

Community update on response to fish deaths in Menindee and Lower Darling-Baaka

Dissolved oxygen levels in the Menindee weir pool

The dissolved oxygen levels in the Menindee weir pool remain at good levels for fish health. Our series of in-river buoys installed between Lake Pamamaroo and Weir 32 provide 'real-time' enhanced water quality data and show that the dissolved oxygen is well within the healthy range.

NSW Government and Commonwealth agencies are continuing to carefully monitor the situation and adjusting releases as required. Staff from the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water as well as the Department of Primary Industries Fisheries have been conducting checks on the river and gathering samples including testing the DO levels near the micro bubbler pilot site.

NSW DPI Fisheries investigating cause of fish deaths in the Darling-Baaka at Menindee

DPI Fisheries has continued to receive reports of small numbers of dead fish within the Weir 32 weir pool. Initial laboratory assessments have confirmed the presence of *Lernaea sp.* (anchor worm) in significant numbers on the samples collected on the 11th February, however some of the recent mortalities have exhibited little or no evidence of lernaea infestations.

Water quality parameters such as dissolved oxygen and temperature remain within the typical thresholds for native fish. As a result, additional water quality analysis will be carried over the next week to determine if there may be other factors impacting fish health. Observations from the community and field staff suggest some fish are continuing to struggle at the surface. Investigations into the cause are ongoing.

Eating infected fish

Lernaea sp. is not known to affect human health. Recreational fishers are advised to always cook recreational seafood thoroughly. Never eat it raw. Severely infected fish should not be eaten.

Reducing the spread of anchor worm

To help reduce the spread of anchor worms, fishers are asked to make cleaning part of their routine by washing and drying vessels (including niche areas such as live wells, water inlets/outlets and anchor wells), trailers and fishing gear between use and particularly before moving to new waterways.

Red alert for Blue green algae in Lakes Wetherell and Tandure remain in place

WaterNSW has issued a red alert advisory for high levels of blue-green algae for the Menindee Lakes at Lakes Wetherell and Tandure. This red alert warning applies only to untreated water at the identified locations and will remain in place until monitoring and test results confirm that the risk is sufficiently diminished.

People should avoid consuming untreated water from this waterbody, making direct physical contact with the water and prevent pets and livestock from drinking this water.

Potentially toxic blue-green algae may cause gastroenteritis if consumed, while contact can cause skin and eye irritations. Consumption of water containing algal toxins may cause liver damage and other health problems. Boiling the water does not remove algal toxins.

People who suspect they have been affected by blue-green algae should seek medical advice.

Any fish caught should be cleaned and washed thoroughly in uncontaminated water; the internal organs should not be eaten. Avoiding fishing during a bloom is the best way to minimise risk.

Blue-green algae is naturally occurring and can reproduce quickly in still or slow-flowing water when there is abundant sunlight and sufficient nutrients.

Updates and information about blue-green algae blooms and red level warning areas can be obtained by visiting – www.waternsw.com.au/algae or [Water Insights](#)

Monitoring for pesticides and other chemicals

The results for samples collected for testing last week will be available next week.

Emergency Operations Centre notified and ready to act

The Emergency Operations Centre led by NSW Police have been notified and they are on standby should a mass fish death event occur. A contractor has been stood up to be available to remove dead fish from the river as soon as possible if a mass fish death event were to occur in the reach.

Additional information

- To notify the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water of potential blackwater events email: waterqualitydata@dpie.nsw.gov.au
- To view community updates issued, visit [Community updates and frequently asked questions | Water \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

- To report dead fish, fish struggling or gasping at the water surface, or crayfish leaving the water please call the **NSW DPI Fisheries Phonenumber 1800 043 536** or fill in a fish kill protocol and report form at: <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/habitat/threats/fish-kills-2019-2020/info-sheet>
- Information on recent fish deaths is available at: [Fish kills in NSW](#). When reporting, please include the name of the river/waterbody, location and date of your observation and provide photographs. If possible, please also record what species are affected and an estimate of number of each species observed.
- Further information on blackwater events can be found at the DCCEEW Water website at: [Hypoxic blackwater | Water \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)
- Additional information is also available on the Murray-Darling Basin Authority website at: <https://www.mdba.gov.au/publications/mdba-reports/water-management-101-factsheets>
- Operational updates are available at: [WaterInsights - WaterNSW](#)
- Water quality data collected after the fish deaths at Menindee is available on the Environment Protection Authority web page at: <https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/working-together/community-engagement/updates-on-issues/menindee-fish-kill>