



# The Goulburn Valley Environment Group Inc.

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## Game Management Authority: CEO Greg Hyams

The Goulburn Valley Environment Group (GVEG) believes duck hunting on Black Swamp north of Wunghnu in Northern Victoria should have been banned this season.

In early March flooding of Black Swamp has resulted in the drowning of establishing vegetation, the destruction of unique feeding and nesting opportunities in the drying wetland and years of planning and works by responsible authorities and the community compromised.

The wetland has been managed with a wetting and drying management plan in a bid to return it to something like its natural state.

This plan ensures that during this cycle, the wetland will have environmental water added; water that will attract ducks and allows under normal circumstances hunting taking place. This is a win, win outcome for the environment and hunters, made possible by environmental water if available, for use in accordance with the wetlands agreed watering plan.

The deliberate flooding of this wetland, almost certainly by duck hunters, has seriously set back restoration works on this wetland that has benefits across the community.

The Game Management Authority should not have gone against local recommendations and community wishes to close the wetland to hunting this season.

This is unfortunately not an isolated case of rogue elements with-in the duck shooting fraternity blatantly breaking the law with a similar case occurring in 2009 when a Field and Game Australia official pleaded guilty in Sale 2009 Magistrates' Court to illegally taking and diverting water to the organisation's private shooting property just a week prior to the opening of the duck shooting season.

In 2013 over 2,000 native waterbirds including some 200 threatened Freckled Ducks (one of the world's rarest waterbirds) were massacred at the Box Flat floodplain by up to 150 mainly local shooters. Despite this obvious breach of the law, no charges were brought against the rogue shooters as other supposedly responsible shooters refused to co-operate with police.

By not closing Black Swamp to duck hunting this season the Game Management Authority has not only missed the opportunity to send the strongest message to these rogue shooters but has effectively condoned the action and rewarded the perpetrators.

John Pettigrew

Chair, GVEG, 0358269557

CC **The Hon Roger Hallam** (Chairperson), **Hon. Lisa Neville**, **Hon. Jaala Pulford**