



Gwydir Recovery Flows

Benefits:	Improving condition of rivers and wetlands across the Gingham and Lower Gwydir systems.
Date & volume:	<u>Supplementary Flow</u> - ~ 3,400 ML (14-16 Feb 2020).
Other flows:	Water for the environment was provided by supplementary entitlements that built on natural flows.
Target areas:	Lower Gwydir and Gingham systems.

This has led river flows to increase significantly across the Gwydir valley. These flows have replenished pools across all parts of the river network. They have also enabled the Gwydir system to connect to the Barwon River. The two systems have been connected since 5 February. These flows are expected to help native fish communities recover from the recent drought.



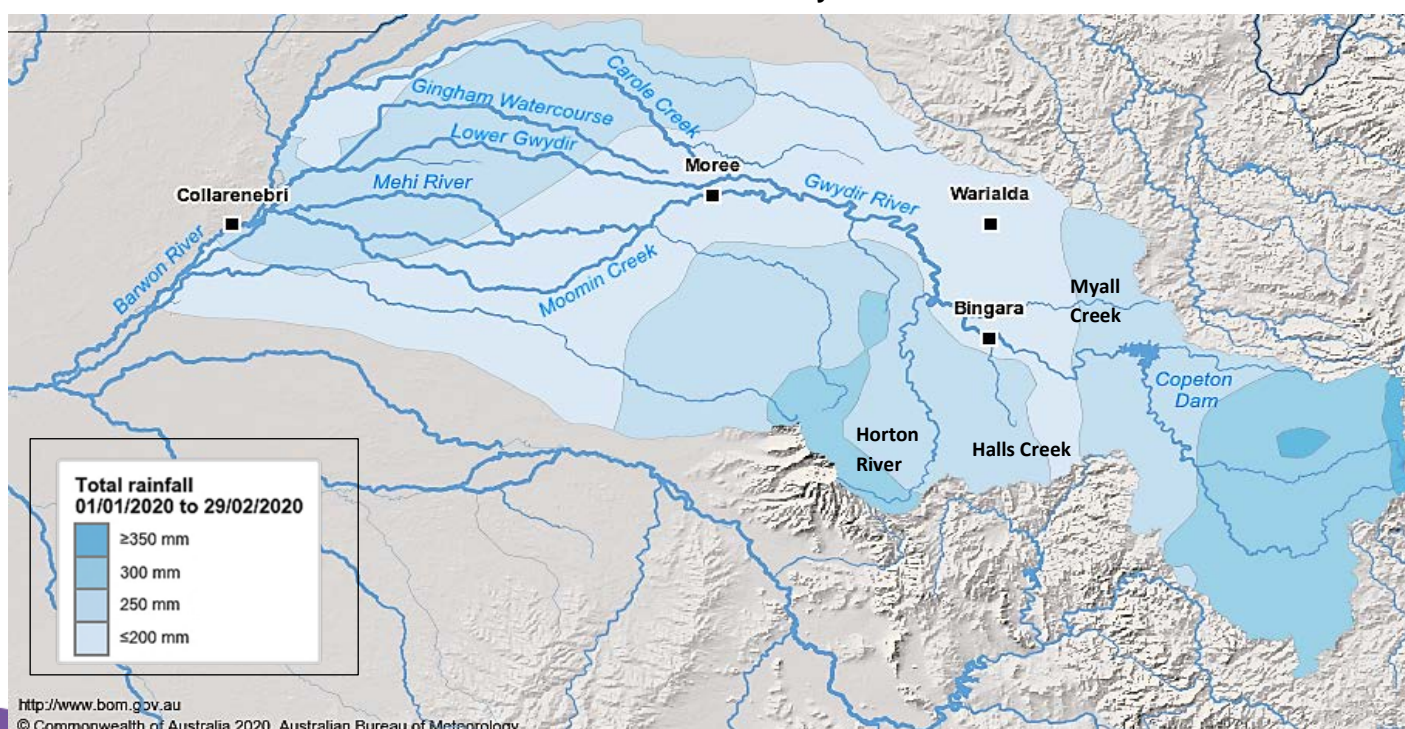
Flows in the Mehi upstream of Collarenebri – 27 February. Photo: CEWO.

Gwydir refuge pool flows

Flows in the Gwydir over Spring and Summer have provided refuges to help native fish survive the hot dry conditions. Recent rainfall has resulted in improved flows. If hot and dry conditions return, additional small releases of water for the environment may be used to top up refuge pools.

Recent flows in the Gwydir system

Recent welcome rainfall has seen some parts of the middle and western catchment record 300 - 350mm across January and February.



Map of Gwydir catchment showing total rainfall recorded from 1 January 2020 to 29 February 2020. Source: Australian Bureau of Meteorology.

Inflows from the Horton River and Myall Creek saw the Gwydir River at Yarraman Bridge peak around 7,900 ML/d on 15 February. These flows enabled access to supplementary licences to be announced along the Gwydir River below Boolooroo weir.

Additional unregulated inflows entered the Gwydir system during mid-March allowing access to supplementary water licences to be announced along most sections of the Mehi River along with Carole and Moomin Creeks.

Increased flows into wetlands

Use of supplementary entitlements by environmental water managers allows additional water to flow downstream and build on the environmental outcomes of natural flow events. NSW and Commonwealth supplementary entitlements meant an additional 3,650 ML of water for the environment flowed into rivers and wetlands across the Lower Gwydir, Gingham and Mallowa systems.



The spread from water that has flowed into Central Gingham wetlands. Photo: NSW NPWS.



Flows filling Gingham waterhole. Photo: A Guest, MDBA.

The combination of natural flows and water for the environment resulted in flows reaching the central Gingham wetlands, inundating some critical wetland habitats that receive flows in most years.

What's next?

Any further rainfall across the the Gwydir Valley is likely to result in further flows into the lower parts of the system. Depending on the size and timing of these flows, additional water for the environment from supplementary entitlements may be used to build on the environmental outcomes of natural flow events.

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Further information on Environmental Water in the Gwydir at:

<https://www.environment.gov.au/water/cewo/catchment/gwydir>

<https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/environmental-water-hub/management>



Flows in the Mehi River at Moree, 24 January. Photo: CEWO.

The Department acknowledges the traditional owners of Gomerioi country and all country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to their elders both past and present.