

Preliminary results from seven demonstration reaches throughout the Murray–Darling Basin (MDB) highlight a range of successful outcomes including increased native fish numbers, riparian revegetation, improved water flow and fish passage and weed removal. The demonstration reaches were established as part of the MDBA’s Native Fish Strategy. The goal of the strategy is to rehabilitate native fish communities in the MDB back to 60 per cent of their estimated pre-European settlement levels. Native fish populations in the MDB have declined due to a range of threats including flow regulation, habitat degradation, lowered water quality, man-made barriers to fish movement and the introduction of alien fish species.

One of the key objectives of the strategy was to establish a range of large-scale river demonstration sites to increase community awareness of ways to improve native fish numbers, and provide practical examples of river rehabilitation. The sites include:

- **Brewarrina to Bourke** Demonstration Reach project along the Barwon–Darling River, New South Wales
- **Dewfish** Demonstration Reach incorporating parts of Myall Creek, Oakey Creek and the Condamine River, Queensland
- **Katfish** Demonstration Reach Project on the Katarapko/Eckert Creek anabranch system between Berri and Loxton along the River Murray, South Australia
- **Namoi** Demonstration Reach along the Namoi River between Gunnedah and Narrabri, New South Wales
- **Ovens** Demonstration Reach on the Ovens River near Wangaratta, Victoria
- **Upper Murrumbidgee** Demonstration Reach along the Upper Murrumbidgee River between Bredbo, New South Wales and Casuarina Sands, Australian Capital Territory
- **Hollands Creek** Demonstration Reach along the Hollands Creek near Tatong, Victoria.

BREWARRINA TO BOURKE DEMONSTRATION REACH

The Brewarrina to Bourke Demonstration Reach was established for the rehabilitation and protection of aquatic habitat and native fish populations along the Barwon–Darling River. Various on-ground works and community awareness activities have been carried out along a 207 kilometre stretch of river extending from the Brewarrina Weir to the Bourke Weir.

The project demonstrates a range of best practise management methods to alleviate the pressures affecting native fish species, including improved fish passage at Brewarrina and Bourke weirs, riparian zone management and reinstating in-stream habitat.

Some of the main project outcomes include the construction of a reverse rock-ramp fishway at Brewarrina Weir, reinstatement of over 400 structural woody habitats (snags) across 11 sites, and significant community engagement, including eight carp musters involving hundreds of participants and removing several hundred kilograms of carp from the river.

Stream bank works include weed control covering 100 kilometres of riverbank, planting of more than 8500 local provenance trees, remediation of eroding gullies and the provision of riparian fencing and alternative livestock watering points.

continued overleaf



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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<http://www.fishhabitatnetwork.com.au/demonstration-reaches/>