

Bullying

Duck rescuers have witnessed duck shooters bullying children on the wetlands.

Emotional bullying is the use of words to mock, shock, tease, or ostracize another person. While it can have a physical component, that isn't the primary means of bullying in this case. This type of bullying can be even more damaging, in the long run, than physical harm. (Study.com).

In order to record incidents of bullying on the wetlands you need to be in the right place at the right time and be filming when the incident takes place.

Capturing footage of emotional bullying, which can take place in an instant, is even more difficult than documenting the shooting of threatened or protected species. But when threatened species are shot the evidence of the bird is available. With bullying there is nothing tangible to show - what's left are the crushed feelings and long term impacts on the victim.

Rescuers have witnessed shooters belittling their sons by calling them pathetic wusses and wimps when the children were reluctant to collect wounded birds and have also seen traumatised and terrified dogs. One dog ran out of the water and onto the bank, frightened and shaking. An angry shooter came out after him, yelling at the dog to go back, but was probably embarrassed when he found rescuers were there comforting the scared dog.

Here are some documented reports:

Some years ago at Lake Buloke I was out on the water during the duck shooting season to prevent birds from being shot and help the wounded birds.

I was standing near a shooter who had a child of around 8 – 9 years of age with him, presumably his son.

The shooter shot a bird which fell into the water around 20 metres from them. It was dying, but still alive when the shooter ordered the child to go and get the bird. The child waded over to the bird and picked it up. It was still alive and trying to flap its wings. The boy was crying as he turned around to the shooter and said, "It's still alive, it's still alive". The father said "Bring it back - what's wrong with you? Why don't you go and join them then?" (referring to me). This made the child cry even more.

I walked away because there was nothing I could do and I didn't want to make the situation worse.

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Prior to 2010, I attended duck rescue with the Coalition Against Duck Shooting at Kerang. It was an opening morning and we were on shore about to head out into the water.

There was a group of shooters going out into the water who seemed to know each other – I presumed they were from two or three different families. They included around five men, a young teenager and a young child of approximately three or four years of age.

We rescuers expressed concern to each other about the age of the child and one of the rescuers actually mentioned this to the shooters.

The family group of shooters was quite close to shore when the shooting started. We rescuers had split into two groups – my group went further out into the water while the others stayed closer to the shore.

Around the time shooting started I observed that the child was extremely upset, tugging at his father's trousers, sobbing and shaking. The father basically told him to shut up and man up.

My group moved further away from these shooters so I lost sight of the boy. When we eventually returned to shore we spoke to the other half of our group who had been close to the family of shooters all morning. They said that the child had continued to be distressed and that the father had either ignored him or told him off for crying. They said that the shooters eventually headed back to shore, basically angry with the child because he had spoilt their morning.



In the following clips you can see an instance of two children accompanying an older child and two adults. One child puts his hands over his ears and winces from the noise of the shotgun blasts. He certainly does not appear to be enjoying himself. https://youtu.be/D_5YeNR9A_E (0.14 – 0.18). Here is different footage of the same group: <https://youtu.be/iVLRcdX6u3g> (0.55 – 1.11).

Together with all members of the public, it is actually illegal for un-licenced children to be in the water or within 25 metres of the shoreline of a shooting wetland.

Taking children who are too young to give consent into a risky ultra-masculine environment is a form of bullying and blooding, due to the dangerous nature of the activity (see photo at right).

See attached Sunday Herald Sun article, March 19, 2000. A six year old child drowned at Cairn Curran Reservoir when a small aluminium dingy carrying six people capsized on the opening of the duck shooting season. The boat was overloaded with three cases of shotgun cartridges each weighting 22kg as well as six people (all without life jackets).

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