



North Central  
Waterwatch



# catchment care

Spring Edition  
November 2012

Hello Waterwatch Monitors,

Can you believe its almost Christmas?!

The past three months were very busy for us; with a total of over 900 community members, Waterwatch volunteers and students, engaged in many activities across the region. We had some really great events and I thoroughly enjoyed being a part of them all. I am constantly fascinated by people's enthusiasm - especially children - for learning all about the environment, particularly our waterways.

**BIG NEWS:** this is the last edition of the North Central Waterwatch Catchment Care newsletter! But please don't worry because you will still receive all of the latest news regularly. Waterwatch and Landcare are merging the two newsletters into one awesome newsletter titled **North Central chat**. This is a monthly newsletter that will contain lots of useful information - including updates about the health of our waterways. It will keep you updated about all the wonderful Waterwatch events, and will feature a monthly community monitor profile so you know who is monitoring our waterways and where they are.



*The new look newsletter will keep you up-to-date with all Waterwatch and Landcare news.*

I am really excited about the new direction of the newsletter and I look forward to communicating with you in this new format in 2013.

*I hope you all have a wonderful Christmas and a very Happy New Year!*

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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# Special Events

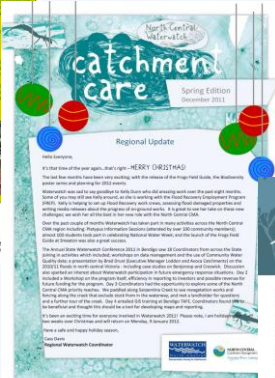
DECEMBER	
5	International Volunteer Day
3-9	Coast Care Week
10	Human Rights Day
11	International Mountain Day
25	Christmas Day
26	Boxing Day
31	New Years Eve
JANUARY	
1	New Years Day
5	National Bird Day
26	Australia Day
FEBRUARY	
2	World Wetlands Day
9-24	Sustainable Living Festival
26	Business Clean Up Day

## Farewell Catchment Care!

From old to new.....



2006/07



2010/11



### A message from the Regional Landcare Coordinator

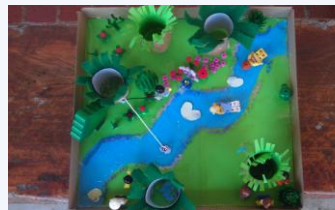
In a previous issue I mentioned that I had been asked to take over the role of Regional Landcare Coordinator for the North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) region. I have been joined in this role by my colleague, the Regional Landcare Coordinator, and I am pleased to be working with you on this exciting journey.

### This Month's Contents

- News
- Coast & Resources
- Funding News

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2013!





## What happened in September

### QA/QC Week

On 13 September 60 Waterwatch community monitors from across the region took part in a series of workshops facilitated by the North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) and hosted by Waterwatch Victoria's Quality Assurance and Quality Control (QA/QC) program.

The QA/QC program is a state-wide water quality assurance testing program that provides technical support to community monitors who collect vital information on water quality in our rivers, streams and wetlands.

The data collected by community volunteers can be used to make important decisions regarding how best to protect and enhance the integrity of our catchments.

The results from the tests were sent to Waterwatch Victoria's laboratory for analysis. A laboratory report was generated for each participant detailing their results.

**Overall the North Central Waterwatch volunteer team did really well.**

This year some of our monitors had some minor issues with their pH meters. Thanks to our monitors being so experienced they realised that the pH meters weren't working correctly and went 'old school' water testing with pH test strips.

Unfortunately the test strips aren't as accurate as the pH meters when they are working but they do still provide a good indication of pH and can still be used with confidence.

I will send monitors their own report and will follow up with any monitors who may have been out in their testing results, to ensure your equipment is working correctly.

If you have any questions please feel free to call. Overall a great pass rate and thank you to everyone for taking part in QA/QC 2012.

## River Detectives Get Wet - Macroinvertebrate studies

Over 286 grade 3 and 4 students from around the region took part in macroinvertebrate studies as part of the **River Detectives** program.

I always enjoy visiting students with bugs in tow. Children are very excited to explore the creatures that inhabit our waterways!

*Philippa Bywaters and Molly Byrne from Strathfieldsaye Primary School wrote this article for their school newsletter:*

On 12 September, Cass Davis from North Central Catchment Management Authority came to visit grades 3 and 4. She came to teach us about macroinvertebrates which are small creatures without backbones that live in the water.

We got into groups to look for macroinvertebrates in a tray. There were many different macroinvertebrates. One of the most common was the Water Boatman. Most of the 3 and 4s learned something about macroinvertebrates and enjoyed Cass coming to our school.



Finding macroinvertebrates with spoons. Photo provided by Jennifer Rogers, Strathfieldsaye Primary School.

