



Australian Government

Commonwealth Environmental Water Office

Southern Spring flow 2019 - Update #4

2 October 2019

Native plants and animals are responding to the flow

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	1 st flow (1 Aug) – 2-3 weeks 2 nd flow (1 Sept) – around 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 complex), wetlands in Chowilla, Coorong and Lower Lakes.

Where is the flow now...?

The flow released in August has reached the Lower Lakes and is providing spring barrage flows to the Coorong.

Water from the 1 September flow has reached the lower Murray and was flowing past Renmark last week.

News from the field

Site managers in the Barmah-Millewa Forest have reported water is reaching lower floodplain wetlands. Frogs have started breeding, waterbirds are moving in and black swans are busy building nests.



Swan and cygnets, Barmah Forest. Photo: Keith Ward and Tim Barlow, Goulburn-Broken CMA.

Monitoring of plankton, nutrients and organic matter (carbon) is being carried out along the river as planned.



Bottom left and right: Field sampling of plankton on the River Murray. Photos: The University of Adelaide.

Rare native fish on the move!

The August flow is providing water through the barrage fishways in the Coorong to support upstream migration of lamprey.

Lampreys are a rare, eel-like fish that migrate during winter and spring from the Great Southern Ocean to the upper Murray to breed.

Two species of lamprey are found in the Basin – pouched and short-headed lamprey. Both migrate vast distances, potentially over 2000km, with records as far upstream as Narranderra on the Murrumbidgee River and Yarrawonga on the Murray.

This season scientists have tagged lamprey to track them as they migrate upstream. Since monitoring began in July, 44 pouched and 8 short-headed lamprey have moved upstream. One pouched lamprey has travelled over 700km, moving the last 423km in just 16 days! This fish passed Lock 7 near Lake Victoria last week.



You'll need to look hard to see a short-headed (top) and pouched (bottom) lamprey. Photo: SA DEW.

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/catchment/southern-spring-flow-2019>

Local Engagement Officers

Commonwealth Environmental Water Office Local Engagement Officers:

Anthony Wilson (Wodonga, VIC)

☎ 0419 188 430

✉ anthony.wilson@environment.gov.au

Richard Mintern (Mildura, VIC)

☎ 0437 218 649

✉ richard.mintern@environment.gov.au

Michelle Campbell (Berri)

☎ 0437 064 664

✉ michelle.campbell@environment.gov.au



Map of southern Murray-Darling Basin showing progress of Southern Spring flow as at 30 September. Dark orange line represents August flow. Dark blue line represents September flow.