

Fishers for Fish Habitat Forum

Report for Participants

22-23 August 2014

Club Dubbo, Dubbo NSW

2014 Fishers for Fish Habitat Forum report for participants

Fishers for Fish Habitat is a NSW Department of Primary Industries developed program. It aims to increase awareness about the importance of fish habitat and inspire anglers to do what they can to protect and enhance these vital areas that our native freshwater fish need to survive and thrive, and in doing so help make more fish!

We can all be inspired by the recreational anglers throughout NSW who are doing things to improve fish habitat. They plant trees on riverbanks, protect mangroves and seagrass beds, clean up rubbish at local fishing spots, help out at fishing clinics and carp muster events and raise awareness about structures that restrict fish movement.

The **Fishers for Fish Habitat** program also aims to ensure the community is aware of the good works these individuals are doing to improve the environment for native fish species and the enjoyment of future generations.

Fishers for Fish Habitat is funded by the NSW Recreational Fishing Trusts.

The 2014 **Fishers for Fish Habitat Forum** was held in Dubbo on 22-23 August 2014. The event was organised by the NSW DPI Aquatic Habitat Rehabilitation unit staff including Charlotte Jenkins, Scott Nichols, Matt Miles and Rodney Price with assistance from Sam Davis and Craig Copeland. 42 recreational fishers registered prior to the event, 34 participants from the surrounding region and as far afield as south coast NSW, Sydney and the central coast made it to Dubbo for the Forum.

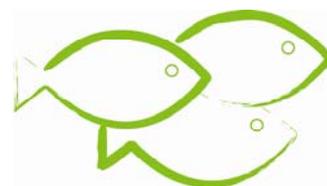
Special thanks to the Dubbo Macquarie River Bushcare for their assistance with the Macquarie River field day and tree planting.



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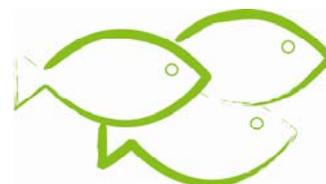
Agenda



Day 1 Friday 22 August

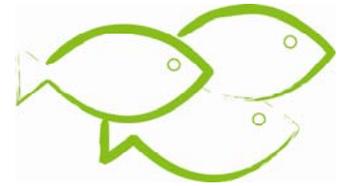
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| From 12:00pm | Refuel, Meet and greet Registration. Light lunch on arrival |
| 13:00 | Cast off! Welcome to Country Open forum |
| 13:15 | Habitat 101 Focus on freshwater fish habitat |
| 13:45 | Restoring fish passage Not just an uphill battle |
| 14:15 | Just add water Shining a spotlight on thermal pollution and e-flows |
| 14:35 | Not your average catch The unusual and the rare |
| 14:55 | Fish habitat Perspectives gained from a native fish hatchery |
| 15:20 | Take a break Afternoon tea refreshments available |
| 15:55 | Habitat Heroes - fishers getting their hands dirty Featuring: Changing our Culture - a journey of learning Keeping Big Fish Moving in the Little River |
| 16:25 | Common Waters NSW Fish Habitat Partnership |
| 16:50 | Better fishery? What's needed? Part I Interactive session |
| 17:20 | Reel it in! Time for a break until dinner |
| From 18:30 | Forum Dinner Tales from the North What Paddy, Taffy, Jock and the Yank said |

Day 2 Saturday 23 August



| | |
|-------|--|
| 7:45 | On the bus (pick up from Club Dubbo) |
| 8:00 | Roll up, roll up BBQ breakfast, bacon and egg rolls catered by Dubbo Lions Club |
| 8:30 | Macquarie River Rehabilitation Creating more homes for fish - A re-snagging demo , Fisheries NSW |
| | Creating more food for fish - Willow stem injection demo and Tree planting with Dubbo Macquarie River Bushcare |
| | Creating more access for fish - South Dubbo Weir |
| 10:45 | Back to Club Dubbo for refuel |
| 11:20 | Better fishery? What's next? Part II Interactive session |
| 11:50 | Making fishing better Getting involved, getting active |
| 12:10 | The feedback loop |
| 12:30 | Lunch before you hit the road Forum close |

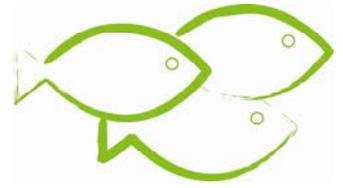
Presentations



In order of presentation:

1. Habitat 101, a focus on freshwater fish habitat – Scott Nichols
2. Restoring fish passage, not just an uphill battle – Dr Craig Boys
3. Just add water, shining a light on thermal pollution and e-flows – Sam Davis
4. Not your average catch the unusual and the rare – Rodney Price, Matt Miles
5. Fish habitat, perspectives gained from a native fish hatchery – Stephan Thurstan
6. Habitat Heroes, fishers getting their hands dirty
 - a. Changing our culture, a journey of learning – Matt Hansen IWRA
 - b. Keeping big fish moving in the Little River – Matt Philipson Yeoval Fishing Club
7. Common waters, NSW Fish Habitat Partnership – Mark Bulley, Chair
8. Making fishing better, getting involved, getting active – Charlotte Jenkins

Participant evaluation of the event



Number of responses – 17

Majority attended both days (N= 16). The person who attended one day attended the Friday.