*Students from Karlsruhe Primary School also said:*

*"I liked listening to Cass tell us about the different names of bugs and matching them to their names."*

*"We saw lots of bugs that we had never seen before."*

*"It was wonderful how many different invertebrates we found."*





Students identifying Water Bugs  
Photo provided by Liz Grinter, Carlsruhe Primary School

### 'Kids Teaching Kids' with Huntly Primary School

Huntly Primary School grade 3 and 4 students participate in the **River Detectives** program. The school held a very successful 'Kids Teaching Kids' event on the Bendigo Creek. This event built on many of the skills/content from the River Detectives program, along with being a major event within the school's strong sustainability program.

Planning for the day involved small teams of grade 3 and 4 students choosing a river health subject area to become 'experts' in. They then designed and prepared an engaging hands-on activity to convey their subject area to peers.



Photo provided by Huntly Primary School

The event was held along the Bendigo Creek, at Epsom, with over 100 students actively engaged in a variety of activities with Huntly Primary School students teaching grade 3 and 4 students from both Goornong and Epsom Primary Schools.



Photo provided by Huntly Primary School

Activities included macroinvertebrate sampling, bird watching, sketching, craft work, propagating, tree planting, water quality testing, urban stormwater study, plant identification, bug catching, Aboriginal culture and habitat surveys.

It was a fantastic day with lots of fun and loads of learning - with the students taking on the responsibility of teaching their peers and fellow future custodians of the Bendigo Creek.

### Bug Blitz with North Central Waterwatch

Tess Grieves, North Central CMA Project Officer, attended the Bug Blitz event over two days on behalf of Waterwatch. The first day was held at the Pyramid Hill Golf Course where 60 students from Pyramid Hill Primary School attended, the second day was held at Happy Valley Reserve with 50 students from Castlemaine Primary School.

Over the two days the students participated in a range of activities, including the Snakebusters Reptile Display, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage presentations, Bug Blitz activities and Waterwatch's Water Bugs!

**The Castlemaine students even got to plant a tree!**





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Some feedback from the students included:

*"WOW!.. There's so much going on in the water... it's amazing,"* said a student from Pyramid Hill Primary School.

*"I've done plenty of Waterwatch before and these bugs show us this is a healthy creek,"* said a Castlemaine Primary School student & Waterwatch enthusiast.

*"I want to keep looking at these bugs... Can we keep them?"*

A big thank you to Tess for attending this event, it was obviously a huge success!



## What happened in October

### Brian Doyle joined the Waterwatch team

I would like to welcome Brian Doyle to the Waterwatch team. Brian has taken over from John Knight to continue monitoring water quality within the Avoca River near Quambatook.

This also means we have to say goodbye to John Knight, who first joined Waterwatch in 2007. Thank you for your wonderful volunteering efforts and we wish you the best into the future.

*From Cass and the North Central Waterwatch volunteer team!*



John Knight collecting a sample from the Avoca River

## National Water Week Activities

### *Bendigo Family Nature Club go pondering with Waterwatch*

The Bendigo Family Nature Club invited Waterwatch along to talk about water bugs and frogs of the region. We all met on a sunny Sunday morning at the City of Greater Bendigo's No.7 Crusoe Reservoir. We then headed down to the wonderful frog ponds and collected bugs. There we found mostly chironomids and true bugs with lots of mosquito larvae. We also found some damselfly nymphs. After viewing and identifying bugs we decided to go looking and listening for frogs. We heard Common Froglets, Pobblebonks and Plains Froglets. We didn't get to see the frogs but found lots of tadpoles!

### *Valuing our Water - A Buck-Art Competition and activities for schools*

Students from Drummartin, White Hills and Huntly primary schools learnt all about the value of our water resources during National Water Week activities at the Bendigo Botanic Gardens, White Hills.

National Water Week runs from 21-27 October and is an annual event aimed at improving community understanding of water issues in Australia and is Australia's only national water awareness week.

The event was hosted by the City of Greater Bendigo, North Central CMA, Friends of Bendigo Botanic Gardens, Northern Bendigo Landcare Group and Coliban Water.

Mayor of the City of Greater Bendigo Cr Alec Sandner said "it was very pleasing to see such a range of organisations working together to promote water conservation and appreciation in a coordinated way."

"Australia is the driest inhabited continent in the world, a fact we all know only too well, so it is very important to continue to support opportunities which engage our children in water conservation and appreciation events such as National Water Week," Cr Sandner also said.

Students had great fun in the sandpit, building a model of a local catchment, they also learnt about the value of water bugs and the special water saving features of plants, as well as the importance of keeping stormwater clear and free of pollution.



## catchment care

The students also participated in a competition involving decorating buckets with messages about what 'valuing our water' means to them. The top ten buckets were selected on the day and are currently on display at the North Central CMA head office.

