

Our Ref: BNE438-9
BNE2004/13686
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Your Ref: 286-04

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Cnr Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 1 October 2004 forwarding a copy of a petition received by the House on 28 September 2004 regarding recreational duck and quail hunting in Queensland.

The recreational hunting of duck and quail in Queensland currently occurs under the Nature Conservation (Duck and Quail) Conservation Plan 1995. This Conservation Plan allows for an annual harvest period, or hunting season, to be declared. The process of declaring a harvest period involves the Environmental Protection Agency seeking advice from my Duck and Quail Management Advisory Committee, a committee comprised of members of several stakeholder groups, including animal welfare and hunting organisations.

The hunting of duck and quail is currently provided for in Queensland but it occurs during a limited period of time in those years when a harvest period is declared. In 2003, the Committee assessed available information on bird numbers and seasonal conditions and recommended to my predecessor, the Honourable Dean Wells MP, that a harvest period not be declared due to the impacts of drought on waterbird populations. In 2004, the Committee again assessed available information on bird populations and environmental conditions and suggested that a harvest period would be sustainable, although some members did not support that a season proceed on other grounds. The season has now closed.

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I understand the specific concerns expressed by sections of the community opposed to recreational hunting. The recreational harvest of duck and quail is not considered a threat to the sustainability of populations under normal seasonal conditions. When conditions are extreme, as in 2003, a harvest may not occur. Animal welfare also continues to be a contentious issue. In recent years the banning of lead shot use in wetlands and the introduction of better bird identification tests for hunters have addressed some animal welfare and sustainability issues.

The conservation plan for duck and quail will expire next year and will therefore be reviewed. The review process will require me to publish a notice of intent to draft a new plan, providing the community with an opportunity to submit comments for a new plan. I encourage the petitioners to provide input about any issue they would like to raise in that process.

Yours sincerely

Desley Boyle MP
Minister for Environment
Minister for Local Government and Planning
Minister for Women