

MEDIA RELEASE

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Surat anglers bust Carp

As the sun set on another hot January day, the South-West Queensland Balonne River's Carp population was counting its losses.

On 28 January, over 220 people had arrived in the riverside town of Surat for the first joint Surat Fishing & Restocking Club/Queensland Murray-Darling Committee (QMDC) 'Carp Buster Competition'.

The day was designed to raise awareness about the threat Carp pose to Queensland's waterways, and to make a dent in the large numbers of Carp currently in the Balonne River.

Carp, a dirty word for most Australians, are responsible for severe degradation throughout the Murray-Darling Basin's waterways, affecting water quality and native fish populations.

"The sheer numbers have meant that there's increased competition with native fish," QMDC's Riverine and Wetlands Technical Officer, Erin Bainbridge said.

"And the feeding habits of Carp stir up sediment in the water, which uproots aquatic plants and disturbs native fish habitat. This has resulted in a significant change in the ecosystem and a drop in the level of water quality," she said.

Funded by QMDC, staff were out in force to support the day; however, it was the Surat locals who actually achieved the results, catching and disposing of 200 Carp.

Female Carp spawn twice a year, laying over one million eggs per kilogram of body weight each time.

So, the eradication of over 270 kilos of the pest made the day a huge success – and a lot of fun, too!

In addition to the work done to eradicate Carp, 50,000 yellow belly fingerlings were released by the Surat Fishing & Restocking Club, with the help of QMDC staff, to restock the native fish population.

Although a general source of embarrassment for QMDC staff (boasts of fishing prowess from staff in the Toowoomba office became a source of amusement to Surat locals), the day was a huge success and congratulations must go to the Surat Fishing & Restocking Club and all the local Surat anglers.

"With Carp being so common in regular competitions, the community felt this was a good idea to raise general awareness about Carp and promote community involvement to help control Carp numbers," said Ms Bainbridge.

Surat's Carp Buster Competition will be on again next year. If you'd like to pit your fishing skills against the locals, please contact the QMDC Roma office on 07 4622 8446.

Thallon will be following Surat's example, with their own Carp Buster competition to be held on 18 and 19 March. Please contact QMDC's Goondiwindi office on 07 4671 7900 for more details.

QMDC is sponsoring other fishing clubs to implement Carp Buster competitions and other fish habitat restoration programs. Contact QMDC on 07 4637 6201 for information.

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Sun set on the Balonne



QMDC Staff help release 50,000 yellow belly fingerlings into the Balonne River