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Volunteers are vital in keeping our community nursery running

# Working Together

Volume 28

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## Volunteers are vital!

Volunteers underpin the management of natural resources in the SA Murray-Darling Basin. Whether individual volunteers, members of small volunteer community groups, volunteers on committees or short-term volunteers visiting our region, the state of our environment without these important people does not bear thinking about!

To ensure that volunteers and the organisations that work with them get the best possible support, the SA MDB NRM Board, in partnership with Volunteering SA & NT, and in close consultation with volunteers and other stakeholders, has recently developed a regional NRM volunteer strategy.

The strategy identified 8 key objectives for improving volunteer management relating to improving recognition, increas-

ing recruitment, ensuring effective communication, providing adequate funding, ensuring volunteer safety and wellbeing, establishing effective governance systems, developing knowledge and skills, and ensuring that technical support is available. Recommendations were also made about how the various groups and stakeholders involved could best work together to achieve these objectives.

Since the strategy's release a range of new initiatives have been introduced across the region including volunteer celebrations, a program of training for volunteers and volunteer managers and a volunteer small grants program (the next round of which will open in early 2012 with a closing date of 31 March 2012).

For more information on volunteering or for a copy of the volunteer strategy, contact Miranda Leckie on (08) 8532 9100 or visit the website [www.samdbnrm.sa.gov.au](http://www.samdbnrm.sa.gov.au).

## Friends of Meldanda

We meet the 1st Friday of every month working on various projects, we have new plantings, mulching and interpretive signs at our Bush tucker gardens, It's a lovely way to spend a few hours with people who enjoy working outdoors and learning about our natural environment, for more information contact the LAP.



## Catfish, Carp Gudgeons and Carp – Kate Mason

### Fish Monitoring at Morgan's Lagoon

The most recent round of fish monitoring, conducted as part of the Mid Murray LAP/SAMDBNRM Board wetland monitoring and management program, has found that native fish are gradually bouncing back at Morgan's Lagoon. A total of 1556 fish were caught in early November comprising of seven native fish

species and four alien species. The aim was to monitor the changes in fish populations and assist management. The catch was dominated by carp gudgeons (*Hypseleotris* spp.) which represented over half (58%) of the individuals caught. Although the common name is misleading, carp gudgeons are a native small-bodied fish which are native predators of aquatic insects such as mosquito lar-

vae, and are also an important food source for larger fish, birds and tortoises. The common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*), one of the most notorious alien species in the Murray-Darling Basin, represented 35% of the total catch. However, far fewer juveniles were found when compared to the previous surveys conducted in April 2011 and November 2011, which were undertaken



**Figure 1: Carp gudgeons at Morgan's Lagoon**



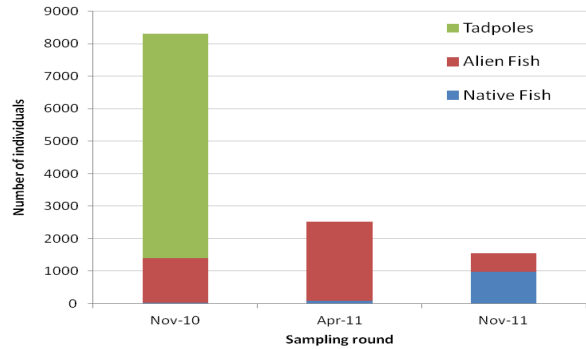
**Figure 3: Freshwater catfish at Portee Creek**

## Catfish, Carp Gudgeons and Carp – continued

after the wetland had re-wet following the increase in river levels. The large amounts of organic matter that had accumulated during dry years is likely to have contributed to the poor water quality seen in a number of wetlands following re-wetting. This in turn may have deterred native fish species, and created spawning habitat for common carp. However, it wasn't all bad news during the rewetting. Tadpoles made up over 83% of the total catch in November 2010, as seen in Figure 2 which demonstrates the

changes in the assemblage of the total catch in each monitoring round following the re-

wetting. A highlight of the fish survey this year was the 19 freshwater catfish (*Tandanus*



**Figure 2: Comparison of total catch assemblage between sampling rounds post re-wetting at Morgan's Lagoon**

**“These fish do well in deeper flowing areas such as Portee Creek and it was encouraging to see five juveniles amongst them.”**

