



Upper Murrumbidgee Demonstration Reach

Improving fish habitat and river health in the Upper Murrumbidgee

2015– It's a wrap

Seasons greetings and a happy new year to all our friends and supporters. This is a time when we take a break, or if you manage a property it can be a very busy time of year.

Whether you are relaxing or working hard- we wish you a safe and happy transition to 2016.

This time of year is also a great time for reflection, to celebrate our achievements, recharge and look to take forward the positives we have gained this year into 2016. Looking back, 2015 has been a huge year for the UMDR and its partners.

Just a few highlights of this year included:

- Gaining funding from the NSW Environmental Trust and NSW Department of Primary Industry-Lands to further our Rivers of Carbon Upper Bidgee project which means \$360,000 of multi-partner investment in rehabilitation works along the Murrumbidgee at Bumbalong.
- Completing our first plantings at Bumbalong in Nov and Dec, assisted by a keen group of Bush Heritage Australia volunteers.
- Tagging 31 carp and 4 native fish as part of the UMDR/ BHA carp movement study. Our first lot of data is now being downloaded from our fish monitoring stations.
- The Cooma Monaro Carp Comp– which recorded carp catch data in the UMDR angler diaries to help pinpoint carp hotspots.
- Presenting our River of Carbon Upper Bidgee project at the NSW Weeds Conference.
- And there was so much more.....

On all levels, we pass on a BIG thankyou to everyone that supported the UMDR in 2015. We look forward to working with you in 2016.



Carp being tagged with an electronic tag by NSW Fisheries staff. The tagged fish will provide important movement data which is currently unknown for the upper Murrumbidgee River.

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For more information about the UMDR, our projects and partners go to:

www.upperbidgeereach.org.au

Carp loves 20°C campaign helping to pin point carp breeding spots

Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch developed the Carp loves 20°C campaign this year to encourage people to log carp sightings on the Feral Fish Scan website as water temperatures rise during spring. Warmer water temperatures are the trigger for carp spawning and so this will give us an important insight into carp breeding in our catchment, which is largely unknown. Sightings logged before Dec 7, 2015 went into a draw to win a tablet. The winner and campaign results will be announced shortly.

Reports of carp sightings at any time of year are also useful and we encourage people to keep logging sightings post Dec 7 by going to www.feralfishscan.org.au/uppermurrumbidgee. For more information about the Carp loves 20°C campaign go to www.act.waterwatch.org.au. Feral Fish Scan is an initiative of the Invasive Animals CRC.



Feral Fish Scan is picking up unusual behaviour such as these 'Carp circles'. But—any sightings, even single carp, are also useful!

Tracking carp movement in the upper 'bidgee

31 carp were tagged in autumn 2015 and are being tracked along the upper Murrumbidgee River (via fish monitoring stations deployed along a 90km long array). Our first lot of data is in the process of being 'downloaded' and will give us an insight into where carp move in our catchment, which is also not clearly known. This project has been made possible by linking in with Macquarie perch research currently being conducted at the same time.

This study is a collaborative UMDR project involving Prue McGuffie's PhD Macquarie perch research project, Bush Heritage Australia, NSW Fisheries, the Capital Region Fishing Alliance and the NSW Recreational Fishing Trust. For more info go to www.upperbidgeereach.org.au

Casuarina Sands Fishway now functional for low flow

An assessment of the Casuarina Sands Fishway by Dr Martin Melan-Cooper and ACT Government's Conservation, Planning and Research staff in March 2015 showed how the slots of the fishway need to be amended to enable fish passage during low flows. This is good news for our native species. The assessment was funded by the Murray Darling Basin Authority, under the UMDR. The ACT Government will fabricate and install the new steel slots to make the fishway operational once again.



Volunteers setting the carp net at Scottsdale Reserve.

Carp management (trapping) trials

Carp management (trapping) trials have been going on at Bush Heritage Australia's Scottsdale Reserve and Jerrabomberra Wetlands this spring and summer, with mixed results! While catches were not as expected and will require review, the program has shown that teams of volunteers have reliably and ably set, monitored and retrieved the carp nets we have been using.....and we maintain a clean record of zero bi-catch. The program is also developing a thermal attractant to trial in 2016. Thankyou to all our volunteers which have diligently contributed to this program!

