



RIVER MURRAY WEEKLY REPORT

FOR THE WEEK ENDING WEDNESDAY, 08 DECEMBER 2010

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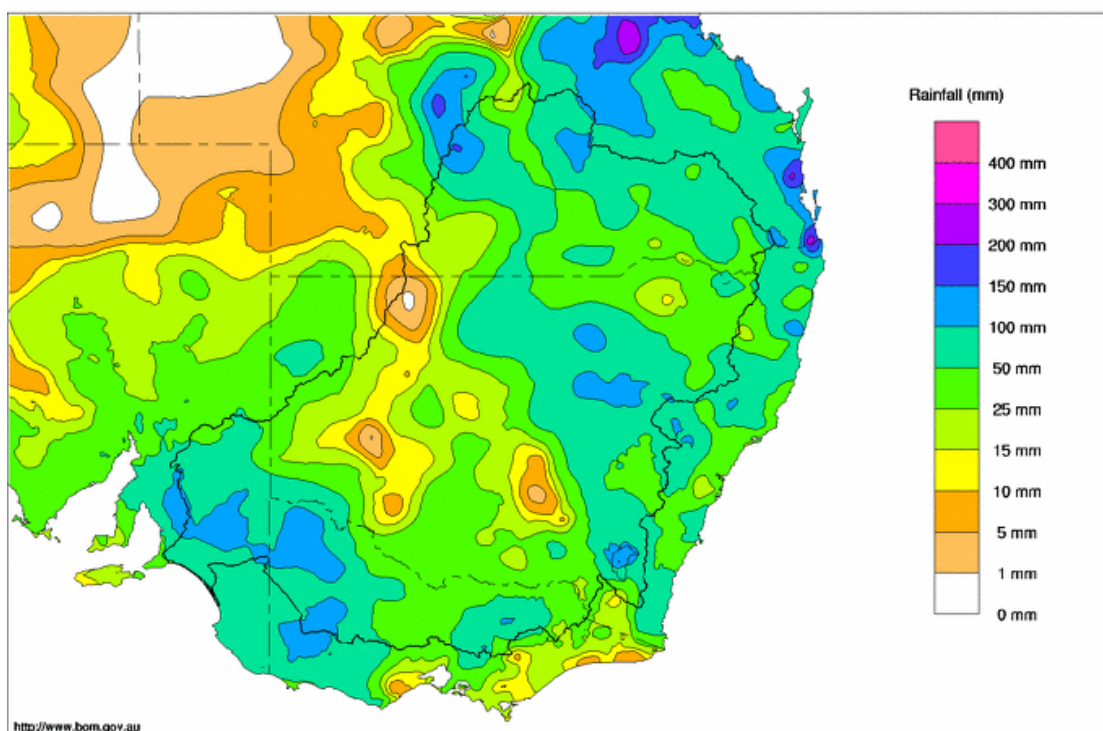
Rainfall and Inflows

Rain blanketed the Murray-Darling Basin again this week, with most areas receiving at least 25 mm. The highest falls were recorded in the lower Murray and in the northern half of the Basin, with many areas recording over 100 mm of rain. In the Sunraysia region, Mildura recorded 131 mm while Parkes, in central NSW, also received 131 mm.

The rain has resulted in flooding in many tributaries across the basin. In NSW, moderate to major flood alerts are in place in the Murrumbidgee, Macquarie, Castlereagh and Namoi Rivers with minor to moderate alerts in many other tributaries. Victoria is also experiencing floods, with localised minor to moderate alerts in the Ovens, Kiewa and Goulburn catchments. Minor to moderate alerts are current in some of the upper Darling tributaries in Queensland. As at Thursday 9 December further significant falls of rain had occurred overnight in northern Victoria and southern NSW. This had resulted in renewed stream rises with major flooding occurring in some locations. For more information regarding flood warnings see the Bureau of Meteorology at <http://www.bom.gov.au/>.

The rain has maintained inflows to the upper Murray with the flow at Jingellic, upstream of Hume, averaging around 18 000 ML/day and the flow at Wangaratta, in the Ovens Catchment, averaging 16 000 ML/day. Further downstream, the flow at McCoys, on the Goulburn River, rose from 8 000 to 25 000 ML/day and the flow at Balranald, on the Murrumbidgee River, rose from 10 000 to 12 000 ML/day. The impacts of the latest rainfall will become clearer over the next week.

