

Trust reveals secret weapon for river swim

Monday, 24 December 2012

Swan River Trust Board Member Shelley Taylor-Smith with Trust 2013 Xstrata Nickel Swim Thru Perth team members Jeff Cosgrove, Aaron Schonberg and Bart Peters

Seven-time world champion marathon swimmer Shelley Taylor-Smith has agreed to head a four-member Swan River Trust swim team in a major river race in January.

The Trust team of river scientists and environmental officers was recently put through its paces by the swimming great at a 'secret' training session at Matilda Bay.

The team is preparing to swim the charity team race in the 2013 Xstrata Nickel Swim Thru Perth on January 13.

The Swim Thru is believed to be Australia's oldest open water swim. It was first held in 1912 and taking account of the few years when the swim wasn't held due to World War and the polio epidemic, the 2013 swim will be the 94th time the competition has been held.

Shelley – who is also a member of the Swan River Trust Board – has a long history with the event, which she first won when she was just 12. Back in the days when the event was a handicap swim, Rolf Harris reportedly swam the course backstroke. The event is run by Claremont Masters Swimming Club and attracted hundreds of competitors last year.

The solo swim is a mighty 4km around Matilda Bay but the team event involves shorter distances.

Each member of the 4-person charity teams must swim 1.6km. The individual times are then added together and the lowest overall team time wins the event. Half proceeds go to the Spine and Limb Foundation.

The Trust team includes Swan River Trust scientist Jeff Cosgrove (39) and environmental officers Aaron Schonberg (31) and Bart Peters (38).

For more information - or to enter the race - go to www.swimthruperth.org

Shelley's achievements include:

7 consecutive Women's No 1. World Marathon Swimming Ranking

1991 World No.1 Ranking in Marathon Swimming (overall for both men & women)

15 World Race Records

4 World Championship 25km gold medals

4 Pan Pacific Swimming Championship 25km gold medals

In her 15 years of International competition she was awarded:

4 times World and Australian Long Distance Swimmer of the Year

Australian Female Athlete of the Year

Guinness Book of World Records for fastest time overall in New York's 48km Manhattan Island swim & for her epic Sydney - Wollongong 79km record swim (smashing the record by more than 15 hours)

Night patrols target festive season rubbish

Wednesday, 28 November 2012

More than 11 tonnes of rubbish were retrieved from the Riverpark waterways and foreshores in 2011 - 2012

The Swan River Trust will increase its presence on the river during the festive season with officers planning expanded night patrols until 11pm on random weekdays and weekends.

Trust Riverpark Manager Chris Mather said officers would particularly focus on vessels dumping rubbish at jetties and the appropriate use of 32 courtesy moorings provided by the Trust.

[» Watch the Channel 7 News feature](#)

“The patrols are about education and ensuring that a few people don’t spoil it for the rest so that everyone can have a good time on the river,” he said.

Mr Mather said twice as many patrols would be conducted this year. They would also be extended to 11pm on random nights throughout December and early January on weeknights and weekends. Previously the festive season patrols were until 8pm and only on weeknights.

“This time of year is busy as many people have work functions on the river and charter operators are often running two trips a day making the pick-up and drop-off jetties busy areas,” he said.

“The patrols will help to ensure charter boats don’t monopolise these areas so that everyone can get out on the river and have a good time and a safe time.

“We are also determined to reinforce the message that dumping litter and other rubbish in or around the Riverpark is illegal and that it has terrible impacts on wildlife and water quality.

“It is not acceptable to leave bags of rubbish on jetties yet unfortunately, there are some people who dump bags of empty bottles, cans and food containers on the jetties at the end of a trip, presumably thinking someone else will clean it up for them.

“If we identify boats doing this the operators can expect to be fined or even prosecuted.”

The offence of littering within the Swan Canning Riverpark attracts a \$200 infringement notice or a penalty of up to \$5,000 if prosecuted.

Mr Mather said there would be no notice given of when patrols were coming. The patrols would target hotspots and busy areas around the river, with officers using boats and cars to patrol these areas.

Water quality improvement focus for Bull Creek

Thursday, 29 November 2012

- \$125,000 plan to cut high nutrient loads in Bull Creek Catchment
- Local governments and community groups target river health
- River protection initiatives in the priority Bull Creek Catchment, 10km south of Perth, will get a \$125,000 boost from the State Government after a local Water Quality Improvement Plan (WQIP) for the area was endorsed by the Swan River Trust.

Environment Minister Bill Marmion said the Bull Creek WQIP - which covered two local government areas - is the 10th and final of its type to be approved under the Government's five-year Healthy Rivers Action Plan to reduce nutrients entering the Swan-Canning river system.

"The Liberal-National Government's investment in these 10 WQIPs has grown to more than \$1million, resulting in a string of projects in priority catchments to tackle nutrients flowing into the rivers," Mr Marmion said.

The Bull Creek Catchment contributes about 11 tonnes of nitrogen a year and more than a tonne of phosphorus into the Canning River. This is linked to high fertiliser use, past farming practices and the impact of light industry, septic tanks and contamination from previous land uses.

"It's something we need to change and it is worthy of the local community to get on board and help tackle this issue by developing their own local WQIP," the Minister said.

High nutrients entering the Swan and Canning rivers contribute to algal blooms and low oxygen conditions, which affects water quality, aquatic life and river amenity.

The local WQIPs identify key water quality issues and hot spots in Perth's priority catchments and devise management strategies to address them. Up to \$125,000 funding is then provided through the trust to help implement the projects.

