

North Central
Waterwatch

catchment care

Winter Edition
August 2012

Hello Waterwatch Monitors,

Welcome to the 2012 winter edition of Catchment Care – the newsletter of the North Central Waterwatch Program.



Rob Loats, Waterwatch monitor for the Avon-Richardson catchment, attended the 2012 National Recreational Fishing Conference in Queensland in August. Rob plays many roles in NRM and has a special passion for fish and recreational fishing. This is shown through Rob's achievement in receiving the 'Mal Ramsay Lifetime Achievement Award' at the conference (pictured). The Award recognises outstanding contributions by an individual Australian to the development and/or administration of recreational fishing over a substantial period of time.

The awards were presented by Recfish Australia in association with the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation. They recognise the considerable amount of time and effort devoted to recreational fishing by community groups, fishing clubs, individuals, governments and organisations.

Congratulations Rob, what an achievement!

I look forward to another successful year of Waterwatching, site visits, River Detectives and many exciting upcoming events.

I hope you enjoy the read.

Cass Davis,

Regional Waterwatch Coordinator

Thank you to the following organisations who Sponsor the Waterwatch Program in 2012



Rochester Campaspe
Water Services Committee



Department of
Sustainability and Environment



NORTH CENTRAL
Catchment Management Authority
Connecting Rivers, Landscapes, People



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Spring Waterwatch Activities

SEPTEMBER	
2-8	Quality Assurance and Quality Control
8	Naturally Loddon Festival
10-21	River Detectives Get Wet- Macroinvertebrate activities
OCTOBER	
21-27	National Water Week (NWW)
21	NWW with the Bendigo Family Nature Club
NOVEMBER	
3 November	Austoberfest – Cohuna

Other Special Events

SEPTEMBER	
All Month	Biodiversity month
1	National Wattle Day
3-9	National Landcare Week
9	Sustainable House Day
9	National Bilby Day
16	International Day for the preservation of the Ozone layer
17	World Parks Day
22	World Car-Free Day
OCTOBER	
1	World Habitat Day
4	World Animal Day
21-27	National Water Week
17	National Ride to Work Day
NOVEMBER	
12-18	National Recycling Week
9	World Fisheries Day



Hamish searching for water bugs



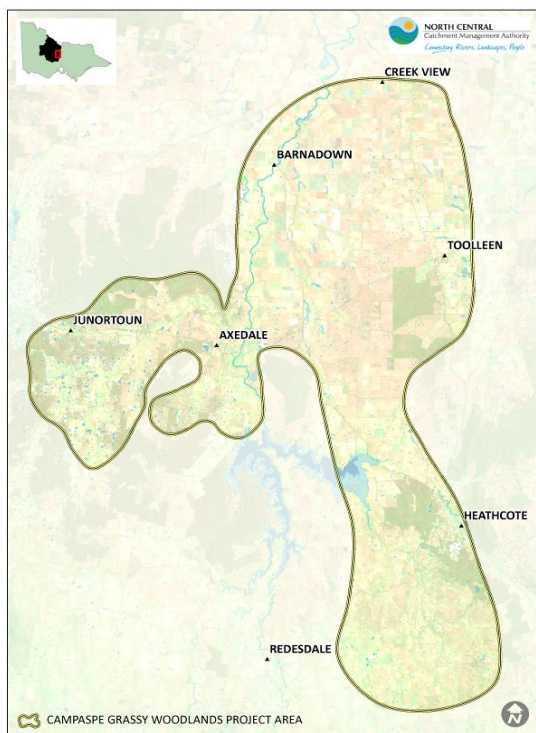


Campaspe Grassy Woodlands Project - Are you interested in conservation?

The North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) is seeking landholders in the Lower Campaspe Catchment area interested in caring for their remnant Box-Gum and Grey-Box Grassy Woodlands.

Financial assistance is available for landholders who qualify within the guidelines. This funding is provided by the Australian Government's Caring for Our Country initiative and is being made available to the North Central CMA for on-ground works, including fencing and revegetation in the project area.

The project focuses on the nationally endangered White Box, Yellow Box and Blakely's Red Gum.



There are particular criteria for landholders to be eligible for funding which may help in self-assessing your property's eligibility. The criteria include:

- The land must be within the North Central CMA pre-determined area.
- At least one of the characteristic trees must be present.
- The understorey must be less than 50% cover of exotic weeds.
- The understorey must contain native grasses and wildflowers.
- The land must be at least 0.5 hectares in size.
- The patch must have the potential for natural or assisted regeneration.

