



The Goulburn Valley Environment Group Inc.

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Media Release

The Goulburn Valley Environment Group (GVEG) believes duck hunting on Black Swamp north of Wunghnu should have been banned this season. GVEG Chair John Pettigrew said “the Game Management Authority, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and ultimately Agriculture Minister Jaala Pulford should not have gone against local recommendations to close the wetland to hunting this season”. “The deliberate flooding of this wetland, almost certainly by duck shooters, has been rewarded”.

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 the community wasted.

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 situation for the environment and hunters, made possible by environmental water if available, for use in accordance with the agreed watering plan.

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.

Mr Pettigrew said “the Game Management Authority had an obligation and opportunity not to reward the flooding of Black Swamp and has instead effectively condoned the action.”

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