

## October 2012 in Our Catchment

What a lovely drop of rain at the end of Floriade! There hasn't been much since, but the soil moisture appears to be good. Let us enjoy the spring, and hope that as we go into longer day-lengths there are some further good falls.

### **Your Results**

**pH** There are some interesting pH reports this month, with elevated levels in part of rural Jerrabomberra Ck, and in the Molonglo at Coppins Crossing. A lower than usual pH was reported for Burbong Bridge, but the reports from the Carwoola area and Captains Flat were close to expected. Valley Creek and the Queanbeyan River also showed slightly elevated pH.

**EC** Along with the usual creeks in the Carwoola area, Burra Ck, Reedy Creek, Barracks Ck in Queanbeyan, Yarralumla Ck at Curtin, Sullivans Ck at ANU and both the drains in Kingston showing elevated Electrical Conductivity, the elevated reading for Woolshed Creek a bit below the Pines was rather higher than usual and the reading at Fairburn Rd agreed. It could be that land use may be changing water quality following high rainfall events. There are several chemical processes that can occur in soils that have increased ions of various elements among their products, and these may only reach waterways when they are included in runoff.

**P** Phosphorus levels in the David St wetland was a little raised, but not as significantly as in all three sample points inside the ANU. The most conspicuous elevation was at the top of Sullivans Creek, where new developments are starting. Barracks Creek has yet to settle after the Edwin Land Parkway road-works, but will really be a worry only if it remains up.

**Algae** Blanket weed is being a nuisance at Reschs Ck gate and in Yarralumla Ck at Curtin, while the bathtub ring in Kingston is rather dense in Norgrove Park.

It was good to be told about all the frogs and birds!

### **Reptiles and waterways**

Not long back, on one of the Platypus walks I found that I was sharing my look-out with a very healthy and far from shy Heatwole's River Skink. I've mentioned these blokes before, they are the large and graceful skinks that enjoy living in drains, fences and rocky places within easy distance of our waterways. They feed on all kinds of invertebrates and so really enjoy the feasting as the grass hoppers, crickets and dragonflies come back in numbers. They are common, but don't really like it when the riverbank becomes crowded with willow and blackberry or too organised and manicured. They like the right amount of mess!



It won't be long before you should be able to guarantee being observed from the water when you visit your sites. The neat snout and bright black eyes of eastern long-necked turtles should be a common sight in our waters, especially the larger stiller pools of rivers, and the open water in farm dams. If we get some wet weather, they will also take to the highways and

byways. If you do slow down for them, remember two things: 1) take them across the road in the direction they were trying to go, and 2) they aren't called Stinkin' Jim for nothing – hold them well away from your body, with the head facing you!

Water Dragons should be in full colour at present. That aquamarine can be almost electric blue on some of them! Mind out for the shiny new coated Red Bellied Blacks; they shouldn't do you any harm but deserve respect and a little distance.

### Calendar

Saturday 17th	Platypus Walk	Collett St and Rutledge St, Queanbeyan. Meet at 5:30 pm
17 <sup>th</sup> and 18 <sup>th</sup>	Waterwatch Monitoring	Your sites

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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.