Murray Darling Rainfall Totals (mm) Week Ending 8th December 2010
Product of the National Climate Centre



<http://www.bom.gov.au>

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Issued: 08/12/2010



River Operations

The impacts of flooding in the Murrumbidgee River and in the tributaries of the Darling will take many weeks to be seen in the Murray. For example, the very high flows seen at Wagga Wagga (200,000 ML/day) will attenuate to a fraction of this flow rate at Balranald before entering the Murray as a prolonged inflow in early 2011. Updates on potential flows in the Murray will be provided over the coming weeks, however it is apparent that good flows will be observed in the mid and lower reaches over December, January and possibly into February.

Total MDBA storage remains fairly steady at about 79% of active capacity. The reason why storage is not nearing 100% is that Dartmouth Reservoir has a very large capacity compared with the size of the Mitta Mitta River catchment so that even with the wetter than average conditions so far this year storage has risen from 31% to only 54%. When full Dartmouth Reservoir holds about five years average inflow.

Storage in Hume Reservoir is currently 2,960 GL (99%) however rain on December 9 will see the dam 'spilling' during the coming week. This 'spill' will likely be passed via the power station, valves and over the actual spillway.

Release from Yarrowonga Weir was increased to 42,000 ML/day this week and is expected to rise significantly over the coming week in response to the latest rain. Flooding of the Barmah-Millewa Forest continues and although there are concerns for native fish and Murray crays due to low dissolved oxygen levels, many thousands of waterbirds are now being attracted to the forest wetlands to build nests (see attached water quality bulletin).

The flow in the River Murray at Torrumbarry Weir has increased to 44,000 ML/day, which is providing another good watering of the Gunbower and Koondrook Forests. Flow rates of the River Murray in Sunraysia are also on the increase. The flow rate at Mildura has increased to 37,000 ML/day and is expected to exceed 42,000 ML/day over the coming week which has triggered the temporary removal of Mildura Weir (see attached media release) to pass the high flows. Weirs 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 have already been temporarily removed to pass the higher flows.

The storage in Menindee Lakes is currently 1,860 GL. Upstream on the Darling River at Bourke, the flow increased from 17,600 ML/day last week to 22,800 ML/day at 8 December. Release from Menindee Lakes has remained around 16,000 ML/day and is expected to gradually rise to 19,000 ML/day over the coming week. The release through the Cawndilla outlet to the Great Darling Anabranch remains steady at 1,500 ML/day.

The level of Lake Victoria was lowered a further 31 cm during the week and further lowering will continue to assist in the protection of vegetation and cultural heritage material. Total storage fell 37 GL to 543 GL (80% capacity). Lake Victoria is expected to be re-filled before the end of the period of unregulated flow.

Flow to South Australia increased to 65,000 ML/day, which will result in limited floodplain inundation for the first time in ten years. The release through the Barrages is estimated to be in excess of 50,000 ML/day. The level in the Lower Lakes decreased slightly during the week to 0.74 m AHD and commencing next week the level will be temporarily lowered towards 0.5 m AHD by the end of December. This operation aims to draw saline water from Lake Albert such that the subsequent refill, in the New Year may assist in mitigating salinity levels in the lake. Notwithstanding this operation salinity levels are expected to take many months to dissipate to levels suitable for consumptive use, following the recent prolonged period of extremely low river flows.

For media inquiries contact the Media Officer on 02 6279 0141

DAVID DREVERMAN
Executive Director, River Murray

Week ending Wednesday 08 Dec 2010

Water in Storage

MDBA Storages	Full Supply Level (m AHD)	Full Supply Volume (GL)	Current Storage Level (m AHD)	Current Storage		Dead Storage (GL)	MDBA Active Storage (GL)	Change in Total Storage for the week (GL)
				(GL)	%			
Dartmouth Reservoir	486.00	3 856	453.70	2 078	54%	71	2 007	+27
Hume Reservoir	192.00	3 005	191.78	2 960	99%	23	2 937	-11
Lake Victoria	27.00	677	25.84	543	80%	100	443	-37
Menindee Lakes		1 731 *		1 862	108%	(480 #)	1 382	+12
Total		9 269		7 443	80%	--	6 769	-8

