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“What do different flows look like in my river?”

NO FLOW IS THE SAME

Different flows can make your river rise or fall - all flows are important for native fish but for different reasons.

- 1 OVERBANK
- 2 BANKFULL
- 3 LARGE FRESH
- 4 SMALL FRESH
- 5 BASE FLOW
- 6 CEASE TO FLOWS

1 OVERBANK

- Water flows out of the river and across floodplains, helping fish feed, breed and move to new habitat.
- Small floodplain fish need overbank flows to access floodplain wetlands and lagoons.
- Larger fish like Golden Perch use wetlands, lakes, billabongs and lagoons as nurseries, helping fish grow big and fit.

2 BANKFULL

- Murray Cod, Golden Perch, Silver Perch and Freshwater Catfish need bankfull flows to inundate benches, snags and low-lying wetlands to feed, grow and breed.

3 LARGE FRESH

- All fish benefit from rises in flow that cover benches in the river channel, creating more food, access to more habitats and better breeding opportunities. Golden Perch and Silver Perch use “freshes” to trigger breeding and movement.
- Murray Cod can use freshes in late winter and early spring to prepare for breeding (to find nest sites and food, creating fat, happy and healthy fish).

4 SMALL FRESH

- Smaller freshes help fish move and find safe homes in low-lying habitats such as snags and well-vegetated areas to feed, breed and grow.
- Small freshes can support breeding and movement of fish such as Murray Cod and Freshwater Catfish.
- These flows also help smaller food fish like Australian Smelt, Gudgeons, Murray-Darling Rainbowfish and Bony Herring.

5 BASE FLOW

- Water is confined to the deeper parts of the river, keeping pools connected, protecting fish habitats and maintaining water quality while also providing food for fish like Bony Herring.

6 CEASE TO FLOW

- With very little flow, the river becomes a set of isolated pools supporting some fish and other aquatic animals and plants.
- For many inland rivers, natural wetting and drying cycles actually help boost food for fish and reduce invasive species like Carp.

HEALTHY FISH COMMUNITIES NEED DIFFERENT FLOWS