

In Our Catchment – September 2015

After good rainfall in August, September was a very dry month across the catchment with rainfall below 14mm at all available stations. With an average evaporation of 80-100mm, soil moisture dropped a lot over the month. However, for the sampling in September almost all creeks were continuing to flow.

Water temperatures ranged from 9 to 20 degrees, with most in the mid-teens, though of course in the smaller creeks this is highly related to time of day.

Turbidity was low at most sites, with the exception of lower Jerrabomberra Creek, two wetlands, and a rural creek - Urialla Creek must be experiencing some disturbance, such as stock accessing the creek upstream or possibly feral pig activity. Turbidity was also slightly elevated in the Molonglo River below Scrivener Dam.

Dissolved oxygen continues to be extremely low in lower Sullivan's Creek. It was also very low at the inlet into east O'Malley pond, however this is associated with low flows, as it is at most of the other sites with moderate to low dissolved oxygen % saturations.

pH showed less variation across the catchment now that almost all Waterwatchers are using pH strips. **Please let me know if you have not yet switched over to them and I will get some to you.** There were no remarkable EC readings, these being largely driven by geology and how much urban runoff contributes to flow, and Nitrates were low at all sites except Yarralumla Creek and Weston Creek. Only Sullivan's Creek and Weston Creek had concerning total Phosphorus readings.

Our spring Waterwatch QA/QC event is coming up

The next Waterwatch quality assurance / quality control event is on **Saturday 14 November 10am to midday**. If you couldn't make it to the last one, or you haven't been before, we would love you to come to this one! It gives us and you confidence that your equipment and techniques are giving us robust data, it makes your effort worthwhile, and provides data that is comparable across the catchments.

New Waterwatchers always remark on how much more confident they feel after they have attended a QA/QC event so please do come if you can. And our aim is to have all Waterwatchers attend at least one a year. This is the first one we've held on a Saturday. **There are more details in the attached flyer.**

The QA/QC will be followed by a light lunch, and this time we will follow up with a fabulous water plant identification workshop for anyone who is interested and can stay on.

When: Saturday, 14 November 2015, 10am to 12:00pm QA/QC, 12 to 12:30pm lunch, 12:30 to 2:30pm water plant workshop.

Where: Scout Hall, off The Valley Ave, Gungahlin.

RSVP: By Wednesday, 11 November to [me](#) by email or Woo O'Reilly 6207 2246.

Please let us know if you are:

1. Coming to QAQC;
2. Staying for lunch; and
3. Attending the Water Plant ID Workshop

Bug Blitzes over November

It seems as though we've only just finished sampling Water Bugs for autumn and it is spring already. Thankfully, sampling water bugs is enjoyable and interesting. It is so good to get out and see the different parts of our large Molonglo Catchment (about 2,000 sq. km), and to spend time with some of you doing Bug Blitzes. And it is great peering into trays, picking out the different types of water bugs and seeing what they tell us about water quality and habitat. If you would like to join us sampling water bugs (we sample the bottom site of most reaches) we'd love to have you along.

We plan to go out next Wed 4 November to sample water bugs in the upper Molonglo catchment. Other dates for Bug Blitzes are Thurs 12 Nov, Wed 18 Nov, and Thurs 26 Nov (inner north wetlands with Dan Starrs) and there will be at least one other day. Please let me know if you'd like to join us for some or all of a Bug Blitz day. I will need to know if you want to come with us next Wed 4 Nov by Mon 2 Nov, or you can ring me on 0439 411 325.

There is a great water bug app available from here: www.thewaterbugapp.com/. It is from John Gooderham, who is the author of our favourite *The Waterbug Book*.

Launch of the 2014-15 CHIP Report

[The Catchment Health Indicator Program report](#) is the culmination of all our Waterwatch data collection for the 2014-15 year. It combines the water quality data you collect each month with the water bug surveys we do in autumn and spring, and this year for the first time also includes riparian assessment scores that rate vegetation and habitat health for [almost] every site.

