



MEDIA RELEASE

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Best-practice method to be used to determine carp tonnage

Researchers from five states are collaborating to develop an international best-practice method to accurately determine the total weight, or biomass of carp in Australia's waterways.

Invasive European Carp are now endemic in waterways in all states and territories, except the Northern Territory, and are estimated to make up a large percentage of the fish biomass in many Australian waterways.

The new research project aims to deliver an estimate of the carp biomass for eastern Australia. This project is one of 10 major research projects being undertaken as part of the \$15 million National Carp Control Plan (NCCP), which is being prepared to explore the use of a biocontrol to improve the quality of Australia's waterways.

Principal researcher, Jarod Lyon, from the Arthur Rylah Institute, says carp biomass estimation will be undertaken across a range of habitat types including rivers, lakes, billabongs, and estuaries, and will also allow for fluctuating carp numbers through time.

"Gaining a solid estimate of the total volume of carp is a vital piece of information that will inform other projects. This research will critically inform development of carp virus release strategies and planning for clean-up; especially in high density locations, should a decision be made to release the virus," Mr Lyon says.

"We have a reasonable amount of data already but the methodology we are using will provide a more robust estimate of carp density to inform planning and management," he says.

"I've worked in a lot of rivers and carp aren't just in the Murray-Darling Basin, there are carp in coastal rivers too, so this research will ensure we measure total abundance in many different areas."

"Standard approaches to measuring fish abundance, such as mark-recapture methods, will be used alongside a relatively new technique – environmental DNA (eDNA) – to provide multiple lines of evidence," Mr Lyon says.

"eDNA taken from water samples can detect what species are in the water, and potentially their relative density as well. Consequently, this approach has the potential to become a rapid sampling technique," he says.

NCCP National Coordinator Matt Barwick says the NCCP program is a plan to recover Australian waterways and aquatic biodiversity.

“Research such as this underpins a thorough and measured approach to the NCCP, ensuring the right recommendations are made to Government at the end of 2018 to deliver the optimum outcome for stakeholders,” Mr Barwick says.

The Arthur Rylah Institute in Victoria is leading the collaboration to determine the tonnage of carp that reside in Australian aquatic environments.

Some of the other major research projects include: completion of trials testing susceptibility of non-target species to the carp virus; and strategies for cleaning up carp if the carp virus is released.

In addition to research a comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan will be delivered over the next 18 months to consult with, and seek feedback from, the general public and special interest groups.

To be kept up to date on the NCCP please visit www.carp.gov.au and sign up to the newsletter or visit the contact us page to leave feedback.

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About the National Carp Control Plan

The National Carp Control Plan (NCCP) is being prepared to explore the release of the carp virus cyprinid herpesvirus-3. The Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) is leading the \$15 million planning process on behalf of the Australian Government. At the end of 2018, the FRDC will provide the completed NCCP to the Australian Government, which will then decide whether to release the virus or not.

For more information visit www.carp.gov.au

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