations to have this outdated and cruel sport banned.

Meanwhile, we request that you modify the Property Based Game Management project to exclude native ducks and native quail.

Yours sincerely



Tim Landsberg  
President  
Bird Observation & Conservation Australia



Alison Russell-French  
President  
Birds Australia