



Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch

Upper Murrumbidgee Restoration Project Swings into Motion

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A sediment tongue coming into the Kybeyan River in the Numeralla Catchment

After a year of investigation of sediment input into the Murrumbidgee River from the Numeralla region by members of the Cooma Council, Upper Murrumbidgee Demonstration Reach, ActewAGL, the NSW Department of Investment and Industry and the Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority (MCMA), a number of sites have been identified and targeted for erosion control work in the Numeralla catchment.

“Through the assistance of the Upper Murrumbidgee Catchment Coordination Committee, we have been able to form a partnership that is now actively engaged with the Numeralla Landcare and community to protect their river.” said Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch Coordinator Tanya Noakes. “As part of this project, ActewAGL has funded the four year appointment of a Cooma Region Waterwatch Coordinator who will monitor the progress of the partnership’s activities,” said Noakes.

Meanwhile, the MCMA has contributed a large amount of money for this fiscal year to tackle erosion in the catchment. “The primary works required at these sites is bank stabilisation, which includes installing of a series of large rock groynes in order to arrest bank erosion, deflect flows away from eroding banks and provide complexity to the channel bed.” said Matt de Jongh Murrumbidgee CMA Catchment Coordinator.

“With stakeholders such as Greening Australia, Numeralla Landcare and Kosciusko to Coast involved in the project there is a great opportunity for collaboration and complementing the good work with which each group and organisation is already involved.” said Mr de Jongh.



The effects of a flood event on Chakola Creek in the Numeralla Catchment

Fishing for a Carp Solution

By Bill Phillips
Reprinted from *The Canberra Times* Feb 22, 2010

Anyone who's been fishing in one of our inland rivers over the past few years will probably have witnessed how successful carp have been at adapting to our rivers and lakes since arriving here about 50 years ago.

They now dominate the fish fauna in many places, so much so that across the Murray-Darling Basin there's a steady stream of 'carp buster' or fish-out events taking place as anglers vent their frustrations and try to make a difference.

Canberra is no exception. Our rivers and lakes are chock full of carp and over the coming months we'll witness a succession of well-attended carp catch events. These help put a dent in the populations but scientists are now telling us that if we are to have a bigger, more prolonged impact, we need coordinated actions over a large area, and we need apply some of the recent tricks of the trade scientific research is starting to reveal.

The problem with carp is that they are tough; able to tolerate a wide range of conditions and environments; and are not too troubled by poor quality water. They are also successful breeders, meaning that each year the problem multiplies unless we interfere.

In rivers and lakes carp are a menace in various ways. They like to stir up sediment when feeding and this contributes to the water quality problems our lakes experience on a regular basis.

They also compete with native fish species for space and food, and generally win. Contrary to popular belief, carp don't eat young native fish. In fact, the reverse is true, with bigger natives species like Murray cod dining on young carp. So, all you anglers catching and releasing larger native species are helping fight against carp.

Think about that before you take them home for dinner.

There are many new ways we can reduce the number of carp. If we know where they go to breed — usually into shallow warm waters — this helps. Radio-tracking can help find these locations so that electrofishing or traps can be used to take out large numbers. If it's possible to lower the water level in these breeding areas once the eggs have been laid into the reeds, the eggs will dry out and perish. This is being used to good effect at sites along the Murray River.

Also, on the Murray River there has been pioneering work to develop what's been called a Williams carp trap (named after the man who dreamed up the idea). These work in conjunction with fishways on weirs that are installed to let native fish migrate up and down our rivers. Williams noted carp will try to jump over a barrier if confronted by one on a fishways, while native species won't. His traps use that simple observation to sort the carp from the natives so that carp can be removed. On the Murray River carp are being taken out by the tonne and turned into fertiliser.

Canberra's rivers and lakes offer carp many ideal habitats, so we will never remove them entirely. But, it should be possible, through concerted and coordinated actions, to see their numbers knocked down, so that native species can start to hold their own again. This should mean we also get better bang for our buck from regular fish-stocking events staged in these water bodies.

To reduce carp in this area, RiverSmart is working with several experts in the field to develop a regional action plan. This is

being funded by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority under its successful Native Fish Strategy.



News from the Molonglo Catchment

By Stephen Skinner



Autumn is definitely here. The days are shortening rapidly, the nights are cooling and at least here in Queanbeyan the kookaburras and the king parrots are back in town. The redleg grass looks wonderful, even when it's smutty.

