

## October 2010 in our Catchment

Floods! We had a month of little or no rain, and then the very weekend the testing was to be done, down came the rain and up went the water levels! It is spring, and we are supposed to get freshes at this time of year. It has been a very good spring so far. I hope you have had the chance to walk through some of the bush at present ... it's a picture!

### Your Results

Most people reported higher than usual Turbidity readings, as would be expected. Many sites had lower than usual pH readings and even the  $520 \mu\text{S}\cdot\text{cm}^{-1}$  for Yarralumla Creek at Cotter Road is well down on the regular level. There are a few quite high reports for phosphates and nitrates. While various sites where the level of Phosphate is rarely greater than  $0.01 \text{ mg}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$  this time the run-off has brought in phosphates from such things as soil turnover for spring planting in backyards and market gardens. Jerrabomberra Ck at Hindmarsh Dr is not greatly elevated (despite the on-going bridgework on Lanyon Drive) but Yarralumla Ck and the North Watson wetland on Roma Mitchell Crescent both have spikes that may reflect overuse of fertilizers in urban situations. The high readings at Weetalabah Estate are very probably linked to the new roundabout for Captains Flat Road, and the remediation that was put in to contain runoff. It may need to be carefully refreshed.

The David Street wetland has oxygenation problems, and the plague of plague minnows is continuing. The macroinvertebrate report from David St made sad reading. I'm glad others put off making their bug sweep in the floods!

While most of you noted there was no visible algal growth, those who did indicated that there were quite large amounts in some of the urban wetlands. This should be silkweed spring growth, and so of little concern, but do keep up the reports, thank you.

### Broomrape Alert

With such a lush season there are a few pests turning up! As usual the villains are both attractive and fascinating. Round here, in the area recently worked on by the Indigenous River Restoration Crew between Dane St and the bend at Barracks Flat the willows are appearing again. Sadly, this is to be expected, as they are very good at suckering and are very hard to remove in one hit. While there have been masses of clematis scrambling over everything, the blackberry has not been backward in coming



forward! And just last week I found a patch of Broomrape in one of the replanting beds in the Doeberl Reserve area. Broomrape is a root parasite that grows quickly, flowers and seeds and then the seeds lie dormant until they are stimulated to germinate by root exudates from suitable host plants. The germinating plant then attaches to the host root system and draws all its sustenance from that host. Flowering may occur soon afterwards or be delayed according to the season, but the root infection is perennial. There are three broomrapes in south-eastern Australia, the noxious *Orobanche ramosa* that destroys

crops, *Orobanche minor* that parasitises some garden plants, and *Orobanche cerna* var. *australiana* that is native to the western plains. *O. ramosa* and *O. minor* are easy to confuse, so the recommendation is to report all Broomrape outbreaks and let the experts decide if it's local (*O. cerna*), unimportant (*O. minor*) or dangerous (*O. ramosa*). While all states have information about this plant, there is a very good exposition on [www.dpi.vic.gov.au](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au) - search for broomrape.

**If you find broomrape, of whichever kind, let the local council and the NSW Dept. of Primary Industry know.** Broomrape could potentially be a very damaging pest in both pastures and backyard vegetable patches.

## Calendar

All you enthusiastic Frogwatchers, please get your tapes and reports and pictures in to Emma Keightley before the **12<sup>th</sup> November**. I don't know about you, but Andy Westcott and I had a couple of interesting evenings, and had plenty to report. James Westcott came the first evening too, and loved the bats!

### QA/QC at Lions Youth Haven, Kambah:

This spring QA/QC is at the Lions Youth Haven at Kambah. It is on **Thursday evening 4<sup>th</sup> November**, starting at 5:30 pm. Southern ACT Catchment Group are the hosts this time. Please make the effort to come if you can; it is important to check your gear and get fresh calibration fluid, and we really do like to see you. There will be a barbeque after the testing.

To get to the Youth Haven, get onto Sulwood Drive and keep going west, around the south side of Mt Taylor, until you cross the Tuggeranong Parkway, and then take the first left into Kambah Pool Rd. If you come down Tuggeranong Parkway, turn right onto Sulwood Dr at the first lights past the west side of Mt Taylor and then go left into Kambah Pool Rd for about 2.4km. When you are opposite the gate to the gated Golf Course Estate, you should see the Lions Youth Haven sign and gate on your right. It's a dirt road but well made; go in and keep left until you find the Meeting Hall. Parking will be organised from there.

The next sampling weekend is **Saturday and Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> November**. If the waterways have had time to settle down, and you want to have a go, please use this weekend to do your Macroinvertebrate sampling too. Let me know well in advance if you need a net, tray and bug guide! You can, of course, borrow the gear and do a sweep at another convenient time, from now till Christmas.

*Stephen Skinner*

Waterwatch Coordinator, Molonglo Catchment Group.