## Catfish, Carp Gudgeons and Carp – continued

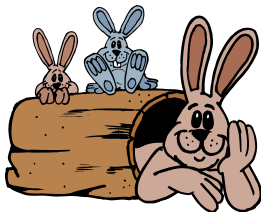
*tandanus*) caught in Portee Creek adjacent the wetland. These fish do well in deeper flowing areas such as Portee Creek and it was encouraging to see five juveniles amongst them. Although freshwater catfish are being caught on a more regular basis following the recent high river, these fish remain protected under the Fisheries Act 2007 (visit [www.pir.sa.gov.au/fisheries/recreational\\_fishing/protected\\_species](http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/fisheries/recreational_fishing/protected_species) for more information on protected

species). For more information or if you would like to get involved in the wetland program, please contact Kate Mason (Lower Murray Wetlands Project Officer) at the Murray Bridge Natural Resources Centre on 85 329100 or email [kate.mason@samdbnrm.sa.gov.au](mailto:kate.mason@samdbnrm.sa.gov.au)

caught just south of Mannum in early November during a fish monitoring survey. Although it is considered to be one of Australia's most widespread native freshwater fishes, it is rarely seen in the southern reaches of the River Murray due to its intolerance of the cold.

**‘Look what the river washed down!’**

—Kate Mason  
This spangled perch (*Leiopotherapon unicolour*) was



**Wheel cactus, one of the weeds that will targeted**

## Local Conservation Parks—Aimee Linke

Earlier in 2011, the Mid Murray LAP, in partnership with the Murray Mallee District – Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), applied for a NRM Community Grant to tackle invasive species management in three DENR reserves. In September 2011, the Mid Murray LAP was advised that their application was successful and planning and implementation of the project is now well underway.

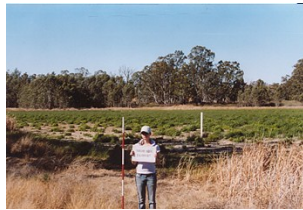
Focussing on three Parks in the Mid Murray LAP area, Marne Valley, Swan Reach and Ridley, the project will utilise the knowledge and expertise of the LAP team, Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA), the SA MDB NRM Board, DENR and local landholders and volunteers. Work already undertaken includes fox baiting within the three Parks, which is part of the larger “Fox baiting program in the Murray Mallee”,

implemented by the CVA at Brookfield Conservation Park, and adopted by landholders and NRM Board across the local area. This baiting program is aimed at protecting the ground dwelling birds of the region, including Mallee Fowl (*Leipoa ocellata*), a nationally threatened species. Other work planned includes rabbit control within Marne Valley Conservation Park, and invasive weed management in all three Parks. The works in

**Morgans Lagoon Pictorial Record 2006-2011**—Kate Mason



2006



2007



2009



2011



2007



2008



2010



2011

**Local Conservation Parks**—continued

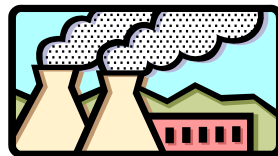
these parks will assist in protecting and enhancing natural biodiversity. In May next year we will have a team of volunteers from a variety of groups walking through the Swan Reach CP controlling Wheel Cactus and documenting any significant faunal sightings. A new community group, focusing on Marne Valley Conservation Park, will also assist in delivering the project. Any person interested in assisting with the implementation of the project should contact the

Mid Murray Local Action Planning Committee.

**AGM**—Warrick Barnes

Nuclear power, interesting discussions, sandwiches, a little bit of cake and a mug of hot tea provided the basis for Mid Murray LAP's AGM. Ben Heard provided a well presented step by step account of why and how he transformed from an opponent to proponent of nuclear power. With a

presentation based around his personal journey it allowed those present to explore their beliefs and challenge their preconceived ideas.



**“.. groups walking through Swan Reach CP controlling Wheel Cactus and documenting any significant faunal sightings.”**

**Upcoming Bat Workshop**—Aimee Linke

The Mid Murray LAP will be holding another bat workshop at Devon Downs on Saturday the 11th of February 2012. We will have harp traps set up to enable participants to see some real bats that we have caught, along with equipment that is used for surveying bats in the wild.

Anabat detectors record the sounds bats make when navigating around searching for food, known as echolocation each call is unique to each bat species providing a passive

means of surveying species present at a given location. These detectors will be available for loan if you would like to discover what species are on your property.

The workshop will also provide you with information about bats of the region and ways to increase biodiversity on your property. Protecting and enhancing biodiversity on your property is vital to providing habitat and food sources for bats. The use of bat boxes will also be dis-

cussed and information on box designs if there are no available tree hollows for bat roosts on your property.

If you would like more information on the workshop or to register your interest in attending please contact Aimee Linke or visit our website for upcoming events.