The paddocks are green this year, even if it's often weedy growth. Some of the waterways are quite green too, and some are a little red.

Volunteer Data Results:

In some of the ponds, and where the water stays backed up as at Yass Road, the water temperature was still more summer than autumn. Certainly, the Molonglo at the Gorge was down to 11.5°C, and very cold when it goes down the front of your waders! There wasn't a pH reading out of range, and some of the flowing water readings were at or just below

7



indicating that the recent flushings have worked well. Electrical Conductivity continues to reflect the alkaline nature of most of the geology of the catchment. Only the small retention pond at the back of North Watson had a slightly elevated turbidity. While the percent dissolved oxygen remained low in some areas (the water temperature hasn't settled to seasonal levels) only three sites (the dam at Watson, the Molonglo above the Foxlow railway bridge and Urialla Ck) showed dissolved oxygen below 4.5 mg/L. There is quite an amount of building activity on the ANU campus, so the elevated phosphate readings for the locations are understandable. Nitrate levels were satisfactory except at the David St Wetland, where the *Englena* bloom continues, and in the Molonglo at Yass Road, well above Queanbeyan! Most of the tributaries and the

Molonglo River have no flow again, reflecting the 'flood and dry' nature of this catchment. It was good to hear about the gang-gangs in the Carwoola area. The main story here is that we have had enough seasonal change to have the creeks, rivers and pondages beginning to take on winter characteristics. Let us hope we get good winter rains.

Reporting Flow: I have a feeling that the flow information, which is rather important when we need volunteer's results as back-up for the ACT flow-based data, is not being entered in the most useful way. That 'usual' category dates back to the days of the Sullivan's Creek Catchment Group, before the 2003 fire, and the expansion of the Catchment Groups. For most volunteers it is not indicative of what is happening. In wetlands and the regulated parts of the Molonglo above the Dairy Flat Rd bridge and the part of Sullivan's Ck in the ANU 'usual' indicates that the water is behaving as the engineers want it to. It would help me interpret your findings much more easily if people indicated

- ◆ 'no flow' when there is water present, but it is not flowing, including ponds;
- ◆ 'Low flow' or 'slow flow' when there is a trickle of water up to gently moving water;
- ◆ 'moderate flow' where you can easily see that the water is moving quite rapidly;
- ◆ 'high flow' or 'strong flow' when the water is moving through your site at pace, and
- ◆ 'flood' when it is rushing past, carrying a load of flotsam and jetsam.

Please, never again hit the 'usual flow' button! The categories above are much less precise than the gauging station flow meters, but the categories are reconcilable with the flow percentiles that the ACT reports. Just in passing, the Flow based readings for the ACT, even with automatic gauges, sometimes miss the events, so the monthly data you all collect is a useful backstop.



Southern A.C.T. Catchment Group

Waterwatch Group Profile:

“Conservation Volunteers Australia-Tidbinbilla Sanctuary Interpreters”

Conservation Volunteers Australia’s Volunteer Interpreters provide information to visitors of Tidbinbilla Nature Park’s Sanctuary.

I had a chance to catch up with Tatjana Schmidt, the Coordinator, and volunteers Jo Thompson, Cathy Crozier, Lesley Harland and Peter Hoad late last year for an interview.



From left, Peter, Lesley, Cathy, Jo and Tatjana

The Sanctuary at Tidbinbilla underwent extensive refurbishment after the devastating fires in 2003. Conservation Volunteers Australia were employed by park management to meet the need for extra volunteers to supplement the work of rangers and the existing Partkcare group when the Sanctuary was reopened in April 2008. Jo, Cathy, Lesley and Peter were among

the original 50 volunteers.

The Volunteer Interpreters’ primary role is to engage visitors to the Sanctuary through interpreting the nature of the reserve, pointing out facts and features and inspiring with interesting stories. They do not run tours as such. They also help care for the Sanctuary’s permanent residents such as the pelicans and brolga.

There are currently around 70 members which gives the group a lot of flexibility, especially during school holidays when the Sanctuary can expect up to 150 visitors a day. It also gives Tatjana a lot of work to do as well, as this number of volunteers requires good coordination. Normally there are four members on duty; three in the Sanctuary and one in the visitors centre. On big occasions, such as the ‘Tidbinbilla Extravaganza’ or during conferences, up to twenty or so members may be required in the nature park to offer assistance.

