



Ms Jacqueline Dewar  
Committee Secretary  
Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts  
References Committee, Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

11 April 2006

Dear Ms Dewar,

As discussed briefly by telephone on Thursday 6 April, we are writing to clarify the findings of a recent study (Miller and Jones 2005) that have been cited by Stephen Larsson in his submission to the Senate Inquiry into Australia's national parks, conservation reserves and marine protected areas.

The study cited in Larsson's submission examined the values and attitudes held by Australasian wildlife managers as they relate to wildlife management issues, and possible future directions and priorities for Australasian wildlife management. Larsson has cited this work, stating:

*"The management of introduced species is rated a high priority among Australasian wildlife managers who also believe that it is necessary and/or appropriate to manage, control and use wildlife for a variety of reasons (Miller and Jones 2005). The Miller and Jones survey also found: 79% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement 'hunting is morally wrong because it violates the right of an individual animal to exist'; 74% of respondents agreed with the statement 'it is possible to view wildlife with reverence and still participate in hunting'" (extract from Larsson's submission to this Inquiry).*

We believe that Larsson has focused on a narrow set of statistics from this work and ignored the bigger picture. While respondents to the survey (a sample of 138) used in the study agreed that it is important to manage wildlife for a variety of reasons, they also expressed the following views:

*94% of respondents agreed with the statement 'It is ethical for society to restrict human activities to minimise negative impacts on wildlife.'*

91% of respondents agreed with the statement *'Minimising animal pain and suffering should be an important consideration in wildlife programs in Australia.'*

93% of respondents agreed with the statement *'Anyone who uses wild animals in some way should be concerned about the pain and suffering of those animals.'*

Furthermore, 86% of respondents in the survey agreed with the statement *'Wildlife managers should understand public and interest group values and knowledge of wildlife before developing management programs'*. As such, it is important to note the findings of another study based in Victoria (Miller 2003) which suggests that there is a very low level of support for hunting activities within various wildlife management stakeholder groups and also the general public. For example, survey responses to the statement *'Recreational hunting is cruel to animals'* were as follows:

Stakeholder group or general public sample (n = sample size)	Responses (%) to statement <i>'Recreational hunting is cruel to animals'</i>		
	Agreed	Undecided	Disagreed
Parks Victoria (n = 138)	37	27	37
Field Naturalists Club of Victoria (n = 141)	69	10	21
Bird Observers Club of Australia (n = 150)	73	11	17
RSPCA (n = 127)	91	2	7
Australian Conservation Foundation (n = 144)	74	11	15
Victorian Field and Game Association <sup>1</sup> (n = 81)	7	1	91
Shire of East Gippsland (n = 95)	48	18	34
Shire of Southern Grampians (n = 94)	53	16	31
Shire of Yarriambiack (n = 109)	51	15	35
City of Brimbank (n = 68)	74	19	7
City of Melbourne (n = 68)	74	13	13
City of Bayside (n = 103)	84	6	11
Shire of Yarra Ranges (n = 92)	67	17	15

<sup>1</sup> Now known as Field and Game Australia  
Reported percentages may not total 100% owing to rounding  
Source: Miller 2000.

Our work does not support hunting in national parks as suggested by Larsson. Rather, it supports the findings from Miller (2003) which suggest that:

*"Victorians tend not to express the dominionistic/wildlife-consumption value. This has implications for wildlife management in this State, where dominionistic-type approaches (e.g. shooting, poisoning) have traditionally been used by managers (see Temby 1995). Managers should continue to seek wildlife control methods that do not rely on destruction of the animal (e.g. sterilisation of wildlife, education programs)" (Miller 2003, p.474).*

However, the role of hunting and other management practices in national parks must not be driven only by people's views of whether or not it is justified but by sound scientific knowledge.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

Yours sincerely,

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**References:**

- Miller, K.K. (2000). Public and stakeholder values of wildlife in Victoria, Australia. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Deakin University, Melbourne.
- Miller, K.K. (2003). Public and stakeholder values of wildlife in Victoria, Australia. *Wildlife Research* 30: 465-476.
- Miller, K.K. and Jones, D.N. (2005). Wildlife management in Australasia: perceptions of objectives and priorities. *Wildlife Research* 32: 1-8.