The Bull Creek WQIP was prepared in collaboration with the cities of Melville and Canning; the South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare; and local groups, including the Friends of Bull Creek Catchment, the Canning River Residents Environment Protection Association and the Friends of Booragoon and Blue Gum Lakes.

Mr Marmion said the trust would work with the Bull Creek stakeholders to prioritise projects and commence implementation.

Fact File

10 local WQIPs are part of the Government's Healthy Catchments program

To reduce nutrient inputs from priority catchments by 30 per cent by 2015

Bull Creek Catchment covers more than 43sqkm in cities of Melville and Canning

Bayswater drain to be transformed

Tuesday, 27 November 2012

- Plan to reduce pollutants entering river from Bayswater drain
- City of Bayswater commended for its participation
- More than 235m of open drain in Morley will be transformed into a 'living stream' to help reduce nutrient loads entering the Swan River, under a \$300,000 project announced today by Environment Minister Bill Marmion.

The Weld Square Living Stream - a joint project by the City of Bayswater and Swan River Trust - will re-engineer the Bayswater Brook stormwater drain and plant 39,000 seedlings to help filter and block nutrients from entering the water and eventually ending up in the river.

Mr Marmion said more than 3,700sqm of drainage reserve in the priority Bayswater Brook Catchment would be transformed by the project.

The State Government will provide \$150,000 and the City of Bayswater will make a similar contribution in cash and in-kind support. Planning and design will start early next year.

"The benefits will be substantial. As well as improving the quality of water that eventually gets into the river system, the living stream wetland will increase biodiversity and enhance the aesthetics and community enjoyment of the local area," the Minister said.

Bayswater Brook flushes an estimated 9.8 tonnes of nitrogen and more than half a tonne of phosphorus into the Swan River each year.

"One of the main contributors to low oxygen conditions and algal blooms in our rivers is the influx of nitrogen and phosphorus, so we need to get this right," Mr Marmion said.

Students from the nearby Weld Square Primary School will be closely involved in the project, helping with planting, weeding and monitoring water quality.

The Minister commended the City of Bayswater for its involvement and said a community-wide effort was needed to address the level of nutrients entering our rivers.

"Whether it is individuals giving their time to rivercare projects, gardeners reducing their fertiliser use, families picking up their litter, or local governments taking on significant projects like this one, we can all play a part in protecting the river for future generations," he said.

Fact File

Bayswater Brook is the biggest urban catchment

Has longest drainage network in Perth metropolitan area

This is the fourth living stream project in Bayswater Brook Catchment

Prawns heading back to the river

Thursday, 8 November 2012

The State Government has announced a 3-year project to restock Western school prawns in the Swan and Canning rivers.

Prawn broodstock will be collected this month and it is expected that the restocking of juvenile prawns will begin over summer.

The location of the restocking is yet to be determined and the exact number of prawns to be released will depend on spawning success. It is estimated that one river prawn can have over half a million eggs.

The project is being funded through recreational fishing licence fees and managed through the peak recreational fishing body, Recfishwest, in collaboration with the WA Fish Foundation, Department of Fisheries, Swan River Trust and Challenger Institute of Technology.

It is intended that the project will be backed by a scientific monitoring and research program involving Murdoch University to help determine why prawn stocks have declined and what conditions they favour.

Hovercraft rides air cushion to check river assets

Sunday, 4 November 2012

A hovercraft will be on the river this month helping the Swan River Trust update its database of built and natural assets along the Swan and Canning rivers.

Trust Riverpark Manager Chris Mather said the hovercraft would be used to take video footage of the shoreline at low tides to record the condition of assets such as riverwall footings and other hard and soft engineered structures.

“The information we gain will help guide our management policies and funding priorities in coming years,” he said.

“Compiling this sort of data has traditionally been done on foot and in boats travelling the length of the river system, which is a massive and time consuming task which can take up to a year.

The combined shoreline of the Swan and Canning rivers is over 300km.

“Using the hovercraft we will be able to collect this data over a single month. The extensive video records will then be analysed and the data formatted into our computerised asset management system to provide current and comprehensive records that can be readily updated in future years.”

Mr Mather said the hovercraft had been brought to Perth from Queensland by consultants engaged to conduct the data collection and was an innovative and cost-effective tool that would have a minimal impact on the river.

“Hovercraft travel on a low-pressure cushion of air with the hull about 300mm clear of the surface, which stops bow wave or wash damaging shorelines or disturbing marine life,” he said.

“With no underwater protrusions the risk of propeller strike for marine creatures is eliminated and riverbed erosion in shallow waters is also not an issue.

“This is a terrific opportunity to rapidly compile detailed information on river assets which will be invaluable in helping us determine future priority areas and prepare appropriate management policies.”

Mr Mather said the hovercraft would not be used in marine reserves which are roosting areas for migratory birds. It would also not be seen in the upper Canning upstream of Kent Street Weir as the river there is too narrow for the hovercraft to operate effectively. Those areas would be assessed by boat and on foot.

Brisbane-based skipper and owner, Peter Venn, has been driving hovercraft for more than 35 years.

Water Police thanked for saving Gizmo

Sunday, 28 October 2012

Three officers from the West Australian Water Police have been recognised for their remarkable rescue of a young river dolphin calf, Gizmo, who was [severely entangled in fishing line for more than two months](#).

The rescue unfolded in June this year near Swan Yacht Club in the Swan Canning Riverpark.