* Menindee surcharge capacity 2050 GL

% of Total Active MDBA Storage = **79%**

NSW takes control of Menindee Lakes when storage falls below 480 GL, and control reverts to MDBA when storage next reaches 640 GL

** All Data is rounded to nearest GL **

Major State Storages

Burrinjuck Reservoir	1 026	985	96%	3	982	-61
Blowering Reservoir	1 631	1 673	103%	24	1 649	+19
Eildon Reservoir	3 334	2 345	70%	100	2 245	+49

Snowy Mountains Scheme

Snowy diversions for week ending 07-Dec-2010

Storage	Active storage (GL)	Weekly change (GL)	Diversion (GL)	This week	From 1 May 2010
Lake Eucumbene - Total	867	-9	Snowy-Murray	+44	627
Snowy-Murray Component	567	-17	Tooma-Tumut	+4	272
Target Storage	1 510		Net Diversion	40.6	355
			Murray 1 Release	+59	952

Major Diversions from Murray and Lower Darling (GL) *

New South Wales	This week	From 1 July 2010	Victoria	This week	From 1 July 2010
Murray Irrig. Ltd (Net)	2.9	196.0	Yarrowonga Main Channel (net)	1.1	32.0
Wakool Sys Allowance	0.0	3.0	Torrumbary System + Nyah (net)	10.3	111.0
Western Murray Irrig.	0.0	3.0	Sunraysia Pumped Districts	0.7	15.0
Licensed Pumps	0.5	30.0	Licensed pumps - GMW (Nyah+u/s)	0.0	3.0
Lower Darling	10.6	99.0	Licensed pumps - LMW	9.0	99.0
TOTAL	14.0	331.0	TOTAL	21.1	260.0

* Figures derived from Estimates and Monthly Data. Please note that not all data may have been available at the time of creating this report.

** All Data is rounded to nearest 100 ML for the above**

Flow to South Australia (GL)

Entitlement this month	217.0 *	(60 600 ML/day)
Flow this week	423.9	
Flow so far this month	480.8	
Flow last month	1,245.0	

* Flow to SA will be greater than entitlement for December due to Additional Dilution Flow and Unregulated Flows.

Salinity (EC)

(microsiemens/cm @ 25° C)

	Current	Average over the last week	Average since 1 August 2010
Swan Hill	200	190	140
Euston	140	130	130
Red Cliffs	150	150	140
Merbein	150	140	120
Burtundy (Darling)	240	240	260
Lock 9	230	230	180
Lake Victoria	170	170	170
Berri	320	270	190
Waikerie	-	-	210
Morgan	300	300	260
Mannum	320	290	280
Murray Bridge	310	270	290
Milang (Lake Alex)	1 250	1 090	2 840
Poltalloch (Lake Alex)	240	260	1 060
Meningie (Lake Alb.)	7 150	7 320	10 260
Goolwa Barrages	1 380	1 290	8 550

Week ending Wednesday 08 Dec 2010

River Levels and Flows

River Murray	Minor Flood stage (m)	Gauge height		Flow (ML/day)	Trend	Average flow this week (ML/day)	Average flow last week (ML/day)
		local (m)	(m AHD)				
Khancoban	-	-	-	9 760	R	9 680	9 400
Jingellic	4.0	2.80	209.32	14 850	F	17 120	15 440
Tallandoon (Mitta Mitta River)	4.2	1.84	218.73	1 610	S	1 800	1 980
Heywoods	5.5	3.50	157.13	21 640	R	22 200	19 690
Doctors Point	5.5	3.94	152.41	24 800	R	26 670	22 810
Albury	4.3	3.07	150.51	-	-	-	-
Corowa	7.0	4.78	130.80	33 470	S	30 900	27 790
Yarrowonga Weir (d/s)	6.4	4.68	119.72	42 020	R	36 320	26 930
Tocumwal	6.4	4.90	108.74	36 240	R	32 700	27 510
Torrumbarry Weir (d/s)	7.3	7.42	85.97	44 820	S	42 120	24 040
Swan Hill	4.5	3.65	66.57	22 460	R	21 750	19 930
Wakool Junction	8.8	7.51	56.63	37 440	R	36 410	33 610
Euston Weir (d/s)	8.8	5.41	47.25	41 140	R	39 960	37 120
Mildura Weir (d/s)	-	-	-	36 820	F	34 970	32 090
Wentworth Weir (d/s)	7.3	6.09	30.85	58 000	R	56 140	52 890
Rufus Junction	-	7.43	24.36	65 510	R	60 560	54 590
Blanchetown (Lock 1 d/s)	-	2.98	-	45 500	R	42 950	39 770
Tributaries							
Kiewa at Bandiana	2.7	2.64	155.87	3 730	R	5 400	3 950
Ovens at Wangaratta	11.9	11.20	148.88	15 740	F	16 370	9 520
Goulburn at McCoys Bridge	9.0	8.59	100.01	25 790	R	22 240	5 570
Edward at Stevens Weir (d/s)	-	5.05	84.83	10 800	F	11 490	12 190
Edward at Liewah	-	5.12	60.50	7 340	S	7 360	6 960
Wakool at Stoney Crossing	-	4.38	57.88	9 760	R	9 440	4 960
Murrumbidgee at Balranald	5.0	5.93	61.89	12 420	R	11 470	10 210
Barwon at Mungindi	-	5.40	-	6 040	F	6 440	3 970
Darling at Bourke	-	7.69	-	22 890	R	19 930	20 680
Darling at Burtundy Rocks	-	6.13	-	13 840	R	13 600	13 110

