



*Healthy Rivers,
Healthy Communities*

A Third La Nina Year - More wet times in the Gwydir

Use options for Gwydir Commonwealth Water for the Environment in 2022-23



Maintain flows to support waterbird breeding across the Gwydir Wetlands.



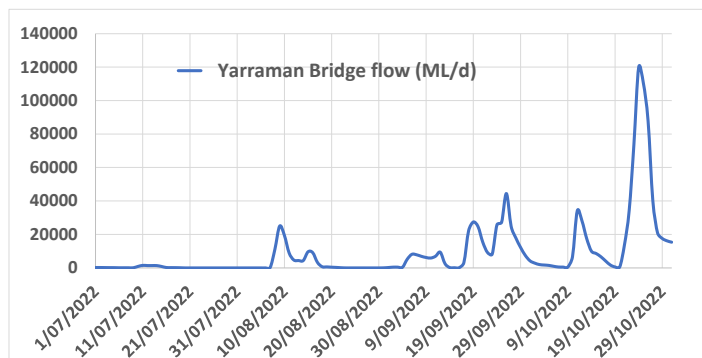
Extend wetland inundation including in the Mallowa Creek, if required.



Maintain and/or improve connectivity with the Barwon to help native fish move & breed.

It is likely that very wet conditions will continue in the Gwydir system for the next few months. At the present time neither Commonwealth nor NSW water for the environment is being delivered in the Gwydir.

The following plot shows the flow at Yarraman gauge from 1st July to 31st October, showing periods of lower flows followed by multiple high and very high flows from upstream rainfall events.



Natural high flows are important for ongoing ecosystem health and recovery from the drought that dominated the northern Basin over the last decade. While providing benefit to the environment they can also lead to negative impacts of flooding properties and damaging roads and infrastructure.

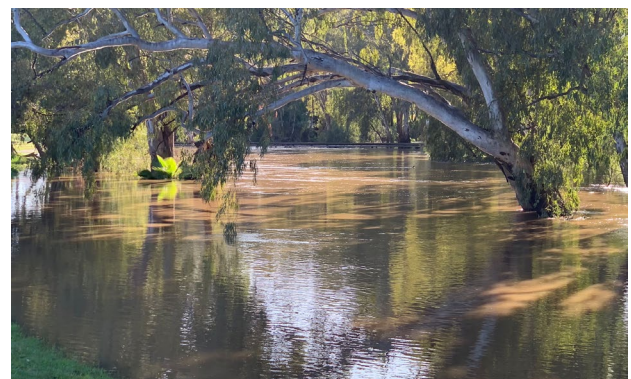
Large scale waterbird breeding is occurring.

A wet spring has triggered large-scale colonial waterbird breeding in the Gwydir Wetlands, for the second year in a row.

Water for the environment may be required at low rates later in the year to maintain flows after the natural events, to support the breeding waterbirds and their young. The Gwydir Wetlands serve a critical role by helping to increase abundance and maintain species diversity in waterbird populations across the Basin.



Gwydir River upstream of Boolooroo 25 Sept 2022. (Jane Humphries, CEWO).



Mehi River at Moree, Sept 2022. (Jane Humphries, CEWO).

Why support waterbirds?

Whilst water for the environment cannot create these large-scale breeding events, it plays a very important role in supporting nesting after it has naturally started.

Giving nesting waterbirds and their young the best chance at survival is important as numbers across the country have declined significantly in recent decades. Waterbirds have had fewer opportunities to breed and supporting birds in wet years helps numbers to rebuild and create resilience in their numbers for when drier conditions return.

Environmental water managers are continually monitoring conditions closely and gathering information about the current breeding event.



Royal spoonbill and Little pied cormorant seen during the [2021-22 Gwydir Wetland breeding event](#). Photo: Jared Reid, 2Rog. (Photo taken during scientific monitoring).

What else is being planned?

Depending on how conditions change, water for the environment may be used to maintain condition of key wetlands across the Gwydir. It may also be used to extend connectivity with the Barwon River to support native fish populations to breed and move. We will continue to keep the community informed as the year progresses. Environmental water deliveries are carefully managed to minimise impacts, working within local conditions.



Old Dromana. (Jane Humphries, CEWO).

Mallowa Creek Scoping Study

Aside from planning environmental water deliveries, the Commonwealth Environmental Water Office is working with local landholders in the Mallowa Creek to understand the way the system works, how flows move and the current constraints to flow delivery so that future water for environment deliveries are better informed.

A workshop with Mallowa landholders and Traditional Owners will be arranged in early December 2022. The project is expected to be completed in 12 months.



Mallowa Creek at The Slab, Poison Gate Road. (David Weldrake, CEWO).

Working together & adaptively

Commonwealth and NSW environmental water managers work together to provide water for the environment in partnership with communities, scientists, government agencies and Traditional Owners. This helps identify how best to achieve outcomes while minimising the unwanted impacts to private landholders.

WaterNSW's [Water Insights Portal](#) provides information on current flow conditions and how water is being managed and shared.

Contact the CEWO Local Engagement Officer for further information:

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The Commonwealth Environmental Water Office pays respect to the Traditional Owners of the Murray-Darling Basin. We acknowledge their enduring cultural, social, environmental, spiritual and economic connection to the rivers, wetlands and floodplains of the Basin. We acknowledge the Gomeroi/Kamilaroi Nation of the Gwydir system.