The Swan River Trust today presented the officers – Senior Constable Bruce Rodgers, Senior Constable Glenn Bott and Constable Brody Baker – with “Caring for River Dolphins” awards to thank them for their efforts.

Swan River Trust General Manager Rod Hughes said three-year-old Gizmo’s plight had become increasingly dire as his protective mother, Tupac, thwarted all previous attempts to help her calf.

“By the time the water police rescued him, the fishing line had become so tightly wrapped around Gizmo’s dorsal fin it was slowly slicing through it,” Mr Hughes said.

“Gizmo was also dragging an increasingly heavy load of seaweed and debris that had latched on to the line and it had reached the point where there was a real danger the little calf would not survive.”

“The rescue conducted by these officers was extraordinary, particularly as they had to contend with Gizmo’s mother – a large, heavy dolphin measuring over 2 metres – repeatedly trying to stop them.”

Mr Hughes said the officers followed the mother and calf for some distance in a boat before Constable Baker and Senior Constable Bott were able to dive in and catch Gizmo in their arms and cut him free.

“During the rescue, Tupac tried repeatedly to grab Gizmo by the tail and pull him out of their hands, which would have been very confronting. It was a remarkable rescue and I am very pleased to have the opportunity to personally thank the officers,” he said.

The awards were presented in front of almost 200 of the Trust’s trained Dolphin Watch volunteers, who helped track Gizmo’s movements prior to the water police rescue.

“Four months have now passed and I am very happy to report that Gizmo is doing well. While his fin is badly damaged and bent, the wound has healed cleanly and he is again swimming strongly with his mother at his side,” he said.

Gizmo is one of at least 22 bottlenose dolphins living in the Swan Canning Riverpark. Dolphin calves are dependant on their mothers for up to five years.

Mr Hughes urged people visiting the Riverpark to be vigilant about picking up their rubbish, particularly discarded fishing line, to protect the dolphins and other river wildlife. He also stressed that people must not approach dolphins in the wild and boats should stay at least 100 metres away.

Millions invested in river care

Tuesday, 23 October 2012

- Joint investment in Healthy Rivers Action Plan tops \$14million in 2011-12
- Government, councils and volunteers working together to protect Perth rivers

More than two million native seedlings have been planted in the Swan Canning Riverpark in the first four years of the State Government's five-year Healthy Rivers Action Plan (HRAP).

The HRAP was adopted in 2008 as a five-year, \$40million plan to protect the environmental health and amenity of the Swan and Canning rivers.

Environment Minister Bill Marmion told State Parliament today that the revegetation activities to reduce nutrient loads entering the rivers were among many river protection activities being undertaken in partnership with local governments, landcare groups and thousands of community volunteers.

"In 2011-12 alone, collaborative activities under the HRAP to reduce nutrients in the rivers included 74 on-ground projects, with more than 781,000 native seedlings planted and some 70ha of weed control," Mr Marmion said.

"We often hear about the problems in the rivers, yet seldom hear about the huge effort being made to improve our rivers, which we all know face stresses from a drying climate and a growing population."

Releasing the Swan River Trust's achievements report for the HRAP's fourth year, the Minister said more than \$7.7million was invested by the State Government in HRAP programs and activities in 2011-12. Another \$7.2million was invested (cash and in-kind) by local governments, community groups, industry sponsors, Natural Resource Management groups and volunteers.

The HRAP is delivered through eight programs that form a 'catchment to coast' approach to reducing contaminants from catchments; intercepting pollutants from tributaries and drains; and applying river intervention techniques such as oxygenation to improve water quality.

In the first four years of the HRAP, nine local Water Quality Improvement Plans (WQIPs) were prepared and adopted in priority catchments that contribute high levels of nutrients to the Swan and Canning rivers, triggering a range of new activities with funding support from the trust.

"Priorities this year include progressing projects in the Bannister Creek WQIP; finalising a WQIP for Bull Creek; constructing an end-of-catchment wetland treatment system at Ellen Brook; finalising design for the Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary constructed wetland; and building a third oxygenation plant on the Canning River and upgrading the two existing plants," Mr Marmion said.

Fact File

In first four years of HRAP, \$32million has been invested by the State Government

Triggering an estimated \$18million (cash and in-kind) contribution by project partners

Trust Stormwater Management Policy updated

Tuesday, 16 October 2012

The Trust's stormwater management policy has been updated to address comments received during the 2010 public comment period.

The stormwater management policy ensures land use changes are managed to protect the water quality of the Swan Canning river system and stormwater management systems are designed to enhance the environmental quality of the river.

To view the policy, visit our Policies section or call the Trust on 9278 0900 for details.

Free homes for overnight boaters

Monday, 24 September 2012

Boaters in the Swan Canning Riverpark will be able to stay overnight at 32 courtesy moorings provided by the Swan River Trust to enhance public enjoyment of the Riverpark.

Swan River Trust Riverpark Manager Chris Mather said the courtesy moorings enable boaters to disembark at a range of popular sites without having to drop anchor, which reduces damage to seagrass.

Boats were previously restricted to a maximum 4-hour stay and Mr Mather said the 4-hour limit will remain during the day but recent changes to the [Swan and Canning Rivers Management Regulations](#) meant boats that arrived within four hours of sunset would now be able to extend their visit and stay at a courtesy mooring all night.

"If, for example, you pull up at 4pm and the sun sets at 7.30pm you can remain at the mooring until sunrise the next day," he said.