**Bats trapped at workshop held at Saunders Gorge, photos courtesy J. Schofield**

**'...students appreciate the time, difficulties and challenges that birds such as the Chough go to, to build their nests.'**

## White-winged Chough—Warrick Barnes

The White-winged Chough's that occupy Meldanda were recently the focus of the Landcare students from Cambrai Area School. Just like a feeding family of Chough's, students worked together to search amongst the leaf litter for materials to build their own replica Chough nests. The idea to replicate the building of a choughs mud nest using materials only sourced from the local area was met with enthusiasm and made students appreciate the time, difficulties and challenges that birds such as the Chough go to, to build

their nests. White-winged Chough's are one of two surviving members of the Australian mud-nest builders family.



**'Previous releases of Leaf hoppers by students are showing good signs with numbers increasing annually'**

## Weed Warriors—Warrick Barnes

WATCHOUT armed with a steady hand, reflexes of a cat and on a mission to destroy CAMBRAI WEED WARRIORS. Yet again students from Cambrai Area School went into to battle with their arch enemy bridal creeper. Armed with biological control agents that strike the fear into their intended targets while having no collateral damage seems to be a war worth fighting. Students were again involved in the weed warriors program this year with students learn-

ing about weeds and biological control agents for the control of weed species. Students released both leaf hoppers and sprayed rust spore water of bridal creeper at Christians Reserve. Previous releases of Leaf hoppers by students are showing good signs with numbers increasing on an annually.

If you know a school that might like to participate in this program, please contact the SA MDB NRM Board.



**Charlie's Angels strike at Christian's Reserve**

**"It is always difficult to attract management committee members to any LAP, so it is with pleasure that I welcome three new members..."**

## Chairman's Report—Inez Bormann

Another year has passed so quickly, I take this opportunity to thank the staff, Aimeé and Warrick for their outstanding efforts to keep the ship upright in turbulent times. Thanks also to the committee members for their diligence and support as we try to address the many challenges that have confronted us across the year. It has been every bit as challenging as I predicted in my report last year and the challenges will increase as the years go by exacerbated by

the Carbon Tax, impacts of Climate Change and reduced value of our funding brought about by rising costs, the global financial situation and reductions in government support.

I have frequent discussions with the staff on ways of working smarter to increase the outputs for every dollar we spend. The Annual Staff Reports will show that we have not lost momentum during 2011 and my team will work hard to ensure that we

can maintain that record into the future.

It is always difficult to attract management committee members to any LAP, so it is with pleasure that I welcome three new members to our fold. Dawn Horton, David Peake, and Ashley Brown have nominated to serve on the committee. All three have a passion in general for our environment and our communities. Both Dawn and David have an interest in the Murray River

**Chairman’s Report**—continued

and Ashley is a strong advocate for issues environmental in the dry land area communities. I believe that they can strengthen the Mid Murray LAP team. As ever our volunteers are the stuff that we LAPs are made of and their support and effort is highly valued by all of us. They are the way that we learn how our communities think and feel. They are the way that we achieve our on ground results; they are the salt of the earth. We thank you for your tireless involvement in our efforts.

As I checked my 2010 report before commencing the report for 2011, I see that many of the issues raised there are still pertinent for the 2011 year and will be relevant into the foreseeable future. Partnerships, resource sharing and possible amalgamations may be the way of the future. These will require careful planning and many hours around many tables to achieve positive efficiencies, however unpalatable some may seem. We, as a team, are committed to continuing the worthwhile contribution that LAPs and volun-

teers make to our communities each year. On past performance, I am convinced that we will all work toward many more successful years. Over the coming year the Mid Murray LAP will be working on a five year Strategic Plan to determine new ways of working, clarifying our goals and how we will both fund them and achieve them. Suggestions from our communities on what we should do, how we can move forward and how we can fund our efforts will always be considered and be welcome.

**“...five year Strategic Plan to determine new ways of working, clarifying our goals ...Suggestions from our communities..”**

**Chairman’s Report**—continued

Continuing from the 2010 Annual Report, the Murray Darling Basin Authority Guide is no more and there is now a Murray Darling Basin Authority Plan due for public consultation. Regardless of a twelve month delay, it is still imperative that everyone takes an opportunity to be involved in the consultation, whatever form the Plan takes it will still have a major impact on our communities, particularly for South Australians, and our voices at the grass roots level

must be heard on the future of the Murray Darling Basin. The health of the Basin underwrites the health of our communities across Australia. The SA Murray Darling Basin Natural Resource Management Board has also experienced changes with a number of new members, including myself as the delegate from the Murray Mallee Regional Local Government organisation. I will endeavour to represent all people interested in the management of natural

resources to the best of my abilities on that board. I appreciate the Local Government giving me the opportunity to be involved at the Board level and I certainly appreciate the warm welcome that has been extended to me on this appointment by both the Chair of the Board and its CEO. I will conclude as I did last year, as there seems no better way to finish my report. To our continuing members we offer you our thanks for

