



NORTH CENTRAL
Catchment Management Authority
Connecting Rivers, Landscapes, People



WORLD FISH MIGRATION DAY | **CONNECTING FISH RIVERS AND PEOPLE**
MAY 21st, 2016

www.worldfishmigrationday.com | #WFMD2016

Reconnecting the Lower Loddon to the Mighty Murray

As part of the *Native Fish Recovery Plan – Gunbower and Lower Loddon*, North Central CMA is hosting a World Fish Migration Day bus tour.

The tour will visit three fishways constructed on major barriers in the Little Murray River and the lower Loddon-Pyramid Creek system, and complementary works to recover native fish populations.

Join Dr Ivor Stuart, fish ecologist and fishway expert, to hear about:

- The importance of fish passage for Australian native fish.
- Fishway design, operation, innovations and lessons learned.
- The Native Fish Recovery Plan – Gunbower and Lower Loddon.

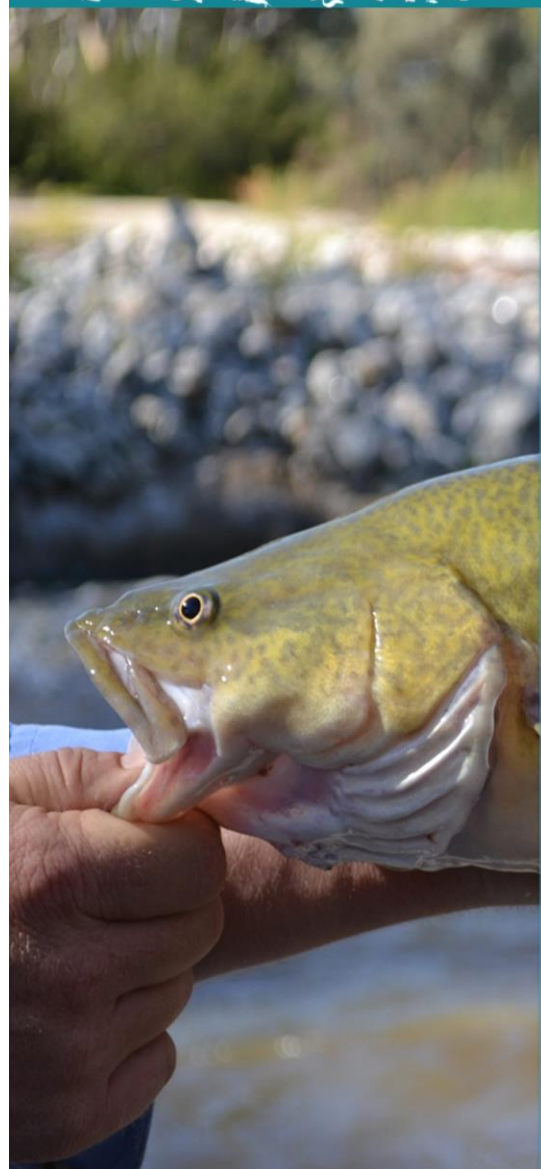
When: Saturday 21 May 2016

Time: 10.00 am—3.00 pm (bus departing from and returning to the carpark at the south end of Lake Boga Caravan Park on the Murray Valley Hwy)

Lunch will be provided.

Be quick to secure your place by contacting the North Central CMA on (03) 5448 7124 or info@nccma.vic.gov.au

RSVP close Wednesday 18 May 2016.




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Welcome to the autumn edition of the Gunbower Island Community Newsletter. This edition features updates on pest control, fish monitoring and an invitation to participate in World Fish Migration Day.

Traditional Owner monitoring shows benefits of environmental watering

Recent fish monitoring on Gunbower Island has shown some promising results. Surveys have been conducted as part of the newly established Traditional Owner Cultural Values monitoring program, by Barapa Barapa and Yorta Yorta's Woka Walla (land water) team.

The program involves Traditional Owner groups developing and implementing a monitoring program to assess the risks and benefits of water delivery from a cultural perspective.

The team have been in the forest and on the creek working in collaboration with ecologists during the annual fish monitoring.

Young Murray cod and silver perch were found during electrofishing in the Gunbower Creek, indicating successful breeding.

"2015 was the third year we have delivered environmental water to Gunbower Creek aimed at providing better breeding and survival conditions for both adult and young Murray cod," North Central CMA Project Manager Anna Parker said.



Young Murray cod found during monitoring in Gunbower Creek

"The benefits of this watering can now be seen with a greater number of young fish now in the population."

Barapa and Yorta were also excited to see all

three local species of turtle (eastern long-necked, broad shell and Murray River turtles) captured during the floodplain netting at Reedy Lagoon and Black Charlie Lagoon.



