



Robyn Parker MP

Minister for the Environment

Minister for Heritage

MEDIA RELEASE

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GOOD NEWS FOR STATE'S WETLANDS ON WORLD WETLANDS DAY

Wetlands in NSW are in the best condition they have been in over a decade - but there is still more work to be done to improve their future health, Environment Minister Robyn Parker said today on the eve of World Wetlands Day.

Ms Parker said World Wetlands Day - held on 2 February every year - provides an opportunity to promote the substantial value of our wetlands and the contribution communities are making to protect their local environment.

"Wetlands have an important role in our communities, improving water quality, providing habitat for fish, frogs and birds and offering cultural, recreational and social significance," Ms Parker said.

"Local organisations, landholders and volunteers across NSW, play a vital part in helping to restore and protect these valuable natural resources.

"I encourage everyone to learn about their local wetlands and if possible visit a wetland on World Wetlands Day."

The Theme for World Wetlands Day this year is *Wetlands and Water Management*.

During spring and summer 2012-2013 the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) managed the delivery of environmental water to maximise the benefits of rainfall and improve the health of wetlands across inland NSW, including in the Macquarie Marshes, Gwydir Wetlands and the Lower Murrumbidgee.

Ms Parker said the deliveries of environmental water flows this summer follow two good wet years and coincide with the peak growing season for wetland vegetation and the wildlife breeding season.

"The OEH closely monitors the response of wetland vegetation to environmental water flows and is undertaking a three-year monitoring program at over 100 sites via satellite and on ground monitoring with landholders.

"This monitoring is showing that the delivery of environmental water over the last three years has maximised the benefits of rainfall and river flows to help improve the health of wetland systems which suffered during the drought.

“There has been an increase in wildlife populations and a significant improvement in the health of native vegetation including river red gum, black box, water couch and marsh club rush.

“This regular watering is also helping to improve the condition of wetlands to withstand dry spells in the future.”

For more information on wetlands and environmental water in NSW visit the OEH website: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/wetlands/RiversAndWetlands.htm>

Key facts:

- World Wetlands Day is held on 2 February each year marking the date of the signing of the Convention on Wetlands in 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar.
- There are 12 Ramsar wetlands in NSW including Blue Lake, Fivebough and Tuckerbil wetlands, Gwydir wetlands, Hunter estuary wetlands, Lake Pinaroo, Little Llangothlin Nature Reserve, Macquarie Marshes, Myall Lakes, Narran Lakes Nature Reserve, NSW Central Murray forests, Paroo River wetlands and Towra Point Nature Reserve.
- Environmental water is managed by the OEH in catchments across NSW in consultation with environmental water advisory groups which include representatives from community, government, water and environmental groups.
- OEH has managed the delivery of over 1.5 million megalitres of environmental water since June 2011 to NSW’s rivers and wetlands, improving their health and supporting native waterbirds.
- The *NSW 2021* target for rivers, wetlands and coastal environments is to “*Improve the environmental health of wetlands and catchments through actively managing water for the environment by 2021*”.

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