So why take on the extra load of Waterwatch monitoring? A number of members are experienced Waterwatchers in other catchments and it made sense to bring this expertise to focus on issues around the Sanctuary’s pond system. The ponds are fed water from the weir on Tidbinbilla River, where visitors often gather to view the platypus. The water is then kept from re entering the river because of concerns about nutrient loads deposited in the ponds by the large bird population. It is true that in the time the interpreters have been monitoring they have witnessed some very high phosphate readings in the ponds.

Water is only allowed to return to the river from the pond system if it is a better quality than when it started. Peter regularly monitors the Tidbinbilla River where it flows past the Sanctuary for immediate comparison. The data that the volunteers collect is passed on to the rangers and the reserve management, as well as the ACT Waterwatch data base.

If you are interested in finding out more about ‘Conservation Volunteers Australia’ or indeed any of our Waterwatch activities please contact Martin Lind on 6296 6400, or email Waterwatch@sactcg.org.au



CVA Team members from left; Francesca Ray, Lesley Harland, and Jo Thompson water testing at Pond 4 in the Sanctuary.

On Golden Pond:
The Ginninderra Swan Factory

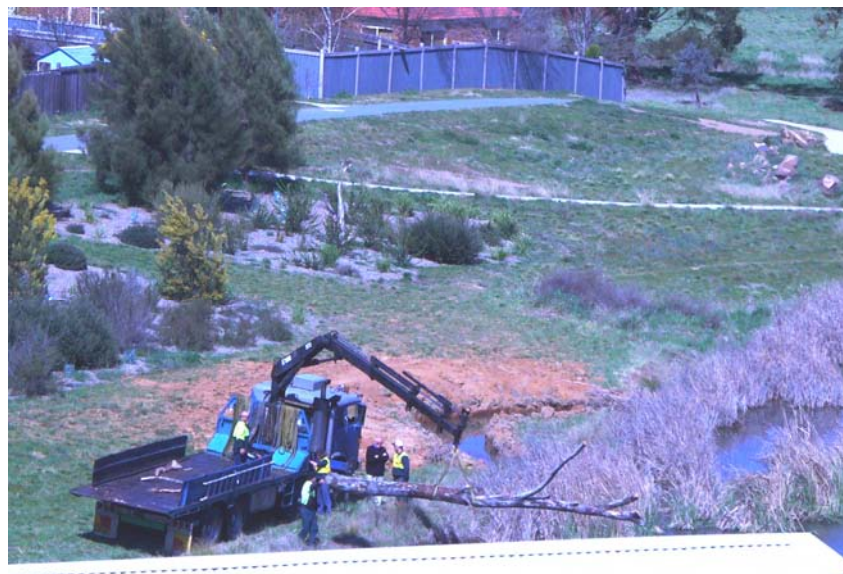


Residents of Dunlop are being provided with a regular opportunity to observe one of the best experiences on offer at local ponds, nesting swans with a clutch of cygnets. Local Waterwatchers Fred and Pam Fawke are delighted to witness Jarramlee Pond becoming a swan factory!

In 2007 concern for the safety of the nest site was expressed after curious human observers created easy access paths to the nest site. Exposure of the nest to local cats, dogs and foxes resulted in very low survival rate of chicks. Fred and Pam suggested that something be done to secure the nest and asked the Ginninderra Catchment Group to help with this problem. After consultation TAMS Department of Parks Conservation and Lands, the idea of a moat was hatched and work to protect the nest site from shore based attackers began in September 2007.

Swan Castle is now proving to be the hottest property in the region and the latest problem for the resident swans is competition from other swan 'home buyers', resulting in an increase in aggressive encounters for this prime real estate.

This success story highlights the need for careful planning of urban wetlands, that allows wildlife to successfully live and breed in as 'natural' an environment as possible. This in turn provides the community with an important opportunity to see nature up close. As all Waterwatchers know, one of the joys of the job is the connection with our environment.



Frog Findings

New insights into how deadly amphibian disease spreads and kills

Reprinted from *ScienceDaily* (May 13, 2010)

Scientists have unravelled the dynamics of a deadly disease that is wiping out amphibian populations across the globe. New findings, published today in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, suggest that infection intensity — the severity of the disease among individuals — determines whether frog populations will survive or succumb to an amphibian fungal disease called *Chytridiomycosis*.

