

Community update on response to fish deaths in Menindee

NSW Government agencies including the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE), the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and WaterNSW are currently responding to a fish death event on the Lower Darling-Baaka in Menindee.

It is estimated that thousands of fish, predominantly Carp and Bony Herring have been affected, with a small number of Murray Cod and yabbies also impacted. These deaths are likely related to low dissolved oxygen levels in the water. This appears to be driven by increased biomass in the system as flood waters recede, with high levels of nutrients draining back into the river channel in recent weeks.

We would like to advise that active steps are being taken where possible to alleviate pressure on the system.

While mitigation options in these circumstances are limited, we are working closely with partner agencies to ensure the water releases into the Darling River have the best chance of achieving better dissolved oxygen levels, to reduce the chance of fish kills.

This includes ensuring strategic releases continue from Lake Pamamaroo, which has stronger levels of dissolved oxygen.

We will continue to monitor the situation closely and keep the community informed. You can [read our most recent factsheet update here](#).

Hypoxic blackwater is a naturally occurring phenomenon when large quantities of fish, bacteria, algae and other organic matter deplete the oxygen levels especially throughout the night when photosynthetic generation of dissolved oxygen by water plants and algae ceases.

The current hot weather, and forecast heatwave in the region are also exacerbating the risk of hypoxia, as warmer water holds less oxygen than cold water, and fish have higher oxygen needs at warmer temperatures.

DPI will undertake sampling of the fish population between Weir 32 and Menindee Main Weir once flooding recedes.

To report areas in NSW where fish may be struggling or a fish death event has occurred, call the NSW Fisheries Hotline on 1800 043 536.

More information can be found here:

- <https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/droughts-floods/drought-update/managing-drought-recovery/blackwater>
- https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/habitat/threats/fish-kills/_nocache