If your property meets the criteria, or you require any further information on the Campaspe Grassy Woodlands Project, phone Daniel Arnold, North Central CMA Project Officer, on 5440 1875 or email daniel.arnold@nccma.vic.gov.au.

Bush Culture celebrated at Lockwood

story by Robyn McKay, Project Officer Box Gum Grassy Woodlands project (North Central CMA)

In June this year more than 100 people from the Upper Spring Creek Landcare Group and the Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-operative took part in a Bush Culture Day at Happy Jacks Natural Features Reserve in Lockwood.

The day provided the perfect opportunity to share stories and learn more about the areas rich Indigenous history. Families took part in a range of activities including planting sedges, wattles and wildflowers to help restore native vegetation along Bullock Creek.

Aboriginal Elder, 82 year old Auntie Gertie Gittins made 'johnny cakes' - a bread traditionally made by grinding native grains to make flour and cooked on hot coals or fried - and served them up with Emu and Kangaroo, along with soup made by a local Aboriginal chef.



Ms Eileen Ballangarry from Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-operative said the day was a chance for everyone, especially young Indigenous children, to connect with the land.

"It is very important for our children to learn about their culture and stay connected to the land, as so much has already been lost. It is days like this when everyone can learn the importance of looking after the land and Aboriginal culture. Who knows, we may have a couple of future young environmentalists in the making," she said.

Participants also made animals using natural materials with consultants of the planned Eaglehawk Regional Play space, to be located adjacent to Lake Neangar.

The day was supported by the Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-operative, North Central CMA's Box-Gum Grassy Woodlands project, funded through the Federal Government's Caring for Our Country initiative, North Central Waterwatch, and the City of Greater Bendigo.



July School Holidays

July is a quiet month for events and activities on the Waterwatch calendar. In our office it is always project planning month, pulling together information for reporting to our investors and telling them all about our success stories.

July is a good time to reflect on the past year and on what worked and what didn't work. I had some time off over the school holidays; Finn and I went to Circus Oz in Melbourne and it was lots of fun! We spent the rest of our holidays at home, which was very nice (I got lots of cuddles).



Melbourne University

On 17 July I headed to Melbourne to start a 12-month course in River Health Management. I am very excited about getting back into study and sharing my new knowledge with you all.

Frogs at Baringhup

On 19 July I headed down to Baringhup Primary School to talk to the students about frogs. We had lots of fun on the day and I found the children were already very knowledgeable about frogs. It was great to see the enthusiasm already there from the young ones.

We discussed frogs and their features, habitat and life cycles and then we headed down to the Loddon River and the wetland to listen for frogs. Lots of fun was had by everyone!

Fish Field Guide

I have started working on compiling information for the North Central Waterwatch Fish Field Guide.

This guide is the second in a series of three Field Guides being developed by the North Central Waterwatch program to raise awareness and provide knowledge sharing tools for the community. I am working closely with experts from the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), Arthur Rylah Institute and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority to ensure the information is up-to-date.

The fish guide is proving to be a bit trickier than the frog guide. It seems more information is readily available on frogs than for fish. However, this hasn't deterred me. I expect to have the Fish Field Guide completed in October – **so watch this space!**

River Detectives Manual

The River Detectives manual is now being finalised. It has taken lots of input from many experts in teaching, delivering and planning to develop this manual.

The new manual has a fresh new look and combines teacher's notes so that a teacher can deliver activities to students without a facilitator present.

The manual is easy to use and aligns directly with the Victorian Essential Learning Standards progression points and the Australian Curriculum. Currently, I am seeking funding for printing of this publication. I am very excited about using this resource with students in 2013!

Data Confidence Plan

The North Central Waterwatch Data Confidence Plan 2012 (updated version) will soon be made available online. The document provides us with the confidence to deliver strategic monitoring activities and assist monitors in understanding the methods used in identifying a site for monitoring.

The Plan also enables Waterwatch to demonstrate data quality of a known integrity to program stakeholders; data users, sponsors – actual and potential, community monitoring networks, North Central CMA, the Natural Resource Management Committee and local governments.

