

Supplemental responses to Native Game Bird Hunting Committee Testimony from Dr. Brian J. Hiller

**Page 9 of 15. In response to Ms. Purcell’s question as to whether I am a duck hunter also.**

In addition to hunting ducks, I also hunt deer, turkeys, geese, grouse, and doves. I also keep and eat fish that I catch. I also forage in the forest for wild edibles such as mushrooms. I also grow my own vegetables. My family also cans/preserves our own salsa. I help friends raise and butcher chickens. Sometimes, I even have to resort to going to the grocery store for some of my food. My point here is that I hunt to participate in collecting my own food locally from wild, free-range, organic sources based on what is seasonally available and abundant.

I have been asked to give evidence based on my extensive education in Wildlife Management, my recognized expertise in the field, as well as my position as someone who trains wildlife managers for a living. My personal pursuit of wild food sources is irrelevant to my scientific opinions regarding the influence of hunting on the population health of waterfowl in Australia. I would expect that Ms. Purcell regularly helps legislate on issues that may also interact with her personal views and that she also has the ability to separate the two.

**Page 14 of 15. In response to Mr. Mulholland’s question regarding changing the existing laws in Australia, and Victoria specifically, to better align with the Hunter Harassment laws in place in many US states.**

First, yes, I do agree that there should be some statutory protection for people who are legally pursuing wild animals for food as part of the regulated hunting or fishing season. If they are doing so legally (proper season, licensing, bag limits, etc.) then there should be some legal protection from other people harassing them while they do so. Australians wouldn’t, and shouldn’t, allow protesters to harass people as they walk around the supermarket buying food for their families either. If this happened, the “protester/harasser” would, and should, be prosecuted. This is no different. Hunters, and anglers, who are legally pursuing their quarry should not be disturbed while doing so. This should include prohibiting protesters from disturbing the animals being pursued as well. The law should include protection for hunters and anglers pursuing quarry on both public and private lands so as to not exclude public land hunters and anglers from being protected from being harassed.

Second, please see below for an example of the statutes in my current home state of Minnesota regarding the harassment of Hunters, Trappers, and Anglers. The fine for harassing a hunter, trapper, or angler in Minnesota starts at \$300 and can increase up to \$1000/incident. Please note that this statute applies to someone harassing hunters, trappers, or anglers on both public and private land, including Wildlife Management Areas (Game Reserves). Many other US states have similar protections for Hunting, Trapping, and Angling.

**Current (2022) Minnesota State Statute prohibiting Hunter, Trapper, and Angler Harassment.**

**97A.037 HUNTER, TRAPPER, AND ANGLER HARASSMENT PROHIBITED.**

**Subdivision 1. Interference with taking wild animals prohibited.**

A person who has the intent to prevent or disrupt another person from taking or preparing to take a wild animal or enjoyment of the out-of-doors must not disturb or interfere with that person if that person is lawfully taking or preparing to take a wild animal. "Preparing to take a wild animal" includes travel, camping, and other acts that occur on land or water where the affected person has the right or privilege to take lawfully a wild animal.

**Subd. 2. Disturbing wild animals prohibited.**

A person who has the intent to prevent or disrupt a person from lawfully taking the animals may not disturb or engage in an activity that will tend to disturb wild animals.

**Subd. 3. Prohibition on public lands or without landowner permission.**

A person who has intent to violate subdivision 1 or 2 may not enter or remain on public lands, or on private lands without permission of the owner.

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**Subd. 4. Peace officer order; penalty.**

A person must obey the order of a peace officer to stop the harassing conduct that violates this section if the officer observes the conduct. For purposes of this subdivision, "harassing conduct" does not include a landowner's or lessee's action to enforce the trespass law. Violation of this subdivision is a misdemeanor.