“We found that mass frog die-offs only occur when the severity of the Chytrid infection reaches a critical threshold among the individual frogs,” said Vance Vredenburg, assistant professor of biology at San Francisco State University. “Now that we know this limit, which is a specific number of fungal spores per frog, conservation efforts may be able to save susceptible frog species by preventing the disease from reaching this point.”

In the first of two separate studies, Vredenburg and colleagues tracked the invasion and spread of Chytrid among frogs in California’s Sierra Nevada Mountains during a 13-year period, focusing on two species of the mountain yellow-legged frog (*Rana muscosa* and *Rana sierrae*). The study found that Chytrid is particularly destructive when it invades a previously unexposed population, similar to the smallpox epidemics that devastated human populations in the 17th and 18th centuries.

“When Chytrid hits naïve host populations, it grows so quickly that the usual checks and balances, which prevent a pathogen from causing extinction, don't have a chance to kick in,” Vredenburg said. “We are living in a time when the global movement of people and goods is likely spreading this disease to areas where it wasn't present before, interrupting the natural equilibrium between the pathogen and its hosts.”

The authors observed no evidence of Chytrid prior to the die-offs, a finding that stands in contrast to previous studies, which have suggested that Chytrid may be ubiquitous in the environment and that frog hosts were simply becoming more susceptible to a common microbe.



San Francisco State University Professor Vance Vredenburg collects a skin swab from a southern mountain yellow-legged frog in California's Sierra Nevada where he and colleagues tracked the spread of chytrid fungus

Both studies found that infection intensity, which escalates through frogs being re-infected, is central to understanding how to save amphibians from mass extinction caused by Chytrid. High population densities in naïve frog communities could promote re-infection, causing the infection to reach a dangerously high level. The importance of population density is supported by evidence from the surveys in Sequoia Kings Canyon National Park where patterns of infection spread was consistent with frog movement patterns, suggesting that frogs help re-infect each other through contact.

The authors suggest that conservation efforts should focus on limiting the severity of the fungal infection on individuals during an outbreak of Chytrid. For example, treating individual frogs with anti-fungal compounds, or probiotics, temporarily removing tadpoles or reducing population density might lower infection intensity and allow some frogs to survive an epidemic. Such interventions could promote a stable relationship with the disease where the infection reaches an endemic steady state.

“These results are about more than just frogs,” Vredenburg said. “They are about disease, how and why it spreads and how some populations can be wiped out by a disease while others survive. This is important to all of us considering that 60 percent of emerging diseases in humans come from wildlife. The models we have provided may be adapted by ecologists to better understand similar diseases that affect humans or cattle or corn, for example.”

Bell Frog Celebration

Industry and Investment NSW researcher, Luke Pearce, was looking for southern pygmy perch when he found frogs instead. The once abundant Yellow-spotted Bell Frog (*Litoria castanea*) had not been seen in the wild for almost 30 years and was thought likely to be extinct. Luke spotted what he thought might be a bell frog in a small stream on the Southern Tablelands of NSW and reported his sighting to Threatened Species Officer with the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water, Dr David Hunter. The pair returned to the stream and to their delight found the species along a four kilometre stretch. Like many native frogs affected by Amphibian Chytrid Fungus, this frog is endangered and the exact location of this find is being kept a secret. Now

confirmed as a viable population, some individuals were removed to form the basis of a captive breeding program.



The recent discovery of a healthy population of bell frogs was some consolation for fisheries officer, Luke Pearce, who was looking for southern pygmy perch.
Photo: David Hunter

Duck Dos and Don'ts:

By Melanie Pearson



Feeding ducks is tempting. You have an old loaf of bread, it's a nice day for a walk, and the ducks seem so desperate for food. Feeding ducks and geese has been a pastime for

generations, but the more we learn about wild waterfowl, the more we realise how detrimental feeding them is.

Feeding bread to ducks and geese is the equivalent of feeding your child nothing but candy. Ducks and geese like bread, and will clamour for it much like a child will ask for candy. But bread has no nutritional value for waterfowl, it fills their stomachs up so that they do not eat the foods they need in order to remain healthy. Birds without proper nutrition will quickly succumb to disease and death. Nutrition is not the only reason we shouldn't feed wild ducks and geese.