Perception of habitat knowledge *prior* to participation in the Forum

v. good – 23.5%

Good – 12%

Okay – 41%

Patchy – 23.5%

The majority of respondents strongly agreed and 4 respondents agreed that participating in the Forum has *improved their understanding* of issue affecting fish habitat.

All but 2 of the respondents strongly agreed that they now have a *better understanding* of the work being done to improve fish habitat

All respondents either strongly agreed (12) or agreed (5) that they *feel more confident* about ways in which I can get involved in improving fish habitat as a result of the Forum

The majority of respondents either strongly agreed (14) or agreed (3) that they would *encourage other recreational fishers* to attend the next Forum

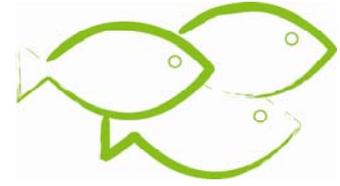
Respondents were very positive about the venue, organisation, mix of speakers and activities, bus trip and dinner.

Comments and suggestions about the most useful aspect of the Forum were overwhelmingly positive. There was a strong focus on the social aspect of the event and respect and appreciation for fellow attendees:

- “The networking available and the great people I met”
- “To see and appreciate the enthusiasm of attendees particularly the IWRA”
- “The Network”
- “The very passionate and active people in the Dubbo area”

The most useful aspect of the Forum for one respondent which reflects the usefulness of the event was the “The belief that something can be done”

Respondents listed the three key messages they will take from the Forum. The list of these indicates that the Forum was successful in generating key ‘take home messages’ about habitat for the whole ecosystem and not just the popular catch species, and the importance of rehabilitation for making more fish.



The list of take home messages also indicates that respondents had a clear belief in the concept of long term fisheries management and the importance of working with and educating all key stakeholders in fish habitat restoration.

Several suggestions for the next Forum included enhancing the social aspect of the Forum and the learning opportunities this would create, such as:

- Have a river bank campout in tents or swags
- Host a fishing event and use it as a tool to for an interactive demonstration of the species concerned
- Provide an opportunity for local attendees to billet/host travelling attendees who may otherwise not attend due to accommodation costs.

Many respondents suggested the attendance at the Forum should be extended to local Councils – councillors, managers and staff, local businesses and media outlets.

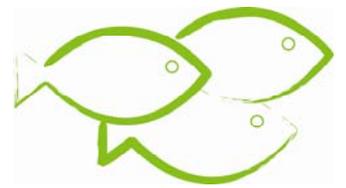
Other suggestions included:

- Allowing more time for speakers
- Providing advice on communication and media processes i.e. how do we fishers get all the other stakeholders involved
- Additional on-farm visits to view project planning and implementation.

Other comments received:

- “Host a half day workshop for the whole community on why fish passage and migration is important”
- “Not just restocking, you need habitat!”
- “This is the first Forum I have been to and I found it most informative, I look forward to the next one where ever it may be”
- “Keep up the good work! There is plenty left to do”
- “Great 2 days, thanks”

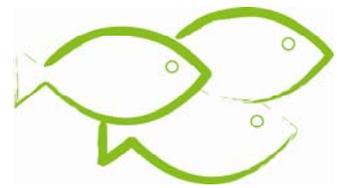
Photos from the event



| Who | \$ | Resources | Other? |
|--|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Govt DPH FISL Council State Water Landowner (State Water) Community (education) advisors on river Local member media Fish Habitat Partnership (top down) businesses (financial benefits) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State / Fed Govt outreach - State Water corporate sponsors community contributions alternate buckets = education, business financial institutions (super funds) green BCF - house fees Recreational Fishing Test Generate Revenue via Lottery Program Fishing Tackle Levy comp. boats Maritime - Fees = sub Redire of fines to hubs (fishing) into inst fund or lab | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> inkind - machinery monitoring maintenance FIS driver (manager) ACT school river health program more core funded aware (floods) phobias Lobbying | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduction of length of removal / fishing managing pump NWS education to wider community (schools, financial health of work) awareness - bringing in no fees community education re: waste eg cigg butts |
| <p>Holistic Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landcare (our groups) EPA Fishing media adjacent landholders Wharist boards Schools (our education) media personality | | | |
| <p>Long term Vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plastic Bottle.org soft drink compense SA example | | | |



Photos from the event



Photos from the event

