



Newscast



An information bulletin for recreational fishers

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Rescue mission saves 600 native fish near Warren weir

More than 600 native fish, including large Murray cod, have been saved during a major upgrade of the Warren Weir near Dubbo in early March. The fish were caught with nets from temporary dams created upstream and downstream of the weir and then returned to the Macquarie River. Without this rescue mission, the fish would have been trapped in an area pumped dry of water. It was a great joint effort involving staff from NSW Fisheries, State Water, Warren Shire Council, the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources, and two local residents.

Lachlan River willow removal

Shoreline rehabilitation works have recently been completed along two tributaries of the Lachlan River by the Mid-Lachlan and Wallamundry Creek Water Users Association. The project will help reduce erosion, sediment build-up and stabilise banks in parts of the Lachlan catchment. Willow trees, noxious weeds that hinder fish passage, have been removed from 13 locations along Bumbuggan Creek and 15 locations along Goobang Creek. The Lachlan River willow removal program received \$10,000 in funding from the Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust via the Habitat Grant Program. In kind support of \$52,950 was provided in by the Mid-Lachlan and Wallamundry Creek Water Users Association. NSW Fisheries is working with the group to rehabilitate the creek system.

Man to be prosecuted over blue groper spearing

A 45-year-old man from Macquarie Fields in Sydney will be prosecuted in relation to the spearing of a blue groper. Police responded to a call from a concerned eyewitness and found the 10 kg fish in the boot of a parked car in Cronulla. The maximum penalty for spearing a blue groper is an \$11,000 fine. The blue groper is the State's emblem fish, and has been protected from spearing since 1969. The only legal method to catch blue groper is by recreational line fishing, and there is a bag limit of two per day. The species can grow to around 15 kg and one metre in length. Adult goppers establish territories on rocky reefs, making them a much-admired fish among divers and snorkellers.

Yellowbelly stocked in Riverina

NSW Fisheries released 15,000 golden perch fry into Lake Wyangan near Griffith, 8,000 golden perch fry each into Finley Dam, Finley, Jerilderie Lake, Jerilderie and Urana town lake, Urana and 4,000 golden perch fry into Yanco lagoon, Yanco on the 3/3/04. These fish were bred at the NSW Fisheries Narrandera Fisheries Centre and released as part of the NSW Government's freshwater stocking program. In about two years, these fish will be ready to be caught - good news for anglers in the Riverina area. Lake Wyangan is a popular fishing spot for locals, and anglers have advised that they're catching an increasing number of native fish in the dam. Other fisheries are stocked under the small dams program. Small dams are generally less than 10,000 ML in capacity, and are often more accessible for shore-based anglers. Locations are considered if there is reasonable public access and fishing is allowed.

Murrumbidgee River rehabilitation, Hay

A wetland rehabilitation project on the Murrumbidgee River near Hay has been completed by the Nari Nari Tribal Council. Wetland vegetation has been restored to provide a habitat for freshwater fish such as Murray cod, perch, catfish and bream. The work involved controlling weeds, removing rubbish and revegetation work. The draft Native Fish Strategy for the Murray-Darling Basin has identified these types of remediation works as key actions to recover native fish species. The program was jointly funded by the Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust's Habitat Grant Program (\$4,895) and the Nari Nari Tribal Council (in-kind contribution of \$5,490).

NSW Government to stop unbridled seahorse collection

From 1 July 2004, all native species of syngnathids, a family which includes seahorses, pipehorses and sea dragons, will be protected in NSW. From that date it will be an offence to collect or harvest any of these species without a permit. Permits will be available to allow a limited number of these species to be collected for aquariums and for aquaculture breeding stock. Anyone caught taking syngnathids unlawfully will face heavy penalties, including fines of up to \$55,000 for corporations, and \$11,000 for individuals, plus a possible three-month gaol term. NSW is home to an incredible 31 of the world's 35 species of syngnathids, including several that are found nowhere else. Throughout the world, the demand for these fish has increased dramatically. Seahorses are used for medicinal purposes, as dried curiosities in the tourist trade or sold for the aquarium trade.

More trout for Central tablelands and Southern Highlands

Anglers in the central tablelands and southern highlands are set to benefit from the latest releases of rainbow and brown trout fingerlings from the NSW Government's Gaden Trout Hatchery. On the 2nd and 3rd of March, 2004, 30,000 rainbow trout were stocked at Pejar Dam near Goulburn, 40,000 brown trout were stocked at Lake Lyell near Lithgow and 2,000 rainbow trout were stocked at Red Ground Dam near Crookwell. These fish releases form part of a continuing program to stock freshwater areas with trout, salmon and native species. So far this season, more than 6.5 million native fish and trout have been released through this program plus the community dollar-for-dollar stocking scheme.

"Bluey on Wheels"

Three mobile community education units - fully funded by the recreational fishing licence - have been on their first major road trip, stopping at Eden, Merimbula, Narooma, Ulladulla and Jervis Bay. The units, called "Bluey on Wheels" after NSW's state fish, the Blue Groper, aim to educate people about how we can all work together to safeguard our fish, other aquatic life, and the environment for the future. Each unit includes built-in audio/visual equipment, displays and educational brochures. The units will be making regular appearances at outdoor events, trade shows, festivals and school visits and will be under the guidance of our NSW Fisheries Education Officers and Fishcare Volunteers.

Battery-powered acoustic tags to boost mulloway research

Battery-powered acoustic tags will be fitted to juvenile mulloway as part of a research project to help improve restocking programs. The 18-month project is being funded with more than \$24,500 from the Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust and run by the University of NSW. A total of 40 juvenile mulloway will be tagged for the research in Botany Bay. They will be fitted with 'pingers' that emit a series of electronic 'blips' that can be detected by a boat-based hydrophone and receiver. Little is known about key juvenile mulloway habitats in south-eastern Australia, or their migration patterns, so this research will hopefully unlock some of those secrets.