**‘I will endeavour to represent all people interested in the management of natural resources to the best of my abilities ..’**

**Chairman’s Report**—continued

your ongoing commitment and accumulated knowledge that is always at our disposal. To our community members and volunteers, you are our strength; we value you highly and respect your efforts while urging you to continue their interests and activities in the environment and in our LAP. To our partnering organisations and our funding partners, I congratulate you on a successful year. I look forward to sharing many more well into the future.

To our staff, I offer our grateful appreciation of your great efforts during this year and for many more to come. Next year will bring new challenges. We are ready for them. We will negotiate we will be strategic, and we will be adaptable. Our task is to involve our community and to work for the improvement of our environment. As we approach the festive season, I wish you all the very best for now and the coming year. I hope that it is every-

thing that you could wish for yourselves and your families. May you all have a Christmas full of goodwill and joy and a New Year full of hope and happiness.

Inez Bormann  
Chairman,  
Mid Murray Local Action  
Committee Inc



**Native Catfish**



**Oriental Weather Loach**  
photo L. Suitor

MID MURRAY LAP

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- Vice Chair: Terry Franklin
- Executive: Ian Mann
- Councilor: Brian Taylor
- Don Webster
- Glenn Donnell
- Rose Laucke
- Advisor: Kelvin Goldstone
- Indigenous Advisor: Isobel Campbell

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100% recycled paper,  
Protecting our Trees and  
Environment



Government of South Australia  
South Australian Murray-Darling Basin  
Natural Resources Management Board



Government of  
South Australia



MID MURRAY COUNCIL

Fire Resistant Plants — Aimee Linke

The following plants are an example of plants that have low flammability;

Groundcovers

*Carpobrotus rossii*, Pigface  
*Einadia nutans*, Nodding Saltbush  
*Kennedia prostrate*, Running

Postman  
*Myoporum parvifolium*, Creeping Boobialla  
*Scaevola albida*, Fanflower

Low Shrubs

*Atriplex* species, Saltbush

*Correa alba*, *C. reflexa*, Native  
Fuschia  
*Enchylaena tomentosa*, Ruby

Saltbush  
*Maireana brevifolia*, Short-leaved Bluebush  
*Maireana sedifolia*, Pearl Bluebush

*Rhagodia* species

Medium Shrubs

*Acacia acinacea*, Gold Dust  
Wattle  
*Myoporum insulare*, Common Boobialla

Grass or Sedge

*Dianella* species, Flax Lily  
*Lomandra* species, Matt Rush

Climber

*Hardenbergia violacea*, Native  
Wisteria

For a more comprehensive list visit [http://www.apsvic.org.au/plant\\_fire\\_resistant.html](http://www.apsvic.org.au/plant_fire_resistant.html)  
Or [http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/site/about\\_us/publications/fact\\_sheets\\_bushfire\\_prevention.jsp#fact sheet 16](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/site/about_us/publications/fact_sheets_bushfire_prevention.jsp#fact sheet 16)

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- I wish to become a social member
- I wish to become a volunteer

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.....Postcode.....

Be Informed—Aimee Linke

Oriental Weather Loach,  
*Misgurnus anguillicaudatus*

There have been reports from locals about the capture of Weather loaches in our reaches of the river. This is an introduced species and should not be returned to the water, bag it, freeze it and report it. Report all sightings of suspected marine pests to the 24 hour FISHWATCH hotline on 1800 065 522. A relatively small-sized fish known to attain a maximum length of about 25cm, but

more often 20cm. An elongate and cylindrical body. Generally orange-yellow to yellow-grey in colour, darker along their back with black and dark brown spots. Five pairs of small barbels around the mouth, three on the upper jaw and two on the lower jaw. The oriental weatherloach may be mistaken for the native freshwater catfish (*Tandanus tandanus*), particularly juvenile catfish. Freshwater catfish also have barbels around the

mouth, but can be distinguished from the oriental weatherloach by the shape and tail: The native catfish grow larger in size, are flattened ventrally (top to bottom) and have a tail fin which begins at the top, extending to the back and around underneath to the anal fin. See photos page 5, source -[http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecuritysa/aquatic/current\\_and\\_potential\\_pests/oriental\\_weatherloach](http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecuritysa/aquatic/current_and_potential_pests/oriental_weatherloach)