Natural Inflow to Hume (ie pre Dartmouth & Snowy Mountains scheme)	16 800	13 090
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Weirs and Locks

Pool levels above or below Full Supply Level (FSL)

Murray	FSL (mAHD)	u/s	d/s		FSL (mAHD)	u/s	d/s
Yarrowonga	124.90	-0.19	-	No. 7 Rufus River	22.10	+2.25	+5.06
No 26 Torrumbarry	86.05	-0.05	-	No. 6 Murtho	19.25	+0.34	+0.17
No. 15 Euston	47.60	-0.09	-	No. 5 Renmark	16.30	-0.02	+2.80
No. 11 Mildura	34.40	+0.05	+2.57	No. 4 Bookpurnong	13.20	+0.74	+3.89
No. 10 Wentworth	30.80	+0.15	+3.45	No.3 Overland Corner	9.80	+0.33	+3.24
No. 9 Kulnine	27.40	+0.34	+3.04	No. 2 Waikerie	6.10	+0.62	+3.51
No. 8 Wangumma	24.60	+1.46	+3.78	No 1. Blanchetown	3.20	+0.07	+2.23

Murrumbidgee	FSL (mAHD)	relation to FSL	d/s gauge ht.		Flow (ML/day)
			local (m)	(m AHD)	
No. 7 Maude	75.40	+0.15	5.315	74.665	14409
No. 5 Redbank	66.90	+0.20	5.727	67.027	10572