Overcrowding

Where birds are fed, more birds will come, usually leading to a crowded situation. More birds mean more droppings. Excess feces cause water pollution, create an unsanitary environment for human recreation, and lead to the spread of disease in the bird population.

Disease

Many avian diseases have been attributed to duck feeding. There are documented cases of waterfowl dying from enteritis, aspergillosis, and avian botulism, all due to excess food left floating in the water. These diseases spread quickly throughout populations due to the overcrowded situations that feeding waterfowl causes.

But we love feeding ducks!

If you are serious about dishing out treats, choose grated cheese, leftover jacket potatoes, breakfast cereals, crumbled biscuits and even cake. [The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds](#) (RSPB) also recommends porridge oats, overripe strawberries, rice or scraps of pastry. Val Osborne, the RSPB's head of wildlife inquiries, said: "There are many other household foods that would be much better for them. The RSPB is asking people to consider alternatives such as porridge oats, cake crumbs and potatoes."

What's Going On?



United Nations World Environment Day is celebrated annual on 5 June. It is one of the principal vehicles through which the United Nations stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment and enhances political attention and action. For the first time in 2010, the ACT Government will be holding an event to celebrate World Environment Day on Friday 4 June.

The interactive event will include displays from local organisations and government agencies to celebrate our environment as well as showcase environmental initiatives and programs that can help our community.

Come and visit us in Garema Place from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm and celebrate!

- ◆ WIN one of two \$350 compost bins
- ◆ Learn to make your own seed ball with Greening Australia
- ◆ Touch real Waterwatch's water insects and bugs
- ◆ Participate in drain stencilling with Waterwatch
- ◆ Find out more about ActewAGL's **FREE** enviro pack
- ◆ Discover simple tips for saving water at home with ACTEW
- ◆ Make an apple slinky with SEE-Change
- ◆ Build your own bird house with Bunnings
- ◆ See a real fire truck and talk to Parks, Conservation and Lands about fire management
- ◆ Meet Canberra Environment and Resource Centre and see *Food for Thought*
- ◆ Entertainment with Annie and the Armadillos *and* Jumptown Swing

ACT OTHERWISE

YOUTH LEADERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

ACT Otherwise is again hosting the Sustainable Careers Expo.

The Expo promotes environmental courses, jobs/careers, volunteering opportunities and support for ongoing commitment to sustainability in jobs/careers.

Careers councillors, secondary and tertiary educators, government and non-government

organizations, businesses and employers in the ACT will be represented.

The event will be held on 18 August from 12-4pm at the Sports Hall on the ANU campus.



Duck with a BLUE Hat



Local Plants for your Frog Bog

By Stephen Skinner

Planting out the fringes of a garden pond can be an interesting experience in coming across herbs and grass-like plants from families that you would rarely encounter for the rest of the garden. Aside from the real aquatics that are adapted to wet feet and being mostly submerged, there are numerous plants that live in boggy ground and will provide variety and complexity at the margins of the artificial pond so long as the soil moisture is kept high.

There are two main groups of such plants; the rushes and sedges and their 'grassy' relatives and the forbs with their broader leaves and often showy flowers. In both groups there are tall, medium and short species.

Among the grassy group, the tall species that form dense clumps are suitable for public places and open space. It is unwise to plant bulrush (*Typha* spp), common reed (*Phragmites australis*) or any of the taller sedges (*Schoenoplectus validus*; *Bolboschoenus* spp; *Carex fascicularis* or *C. gaudichaudiana*; or *Cyperus exaltatus*) around your backyard bog. They will fill the space and you will never get to view the pond life.

The medium sized and smaller sedges



Spike Rush

(*Schoenoplectus pungens*, *Eleocharis alata*), and most rushes (*Juncus* spp) will do well at a suitable height, and some grasses, like *Pennisetum alopecuroides* and *Poa sieberi*, will grow well with them. The smaller sedges (*Isolepis* and *Lipocarpa*) also deserve a go: many are very fine leaved, with a very low tussock growth habit and tiny but sometimes spectacular flower-heads. There are a couple of ferns that also fit in here but are unlikely to be on sale at a nursery. They include the curious Quillwort (*Isoetes muelleri*) and a Nardoo that grows in damp places (*Marsilea hirsuta*).