### *Wonderful Wetland Birds of Gunbower*

The Wonderful Wetland Birds event was held at the Kerang Ibis Rookery, Middle Reedy Lake, in partnership with the North Central CMA's Kerang and Gunbower Wetlands program, and the Waterwatch program. One hundred students from Lake Charm, Kerang and Murrabit primary schools took part in four activities exploring the lake and learning all about the wonderful birds that inhabit the area.

"Most of the students are lucky enough to have internationally important wetlands in their backyard and we aim to enhance the kid's value of the area," said Britt Gregory, Wetland Project Officer at the North Central CMA.

The Kerang Wetlands are recognised for their significance as habitat for a large abundance of water birds.

The students were engaged in a range of activities which included a wetland treasure hunt and learning to look at beaks and feet, to identify different species using binoculars.

We even had a visit from a very special Ibis called CARLA!



CARLA the Ibis saying hello to the students

Some of the feedback on the day clearly outlined the importance of hosting such events.

*"The bird hide was the best part because you could see tons of birds"* Kerang Primary School student.

*"It's been a great experience for them,"* local bird expert Tom.

*"I liked the bird watching and my favourite bird is the Ibis because of its beak,"* student from Lake Charm Primary School.



*"Schools such as these do not often get the opportunity to go on field trips such as this. Today has provided students with an experience that they can look back on in years to come which will help connect them to nature."* Teacher.

### *Glenlyon Landcare Kids Froggin around*

About 40 people attended the Glenlyon Landcare Kids Day along the Loddon River. Tess Grieves, Project Officer with the North Central CMA, and the kids collected some macroinvertebrates from the Loddon. Then Tess discussed their role in the food chain and how we can identify different bugs as indicators of water quality and river health.

The focus of the day was frogs, so after discussions about how many bugs were found, and how much diversity there was for frogs to eat, the kids went with Tess to listen to the frogs calling, hearing around five different calls. Everyone walked down to the river looking for the frogs.

They all got their feet wet scrambling over the river rocks, turning them over to try and discover their froggy friends. Four individual frogs were seen on the day. The kids were able to use the North Central Waterwatch Frogs Field Guide and fact sheets to identify the frogs. Those found were identified as Common Froglets.





### *Storm Water and Water Bugs White Hills Primary School Visit*

Waterwatch visited 100 students at White Hills Primary School to talk about the importance of keeping our waterways clean in urban areas. The students talked about what storm water is and how it gets into our waterways and I discussed how important clean water is, especially for the little bugs who live at the bottom of the food chain. The students each investigated a sample of bugs collected from the Bendigo Creek to test the water quality.

## What happened in November

### Discover Gunbower Creek by canoe and North Central Waterwatch Fish Field Guide Launch

At the Cohuna Festival, Waterwatch and the Gunbower and Kerang Wetlands team joined forces to deliver a community event on the Gunbower Creek. The event raised awareness about the importance of these wonderful wetlands and who uses them - one of the participants even saw a Water Rat cleaning himself on a log in the creek!