"This will allow boaters to turn day trips into overnight stays, including visiting some of the great restaurants around the river at night and then staying on their boat."

The courtesy moorings – which are a distinctive orange/red colour with a Trust logo – are so popular that in 2009 an extra 12 were established to cater for demand.

They are located at Middle Swan Bridge, Pickering Park, Sandy Beach Reserve, Ron Courtney Island, Claughton Reserve, Tranby House, Cracknell Park, Barrack Square, Blackwall Reach, Matilda Bay, Freshwater Bay, Mosman Bay, South Perth Foreshore and Fremantle Traffic Bridge.

Further details are available on the Trust's interactive [Riverpark recreation map](#).

Mr Mather said boaters must check they met vessel size requirements before pulling in.

"All of the Swan River Trust courtesy moorings are clearly marked with a maximum vessel length and they are certified for that maximum," he said.

"Importantly, they carry the appropriate insurance for that size should a mooring break free while a boat is attached, so vessels exceeding the specified length run the risk of voiding their insurance and also damaging the moorings."

Oversized vessels also risk \$200 fines or a maximum \$5000 penalty for repeat offenders.

Mr Mather reminded boaters to check access to land-based toilet facilities or have appropriate storage tanks fitted to their boat when planning overnight stays, as sullage (toilet waste) cannot be disposed of in the Riverpark.

Commercial tour operators will also be allowed to access the courtesy moorings to recognise that the extra moorings installed in 2009 took up many of their previous anchoring areas.

Swan River Trust monitoring injured dolphin

Thursday, 20 September 2012

The Swan River Trust is asking the public to take extra care in the river as bull sharks can be more active in the Swan Canning river system at this time of year.

Swan River Trust Principal Scientist Kerry Trayler said a dolphin with a large bite injury from an unidentified shark was seen in the river this week.

It is not known whether the dolphin was attacked in the river or whether the injury occurred at sea and it later came in to the river.

The injured dolphin was seen by a Trust officer at Point Reserve in Bassendean early this week.

Dr Trayler said there had been very few incidents involving sharks in the Swan Canning rivers. It was not known what species of shark caused the injury to the dolphin, which has survived but has lost part of its dorsal fin.

“The lower end of the river system is very saline and marine species may move in and out of that area. Bull sharks are the only shark species that are known to stay in fresh and brackish waters for extended periods,” Dr Trayler said.

Adult bull sharks are thought to enter the Swan Canning rivers in spring and summer to give birth to their young and may then move back to the ocean.

“People need to remember that we share our waterways with other species, including sharks, and be aware of their surroundings,” Dr Trayler said.

“Bull sharks are ambush predators that swim close to the bottom, so particular care should be taken in areas where deeper drop-offs occur, and it is never sensible to swim or dive alone.”

Shark sightings should be reported to the Water Police 24-hour hotline on 9442 8600.

Tough response to Ashfield tree vandalism

Thursday, 20 September 2012

The Swan River Trust has today installed a large sign in Ashfield Parade, Ashfield advising the public that two native Acacias had been cut back in a deliberate act of vandalism to Riverpark vegetation.

Swan River Trust Riverpark Manager Chris Mather said foreshore vegetation was a critical part of the river ecosystem, providing foreshore stability and a habitat for wildlife while also helping to prevent erosion.

“When people destroy trees and other Riverpark vegetation we take a very strong stance because it can have serious impacts,” Mr Mather said.

“The Riverpark belongs to the whole community and it is unacceptable for selfish individuals to illegally cut back trees and other vegetation to enhance views, create paths or any other purpose.

“I am aware that some residents will be unhappy with this large sign, but the alternative is to allow this behaviour to go unchecked.

“The signs not only highlight the selfish behaviour that has occurred, they also encourage people to report any future acts of environmental vandalism that they see.

Despite thorough investigations by the Trust, including a door knock in the vicinity and a letter drop seeking information on the incident, the offender was not able to be identified.

The Trust currently has seven other vandalism signs erected across Perth at sites in North Fremantle, Rossmoyne, Shelley, Salter Point, South Guildford and two in Attadale.

Mr Mather said the sign would remain in place until the vegetation had re-established at the Ashfield site.

Anyone destroying or damaging trees or other vegetation in the Riverpark without a permit risks penalties of up to \$5,000.

River rubbish a disgrace

Sunday, 16 September 2012

- More than 11 tonnes of rubbish, rubble and timber dumped in and near Perth rivers
- 125 large items, such as tyres and chairs, also retrieved

Environment Minister Bill Marmion has urged the public to stop dropping rubbish in and around Perth's rivers after the Swan River Trust retrieved more than 6.3 tonnes of general refuse and five tonnes of timber and rubble from waterways and foreshores in 2011-12.

New figures released today show trust officers also collected 125 large items, such as chairs and tyres, from the Swan Canning Riverpark during the 12 month period.

Mr Marmion said the behaviour of people who dropped litter and junk in and around the riverpark was inexplicable.

"This is a conversation we need to have as a community to make it clear that littering is not okay," he said.

"Most disturbing is the mass of plastic bags and fishing line that continues to be found, despite people knowing the terrible impacts these items have on river wildlife from pelicans to dolphins."

Tyres were the most common large items being dumped, with 48 retrieved in 2011-12. This was similar to the 46 collected the previous year.

There was some improvement with just nine shopping trolleys collected compared to 48 the previous year, and also fewer chairs (21, compared to 51). However, the number of vandalised signs thrown in the river (ranging from real estate to street signs) jumped from 10 to 19 and the number of drums more than doubled from seven to 16.

