

Cooma Region Waterwatch Update

August 2014



Our catchments in July– what does our data show?

Waterwatch data for July is showing low to medium river heights were maintained across all our catchments. Turbidity has been very low (<10NTU) at most sites monitored. This is to be expected, as there have been no heavy rainfall events, which have resulted in stable river levels and reduced risk of erosive events. The spike in river levels that can be observed on the Numeralla River (see heights graph) is due to a snowfall event higher in the catchment.

Generally, Dissolved oxygen, pH and EC levels were in keeping with levels usually recorded at most sites across the catchment. In the upper Murrumbidgee River, lower than usual EC levels were recorded due to a small release of environmental flows. (For the 2014-2015 Tantangara Dam release schedule go to www.snowyhydro.com.au)

Nutrients were low across all sites, including in the Cooma Creek, where phosphate levels can be elevated at times. New algal growth has been noted at some sites. No blooms were recorded.

Common eastern froglets are starting to be noted at some sites, especially on warmer days. Help us to record frog activity by joining in the Frogwatch census in October this year. A training seminar will be held at Scottsdale Reserve, near Bredbo on September 9. During August, the platypus pre-breeding season occurs. Platypus should be easier to spot as they start feeding more and males seek to impress platypus females. Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch will be conducting platypus surveys in a number of places across the catchment in late Aug. If you would like to take part please contact Antia at Cooma Waterwatch.

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

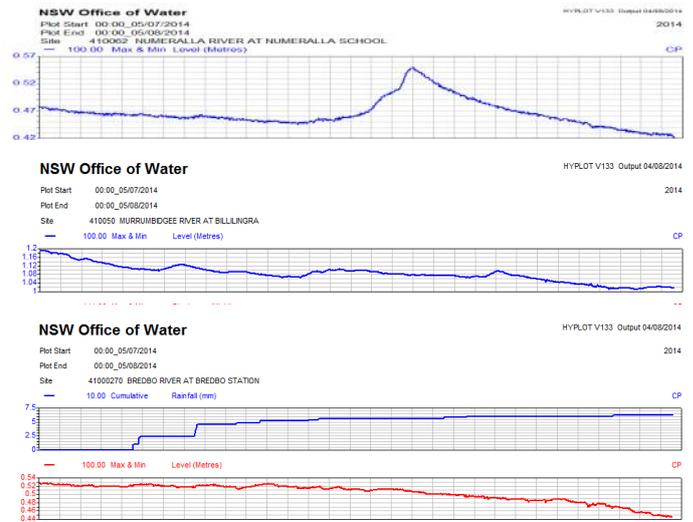
Total monthly rainfall: = 6.8 ml

Long term av. monthly rainfall: 28.2ml

Maximum temperature for July: -6.2 °C

Minimum temperature for July: 17°C

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



Water quality parameters tested by Waterwatch

The waterways of the upper Murrumbidgee catchment are known as upland streams. A healthy upland stream can be described by the water quality limits as below:

Turbidity– measure of ‘murkiness’, can be an indicator of sediment pollution. Healthy upland streams usually have very low turbidity levels. Levels above 10 NTU reoccurring regularly can affect aquatic life.

pH- measure of acidity/alkalinity. Levels between 6-8 pH units are suited for aquatic life.

EC (electrical conductivity)- measure of dissolved ‘salts’. EC levels greater than 1000uS/cm can affect aquatic life.

DO (dissolved oxygen)- necessary to support aquatic life, low levels can be an indicator of organic matter pollution. Levels below 4mg/L may stress fish/cause fish kills.

Nitrates– bio-available nutrient which influences algal growth in stream. Low levels (<50mg/L) are desirable.

Phosphates– bio-available nutrient which influences algal growth in stream. Levels above 0.05mg/L can stimulate nuisance algal blooms.

[View our Waterwatch data online](#)

Waterwatch data for all sites in the Upper Murrumbidgee catchment can be found at:

www.root.ala.org.au/bdrs-core/umww/home.htm

Latest news!

Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch database is now online

The Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch database is now fully operational and online. Thanks to the database, our data can now be viewed by anyone at any time. This data becomes available soon after our volunteers submit it online. To access the database go to www.root.ala.org.au/bdrs-core/umww/home.htm

Please let us know if you experience any issues/need help with the database by contacting your local waterwatch coordinator. Thanks to all our volunteers for patiently awaiting and now using the database.

ACTEW continue to fund Cooma Region Waterwatch for 2014-2015

The Cooma Waterwatch program has been operating since 2010, providing water quality monitoring and community support to put in place actions which increase river health, thanks to funding support from ACTEW. We are pleased to announce that ACTEW will continue to fund the program in 2014-2015 as part of its commitment to support the catchment community to implement source water protection objectives.

Source water refers to any water that has the potential to become part of the drinking water supply. Our rivers and creeks feed into the upper Murrumbidgee River, which is part of the ACT's drinking water supply network. Source water protection objectives recognise that the cleaner water is when it gets to water supply treatment plants the lower the likelihood of anything harmful making it through into the water supply.

Source water protection doesn't only benefit downstream users, but also greatly benefits our own catchment community by ensuring clean water for all catchment users, protecting and enhancing river health, reducing erosion, making sure our waterways contain high quality habitat for wildlife, reducing the risk of water borne disease and providing opportunities for information sharing and collaboration between stakeholders. By monitoring water quality in our rivers we can see how water quality is affected, as well as determine what things we can do to protect and increase water quality and catchment health.

A BIG THANKYOU!!

To our team of dedicated volunteers, who collect water quality data every month. Without them this program would not be possible!

If you would like to find out more about Waterwatch or adopt a site please contact us.

We have moved!

Cooma Waterwatch has moved and our new office is at the Cooma SE Local Land Services offices on Soho St, Cooma. Many thanks to SE Local Land Services for supporting the program by providing us with an office space. Please drop in to say hello if you are in the area.

Coming Up.....

- ◆ 16/17th August- Next Waterwatch sampling weekend
- ◆ 17th August- Bumbalong weeds/river landholder field day, Bumbalong, all welcome
- ◆ 25th-31st August- Platypus surveys, upper Murrumbidgee River (exact dates TBA)
- ◆ 27th August- ECO FOCUS Seminar, CSIRO, Crace ACT
- ◆ 6/7th September- UMDR adventurous volunteer willow control canoe days (single day trips)
- ◆ 9th September- Frogwatch seminar, Scottsdale Reserve via Bredbo, 6-8:30pm
- ◆ 15-18th September- River Symposium, Canberra
- ◆ 20/21st September- UMDR adventurous volunteer willow control canoe days (single day trips)
- ◆ 18-19th October- UMDR adventurous volunteer willow control canoe days (single day trips)
- ◆ 19-24th October- Waterweek, look out for local events and information
- ◆ October- Cooma Waterwatch 'bugblitz' program (exact survey dates TBA)
- ◆ November- Cooma waterwatch 'RARC blitz' program (exact survey dates TBA)

For more details go to www.upperbidgeereach.org.au and look under 'Upcoming events'

CONTACT US!

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