Among the forbs the tall species, with the possible exception of Loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria*, are prone to weediness. The medium species, especially the willow herbs (*Epilobium* spp) and native geranium (*Geranium solanderi*) will do



Willow Herb

well. As snails and slugs absolutely adore it, grow your Brooklime (*Gratiola peruviana* and *G. pedunculata*) as an aquatic! Water Pimpernel (*Samolus valerandi*) is a rare plant of wet flood runners but thrives with a little care. Water Stonecrop (*Crassula helmsii*) is a great survivor and will cover wet ground with a soft carpet of short, bright green succulent leaves.

And then there are the mudworts! The spreading Lesser Joyweed (*Alternanthera denticulata*) is not madly attractive but does a good job as a ground cover. *Limosella* has neat little white flowers on short stalks, flat, narrow spoon-ended leaves all one height, and stolons; *Glossostigma* has broad leaves and flowers with a landing platform, on stalks. *Neopaxia* is about twice the size of *Limosella*, and had floppy petals, spoon-shaped flat leaves of variable length and grows better at altitude. *Isotoma fluitans* (like *Pratia pedunculata*) has flowers with three petals at the front and two behind, and small, alternate, serrated leaves. *Elatine* has pairs of paddle shaped leaves, and basal fruits with central dimples. All these grow very well in moist soil.

Some of the plants listed may be available from native plant nurseries. Others you will need to look for, and probably cultivate for yourself. The usual rules apply...don't take things, even seeds or cuttings, from national parks or conservation areas, and ask land holders permission. If you do find a friendly landholder with a boggy patch, you may be able to source your bog garden from the native seed bank at that spot. This involves taking 2cm cores with a jam tin from the boggy ground, drying out the cores, wetting them up in groups in shallow plastic tubs and keeping them saturated until your new plants appear. That way you may even score some Ladies Tresses orchid (*Spiranthes*) or some Milkmaids (*Utricularia* a native carnivorous plant).

Contests and Goodies

Reduced Price Trees from Tablelands Trees & Shrubs

John Bowe, from Tablelands Trees and Shrubs has the following Tubestock (Forestry Tubes) which need to shift by Spring 2010.

Normally these would be \$1.50 each plus GST but if a group or individual can take some large numbers he is willing to let them go for \$1 each plus GST or if you take the lot 80c plus GST.

Melaleuca ericifolia	200
Lomandra longifolia	200
Poa laibilliardii	80
Callitris endlicherii	100
Leptospermum lanigerum	240
Callistemon ptyoides	250
Callistemon pallidus	480
Eucalyptus nicholii	40

Eucalyptus pauciflora	360
Eucalyptus gregsoniana	40
Eucalyptus niphophela	280
Eucalyptus stellulata	350
Eucalyptus viminalis	400
Eucalyptus parvifolia	300
Eucalyptus pulverentula	40
Acacia melanoxylon	320
Acacia sichiliformis	80
Acacia covenyii	100
Acacia dealbata	280
Acacia vestita	80
Acacia kybeanensis	40
Acacia rubida	50
Acacia pravissima	160

John can be contacted at: 64533241

The 'Bidgee from Behind the Lens – A photographic competition about valuing natural heritage



The Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority (CMA) recently announced the opening of 'The Bidgee from Behind the Lens' photographic competition to celebrate the Murrumbidgee catchment's natural assets.

The Murrumbidgee catchment has one of the most diverse climates in NSW – from alpine areas of Kosciuszko National Park, through to the rich grazing belts of the South-West Slopes and grasslands of the semi-arid western Riverina.

The Murrumbidgee CMA would like to capture the diversity, beauty and sustainable management of the Murrumbidgee catchment and invites entries that may include, but are not limited to, images of wildlife, flora, landscapes, wetlands and rivers, sustainable farming practices and communities living in and caring for the catchment.

There are four categories – Primary Student; Secondary Student; Open

Amateur; and Open

Professional. Photographs can be historic or recent, black and white or colour – but they must be from the Murrumbidgee catchment. Only digital entries will be accepted.

Cash prizes of \$250 will be offered for first place and \$100 for runner up in each category.

Entries close 5 pm, Friday 18 June 2010.

