

So many reports of no water again! And where the upper Molonglo is testable, the conductivity has gone up dramatically. It was interesting to get some of the new Oxygen, Phosphorous and Nitrogen reports. We will have to wait for the rains to see any major trends, other than when it's hot and dry O₂ levels are generally unfavourable to aquatic health!

Training and Quality Control

Thank you to all of you who could make it to the training afternoon on Saturday 21st. Lynton tells me that the data entry form will now accept Dissolved Oxygen, orthophosphate and nitrate/nitrite reports. If you go to the Molonglo Catchment Group website and scroll down the list of articles on the left hand side, you will come to M-CHiP Submit Results, below Molonglo Waterwatch and above Members Pages. Please continue to put in plenty of General Comments!



Phosphate Kits: I have a number of 0.01–0.25 orthophosphate Visocolor kits in store, and you can collect these from the office in Cassidy Arcade, Queanbeyan, on Mondays, Tuesdays or Wednesdays.

QA/QC: If you are coming to the QA/QC at the Discovery Centre at 2:00 pm on Sunday 19th April, let me know soon and tell me if you would like me to have a phosphate kit for you. When you come to the QA/QC bring your (empty) bottles for **fresh calibration buffer** in your kit. It is much more fun to get your calibration buffers at the meeting than by coming into the office.

Things to do in April

Autumn Macroinvertebrate Count:

I have enough equipment to share some kits for the Autumn Macroinvertebrate Count. We need six volunteer groups, scattered across the catchment area. Bug counting can be great fun and highly informative. What we are after is a snapshot

of the more visible water animals in your waterway, not an exhaustive catalogue of every last invertebrate organism.

Each Kit will contain:

- 1 sweep net
- 1 white examination tray
- 1 white icetray
- 1 NSW Water Bug Detective Guide
- 1 The Freshwater Name Trail chart
- 1 clipboard
- Record sheets for your sites, with Southern Tablelands SIGNAL2 loadings

On the day, go to the site and have a quiet look around before you put the net in the water. You may see water striders and whirligig beetles, neither of which you are likely to net, enjoying your waterway. **They go in the count too!** Pick a part of the bank that has both patches of emergent plants and bare edges if possible. You take a sweep along the edge of the bank at your site, approximately 10m long. You empty the contents of the net, mud, gravel, weeds and all into the water in the dish and give it a chance to settle.

Some water animals are very active –water mites and backswimmers rarely stand still– some are naturally slow moving –snails and flatworms take their time– and some are cautious or shy –caddis nymphs stay inside their houses unless the water is still, while yabbies freeze in the hope of not being spotted. So watch the water before you go fishing with your spoon. Catch one example of each bug kind, and put it into a chamber of the icetray. Using a magnifying glass if need be, find out what it is.



To help you feel confident with your identifications we are including *The Freshwater Name Trail* chart. It is from the United Kingdom, but it includes all the orders of animals we would expect you to come across. You start at the beginning and work your way round the trail till you come to an aquamarine label and drawings of the animals. Take the name, if the picture is close enough, and see where it comes out on the *Water Bug*

Detective Guide. Then score the number of that animal in your dish on the Results sheet, in Column 1. The kits would need to be collected from the office and returned promptly, as I will need them all as soon as the schools open again!

If you can do the bug count this month it would be great, but May will do.

Stephen Skinner

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