



*** MEDIA RELEASE *** MEDIA RELEASE *** MEDIA RELEASE ***

Thursday 2nd April, 2009 For immediate release

Animal Rights and Conservation Groups call for a Ban on Shearwater Killings

With the 2009 recreational shearwater season due to begin on the 4th of April, Against Animal Cruelty Tasmania and the Tasmanian Conservation Trust are once again calling for a ban on this barbaric practice.

Against Animal Cruelty Tasmania spokesperson, Jennifer Beer, states:

'For the next two weeks, Short-tailed Shearwater chicks (or muttonbirds) will be dragged from the burrows by muttonbird harvesters and have their necks manually broken. Due to inadequate monitoring and lack of training, many of the chicks will be killed in inhumane ways and are likely to experience a painful death'.

Tasmania is the only state in Australia that allows the killing of Short-tailed Shearwaters. In all other States of Australia, the birds are wholly protected, with significant fines for offenders. Victoria has not had a legal Muttonbird season for over 30 years.

Ms. Beer adds:

'Short-tailed Shearwater adults travel some 15,000 km from the Arctic Circle in the Northern Hemisphere to south-eastern Australia to breed and raise chicks each year. They spend the entire year preparing for this challenging journey only to risk having their only fully-grown chick killed in Tasmania'.

Last year, 53,902 chicks were reported as being taken from their burrows and killed during the recreational season. Each year in Tasmania over 150,000 chicks are killed in total, including the commercial kill.

Ms. Beer states:

'Although prohibited, chicks may sometimes be removed from burrows by hooks or barbed instruments. On the opening weekend of last year's recreational Shearwater season, we witnessed and documented an individual using a wire hook to drag chicks from their burrows and we are certain that this was not an isolated incident. We will be on the look-out during this year's season for any illegal activities'.

TCT Acting Director Peter McGlone said:

'It is totally unacceptable that the State Government still allows thousands of people to strangle young shearwaters solely in the name of recreation'.

The 2009 recreational Short-tailed Shearwater (or muttonbird) season begins on Saturday the 4th of April and ends on the 19th of April.

For more information contact:

Jennifer Beer, Against Animal Cruelty Tasmania – 0408 970 359
Peter McGlone, Tasmanian Conservation Trust – 0406 380 545