

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

Responding to ongoing fish deaths in the Darling-Baaka at Menindee

DPI Fisheries and other NSW Government staff are in Menindee again this week to undertake further inspections and obtain more samples. These fish deaths are unusual, and the causes are different to what we have observed in the past.

While initial laboratory assessments have confirmed the presence of *Lernaea sp.* (anchor worm), DPI Fisheries are undertaking further tests, as there are likely other factors impacting fish health.

We understand how distressing this ongoing event is for community and we are completing the assessment of possible causes of death as quickly as possible so that we can then determine if there are any actions we can take to respond to the current issues.

Drop-in information session Thursday 22 February, Menindee Community Hall

Representatives from DPI Fisheries and other government departments will be available to discuss the current impacts on fish health in the Darling-Baaka on **Thursday 22 February from 3:30 - 5:30pm** at the Menindee Civic Hall. Feel free to drop in and ask any questions about the fish deaths recently observed in the Darling-Baaka and hear about what measures are being put in place to better understand the current risks to fish in the river.

Eating infected fish

NSW DPI recommends people do not consume or handle fish showing signs of poor health (such as cloudy eyes, ulceration, fish schooling in the shallows or swimming slowly) and to clean, wash and cook thoroughly any fish caught for consumption during this time. Fish that are found already deceased should never be consumed.

Members of the public are encouraged to follow all advice provided by NSW Health in relation to this matter. Read more: <https://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/consumer/special-care-foods/recreational-harvest-of-seafood>

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.

Dissolved oxygen levels in the Menindee weir pool remain at good levels

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.

NSW Government staff in Menindee

The NSW Government has employed a Senior Water Implementation Officer who is based in Menindee. Prissy Stephens lives and works locally and is a key point of contact and coordination across government agencies and the community. It has been invaluable in recent weeks to have Prissy on the ground to respond in real time to fish events by rapidly recording and collecting samples for DPI Fisheries as well as assisting with ongoing monitoring of the water quality.

While the **1800 043 536 Fishers Watch Phonenumber** should be your first call if you observe dead or dying fish, Prissy is available to also take calls on observations of issues arising in the river at Menindee. Prissy can be contacted on **0477 755 975**.

Keeping up to date

Anyone wishing to receive this and other related updates from NSW Government can subscribe by emailing water.enquiries@dpie.nsw.gov.au and mention you would like Menindee updates.

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>