The 11.3 tonnes of other material included:

- more than 6.3 tonnes of general refuse, such as plastic and foil containers, cans and bottles, food and confectionary wrappings, plastic bags, rags, styrofoam, metal objects, paper and magazines, hats, broken thongs, fishing line and bait bags
- two tonnes of old timber, such as fencing and wood offcuts
- nearly three tonnes of old building rubble removed from a foreshore area.

The release of the river rubbish figures comes just weeks after Keep Australia Beautiful released its national litter index, which indicated that West Australians were among the worst litterers in the country.

"The Liberal-National Government has substantially increased fines for both illegal dumping and littering and now it's up to the general public to do their bit and stop dumping rubbish where it doesn't belong," the Minister said.

Fact File

More than half a tonne of general refuse collected each month

6.3 tonnes picked up (2011-12); 6.5 tonnes (2010-11); 6.7 tonnes (2009-10)

There was no indication the total volume of litter had declined

Farmers invited to a field day on new fertiliser management trial

Wednesday, 12 September 2012

A field day to brief farmers on the impact of fertiliser run-off on waterways and a new scientific trial which is testing the effectiveness of using industry by-products to help bind nutrients in the soil will be held on September 26.

Swan River Trust project coordinator Alex Hams said a one-hectare trial on Department of Defence land at Ellen Brook is currently testing the impact on plant productivity and nutrient leaching of three industry by-products and he was keen for farmers to come and see what they were doing.

The trial is being conducted by the Trust in partnership with the Department of Agriculture and Food and ChemCentre as one of a suite of initiatives to try to reduce nutrient loads entering the Swan Canning river system.

The main contributor to low oxygen conditions and harmful algal blooms in the rivers is the influx of nutrients and organic matter. Computer modelling suggests that up to 17 per cent of total nitrogen and 32 per cent of phosphorus entering the Swan Canning rivers comes from farms.

Mr Hams said three nutrient sorbent materials – Lime Amended BioClay® from the Water Corporation, Iron Man Gypsum® from Iluka and Alkaloam® from Alcoa – were being tested in the scientific trial. Each material had been spread at various rates to monitor and compare changes in plant productivity, soils, water leachate and radiology.

“The feedback we get from farmers is that they understand there is an issue with fertiliser run-off and that they would like to help, but we need to find a way for them to do so without reducing productivity,” he said.

“This field day is a great opportunity for farmers to gain first-hand knowledge of the issue, talk to us about it and see what we are doing to try to address the problem.”

“The Ellen Brook trial showcases three materials that could potentially help us achieve a significant improvement in water quality in the river system, while also potentially providing savings to landholders through reduced fertiliser costs and improved productivity.”

The trial was established with funding from the Australian Government’s [Caring for our Country](#) Program. The State Government has also provided funds for monitoring and evaluation.

The field day is at the trial site on the corner of Railway Parade and Neaves Road, West Bullsbrook. It includes a morning session for regulatory officers and catchment groups and an afternoon session from 2pm - 4pm for farmers and other landholders. People interested in attending the field day can register their interest by emailing [Alex Hams](#) or calling (08) 9278 0964.

Modelling conducted while developing the [Swan Canning Water Quality Improvement Plan](#) – the Government’s blueprint for action to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus moving from catchments to the rivers – indicates that up to 250 tonnes of nitrogen and 26 tonnes of phosphorus enter the Swan Canning system from coastal catchments each year, which is nearly double the acceptable load. As well, substantial nutrient loads enter the Swan Canning from the Avon River.

New funding targets river health

Wednesday, 12 September 2012

- Water quality improvement projects get an extra \$1.5million
- Catchments delivering the greatest nutrient loads targeted

The State Government has announced \$1.5million over three years for 10 new projects to help reduce nutrient loads, from catchments, entering the Swan and Canning rivers.

Environment Minister Bill Marmion said the projects under the Swan Canning Water Quality Improvement Plan (SCWQIP) ranged from re-engineering stormwater drains and improving fertiliser management to revegetating foreshores to help filter and block nutrients. The funds were allocated from the State's Natural Resource Management program.

"The goal is to improve water quality and reduce harmful algal blooms that can cause fish deaths and loss of amenity. The Swan and Canning rivers are the lifeblood of Perth and we must maintain and protect them for future generations," Mr Marmion said.

"The main contributor to low oxygen conditions and algal blooms in the rivers is the influx of nutrients and organic matter and it is critical this action is continued to reduce it."

Nearly \$600,000 will be spent on projects in the priority catchments of Ellen Brook, Bayswater Brook and Southern River, which are some of the biggest contributors of nutrients entering the Swan and Canning rivers. Ellen Brook alone contributes more than 70 tonnes of nitrogen and 10 tonnes of phosphorus a year to the rivers - more than any other Swan Canning catchment.

Other projects include providing training on sustainable fertiliser use to turf managers and home gardeners; evaluating urban stormwater practices to identify potential improvements; and trialling soil additives that might help bind nutrients in the soil.

The SCWQIP - which is co-ordinated by the Swan River Trust - is the State Government's blueprint for action to reduce levels of nitrogen and phosphorus moving from catchments to the rivers.

The \$1.5million announced today adds to \$3.3million invested in the SCWQIP by the Government since 2009 for projects ranging from constructing a nutrient-stripping wetland at Welshpool; to re-engineering drains into living streams; applying nutrient-stripping clay to the Canning River; and installing 10km of fencing and 50,000 plants along priority sections of the Ellen Brook.

