

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

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

Water quality monitoring is showing water temperatures are decreasing and dissolved oxygen levels in the Darling River at Menindee have increased and are remaining above the critical thresholds for fish health. In addition to the release of water from Lake Pamamaroo, the cooler water temperatures have provided an opportunity for dissolved oxygen levels to recover. NSW Government and Commonwealth agencies are continuing to carefully monitor the situation and adjusting releases as required.

Water releases

In response to the improved dissolved oxygen results, the volumes of water being released from lakes Pamamaroo and Menindee were adjusted this week to help preserve the water resource stored in the upper lakes. Discharge from Lake Pamamaroo was decreased from 500 ML/day to 300 ML/day, while Lake Menindee was increased from 50 ML/day to 100 ML/day to maintain a total of 400 ML/day at Weir 32.

Data from the weir pool buoys will continue to be monitored to determine if there is a deterioration of water quality conditions as a result of reduced flows and we can take immediate action.

Fish death summary

In the past week to 11 April 2024 there have been no reports of dead Golden Perch in the Darling River at Menindee. Since the fish deaths started on 10 February 2024, Golden Perch continued to die in small numbers, bringing the total number of fish affected into the low thousands.

Despite detailed investigations and sample analysis, no single factor has been identified as the cause of the fish deaths that began in February 2024. Government agencies are continuing to pursue investigations into the cause, with further water quality, toxicology analysis and sampling of sediments undertaken.

Large numbers of Bony Herring and Carp remain in the reach of Darling River between Main Weir and Menindee Creek (Weir 32 weir pool). There remains a risk of further fish deaths in the Menindee area as fish (particularly Bony Herring) may be in poor condition from previous low oxygen conditions, limited food supply and may be more susceptible at reduced flow rates.

Fish forum in Menindee 29 April – 3 May

NSW DPI Fisheries is hosting a Menindee Fish Forum from Monday 29 April – 3 May 2024 with events locally in Menindee and Pooncarie, with funding from the MDBA towards the Lower Darling-Baaka Recovery Reach program.

Fisheries and other government representatives will be in town to discuss a range of fish related topics for the Lower Darling-Baaka including:

- Update on the Lower Darling-Baaka Recovery Reach project
- Fish and flows: water for the environment and monitoring native fish outcomes
- Fish and flows – Golden Perch and Murray Cod and how they are tracking
- Various informal sessions in the evenings at the local pub to chat about threatened species,
- An electro-fishing demo at the Railway Bridge
- Drop-in sessions at the CWA Hall.

Additional information

- To notify the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water of potential blackwater events email: waterqualitydata@dpi.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/climate-and-river-health/water-quality/fish-deaths>
<https://www.mdba.gov.au/water-management/infrastructure/menindee-lakes>
- 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>