

Removing a barrier to fish passage

Letting the tide in

The site

Duroby Creek is a feeder creek of the Terranora Broadwater in the Tweed Catchment. The creek is tidally influenced and was originally lined with mangroves. However, the extent of the tidal limit was restricted when a rock and earth weir-type structure for cattle to cross the creek was constructed across the whole breadth of the creek.

Proponent: Tweed Shire Council

Land use: Crown land

Habitat grant: \$10,000

In-kind support: \$13,970

The project

Local fisherman Charlie Howe recognised that the structure was a problem as it *'isolated the salt from the fresh and restricted fish, such as bass and mullet, getting to spawning grounds'*. It wasn't until the land use in the area changed from farming and grazing to rural residential that Charlie finally *'saw an opportunity to do something about it'*. He approached I&I NSW (Fisheries), who took on the project with Tweed Shire Council. No owner of the crossing could be located and because it was impacting the waterway and restricting fish to 6 kilometres of upstream habitat it was earmarked for removal. With funding from the NSW Recreational Fishing Trust a Council work team took 2 days to remove the structure and reinstate flow to the creek.



The original crossing stopped fish from accessing habitat in the creek. Photo: I&I NSW

The outcomes

The removal of the weir has

- reinstated tidal flow to that section of the creek
- opened up 6 kilometres of habitat for fish
- reduced flooding of residential land

Charlie continues to address habitat issues such as seagrass protection and mangrove rehabilitation and wants to *'make people, especially recreational fishers, aware that without habitat you won't have any place for fish to breed or spawn... without habitat you don't get any fish'*.



Once removed, fish had greater access to better quality habitat. Photo: I&I NSW