

Cooma Region Waterwatch Update

NOV/DEC 2011



A big thanks to our volunteers and Season's Greetings to all!

Cooma Waterwatch gives a big thanks to all it's volunteers for their hard work and effort during 2011. Without you the Waterwatch program would not be possible. During 2011 we welcomed ten new volunteers to the program in our region, which is great.

Also thanks to all our friends for their support of the program and a merry Christmas and happy New Year to all.

Our catchments in Nov/Dec

The October to December period saw two environmental flow releases for the Murrumbidgee River. The first, larger event released about 1,500 ML/day in late Oct/early Nov, followed by a second, smaller flush of about 350ML/day in December. This has been the biggest environmental flows the upper Murrumbidgee River has ever seen since Tantangara Dam was established. The flow event was designed to encourage river health, especially the breeding of the Macquarie perch.

Water quality of first flow releases was very low in turbidity and EC with a near neutral pH. The Dec releases came at the same time as some heavy rain in the catchment.....(cont overpage).

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

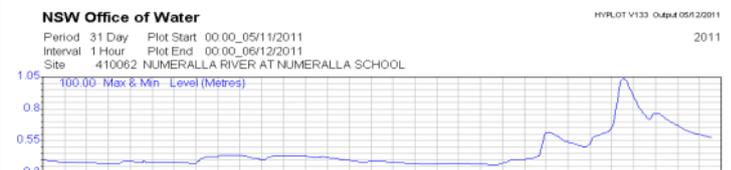
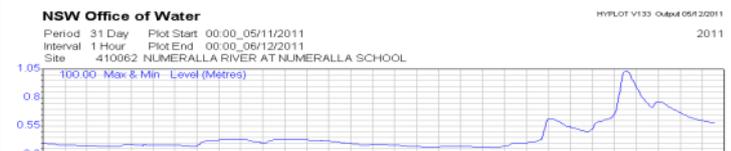
Total monthly rainfall- 84.1ml

Long term av. monthly rainfall- 66.1ml.

Maximum temperature- 30.8°C.

Minimum temperature- 2.0°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 1000uS/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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Our catchment in Nov/Dec cont...

which resulted in the river coming up and exceeding the level of the previous flows for a brief period. This same run-off also contributed to a rise in turbidity levels during the same period.

Similarly, localised, heavy rainstorms have resulted in turbidity levels rising in a number of other creeks and rivers in our region as a result of run-off that occurred, including the Murrumbidgee River and Numeralla Rivers. All other parameters tested during the previous months were within acceptable limits or remained unchanged.

Waterwatch in 2012

2012 promises to be a strong year for Cooma Waterwatch and the focus will be on improving our website and data presentation. Cooma Waterwatch will also publish its first catchment report early in 2012, reporting on water quality data that has been collected so far. We will keep you posted.

There are a number of sites for which we need Waterwatchers, including on the Cooma Creek, Numeralla River and the Bredbo River. If you would like to get involved please contact us.

Another focus for 2012 will be to continue to support our local schools by offering Waterwatch/bugwatch activities to provide hands on learning within the school syllabus. This includes linking in with other NRM agencies and professionals to provide quality learning experiences at all levels (K-12), whether this involves regular sampling activities or more structured workshop sessions.

Great response to platypus seminar

Did you know that a platypus has a home range of up to 7km and shares a number of different burrows with a number of other platypus throughout its range? These facts and more were discussed at the recent Platypus count seminar and info night hosted by Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch in Cooma in November. This seminar was held to raise the profile of the platypus and to encourage people to become involved in monitoring them locally (for five minutes once a week), so that more information can be gathered about their status in the region.

Dr Melody Serena, who gave the talk, helps run the Australian Platypus Conservancy, explained that even records of one-off sightings are of value. To find out more about the platypus and the Platypus count program go to www.platypus.asn.au or contact Antia at Cooma Region Waterwatch.

Coming Up.....

- ◆ **Next Waterwatch sampling weekends**– 17/18th Dec, 14/15th Jan
- ◆ **Numeralla Folk Festival** (24th-26th Jan) & **Sustainability Fair** (Sun, 26th Jan, 9am-1pm) Numeralla Hall
- ◆ **Sustainable Horse Management on Small Properties** with Jane Meyers and Allison Elvin- 29th Jan (9am -3:30pm), Michelago. Cost \$10, RSVP Debbie Saunders– 0422 881 685
- ◆ **Biodiversity Fund**- (grants for carbon storage and biodiversity enhancement), closes 31 Jan 2012. Go to www.environment.gov.au/cleanenergyfuture
- ◆ **Environmental Restoration and Rehabilitation Grant**- (grants program for large projects \$200-250k), closes 31st Jan 2012. Go to www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/BushRegeneration.htm
- ◆ **Murrumbidgee CMA Pest Impact Survey**- online survey for landholders to help the MCMA develop their pest management plan in early 2012. Go to www.murrumbidgee.cma.nsw.gov.au for more details.

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