



## Delivering water for the environment in the Gwydir Valley

<b>Objective:</b>	Support the recovery of river and wetland areas
<b>Timing:</b>	December 2020 – March 2021
<b>Volume:</b>	~23 GL (including 5.1 GL for the Northern Waterhole Top-up to the Barwon River)
<b>Target areas:</b>	Lower Gwydir and Gingham systems, Mallowa wetlands and the Barwon River via Carole/Gil Gil creeks.

### Gwydir wetlands – a haven for waterbirds

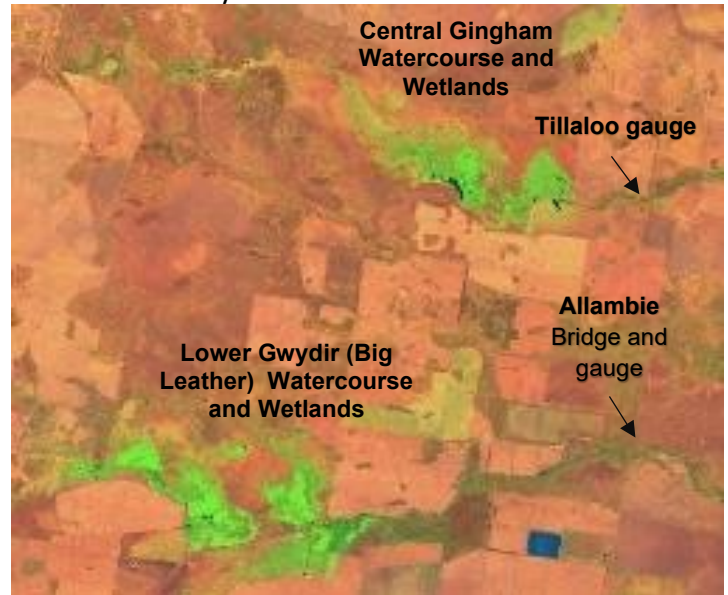
Using a combination of supplementary and regulated river licences, environmental water managers provided ~13,800 ML of water for the environment to the Gingham and Lower Gwydir between January and mid-March 2021.

### Summer flows in the Gwydir

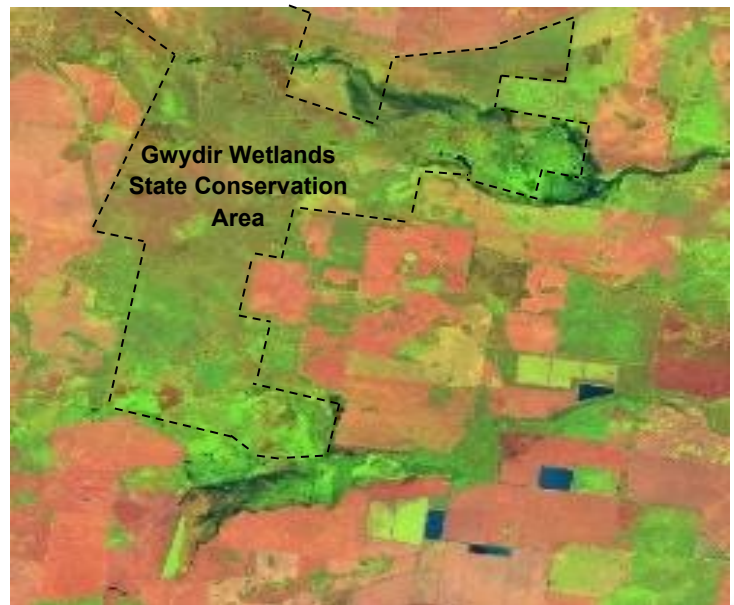
Over the summer of 2020-21, water for the environment was provided across the Lower Gwydir, Gingham and Mallowa Creek systems, the Mehi and the Barwon River via Carole/Gil Gil creeks. This water complemented natural inflows following widespread rainfall and supported the recovery of wetland areas. Flows also provided habitat for a range of waterbirds, fish, frogs and turtles.

### A welcome drink for Mallowa Wetlands

3,100 ML of supplementary water for the environment was provided to Mallowa Creek during December 2020 and March 2021, supporting recovery of wetland vegetation.



Gwydir Wetlands early December 2020 (above) and early January 2021 (below) – Sentinel



'Valetta' – Mallowa wetlands - 22 February 2021 - CEWO



In combination with natural flows, this water helped improve the condition of the Gwydir Wetlands Ramsar sites located on 'Old Dromana' and 'Goddard's Lease'. Natural flows triggered a small waterbird nesting event. Water for the environment was used to help several colonial nesting species finish their breeding.



Bunnor Waterbird Lagoon, Gwydir Wetlands State Conservation Area – CEWO

## Carole Creek System

in early January 2021 as part of the [Northern waterhole top-up](#), ~5,000 ML was delivered from Copeton Dam. This flow travelled down Carole and Gil Gil Creeks on its way to the Barwon River.

In March 2021, using supplementary entitlements, water for the environment was protected through Carole Creek to further improve the health of the stream.

## Flooding from recent rain

In late March, the Gwydir received significant inflows from widespread rainfall. This led to major flooding across much of the Lower Gwydir Floodplain. This had a significant impact on communities across the valley. During this period, Moree received 150mm in a single 24-hour period, with flows peaking at 10.43 metres on the Mehi River on 25 March 2021. Although supplementary water was available, environmental water managers chose not to participate to minimise further flooding impacts to communities.

***The CEWO also acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the Gwydir catchment and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to their elders both past and present.***

***Managing water for the environment is a collaborative effort, working in partnership with communities, Traditional Owners, scientists, and government agencies - these contributions are gratefully acknowledged.***



Mehi River at Moree gauge 24 March 2021 - CEWO

## Out and about with the Birdo's

Waterbird surveys were conducted in February in collaboration with NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE), NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and the University of New England. These surveys recorded around 1,000 magpie geese in the Gingham watercourse gathering in flocks of 80 to 100, with some establishing nests in the area.

Following the floods, NPWS and DPIE EES staff observed several large (100+) groups of straw-necked and white ibis, great egrets, intermediate and little egrets, mixed flocks of ducks and lots of cootes and grebes.

## Local Engagement Officers

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For further information on environmental water in the Gwydir:

<https://www.environment.gov.au/water/cewo/catchment/gwydir>

<https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/environmental-water-hub/management>