Dixie Patten getting up close and personal with a Murray Cod during monitoring in Gunbower Creek

"It's a powerful thing to have that interaction with totemic species like turtle," Woka Walla's Ashton Cashin said. "We have a role as custodians; it would be great to see more opportunities to work alongside Clayton and others who work on Country."



Ashton Cashin with a broad shell turtle at Black Charlie Lagoon

Vegetation monitoring

The monitoring work being conducted by vegetation ecologist Kate Bennetts and her team is nearing completion.

They waded wetlands in spring, summer and autumn and measured thousands of trees to detect the flora's response to the spring 2015 environmental watering.

"Large areas of the forest flourished in spring 2015. The forest floor was luminescent with wavy marshwort, milfoils, rushes, water ribbons, swamp lily and sedges. The environmental water ensured there was aquatic habitat on the dry floodplain," Kate said.



Reedy Lagoon after spring 2015 watering. Photo: Dylan Osler

Kate has also been monitoring the health of the forest's canopy. Photographs are taken annually using a fisheye lens pointed at the sky. Changes in the amount of sky compared to plants in the photos provide an insight into changes in the forest.

"Red gum canopies are obviously healthier in areas that have been flooded, naturally and with environmental water, than in dry areas of the forest," Kate said.



Hemispherical photo of Gunbower Forest, used to monitor tree health.

All cats can kill

While recently completing field work along Gunbower Creek, a North Central CMA staff member discovered a dead sugar glider (pictured).

What's most unfortunate about this discovery is that it was found on the doorstep of a farmhouse with a pet cat standing over it looking very proud of his kill.

Unrestricted cats pose a huge threat to many animals on Gunbower Island. This is an example where even the family pet can have a significant impact on native animals.

Cats will range widely to prey on a variety of wildlife species including birds, rodents, lizards and small mammals such as this unfortunate sugar glider.

This is a sad reminder to all cat owners to contain their pet cats overnight to prevent them hunting and killing native animals.

Cat owners are also urged to consider de-sexing their cats to prevent them reproducing and adding to the increasing population of unrestricted cats across the landscape.



Found at the feet of a pet cat: a deceased sugar glider.

Creek and forest weed control continues

The North Central CMA has been undertaking a variety of weed control work in Gunbower Forest over the past few months. Goulburn-Murray Water, on behalf of the North Central CMA, is completing willow and pale yellow water lily control along Gunbower Creek.

Work is underway along the Cohuna ski run to control broom, along with a range of other exotic species to enhance the environmental value of the creek.

Within the forest, towards the Koondrook end, small infestations of athel pine, noogoora burr and ivy-leaf sida have also been treated to control their spread.



Montpellier broom along River Track in Gunboer Forest

Bad eggs might help save our turtles

The biggest threat to turtles found in our region is foxes preying on their nests. All three of the species; eastern long necked, broad dhell and the Murray River turtles have seen a huge decline since the introduction of foxes. Foxes can consume up to 85 per cent of the eggs in a nest.

"It is currently turtle nesting season so people may see a lot of female turtles moving around to access nesting sites," North Central CMA Project Manager Adrian Martins said.

"This year we are working closely with researchers at the University of Western Sydney to trial a taste-aversion method to help reduce the number of turtle nests predated on by foxes.

"The taste-aversion method involves using chicken eggs injected with sodium carbonate and burying them into fake nests. The sodium carbonate is odorless and may cause the fox to experience nausea, sickness or vomiting after eating the eggs. This process will then create an aversion to eggs in the foxes.

"By protecting the turtle eggs we hope to see an increase in the number of baby turtles."

Stayed tuned for more updates on the trial.

FIVE MINUTES WITH RON KELLY

Ron Kelly is a member of the North Central CMA Community Consultative Committee and has recently become a member of the Gunbower Island Community Reference Group. He kindly took the time to tell us a bit about himself:

I was born in Kerang and raised in Tragowel until the age of 14 when we moved to Kerang. After about 18 years living in Melbourne I moved back home when I got a job in the Cohuna Post Office in 1987. In 1999, I became the owner until selling in 2013. I still have many friends in and ties with the Cohuna district.

I was asked to consider applying for the Community Consultative Committee after my involvement with the Lake Meran group and subsequent membership of the Loddon

Environmental Water Advisory Group. I thought it would be a good way of increasing my knowledge and interest in effectively managing waterways for win-win situations for all.

In this CRG I am very much in the early learning stages. I hope to be able to add another angle as I get to grips with the group's aspirations and direction. I hope to be able to represent the community to get the best outcomes not only for the ecology but also for the recreational and economic values where they mesh well with our charter.

I am not coming from a position of great knowledge of the Gunbower Forest area. Despite having worked nearby to it for decades, my local expertise is elsewhere. However, this might just be a strength when it comes to discerning new ways of approaching things perhaps, so bear with me.