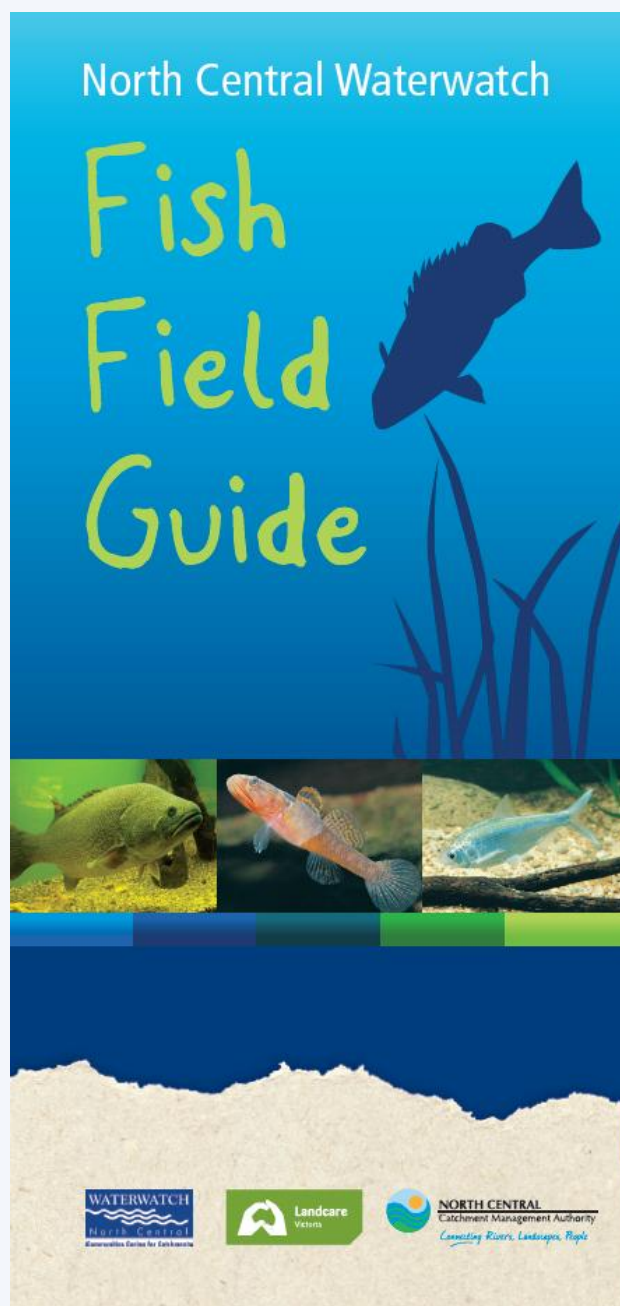


Participants heading off on their tour of the Gunbower Creek

We saw this as the perfect opportunity to launch the North Central Waterwatch Fish Field Guide, hot off the press! Participants each received a copy of the new field guide and Waterwatch monitors should all now have their own copy.

If you would like more copies, please call Cass Davis to discuss this further, as we only have limited copies available.

The Fish Fact sheets will soon be available on the North Central CMA website which you can download and print.





## Funding news

### Parks Victoria 2012-13 Healthy Parks Healthy People Grants for Community Groups now open

2012-2013 Healthy Parks Healthy People Grants:

- Help local groups to deliver projects which protect and enhance the natural, cultural and heritage values of parks and reserves
- Provide diverse recreational, educational, cultural and tourism opportunities of importance to local communities
- Facilitate the involvement of the wider multicultural community in environmental and recreational projects
- Increases community awareness and understanding of parks and their values.

Healthy Parks Healthy People Grants are available to community-based groups/not for profit organisations such as (but not confined to):

- friends groups
- service clubs
- cultural groups
- migrant resource centres
- schools
- historic societies

View and download information from [www.parkweb.vic.gov.au](http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au).

Prospective applicants should contact the relevant Ranger-in-Charge for the park or reserve in which your group is planning to undertake the project, to obtain an application form and to discuss the proposal. The application can be filled in with the assistance of local staff and must be endorsed by the Ranger-in-Charge prior to submission.

**Applications close 17 December 2012**

Projects will commence as soon as possible after the pool of projects is assessed and successful projects approved.

Please phone 13 1963 if you are unsure of who to contact or for any further advice.

### Communities for Nature Grants

The Victorian Government is committed to supporting the Victorian community to contribute to practical on-ground solutions for local environmental issues.

The Communities for Nature grants program seeks to:

- support practical community action to deliver measurable environmental outcomes
- support community groups and volunteers undertaking works of primarily an environmental nature
- support communities with relevant and timely information to assess priorities at the local level to determine the best returns in undertaking on-ground works

Communities for Nature grants are targeted towards local community groups and organisations, including schools.

Projects are expected to address local environmental issues such as:

- Biodiversity and habitat preservation (preservation of areas known for their biodiversity and habitat values)
- Threatened species recovery
- Sustainable management of native wildlife
- Revegetation (of areas that enhance existing habitat or connectivity)
- Cleaning up waterways (creeks, wetlands, streams, rivers and seas)
- Control of weeds and pest animals.

The program has up to \$700,000 to invest for the 2012 Small Grants funding opportunity for grants of up to \$10,000 each.







To apply follow the steps below

1. Visit [www.dse.vic.gov.au/communitiesfornature](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/communitiesfornature) and download the program guidelines and FAQs. You can also view the application form. If you are unable to access the internet, please call the Grants Information Line on 1300 366 356 (during business hours).
2. It is strongly recommended that you contact the Grants Information Line on 1300 366 356 to be put in touch with someone in your region who can provide technical input into your application.
3. Seek approval from the relevant land manager/owner to undertake works and consult with your local Shire/Council regarding any permits for works you may need.
4. Log on to [www.dse.vic.gov.au/communitiesfornature](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/communitiesfornature)
5. Click on the application link to create a log on and draft your application. NB: your draft can be saved until you are ready to submit.
6. Print a copy of your application prior to submission and check all content. NB: You will be unable to edit your application after you submit it.
7. Remember to attach your map showing the project area/s as a shape file (see instructions on the webpage showing how to create your map).

Applications close at midnight Wednesday 19 December 2012.

For additional information please see the Communities for Nature Funding Guidelines and the Frequently Asked Questions on the webpage or call the Grants information line during business hours on PH: 1300 366 356.

*Well, that's it from me this year; I hope you have enjoyed reading the last edition of Catchment Care. Don't forget to stay tuned for the Waterwatch news in the North Central chat!*

Merry Christmas  
everyone  
and a  
Happy New Year!!

From Cass Davis, Regional Waterwatch  
Coordinator, North Central CMA

