Australian Government
Commonwealth Environmental Water Office

Southern Spring flow 2019 - Update #2

4 September 2019

September's water is now flowing

Objectives	Provide food and shelter for native fish and other aquatic animals along the River Murray, from Hume Dam to the Coorong.
Start date	1 August 2019 (Hume Dam release)
Total duration	1st flow (1 Aug) – 2-3 weeks 2nd flow (1 Sept) – at least 6 weeks
Flow rate	Combined with other flows to target up to 2.2m (15,000 megalitres/day) downstream of Yarrawonga Weir.
Target areas	River Murray channel and key wetlands and creeks in Barmah-Millewa and Gunbower-Koondrook-Pericoota forests, Edward-Wakool, Lake Kramen (Vic Hattah-Kulkyne Lakes), Chowilla, Coorong and Lower Lakes.

The August flow so far…

Flows from the water that was released on 1 August reached the lower Murray at Blanchetown (SA) early this week.

Multiple rivers, creeks and wetlands in the mid-Murray have received a drink including—Tuppal Creek, Barmah-Millewa and Gunbower-Koondrook-Pericoota Living Murray sites. Water in the Edward-Wakool system has made its way into the Yallakool-Wakool, Colligen-Niemur and the Edward River.

Water pumping at Lake Kramen (Hattah Lakes, Vic) commenced in early August and pumping into priority wetlands in Chowilla (SA) will start today (4 September).

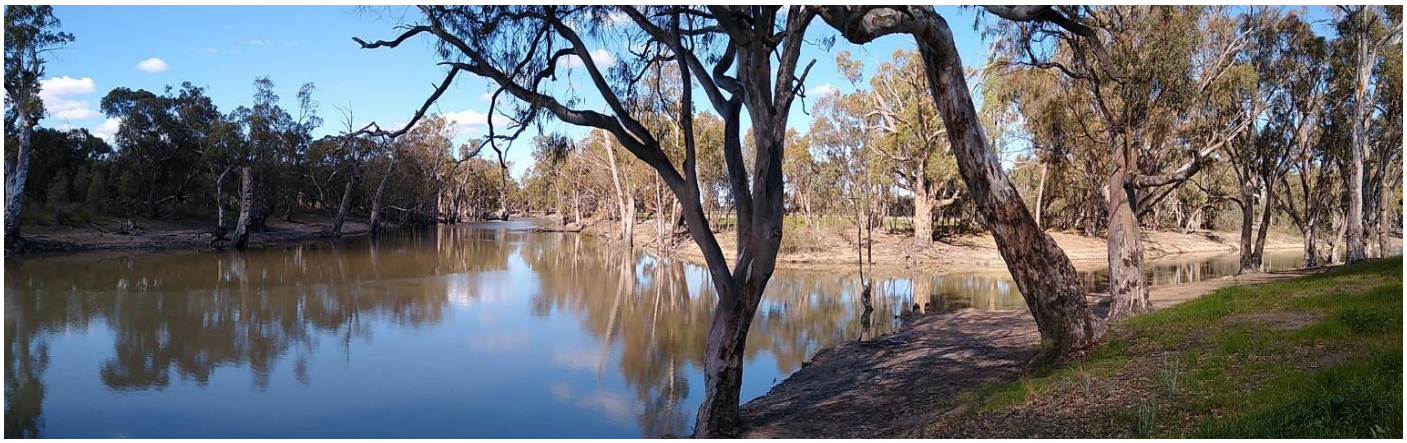
Progress for the September flow…

Delivery of the second flow started on 1 September. Flow rates during September for the River Murray downstream of Yarrawonga are targeting 15,000 megalitres/day.

This flow is timed to coincide with water for the environment being provided in the Goulburn River in mid-late September. Timing of these releases follow natural seasonal flow patterns for these rivers.

Is the water making a difference?

As part of this watering, river scientists will be studying how well this flow is supporting the river food-chain (or food web).



Flows reaching confluence of Yallakool Ck. and the Wakool River near Wakool in late August. Photo: D. McRae, CEWO.

Scientists will be measuring plankton, which is similar to whale food but a freshwater version (see photo). Nitrogen, phosphorus and carbon will also be measured to determine how much energy is available in the system for use by plants and animals.

Fieldwork started this week and will continue for 3 months at more than 21 sites between Tocumwal (NSW) and Blanchetown (SA).

Ranging between 0.2-5mm in length this daphnia is small enough to fit in in the mouth of a newly hatched yellow-belly (golden perch). Photo: SARDI.

Data will be analysed to understand how flows influence energy or food in the river. Results of this work will also be used to advise future water deliveries, as part of an adaptive management process.

Water from the Southern Spring Flow is being re-used multiple times along the River Murray all the way from Lake Hume to the Coorong.

We are collaborating with the Victorian Environmental Water Holder, NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, SA Department for Environment and Water, Murray-Darling Basin Authority, Goulburn-Broken CMA, WaterNSW and Goulburn Murray Water.

More information:

https://www.environment.gov.au/water/cewo/media-release/southern-spring-flow-throws-lifeline-river-murray

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Map of southern Murray-Darling Basin showing progress of Southern Spring flow as at 4 September. Dark orange line represents August flow. Dark blue line represents September flow.