

MEDIA RELEASE

22 September 2011

AMAZING NEW PICS – the Carp are coming – the carp are coming – 4000% increase in one year



Hoads of young carp have recently converged below the Menindee Main Weir on the Darling River. The hoard is a response to the huge increase in carp numbers (more than 4,000%) in the lower Darling River (below Menindee) during the 2010–11 carp breeding season, according to NSW Department of Primary Industries-Fisheries.

Andreas Glanznig, CEO of the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre, says hoards of small carp have also been reported in other rivers of the Murray-Darling system. "Carp have bred in massive numbers following extensive flooding, with the high river levels of last summer proving ideal for carp spawning," Mr Glanznig said. "The carp problem looks set to worsen dramatically throughout the Basin as these young fish spread out and grow. There is no doubt that if we get another series of moderate to large floods this coming summer/autumn then the problem will escalate even further. Perversely, delivering environmental flows to iconic wetlands on the Murray floodplain can also enhance carp spawning and recruitment".

The recent population explosion in carp underlines the importance of IACRC research to produce a strategic toolbox of carp control technologies. The centrepiece - Australia's first carp biocontrol agent Cyprinid herpesvirus 3 (CyHV-3) – has resulted in a 80%+ knockdown of common carp overseas without affecting native species. Research has been underway for five years, and its completion and field implementation depends on future funding for the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre. The IACRC is seeking a five-year extension from the Australian Government once its current funding runs out in June 2012. Control of carp will greatly improve the health of the Murray-Darling and its important wetlands.

The research is being done at the high-security CSIRO Australian Animal Health Laboratory, which is undertaking a rigorous laboratory assessment of CyHV-3. Results to date shows that common carp are very susceptible to CyHV-3 but it does not affect native fish species. Once further proposed research is complete, the research will be evaluated by government regulatory bodies before it can be considered for widespread application in Australia.

Its proposed distribution will be focussed on carp spawning 'hotspots', discovered through IACRC funded research, to maximise its impact. In total, only 18 carp hotspots have been identified in the Murray-Darling Basin. In addition, nine other areas have habitat features suggesting that they may act as carp hotspots when flooded. Seven of these 27 hotspots are much more important than the rest, producing very high numbers of juvenile carp. These include important wetlands like the Macquarie Marshes, Namoi wetlands, Gwydir wetlands and Barmah-Millewa Forest. Release of the biocontrol into carp nurseries will be particularly effective since young carp are the most susceptible to the virus.

Partners in the current carp research led by the IACRC, which concludes on 30 June 2012, include: the Murray-Darling Basin Authority, NSW Department of Primary Industries, SA Research and Development Institute, Qld Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation, Vic Department of Primary Industries and the CSIRO.

The proposed Invasive Animals CRC extension is a focussed collaboration of 26 partners that have already committed more than \$52 million or almost three quarters of the \$72 million over five years needed to continue the R&D program that will deliver the new technologies critical to tackle the carp and other pressing agricultural and environmental pest animal problems.

Picture Editors: email contact@invasiveanimals.com for the pictures of a major aggregation of young carp below the Menindee Main Weir on the Darling River, courtesy of Nigel Harriss NSW Office of Water 2011.

MORE INFORMATION:

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