"Modelling suggests that up to 250 tonnes of nitrogen and 26 tonnes of phosphorus enter the Swan Canning system from coastal catchments each year, which is nearly double the acceptable load," the Minister said.

Fact File

SCWQIP aims to reduce nitrogen loads by 49% and phosphorus loads by 46%

Riverpark regulations have red tape cut

Tuesday, 28 August 2012

- Development approvals streamlined under new Riverpark regulations
- Swan River Trust able to approve works costing less than \$500,000

The State Government has moved to streamline approvals for local governments to build public amenities such as play equipment, landscaping and gazebos on land in the Swan Canning Riverpark.

Environment Minister Bill Marmion said new regulations gazetted today meant works valued at less than \$500,000 could now be assessed and approved solely by the Swan River Trust without requiring ministerial approval.

Mr Marmion said rising costs meant many low level infrastructure projects, including public toilet blocks, could now cost hundreds of thousands of dollars but remained minor works, and the previous \$50,000 limit was too low.

The Minister said the trust's assessment processes would be rigorous and ensured the river's protection remained top priority. The change followed extensive consultation with the 21 local governments around the Swan Canning Riverpark.

The amended Swan and Canning Rivers Management Regulations also:

- give the trust final approval for works under \$50,000 proposed by leaseholders such as yacht clubs, sport and community groups - such as installing water tanks and air-conditioners or doing minor jetty works
- allow local governments and agencies to carry out repairs and maintenance to erosion control works without requiring permits, to encourage more regular maintenance
- allow local governments to install minor amenities worth less than \$10,000 - such as benches and street furniture - in the Riverpark without having to apply for permits.

The new regulations also remove the need for the trust to approve regular Riverpark foreshore events such as concerts and fetes that already require council permission to proceed.

"This allows local governments to have full responsibility for these activities," Mr Marmion said.

"The only events that will still need a permit from the trust are major spectator events, such as the Skyshow."

Fact File

The 21 river councils are: Armadale, Kalamunda, Mundaring, Belmont, Bayswater, Swan, Canning, Fremantle, Gosnells, Melville, Nedlands, Perth, South Perth, Subiaco, Vincent, Peppermint Grove, Bassendean, Claremont, East Fremantle, Mosman Park, and Victoria Park

Funding boost for riverbank projects

Thursday, 23 August 2012

- Riverbank grants benefit 13 suburbs
- Government, councils and volunteers join forces to protect rivers

Environment Minister Bill Marmion has announced more than \$800,000 in funding for foreshore rehabilitation projects in the Swan Canning Riverpark.

Funds will be shared by 10 local governments to control invasive weeds, stabilise riverbanks, help repair river walls and revegetate foreshore areas at 16 sites in 13 suburbs.

Riverbank grants of \$155,288 have been allocated to five local governments - Bassendean, Armadale, Gosnells, Fremantle and Canning - for community-based projects that will be matched by cash and in-kind support (labour and equipment) from councils and volunteers, enabling projects worth more than \$340,000 to proceed.

The State Government will distribute a further \$680,000 through Riverbank Proactive Funding for major, complex foreshore projects currently being negotiated between the Swan River Trust and the cities of South Perth, Belmont, Melville, Bayswater and Swan.

Mr Marmion said tens of thousands of native plants would be planted to increase biodiversity and habitat, improve water quality and counter riverbank erosion across a number of suburbs.

"The Riverbank funding reflects a strong partnership between the State Government and the community working together to protect and preserve our rivers and shorelines for generations to come," he said.

"It will boost the capacity of the riverfront land managers to significantly improve shoreline condition, providing major benefits to river health.

"The rivers present complex and challenging problems. All are battling invasive weeds and erosion issues, some have excessive nutrients entering waterways, one even has rabbit warrens destabilising its riverbank - and I commend the managers for all for their efforts."

Fact File

Since 2002, more than \$11m in Riverbank grants have been distributed to 183 projects

This has resulted in more than \$22m of on-ground work

River management gets national recognition

Thursday, 16 August 2012

Riverprize Finalist Swan River - view from the Causeway bridge
View of the Swan River from Causeway bridge

The Swan River Trust has been shortlisted as one of three finalists for the prestigious Australian Riverprize 2012, which will be decided in Melbourne in October.

Swan River Trust Chairman Professor Mick Poole said a drying climate and increasing population posed ongoing challenges for the Swan Canning rivers but an enormous amount of work was being done to protect and maintain them.

“Trust staff and their project partners are working hard to reduce nutrients entering the river system through a multitude of projects ranging from revegetating and restoring foreshores to creating nutrient-stripping artificial wetlands and re-engineering drains,” he said.

“Huge effort also goes into maintaining crucial oxygen levels with four oxygenation plants operating across the two rivers, and more planned.

“I’m very proud to have the Trust and our partners’ work recognised by the International RiverFoundation, which presides over these national awards.”

The International RiverFoundation said the awards recognise and support groups that have “developed and implemented outstanding, visionary and sustainable programs in river basin management”.

The \$200,000 Australian Riverprize is the largest prize for environmental achievement in the country. It is funded by the Australian Government’s Water Smart Australia program, under the Water for the Future initiative.

The other two finalists are the Georges River in New South Wales (Georges River Combined Councils Committee) and the Condamine River in Queensland (Condamine Alliance).

The winner will be announced on 9 October at the International Riversymposium in Melbourne.

