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

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.

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

Small numbers of dead fish within the Weir 32 weir pool have been observed today. The initial laboratory assessments have confirmed the presence of *Lernaea sp.* (anchor worm) in significant numbers on the samples collected on the 11th February.

Given the water quality parameters such as dissolved oxygen and temperature remain within the typical thresholds for native fish, DPI Fisheries are undertaking further tests to determine if there may be other factors impacting fish health.

Water quality monitoring and further analysis of fish samples is continuing to help inform management actions as appropriate, noting options are limited until cause of death is known and any associated risks can be managed.

NSW Government staff are on the water today to undertake further inspections to gain a better understanding of affected numbers, species and any other observations.

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.

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.

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 Phoneline 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