

## October in our Catchment.

In your own quiet way you have all been involved in Water Week 2009. Those of you who do Frogwatch participated twice! And other events that were involved included the release of the ACT Water Report 2008-2009 where your data in the summer and autumn helped fill out gaps in the regulator's data bank, and the MDBA International River Health Conference. Your coordinator and the other ACT coordinators spent the first two days with school students from across Australia and our region, using macroinvertebrates to demonstrate water condition. There are many bright and enthusiastic young people out there happily teaching one-another! The Yr 9 group from Orana School made the papers with their rubbish monster.



Haven't the frogs been good this spring! During the day, particularly first thing or in the later afternoon, you hear common froglets and the Ack-acks of the spotted marsh frog. In some places there have been the plonks of the Pobblebonks. Once night falls, even in the built-up areas the chorus gets louder and louder. Then it is worth listening for the maniacal cackling frog, the whistling tree frog and the tennis playing striped marsh frog. Going for a stroll through the restoration work on the Queanbeyan from Dane St to River Drive in Queanbeyan can be worth it, just to hear the maniacal cackling frogs! In pasture country its worth listening for the smooth or orange groined toadlet, a frog that calls from away from the water.

Keep your frog reports coming in. Data collected across the year helps us learn, little by little, more about our frogs, their distribution and behaviour. Some species, including the rarer ones, become more active towards summer.

## Results for the Month

The water temperature is on the way up; watch it if your site runs to pools, as temperature may rise dramatically, with the possibility of it then causing oxygen stress in both plants and animals. With increased run-off and groundwater refills there may be some localised changes in Phosphorus and Nitrogen levels. The show for Nitrogen in Yarralumla Ck, for instance, may simply indicate run-off over stock manure. The frogs are hard to miss at present. It is good to note other animal life about also.

Pontoons of bright green silkweed at this time of year are not uncommon, especially where a site has plenty of open, unshaded water. Our experience has been that silkweeds generally spore in October and November, and then the pontoons collapse. Silkweeds (*Spirogyra*, *Zygnema* and related algae) are proto-plants and seasonal.



Silkweed pontoons on the edge of a reservoir.

Blanket weed (*Cladophora*, *Rhizoclonium* and *Pithophora*) is a filamentous alga related to green seaweed, and is a perennial, hence its nuisance status. The strands of blanket weed are usually attached, and very long. If they catch on rocks or snags they often go curly. An infestation by blanket weed is usually associated with bank disturbance, collapse of the shading vegetation or fertilizer run-off, or all three.



A blanket of Blanket Weed on the outlet of a Gross Pollution Trap.

## **An Afternoon with the Macroinvertebrates**

Already a couple of people have expressed interest in coming to a Macroinvertebrate Refresher/Training on Saturday afternoon, 14<sup>th</sup> November. We can meet at the boat ramp in Ray Morton Park (the riverside park) near the Art Gallery in Queanbeyan. There is parking in the loop end of Wanniasa Rd and near the barbeques in Trinculo Place. We will meet at 3:30 pm, and plan to have the training done by 4:30 pm, with light refreshments to follow. You will need a hat and sunscreen, and gumboots or waders. Afterwards I will lend you a sorting tray, an ice cube tray, a couple of pipettes, a hand-lens, a net and charts to help your identifications. These will need to be used the following weekend in conjunction with your Waterwatch, and returned to us as soon as possible. The last couple of weeks of the school year is a busy time for the Waterwatch Coordinator, as school visits to do 'Macroinvertebrates' are often scheduled then.

While you are contemplating the Macroinvertebrate Snapshot there are two very useful local websites to investigate: the Bugasaurus Explorus site ([www.bugsurvey.nsw.gov.au/index.html](http://www.bugsurvey.nsw.gov.au/index.html)) is great for showing how to collect bugs and instilling confidence in identifications. The bugs really do look like the line drawings provided. The one drawback is that the coverage is limited to one or a small number of examples in each major group. The Murray-Darling Freshwater Research Centre has an Identification and Ecology of Australian Freshwater Invertebrates site at [www.mdfrc.org.au/bugguide/index.html](http://www.mdfrc.org.au/bugguide/index.html) and this will take you much deeper into examples of the groups. It's a 'find a picture, push on tab and follow the prompts' system. It has a Victorian bias, as the main work is done there.

### **Important Dates:**

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| Saturday 7 <sup>th</sup> November:  | Captains Flat Market Day, with an emphasis on the Environment. 10:00 till 12:00...come and support Captains Flat Landcare.               |
| Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> November:    | Annual General Meeting of the Molonglo Catchment Group. 4:30 to 6:00, Room 10, Cassidy Arcade, 72-76 Monaro St, Queanbeyan. All welcome. |
| Saturday 14 <sup>th</sup> November: | Macroinvertebrate Refresher/Training at Queanbeyan Weir. 3:30 to 4:30 with refreshments to follow.                                       |
| Saturday 21 <sup>st</sup> November: | weekend for Waterwatch Sampling and Spring Macroinvertebrate snapshot.   |

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