



Australian Government

Commonwealth Environmental Water Office

Northern Fish Flow

The Barwon River in the northern Murray-Darling Basin has dried back to poor quality waterholes, threatening our native fish.

To help fish survive the drought the Commonwealth Environmental Water Office and NSW Office of Environment and Heritage are releasing water for the environment from April to June 2019.

The flow will top up waterholes along the Dumaresq, Macintyre, Gwydir, Mehi and Barwon rivers.

Up to 7.4 GL from Glenlyon Dam will flow through to Collarenebri, joining up to 28.6 GL from Copeton Dam at the junction of the Barwon and Mehi rivers. It is hoped the flow may make it to Brewarrina.

The flow will be protected by NSW and Queensland governments and supported by on-the-ground compliance checks.

As well as helping to keep the rivers healthy, this flow will support important Aboriginal environmental, cultural and spiritual values in the river systems.

With welcomed support from irrigator groups, the flow will also support local river communities, contributing to town water and basic stock and domestic water supplies, as well as giving wellbeing and recreation benefits.

Key facts

Healthy rivers are important for cultural and community wellbeing, agriculture and the survival of our native plants and animals.



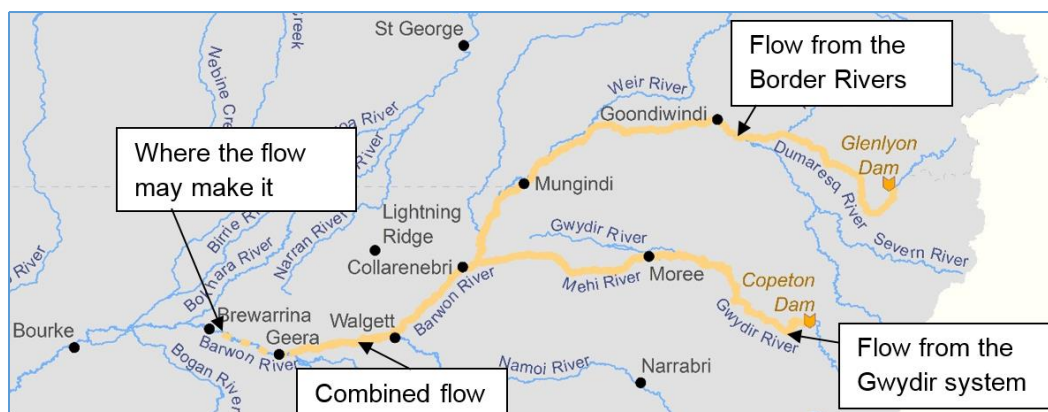
27-36 GL of water for the environment is being released for northern rivers from April – June 2019.



Water is vital for Aboriginal culture, spirituality, identity and wellbeing. The flow will help native fish survive the drought, including species important to the Kamilaroi/Gomeroi nation including *Guduu* (Murray Cod), *Dhagaay* (Golden Perch) and *Gaygay* (Freshwater Catfish).



The flow was planned with support from NSW and Queensland government agencies, local councils, irrigators and landholders along the rivers.



Why is water for the environment being released?

Water for the environment helps native plants, animals and fish survive drought.

While water storages in the north are extremely low, the release of flows for the environment now are important to help native fish and animals hang on until the region receives drought-breaking rain.

When will the flow start?

Water was released from Glenlyon Dam on 24 April and Copeton Dam on 2 May 2019.

The flow along the Mehi River follows a smaller maintenance flow, re-starting the Mehi River. The Border Rivers flow follows small natural flows from rainfall in late March to early April.

Where will the flow go?

Over 1000 km of river habitat will benefit from the flow.

The flow will move from Glenlyon Dam down the Macintyre River and from Copeton Dam down the Mehi River into the Barwon River.

The flows will meet at Collarenebri in mid-May.

Why release water now?

The time is right. Summer rains in the northern Basin did not arrive meaning fish are now stuck in small, shallow, stagnant waterholes.

These fish are at risk with isolated fish deaths already recorded in the region. Water from the flow will top up the waterholes, providing fresh water and food for fish.

Some recent rains will help the flow, and cooler temperatures reduce the risk of losses and spread of blue-green algae.



*Devils Pool,
Barwon River*

How will the flow be monitored?

The flow will be monitored using the gauge network and MDBA satellite tracking.

The flow is protected. More information on protection requirements in NSW can be found at the [NSW Department of Industry](#) website.

Compliance officers from the NSW Natural Resources Access Regulator will monitor the flow, along with ground inspections.

Local water officers will visit sites along the rivers and scientists will undertake water quality testing and fish monitoring.

Regular updates on the flow can be found on the [CEWO's](#) website.

Want to know more?

Community information sessions about the flow are being held in river communities from 14 May 2019.

See the [CEWO's](#) website for details or to find out more:

- **Email** ewater@environment.gov.au
- **Call** our Local Engagement Officer Jason Wilson on 0418 210 389
- **Follow** us on Twitter: @thecewh

About the Commonwealth Environmental Water Office

We manage water recovered under the Basin Plan for the environment. We work hard to keep our rivers and wetlands healthy through wet and dry times.

Our water supports the environment across the Basin and benefits communities from farmers, to riverine towns, recreational fishers and Aboriginal people.



Gudu (Murray Cod)