Boat boost for river health

Sunday, 12 August 2012

The new work boat Marli replaces the ageing Wilma Vincent

The Swan River Trust has a new 7-metre work boat – Marli – to replace the ageing Wilma Vincent, which has been a fixture in the Swan Canning Riverpark for a decade.

The new boat is purpose-built for river maintenance work, including retrieving the tonnes of litter and objects unfortunately discarded in the Riverpark each year.

A small reinforced crane is mounted on deck to help retrieve larger items, such as tyres and shopping trolleys.

Marli is one of four main vessels operated by the Trust. It was launched today with an Aboriginal smoking ceremony.

Marli is the Noongar word for black swan. Swan River Trust Chairman Mick Poole said the Aboriginal name was chosen in recognition of the special significance the Swan and Canning rivers hold for the Noongar community.

“The spiritual, cultural and practical connections that the Noongar people have to these rivers and surrounding lands are immeasurable. They are custodians of over 40,000 years of caring for country and respecting the environment,” he said. Professor Poole thanked Noongar Elder Reverend Sealin Garlett for conducting the smoking ceremony to mark the occasion.

“The Marli has a number of improvements on the Wilma Vincent, including a wider folding ramp at the front for crew to access difficult shoreline areas and extra design features to increase manoeuvrability,” Professor Poole said.

“It allows ballast to be added so the boat can be lowered to go under bridges in the upper reaches and has a retractable awning to assist that purpose. “There is more deck space and a wider cabin door so that more and larger materials can be transported, and the boat can also be easily ‘beached’.”

While the extra capacity was welcome, Professor Poole urged people to be more diligent about disposing of their rubbish responsibly to protect the river system.

A major concern is the amount of discarded fishing line which continues to wash up in large quantities and has a devastating impact on wildlife.

The old vessel has been bought by a private charter company.

In February, a new high-tech patrol boat, Booneenboro, was also added to the Trust’s small fleet to boost its enforcement and compliance capacity.

Algae concern diminishing

Tuesday, 7 August 2012

Recent rains are helping to clear a harmful algal bloom from the Swan River, with no more dead fish collected since the weekend.

The bloom killed more than 10,000 fish between 27 July and 5 August in an area stretching from the Garratt Road Bridge in Ascot to the Narrows in the city.

Small scatterings of decomposed fish were still being collected on Sunday but there was no sign of any fresh deaths and no sightings have been recorded since then. The major clean-up operation is now completed.

Algae levels remain higher than desirable, particularly in the East Perth area, and the Swan River Trust will continue extra monitoring until the situation improves.

The majority of the fish deaths occurred around the Ascot Waters marina, Ascot channel and also the Belmont ski area.

The incident is linked to high levels of the potentially fish-killing microalgae - *Karlodinium veneficum* – identified in those areas. Toxins released from the *Karlodinium* microalgae can damage fish gills and reduce their capacity to extract oxygen from the water.

Karlodinium does not present a direct risk to public health. However, the Department of Health advises that people should not swim or fish in water with dead or decomposing fish. The public should also keep pets and other animals away from the fish because they may contain high levels of bacteria. Sluggish and dead fish should not be collected and used for bait or consumption because of the risk of high levels of bacteria.

Anyone noticing dead or sluggish fish in the river should report them to the Trust by calling (08) 9278 0900.

Algae bloom clean-up continues

Wednesday, 1 August 2012

The Swan River Trust is continuing a major clean-up of fish that have died over the past week due to a large algal bloom in the Swan River.

Over 8,000 dead fish have been collected since Friday in an area stretching from the Garratt Road Bridge in Ascot to the causeway in the city. Several local governments are now assisting the Trust with the clean-up.

Most of the dead fish have been collected around the Ascot Waters marina, Ascot Channel and Belmont ski area but scatterings of dead fish have also been found in surrounding areas.

Elevated levels of the microalgae *Karlodinium veneficum* have been evident in the vicinity over the past month. As the bloom crashes and algal cells disintegrate they can be toxic to fish.

Swan River Trust Principal Scientist, Dr Kerry Trayler, said dry and sunny conditions in Perth with sporadic rainfall had created ideal conditions for the algae.

“Good rainfall over the past few days and into the week should help to diminish the algae, which does not like freshwater conditions,” she said.

“River levels are still rising in the upper catchment and this should help to flush the system through next week.”

Karlodinium does not present a direct risk to public health but the Department of Health advises that people should not swim or fish in water with dead or decomposing fish.

Pets and other animals should also be kept away from dead or decomposing fish because they may contain high levels of bacteria. Sluggish and dead fish should not be collected and used for bait or consumption because of the risk of high levels of bacteria.

Tree planting day targets Ellen Brook

Tuesday, 31 July 2012

Staff from the Swan River Trust have used their annual tree planting day to plant more than 3,000 native seedlings in the Ellen Brook catchment.

Forty staff swapped their desks for wellington boots to spend the day planting rushes and sedges at the Bingham Rd Creek Wetland, near Bullsbrook.

The wetland was constructed in 2010 as part of the Drainage and Nutrient Intervention Program (DNIP) and successful revegetation of the site has been ongoing for the past two years.

Over 40,000 seedlings provided by the Trust will be installed at the site this year. The project aims to reduce the amount of nutrients from fertilisers entering the Ellen Brook and the Swan River.

The planting activities were coordinated by the Ellen Brockman Integrated Catchment Group. The site is on Department of Defence land across the Ellen Brook from the Pearce Air base.

