

Cooma Region Waterwatch Update

August/September 2011



Our catchments in August– What does your data say?

During August, rainfall across the catchment resulted in a considerable rise in river levels, as can be seen in the graphs on the right below. Anecdotal rainfall reports described rainfall of up to 50mm in the eastern parts of the Upper Murrumbidgee catchment as well as around the Eucumbene area.

Rising river levels corresponded with a rise in turbidity levels which reached a turbidity of 60 NTU in the Murrumbidgee River (downstream of Bredbo) during peak flows. Our data shows that this correlated with elevated turbidity levels in the Numeralla River, and to a lesser extent, the Murrumbidgee River (upstream of the Numeralla River) and the Bredbo River.

All other measured water quality parameters were within acceptable levels. Dissolved oxygen remained high, correlating with water temperatures remaining below approximately 10°C. Phosphates and nitrates/nitrites were zero in most streams.

Monaro High School's year 12 Earth Science class surveyed macro-invertebrates in the Cooma Creek and Badja River during August on their last science field trip before the HSC (good luck in your HSC guys)! The class found plenty of macros in both streams (and some wonderful Caddis fly larvae in the Badja!). This means our macros are 'on the move' for spring and so it's time to think about doing macro-invertebrate assessments at Waterwatch sites in the next couple of months.

Weather (as at Cooma Visitor's Center) for August (Source: www.bom.gov.au)

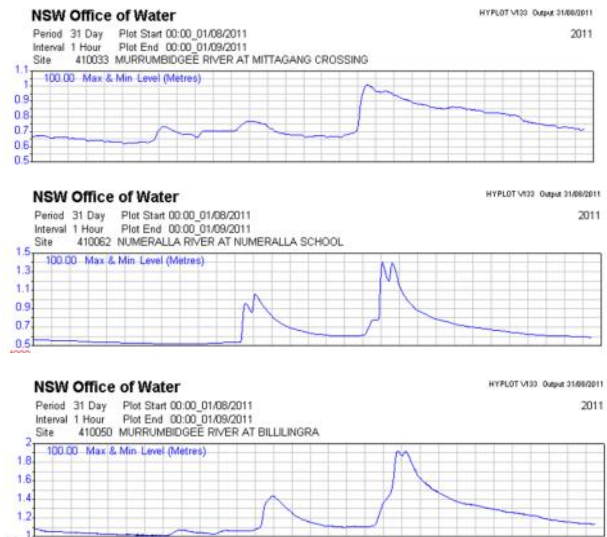
Total monthly rainfall: 36.8 ml

Long term av. monthly rainfall: 27.5 ml

Maximum temperature for August: 21.0 °C

Minimum temperature for August: -6.5 °C

River heights (Source: www.realtimedata.water.nsw.gov.au)



Water quality parameters tested by Waterwatchers in our local waterways

Turbidity– measure of 'murkiness', can be an indicator of sediment pollution. Levels above 10 NTU can affect aquatic life if occurring on a regular basis, low levels are desirable.

pH– measure of acidity. Levels between 6-8 pH units are suited for aquatic life. Levels near 7 pH units are desirable.

EC– electrical conductivity is a measure of dissolved solids or 'salts'. EC levels greater than 1000µS/cm are excessive and warrant attention. Lower EC levels are desirable.

DO– dissolved oxygen. Levels below 4mg/L cause stress to/death of aquatic life. Higher levels are desirable.

Nitrates/nitrites/phosphates– these refer to bio-available nutrient levels which will influence algal growth and productivity in stream. Excessive nutrient levels are not desirable.

Our Waterwatch data is generated by our team of dedicated volunteers. Without them this program would not be possible! Thanks to all volunteers that have contributed data this month.

If you would like to find out more or become involved in the Waterwatch program please contact your local Waterwatch Coordinator.



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Environmental Flow for the Murrumbidgee River in October– Landholders wanted to mark river heights and photograph flows

The Murrumbidgee River will be receiving an environmental flow in October of 1500ML/day, released from Tantangra Dam between the 14th and the 21st October, as advised by the Snowy Scientific Committee. The size of the October release has been planned to encourage cleaning of silt from cobble runs in preparation for Macquarie perch breeding later in the year, when another, smaller flow release has been scheduled to occur (350ML/day) between the 27th Nov to 15th Dec. These flows are expected to have the most beneficial impact on the Murrumbidgee River between Tantangra Reservoir and Cooma, a stretch which has been historically identified for its high conservation status Macquarie perch habitat.

In order to monitor the likely effect of the release, the maximum height of river levels achieved by the release and photographs are required. Cooma Waterwatch would therefore like to make contact with any landholders, especially along the Murrumbidgee River upstream of Cooma, that have safe and easy access to the river and could assist by placing a stake at high water mark during the release as well as taking photographs of the flows.

If you would like to take part in monitoring the environmental flows, please contact Antia on 0429778633 or antia@coomawaterwatch.org.au

Come and see what Waterwatch is about at our QA/QC & macros training day

Cooma Region Waterwatch will be holding its next QA/QC and macro-invertebrate sampling training day on Saturday, the 24th of September at Norris Park, Cooma starting at 10am. All welcome, including those wanting to find out more about Waterwatch in our area. The macro-invertebrate training is scheduled for 10-11am, followed by the QA/QC at 11am and a free BBQ.

Please contact Antia if you would like to attend the QA/QC and or macro invertebrate assessment training.

Coming Up.....

- ◆ **Next Waterwatch sampling weekend**– 17/18th September
- ◆ **Rapid Assessment of Riparian Condition (RARC) Training**– 17th September, 10:30-2:30pm, Coppins Crossing. Contact Tanya Noakes, 02 6207 2246 or Tanya.rucoskynoakes@act.gov.au
- ◆ **Cooma Region QA/QC and Macro-invertebrate Training**– 24th September, 10am, Norris Park, Cooma. RSVP Antia on 0429778633 or antia@coomawaterwatch.org.au
- ◆ **World Rivers Day**– 25th September
- ◆ **Frogwatch Seminar & Field Trip**– 26th September, 6-8:30pm & 8:45-10:30pm, Scottsdale Reserve, Bredbo. Please RSVP Anke Maria Hoefer on 02 6278 3309 (Please book as places are limited)
- ◆ **Murrumbidgee CMA Community Partnerships Program (funding opportunity)**- Closes 30 September, for more info go to http://www.murrumbidgee.cma.nsw.gov.au/getinvolved/incentive_program/cp.aspx
- ◆ **Riparian Week**– 3-9th October
- ◆ **Murrumbidgee Environmental Flow Release**– 14th-21st October
- ◆ **Water Week**– 16th-22nd October
- ◆ **African Lovegrass Field Day**- 22nd October (9:30-3pm), Scottsdale Reserve, Bredbo. Please RSVP Sally McIntoch– 02 6205 2913 or actlandcare@act.gov.au
- ◆ **Indigenous Resource Management with Rod Mason (2 workshops)**- 20-21st October & 22-23rd October (9-4pm each day), Garuwanga, Nimmitabel. Contact Geoff at geoff.robertson@fog.org.au or on 02 6241 4065
- ◆ **Native Fish Awareness Week**– 6-12th November

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