We worked hard to include all the great feedback from last year's CHIP report, and I think you'll agree it has resulted in a very useful and beautiful report this year that describes water and catchment health, reach by reach, in a very accessible way. And we managed to get it done in time for Water Week. Thank you all for making it possible! More and more it is being used by local governments to help make management decisions, so you should feel even more proud of your contribution.

The report includes Waterwatch data from over 11,000 sq. kms of catchments in the Upper Murrumbidgee region, from the 5 sub-catchments: Cooma, Southern ACT, Ginninderra, Yass and of course Molonglo.

You can download the 2014-15 CHIP report from www.act.waterwatch.org.au/Chip.html

It's quite a big file at 9MB, even though this is the medium image quality version. You can also come into the office and see the lovely printed version with high quality images and maps. And if you are really keen I can get you a copy.

Updated Waterwatch Manual

An updated version of the Waterwatch Manual is available on the Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch website at www.act.waterwatch.org.au/Waterwatch%20Manual.html

There are lots of improvements and tweaks to the information, it is now the manual used across all 5 upper Murrumbidgee catchments, and it has great background information too. If you print it as a booklet you get a very nice transportable half-A4 sized booklet. If you would like me to print you one, just let me know.

Other News & Events

CARP LOVE 20 DEGREES

And finally, a reminder about this important campaign: As the carp breeding season starts, the Carp Love 20 Degrees campaign seeks to raise community awareness of the impact carp and other feral fish have on our waterways. It also aims to improve knowledge of carp distribution, movements and breeding hotspots in the upper Murrumbidgee River catchment area.

Help us map carp hotspots and where they breed to improve our understanding of their behaviour and identify opportunities for control. This will put you in the running to win a tablet or other prizes (this is an ACT Govt competition, not a commercial one).

Watch out for carp aggregation, feeding and breeding behaviours. If you see fish in groups, "wallowing" in shallow water exposing their backs and rolling around, or doing lots of splashing or chasing, note the day, time, location, and estimate of number and size of fish, (perhaps take a photo or video) then record your sighting on the website or using the app.

See www.act.waterwatch.org.au/Feral%20Fish.html#carp for details about the campaign and the competition, to find out how to identify carp and other feral fish species, and for information on the Feral Fish Scan website where you can record your sightings. Waterwatchers are more likely than many people to see carp activity, and this competition is open to you all. Please spread the word too so we get more people out there watching and recording carp activity. We are also interested in details of other feral fish sightings.

Thanks for getting out in this lovely spring weather to collect our Waterwatch data. I hope your gardens and families are flourishing.

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Deb Kellock

Waterwatch Coordinator, Molonglo Catchment Group

waterwatch@molonglocatchment.org.au

(02) 6299 2119

The operation of the Molonglo Catchment Group is assisted by the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme and the ACT Government.



Waterwatch QAQC

Valley Ponds - Gungahlin

Saturday 14th November 2015, 10am-2:30pm

10am-Midday: QAQC

- 1. Mystery solution tests** for Nitrates, Total Phosphorus, Electrical Conductivity and pH. As with the Autumn QAQC, there will be a station for each parameter overseen by a Waterwatch coordinator.
2. Remember to bring your bottles to **update your EC calibration** solution.
3. All **QAQC sheets** will need to be checked at each station and given to Woo or another Waterwatch staff member at completion of all four tests.

12-12:30pm: Lunch

12:30-2:30pm: Water Plant ID workshop

We are very lucky to have Dr Jane Roberts, vegetation ecologist, joining us to run a water plant ID workshop. We will go for a walk around the Valley Ponds and learn about some of our more common native and non-native aquatic vegetation. No prior experience necessary.

WHERE: Scout Hall, off The Valley Ave, Gungahlin

RSVP: Wednesday, 11 November to your Waterwatch coordinator or Woo O'Reilly 6207 2246.

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