For more information visit

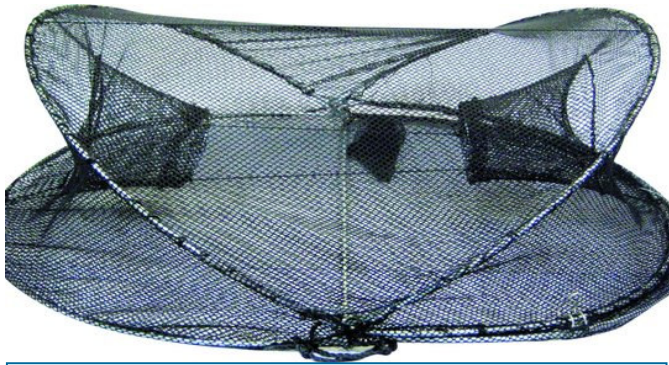
www.murrumbidgee.cma.nsw.gov.au

or contact Sue Buik, Murrumbidgee CMA on (02) 6940 2942.



Photo by Luke Johnston

Reducing Platypus Death Rates in Yabbie Traps



Opera house traps like this are only legally used in private farm dams in most regions.

From the Australian Platypus Conservancy

We have previously highlighted the fact that illegal netting for fish, crays or yabbies has been responsible for more than half of all platypus mortalities reported to the APC where the cause of death can be reliably identified. Since 2000, the most frequent source of net-related mortality has been enclosed yabby and cray traps, especially “opera house” traps.

According to industry sources, around 100,000 opera house traps are sold in Australia each year. Although some restrictions on their use apply in most states and territories, many traps continue to be set illegally, often by persons who are both ignorant of fishing regulations and unaware of the risk that these traps pose to platypus and other aquatic wildlife.

The Conservancy is now working with platypus expert Dr Tom Grant (based in New South Wales) and the Wildlife Preservation

Society of Queensland (WPSQ) to heighten community awareness of the fact that opera house traps continue to drown platypus throughout the species’ range. Where necessary, changes to legislation are also being proposed to reduce the likelihood that non-target species die in the traps.

A key part of this campaign involves asking wholesale and retail suppliers to become involved in educating consumers about possible pitfalls and proper procedures to follow when using opera house traps. Leading retail chain Ray’s Outdoors is the first major business to support this initiative. Opera house traps sold by this company are going to carry a tag with the unequivocal message: “Opera house nets kill platypus, water-rats and turtles. Check fishing regulations before using.” A special notice will also be displayed at the point of sale describing current state restrictions on the use of opera house traps.

Such notices may usefully serve both to alert Australians to the dangers of enclosed yabby traps and also encourage the use of wildlife-friendly alternatives, such as simple baited lines or lift-style hoop nets. Accordingly, we hope that those who care about platypus conservation will consider directing their purchases of outdoor recreational equipment to retailers, like Ray’s Outdoors, who take steps to protect vulnerable freshwater species.

An abandoned crab trap with over 40 dead turtles trapped in it.



ACT Waterwatch

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What is Waterwatch?

Waterwatch is a national community water quality monitoring program that encourages all Australians to become involved and active in the protection and management of their waterways and catchments.

Who is Waterwatch?

Waterwatch involves local community groups such as Landcare, Park Care and Catchment groups, as well as residents, schools and landowners who regularly monitor the water quality of local creeks, wetlands, lakes and rivers.

Why monitor?

Healthy catchments produce healthy ecosystems with happy fish, frogs, birds, plants, macro-invertebrates and people. Waterwatch aims to create awareness of water quality issues by involving all members of the community and by forming partnerships between the Waterwatch group and water authorities, resources management authorities, business and industry.

First step

If you are interested in improving the health of your waterway and meeting or forming a group of like minded individuals, you should begin by contacting your local Waterwatch Coordinator.

Making a difference

Water quality information collected throughout a catchment provides a picture of the health of your waterways. Waterwatch groups have initiated many positive, community based conservation activities such as creek restoration, willow removal, removing litter from waterways, eradicating weeds, development of habitats, and reducing the use of pesticides and other pollutants.

Waterwatch is proudly supported by:



Australian Government

ActewAGL



Volunteers work for free
but not for nothing!
Our Vision—
Healthy Waterways



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THE ENVIRONMENT,
CLIMATE CHANGE,
ENERGY AND WATER

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