

MEDIA RELEASE

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Murray cod: study of an icon

Anglers from along the New South Wales/Queensland border, east of Goondiwindi, have been studying the optimal stocking rates for the Murray Cod, which is listed as vulnerable under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

The project, called 'Study of an Icon', has been carried out on the Dumaresq River between Mingoola and Bonshaw.

The project has been organised by the Glen Lyon Dam Fish Restocking Group and Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, and supported by the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee (QMDC), the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries, the Murray Cod Recovery Team, the Freshwater Fish Stocking Association of Queensland, Victorian Fisheries, CSIRO and the University of New England.

Organiser Brian Dare from the Glen Lyon Dam Fish Restocking Group, said that an initial research trip had already taken place in late May. "Over 100 cod were caught over two days by 68 keen anglers, fishing from small boats and canoes," said Brian. "We had expected to catch around 300 cod, but, unfortunately, poor weather conditions prevented this," he said.

All cod caught were tagged and released.

Brian said that this information would help the 'Study of an Icon' partners to assess the contribution of fish stocking and the levels of natural recruitment for the Murray Cod along the river. "We hope to use this information to improve the stocking management plans presently in place," he said.

Prior to 2004, approximately three million cod fingerlings were stocked into the Murray Darling Catchment, with little knowledge of the impact or contribution this would make to natural fish populations and recreational fishing activities.

Megan Purvis, QMDC Riverine Technical Officer, said, "Not knowing, or understanding, these impacts, is not ideal.

"It means that restocking groups can't properly manage their fish stocking programs, including deciding where to restock, how many fingerlings to restock with, or whether to restock at all."

The 'Study of an Icon' project has been funded by both state and federal governments and will continue for the next eight years.

For more information on the project, please contact Brian Dare on 02 6737 5266, or Megan Purvis from QMDC on 07 4671 7900.

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Images



Ben Durkin with a 103cm Murray Cod, caught during the 'Study of an Icon' research trip in the Dumaresq River.
Photo by Rod Cheetham.