Lower Lakes

FSL = 0.75 m AHD

	(m AHD)
Lake Alexandrina average level for the past 5 days	0.74

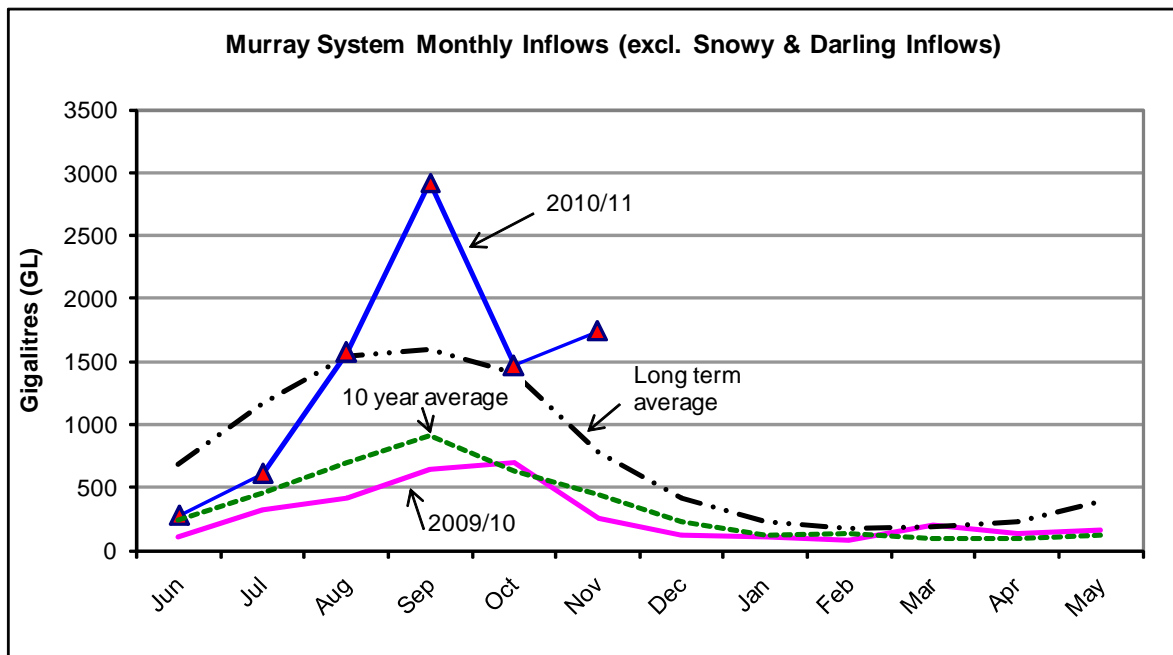
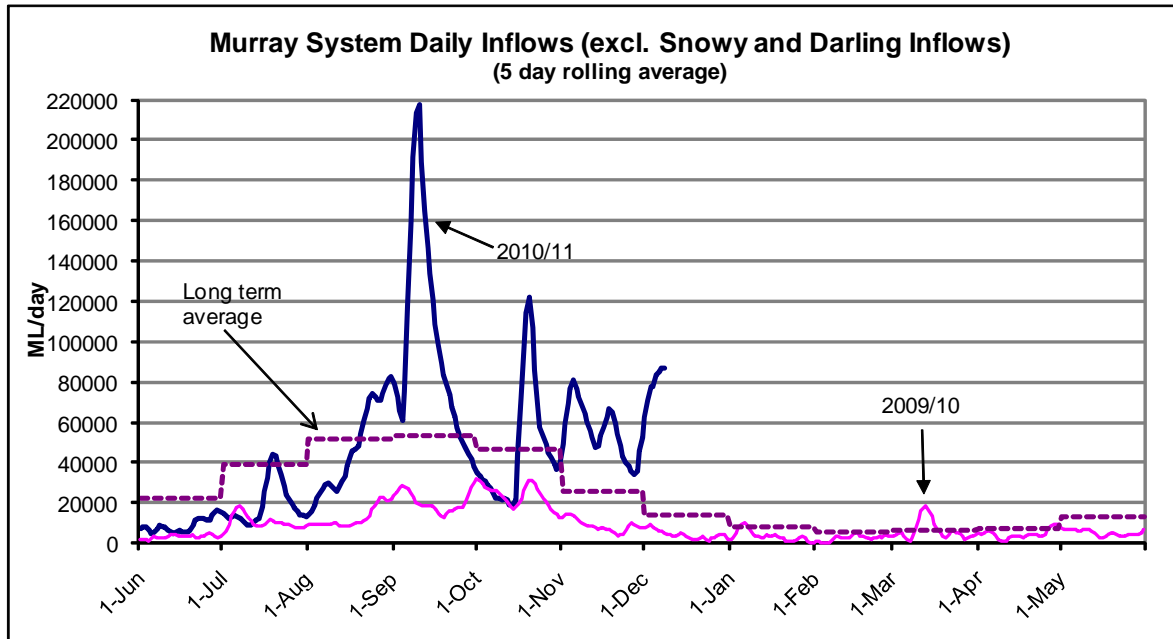
Barrages

Fishways @ Barrages

	Openings	Level (mAHD)	Status	Rock Ramp	Vertical Slot
Goolwa	128 openings	0.78	80	-	Open
Mundoo	26 openings	0.71	3	-	-
Boundary Creek	6 openings	-	1	-	-
Ewe Island	111 gates	-	31	-	-
Tauwichee	322 gates	0.70	97	Open	Open



Week ending Wednesday 08 December 2010



State Allocations (as at 08 December 2010)

NSW - Murray Valley

High security	97%
General security	64%

Victoria - Murray Valley

High reliability	100%
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NSW - Murrumbidgee Valley

High security	95%
General security	59%

Victoria - Goulburn Valley

High reliability	100%
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NSW - Lower Darling

High security	100%
General security	100%

South Australia - Murray Valley

High security	67%
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NSW : <http://www.water.nsw.gov.au/About-us/Media-releases/media/default.aspx>
 VIC : <http://www.g-mwater.com.au/water-resources/allocations/current.asp>
 SA : <http://www.waterforgood.sa.gov.au/category/news/>

MEDIA RELEASE

6 December 2010



Mildura Weir pool lowering to start 7th December

The Murray–Darling Basin Authority advised today that the Mildura Weir pool will be lowered starting **Tuesday 7 December 2010**.