It also assists groups to develop effective monitoring programs that produce relevant data and provides training opportunities for monitors to ensure a high standard of competence in water testing is attained. The Plan clearly highlights the value of the data and it sets a benchmark for practice, through the documentation of procedures, to ensure continuity of the program delivery and efficiency and instil proper scientific principles in all monitoring.

It also provides water quality information for the North Central CMA. I will notify you when this document is available for viewing.



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Interpretation and Methods Manual

The Interpretations and Methods Manual has been developed to complement the North Central Waterwatch program's Data Confidence Plan. It provides helpful information to assist community monitors in undertaking water quality monitoring.

The document includes information on: North Central Waterwatch Staff – who and where they are; Why monitor water quality?; aims of community water quality monitoring; Health and Safety Guidelines; water sample collection; preservation and storage; chemical, physical and biological water quality parameters and tests; water quality data and information; and Interpretation of water quality data.

Catchment Care Features

River Detectives Get Wet

In September River Detectives will get wet while studying the underworld of macroinvertebrates. The whole world of tiny spineless creatures still manages to intrigue me. The way they move, breathe, eat, breed, form and survive is a world of wonder!

I am really looking forward to this activity, although it will be sad to say goodbye to some students who will be moving up in grades next year. It has been a great year working with you all. I feel very lucky to be a part of such a great educational activity!

Did you know the platypus relies heavily on the abundance of aquatic invertebrates in-stream for its diet?



Water Quality Fact

'Low pH levels can cause fish death by stressing their systems and causing physical damage, which in turn makes them more vulnerable to disease'.

What Fish am I? (Answer Page 6)



- I have a big head and a large mouth
- I am a big fish that can grow up to 500 mm long
- I have a four pairs of barbells that surround my mouth
- My lips are fleshy
- I am usually brown in colour with a white belly
- I like to lay my eggs in vegetation
- I am listed as a declining species

• I am a F _ _ _ _ w _ _ _ _ C _ _ _ _ _

North Central CMA Projects

Repairing Flood Damage

After 12 years of drought, the spring and summer of 2010-2011 delivered record breaking rainfall and floods across north central Victoria. Flooding was at a magnitude not seen for over a century.

A landholder's story

Leigh and Jan Williamson run a Shorthorn cattle and lucerne hay property 'Gairnshiel' on Tullaroop Creek at Carisbrook.

In 2007, they sought to become involved in the North Central CMA's Loddon Stressed River project to address the damage to the river banks that their stock was causing. The North Central CMA provided the Williamson's with 1,650 metres of ringlock and pine post fencing and four stock troughs.

"Since we have fenced the river we have noticed the gradual improvement to the river and its surrounds. We have more natural reeds growing, more bird life in the trees and more ducks, fish and platypus in the river. The erosion of the banks is not as apparent. The kangaroos and wallabies are also enjoying it and come out of the forest nearby in the drier months and use the river to drink and feed on our pastures adjoining the river."

The September 2010 flood brought the creek back to life but destroyed the fences provided by the North Central CMA. The Williamsons invested their own time and effort to replace these fences by Christmas 2010.



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“January 2011 saw the river in flood again, this time to levels never before seen. In the raging torrent we lost all the fences we had just restored on both sides of the river along with internal ones. We saved the houses by sand bagging with old potato sacks from a Thorpdale farmer. But still the water rose, so a neighbour’s backhoe arrived and a levee bank was installed around the houses. Swept away were rolls of hay, water tanks, pumps, livestock and equipment from the flooded workshops and sheds.”



Poly tank lodged in a tree by floodwater (Williamson property, Carisbrook)

Following the floods, Leigh reported that 1,030 metres of previous North Central CMA funded fence required complete replacement and 2,020 metres of fence was in need of repair. This work was completed in May 2012 with funding from the National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA).

The NDRRA funding allowed the North Central CMA to protect the health of our rivers and support the regional flood affected community.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Ph: (03) 5448 7124 www.nccma.vic.gov.au

Coliban Water News

In this issue of ‘Catchment Care’ we take the opportunity to introduce another member of our staff with a catchment/water quality focussed role.

Brett Thompson is Coliban Water’s recently appointed Manager of Environmental Risk. Brett’s responsibilities include management of our Environmental Management System (EMS) and leadership of the Environmental Management Group (EMG). The EMS and EMG provide staff with procedures and tools to ensure environmental compliance and continuous improvement to environmental management.

