

August 2012 in Our Catchment

Still not much rain and winter is gone! Apart from Thursday evening and Friday afternoon it really hasn't rained much at all. It would be interesting to know what the soil moisture is like! Let us hope we have a reasonably wet spring again.

Your Results

Quite a number of the creeks showed electrical conductivities between 400 and 1100 $\mu\text{S}\cdot\text{cm}^{-1}$ and while this is not unusual, it does indicate that there may be a gradual increase in the contribution of groundwater in the catchment. It was interesting to note that Kingston Foreshore also had elevated EC. Only Barracks Creek and Banksia St Wetland had unusual pH readings. Many of the reports were of water in good condition.

Living Water

I had a few sessions at Dickson Wetlands earlier this month. The invertebrates were included, because the schools asked for them. The water was very cold. There was no sign of life above the water at insect size! However it was great to see how a few water boatmen, a couple of angler's curses and the occasional caddis in a stick can alert young minds to the potential for life in water.

By late September and early October life should have returned to your site. There may be clouds of mayflies just above the water. The reeds and rushes may show the fresh chrysalises left by the dragonflies and damsel flies cruising the airways. Water skaters and whirligigs should be dashing about on the water surface. The submerged rocks may be crawling with life. Just which bugs, and in what proportions, provide information about the condition of waterways and how they have come through the last year.



Australian freshwater scientists have developed some of the most reliable statistics for assessing water quality using the invertebrates that live in waterways. You can be involved! With a little training, and many of you have enjoyed this already, the citizen scientist can quickly get a SIGNAL2 score for each of their sites. You can also have a go at judging your waterway's health on the spot. Generally the more mayflies (except angler's curses) and caddis larvae you have, compared

to blackfly larvae, bloodworms and water boatmen, the better the aquatic habitat; if you have stoneflies, like those in the picture, even better. Yabbies, water scorpions, mudeyes and

damselfly larvae are interesting, but don't usually indicate much. Flatworms, real worms and fish leeches should only be there in very small numbers.

If you would like to know what most of these things look like there is a very useful website at www.mdfrc.org.au/bugguide/index.htm . When you go in the first time use the teaching tabs; when you are confident go straight to **Identify your bug**. This is a great site to have a browse. When you have spent some time familiarising yourself with the bugs, we would be thrilled if you felt confident enough to borrow a net, a dish and a field guide and did your own Macroinvertebrate survey, either in October or November.

Calendar

Thursday 13 th September	Frogwatch Introduction	Queanbeyan Public School Isabella St, Queanbeyan 6:00 – 9:30 pm RSVP frogwatch@ginninderralandcare.org.au
Saturday 15 th & Sunday 16 th September	Waterwatch Monitoring	Your sites
Saturday 22 nd September	Platypus Walk	Cnr Collett and Rutledge Sts, Queanbeyan. Meet at 4:00 pm
Monday 24 th September	Frogwatch Field Night	Doeberl Reserve end, River Dr, Barracks Flat 6:00 – 9:30 pm RSVP frogwatch@ginninderralandcare.org.au

Stephen Skinner

Waterwatch Coordinator, Molonglo Catchment Group

The operation of the Molonglo Catchment Group and Waterwatch program is assisted by the Australian Government's Caring for our Country and the ACT Government. Some administrative assistance is provided by the Australian Government's GVESHO program.