Under normal operating procedures, Mildura Weir is temporarily removed when river flows at Mildura rise above 42,000 ML/day. Flows in Sunraysia are expected to reach this level in the coming week.

The Weir will be reinstated and the pool level raised to the normal operating level of 34.4 m AHD once flows in Sunraysia recede.

The proposed schedule for weir removal is:

Proposed date	Action
Tuesday 7 December	Commence lowering the Mildura Weir pool.
Sunday 12 to Tuesday 14 December	Remove Mildura Weir trestles to allow a free flowing river.

Over the coming weeks, the Murray-Darling Basin Authority will continue to issue further advice via the MDBA's Weekly report which can be viewed at www.mdba.gov.au

Media office: (02) 6279 0141

 Receive MDBA updates via http://twitter.com/MD_Basin_Auth

9 December 2010

Update on Mid-Murray and Edward-Wakool System 'Blackwater' Event

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority today advised of the continuing impacts of the 'blackwater' in the waters of the River Murray downstream of Barmah and in the Edward and Wakool River System.

The 'blackwater' has very low dissolved oxygen levels and has resulted in fish deaths in some locations and has forced exceptionally high numbers of Murray crays to leave the water and seek refuge on the river banks.

River users are reminded by the NSW Department of Industry and Investment that it is currently a 'closed season' for Murray crays and that people should not have them in their possession. The Murray crays will be very vulnerable over the coming weeks until they return to the river and river users are asked to minimise any disturbance to Murray Crays they see on the river banks. It is also fish spawning season and anglers may wish to voluntarily limit their catch to minimise further impacts on the fish population into the future.

Blackwater events occur naturally due to the rapid breakdown of leaf litter on the forest floor causing water discolouration. The breakdown of leaf litter plays an important ecological role as it provides nutrients back into the river system thereby promoting the growth of many aquatic organisms. However, at times such as now, this process can result in very low dissolved oxygen levels.

The 'blackwater' is arising from flooding of the Barmah-Millewa, Gunbower-Koondrook and Werai Forests and other floodplain areas that have not been adequately flooded for many years. The flooding has occurred following several months of heavy rainfall across the upper Murray catchments resulting in high inflows from Kiewa, Ovens and Goulburn Rivers, Billabong Creek and Hume Dam spilling.

With more rain forecast, it is expected that flooding in the Mid-Murray and Edward-Wakool System will continue for at least another month. The low oxygenated water in the Mid-Murray will mix with fresh inflows reducing its impact downstream.

The Authority and New South Wales and Victorian agencies have implemented several measures to lessen the impact of the blackwater event. This includes releasing fresh water from irrigation systems to the river system at a number of locations and releasing environmental water from storages to provide dilution. Whilst such measures may reduce the severity of blackwater impacts at some locations, they are unlikely to eliminate them.

In the Edward-Wakool System, an emergency fish rescue plan is being implemented by NSW Agencies and the community, which has already relocated some native fish to areas of better

water quality. In the River Murray, monitoring is indicating that many of the large bodied native fish may have migrated upstream and downstream of the worst affected areas.

On a positive note, the floods have watered over 90% of the Barmah-Millewa Forest, which has not happened for over 10 years. The flooding has also attracted many thousands of waterbirds such as Ibis, Spoonbills, Great Egrets, Cormorants and Nankeen Night Herons to begin nesting within the forest. It is expected these birds will continue to breed over the next few months. Waterbird species such as the Blue-billed Duck and Australasian Bittern are listed as threatened in NSW and have been observed in the forests.

Further advice will be issued if circumstances change significantly.

For more information contact the MDBA Media office at media@mdba.gov.au

For more information on recreational fishing regulations refer to the NSW Department of Industry and Investment at <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/recreational/info/guide>

 Receive MDBA updates via http://twitter.com/MD_Basin_Auth

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