Cooma Monaro Carp Comp 2015

The three local fishing clubs of the Cooma region teamed up to run a month long regional carp comp in the upper Murrumbidgee, south of the ACT. The comp was supported by the UMDR, Capital Region Fishing Alliance, NSW Recreational Fishing Trust and a heap of local sponsors. 345 carp were caught, the largest fish caught being 74cm. The comp aimed to remove fish prior to breeding, see who could catch the largest fish and to pin point carp hotspots via the UMDR carp angler diary program. Thanks to all who took part and supported this comp. For a full report on the results of the comp, all our winners and a full list of sponsors go to www.upperbidgeereach.org.au.



Matt Fabbro holding the winning 74cm carp, caught in the Cooma Creek.

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Further investment in Rivers of Carbon Upper Bidgee project will strengthen restoration outcomes

This year, our Rivers of Carbon Upper Bidgee (RoCUB) project was successful in gaining funding from the NSW Environmental Trust and NSW DPI- Lands allowing us to extend and build on existing project works. This funding means that the RoCUB project is now delivering \$360,000 of multi partner investment in connectivity and riparian restoration works along the Murrumbidgee River in the Bumbalong area, where several threatened native fish are found.

The RoCUB project is being carried out under the auspices of the Australian River Restoration Centre (ARRC) in partnership with the Upper Murrumbidgee Demonstration Reach (UMDR). South East LLS is also a major project partner. This project is just one of a number of Rivers of Carbon projects across our region. For more information go to www.riversofcarbon.org.au

RoCUB project progress is updated via the RipRoc report

For the latest update on where we are up to with our RoCUB project visit www.riproc.com.au to see the ARRC's new catchy, web-based, share-point for keeping you up to date on all the Rivers of Carbon projects including RoCUB. Certainly worth a look!

During 2015, progress on the RoCUB project included the control of willows of the top 4km of the project area, the completion of the erosion and sediment assessment by Brad Davies (NSW Soils Conservation Service), holding our first planting days and preparation for large scale plantings in autumn (including a community planting day hosted by Greening Australia). First up on the cards for early 2016 includes blackberry control and removal of willows in priority areas.



Left: heavy infestations of weeds will be a controlled and replanted by RoCUB.

Right: in high quality areas of the 'bidgee, the control of willows is the only intervention required to protect fish habitat and riparian health.



Cooma Region Waterwatch will track project progress

Cooma Waterwatch has established three macro invertebrate (waterbug) survey sites on the Murrumbidgee River at Bumbalong. These sites will monitor river health response resulting from the RoCUB's riparian rehabilitation and re-vegetation works. This is an example of how Waterwatch data is being used to track river health and how catchment organisations can benefit from use of such data for their own projects.



The Bumbalong Valley has been historically cleared, disconnecting the high quality habitats of the Bredbo and Colinton Gorges. This project will address connectivity and instream fish passage.

RoCUB project outcomes

By June 2017, the RoCUB project will have:

- * Treated crack and seeding willows throughout the Bumbalong Valley (6km), connecting and holding investment of previous works
- * Partnered with at least 9 landholders to control riparian blackberry including follow up agreements.
- * Rehabilitated riparian vegetation along the 6km of river corridor to provide riparian connectivity and provide future competition for weeds
- * Held community field days showcasing the works
- * Completed a sediment and erosion assessment of the project reach including for fish passage
- * Carried out one erosion or instream sediment stabilisation works

Seeding willows explain rapid spread at Bumbalong

The RoCUB project has benefitted greatly from expert advice from South East LLS staff this year, helping us to identify willows and plan strategic control. A willow species survey in spring 2015 has identified a high proportion of seeding willows in the project area, which explains the rapid spread of willows at Bumbalong, including reinvading areas previously treated.

Addressing the spread of willows is a priority for the RoCUB project, as willows are rapidly colonising the river channel, causing sediment to build up, affecting instream health and reducing water flow. To date, the RoCUB project has been able to carry out follow up control on areas previously treated for willows, hence ensuring the value of past willow project investments at Bumbalong are maintained.

For more information about the UMDR, our projects and partners go to:

www.upperbidgeereach.org.au

Go fishing and keep a diary!