Central to the management of environmental risk is the identification of our environmental aspects and impacts which are defined below.

Environmental aspect: An activity that has the potential or has an actual environmental **impact**.

Environmental impact: an adverse or beneficial change to the environment wholly or partially resulting from an **aspect**.

One of our significant environmental aspects is *“Blocked sewers and overflows from the sewerage network”*. The environmental impacts of this aspect are:

- Surface and groundwater quality contamination
- Offensive odour generation.

Sewer spills have the potential to impact human and environmental health. Spills and blockages can be caused by a number of things including foreign objects (things that shouldn’t be flushed down the toilet), tree roots and extreme rainfall. Blockages are removed by injecting water at high pressure into the sewer pipe.

When a sewer overflows we have strict procedures to contain spills, minimise environmental impacts and minimise risk to human health. These procedures include:

- Education of sewerage and contaminated water (sucking it up into tanker trucks)
- Disinfecting land
- Replacing topsoil
- Water quality monitoring of waterways

In the event of a large spill, we work with the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) Victoria to ensure the best measures are taken to protect the environment.

Sewer overflows are often identified and reported by members of the public. If you identify a possible overflow, by sight or smell, we encourage you to call us on **1300 363 200**



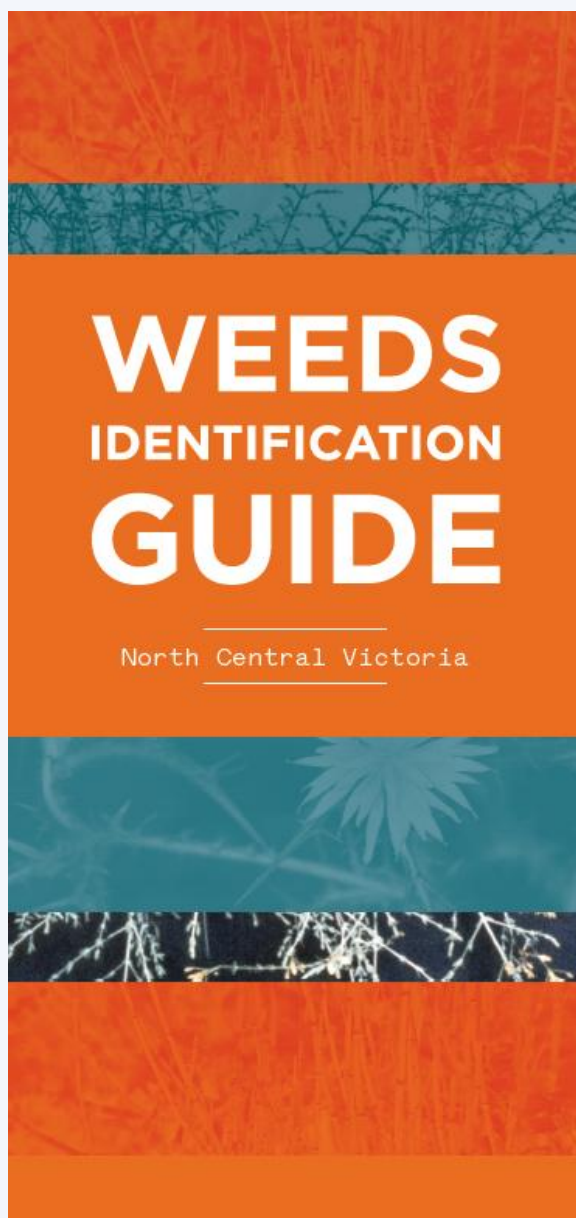
Brett Thompson sampling in the field





New Weeds Identification Guide

The North Central CMA has recently published the second edition of the Weeds Identification Guide for north central Victoria, which includes updated content and new weeds. The guide includes photos, descriptions, and control options for 88 different weeds that are present or pose significant threats to farms and natural environments in the region.



Hard copies of the guide are water repellent and easily fit in your ute glove box or back pocket. Copies will be available to Landcare members, farmers and landholders in the North Central CMA region through their local Landcare group or by contacting Ashley Beven, the North Central CMA's Regional Landcare Facilitator on (03) 5448 7124. Alternatively the guide can be downloaded at www.ncccma.vic.gov.au.

Answer: What fish am I?



I am a Freshwater Catfish

Picture courtesy of <http://www2.mdbc.gov.au>, picture taken by: Gunther Schmida