For those that like to fish— you can contribute the efforts of your favourite past time to helping us get a better picture about fish (and especially carp) in our area via our UMDR Angler Diary program. We are especially interested in carp fishing so we can gather information about carp hotspots which will help to better control carp in the future.

Anglers receive a free, sturdy diary, which remains your to keep (good for future bragging) – we just ask for it to be scanned every now and then. Filling in the diaries is easy, simply record where you fish, time spent fishing and what you catch. All diary info remains confidential and will be used for project purposes only. Please contact Antia on 0429778633 for more details.



Log carp sightings on Feral Fish Scan

If you don't fish or don't want to keep a diary, log your carp sightings on the Feral Fish Scan website or download the free app.

Feral Fish Scan is a community site where we are collecting carp data from across the region. This data is available for all to view. Have a look at the site—

www.feralfishscan.org.au/uppermurrumbidgee



But.....please RELEASE tagged carp!

We have tagged 31 carp in the upper Murrumbidgee River (upstream of the ACT) so their movements can be tracked along the river system. Tagged carp have a **long yellow tag** near their dorsal fin (shown within the circle below). These fish will lead us to carp breeding and aggregation sites, which are currently unknown for our catchment and will allow us to better target carp control in the future.

If caught, please RELEASE tagged fish and REPORT to the number on the tag for a REWARD. Take photos if possible. If deceased, please keep the fish.

Join our volunteer program in 2016

Enjoy the Murrumbidgee while helping to protect it. We have two programs for which we are seeking help-

Adventurous volunteers are needed to help control willows in remoter parts of the 'bidgee. Crews will paddle in and carry out hand control of woody weeds. All gear is provided, paddle experience is essential.

Riparian rehabilitators are needed to help plant native vegetation in autumn and spring 2016. You will help restore the riverside vegetation of the 'bidgee to provide habitat and provide competition for weeds via taking part in planting days.

Please contact us (see p5) to register your interest or for more details.



Join a fishing Club

The UMDR has been greatly supported by our local fishing clubs this year via taking part in our angler diary program, holding collaborative carp outs, making their fishing results available for entry into Feral Fish Scan and by supporting/promoting our work.

For a list of local clubs, contacts details and their upcoming events go to:

www.upperbidgeereach.org.au

Why not become a member or just go along to one of their fishing events?

For more information about the UMDR, our projects and partners go to:

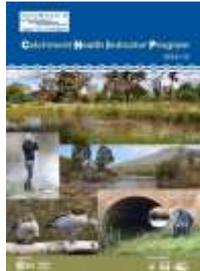
www.upperbidgeereach.org.au

If you are beating the heat by staying inside and hitting the web....check out these links.

New Look CHIP Report for the Upper Murrumbidgee catchment

Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch has published its 2014-2015 Catchment Health Indicator Program Report to include more Waterwatch data than ever before and presented in a redesigned format.

The entire Upper Murrumbidgee catchment is covered, divided into 'reaches', each of which is assigned a health rating based on the Waterwatch data. Very useful to track catchment trends-
www.act.waterwatch.org.au/chip



Your facebook fix....like what we are doing!

If you like what we (and our partners) do....you may find these facebook sites of interest. These pages will keep you up to date on what UMDR and our partners are doing. To find these, simply go to facebook and search the names below:

- * Upper Murrumbidgee Demonstration Reach
- * Bush Heritage Australia
- * Australian River Restoration Centre
- * Macquarie perch- life on the edge of extinction
- * Capital Region Fishing Alliance
- * ACT Landcare and Waterwatch
- * NSW Fisheries

Contact us

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Follow us on facebook by going to our 'Upper Murrumbidgee Demonstration Reach' page

RoC Stream Condition CHECKLIST

On the Australian River Restoration Centre's Rivers of Carbon web site you will find great resources, such as the recently released Stream Condition Checklist- a tool to assess the health of the waterway that you might be interested in looking after.

The RoC website is at:
www.riversofcarbon.org.au



Feeling Fishy? Cast a look at Finterest

For all things fishy and a lot about what we are doing to help our native freshwater fish visit the FINTEREST website-
www.finterest.com.au