Algal bloom kills 4,000 fish

Sunday, 29 July 2012

The Swan River Trust is continuing a major clean-up after thousands of fish died over the weekend due to a large algal bloom in the Swan River.

Most of the dead fish were sighted near the Ascot Waters marina but scatterings of dead fish have also been found in surrounding areas.

Over 4,000 dead fish have been collected by Trust officers since Friday in an area stretching from the Garratt Road Bridge in Ascot to the causeway in the city.

Elevated levels of the microalgae *Karlodinium veneficum*, which is potentially toxic to fish, have been detected in the vicinity over the past few weeks.

Swan River Trust Senior Environmental Officer, Dr Jeff Cosgrove, said more dead fish were likely to float to the surface over coming days.

During the past month, the Trust has had an ongoing active alert over the rising algae levels in waters between the causeway and Guildford. The bloom causes an unpleasant smell and waters may appear orange/brown in the worst affected areas.

Dr Cosgrove said the unseasonally dry and sunny conditions in Perth this winter had created ideal conditions for the algae. "Karlodinium veneficum is a naturally occurring algae but it is not usually seen to this extent this late in the year," he said. The dead fish are predominantly black bream, but have also included some herring, mullet, grunter, flathead, trumpeter, goby and at least one mulloway.

Karlodinium does not present a direct risk to public health but the Department of Health advises that people should not swim or fish in water with dead or decomposing fish.

Pets and other animals should also be kept away from dead or decomposing fish because they may contain high levels of bacteria. Sluggish and dead fish should not be collected and used for bait or consumption because of the risk of high levels of bacteria.

Dead fish concern at Ascot Waters

Thursday, 26 July 2012

The Swan River Trust is responding to sightings of several hundred sluggish and dead fish around Ascot Waters marina in the Swan River.

Elevated levels of the microalgae *Karlodinium veneficum*, which is potentially toxic to fish, have been detected in the vicinity over the past few weeks.

High levels of this algae were linked to over 2,500 fish deaths in early June over a 13km stretch of the upper Swan river from Bassendean to West Swan.

The Trust has had an ongoing active alert issued over the rising algae levels in waters between the causeway and Guildford, including Ascot Waters.

Swan River Trust Principal Scientist Kerry Trayler said the free-floating *Karlodinium veneficum* microalgae was known to affect the capacity of fish to extract oxygen from the water.

While the *Karlodinium veneficum* species does not present a direct risk to humans, Dr Trayler said sensible precautions should be taken where dead fish are sighted.

“The Department of Health advises that people should not swim in, or fish in, water with dead fish. They should also keep pets and other animals away from the fish because they may contain high levels of bacteria,” she said.

“Sluggish and dead fish should also not be collected and used for bait or consumption because of the risk of high levels of bacteria.”

Anyone noticing dead or sluggish fish in the river should report them to the Trust by calling (08) 9278 0900, or after hours on 0419 192 845.

Zari's love of dolphins honoured

Wednesday, 27 June 2012

A young Perth girl who passed away before achieving her dream to swim with dolphins has had one of the Swan Canning Riverpark dolphin calves named in her honour.

Zari Ryan, 12, lost her battle with leukaemia in 2009 before she could fulfil her Make a Wish request to swim with dolphins.

Environment Minister Bill Marmion said it was appropriate the name 'Zari' meant treasure or gold.

"Zari Ryan loved dolphins and I think it's a wonderful idea to remember her this way and also pay tribute to all children battling serious illness with courage," Mr Marmion said.

Zari's name has been given to the last unnamed dolphin calf among the five dependent calves being seen in the river. The three-year-old calf is the offspring of Tworakes, first seen in the river in 2001. Dolphin calves are dependent on their mothers for the first five years.

The decision was announced last night by the Minister at a reception for hundreds of Dolphin Watch volunteers.

Rivervale resident Wayne Kerlake was named the 2012 River Guardians Outstanding Dolphin Watcher after completing a remarkable 951 hours of dolphin monitoring in the past 11 months.

Eleanor Bollam of Attadale won the Chief Scientist's Citizen Scientist Award for the level of detail about dolphin behaviour she included in her monitoring reports.

Mr Marmion told the forum that the community had become increasingly aware of the river dolphins, which was an encouraging sign.

"We need people to care about the dolphins so they take better care of their home - the Swan Canning Riverpark," he said.

"That includes picking up rubbish, particularly discarded fishing line, as we are all very aware that another of our calves, Gizmo, was fortunate to survive after being severely entangled in fishing line for nearly two months before being rescued last week."

There are now 405 trained Dolphin Watch volunteers registered with the Swan River Trust - double the number from a year ago. The volunteers report sightings of dolphins throughout the riverpark, providing valuable data for dolphin researchers at Murdoch and Curtin universities.

Fact File

More than 20 bottlenose dolphins are regularly seen in the Swan Canning Riverpark

The other four river dolphin calves are Highhope, Soul, Gizmo and Night

Dolphins tracked by their fin prints

Wednesday, 27 June 2012

The latest catalogue of dolphins living in the Swan Canning river system shows five dependent dolphin calves among more than 20 bottlenose dolphins regularly seen in the Riverpark.

The new FinBook includes photos of each dolphin's unique 'fin prints' to help Riverpark users recognise individual dolphins, while also offering insights into their alliances or 'friendships' with other dolphins.

Swan River Trust principal scientist Dr Kerry Trayler said the Swan and Canning rivers were an important habitat for bottlenose dolphins.

"It's a place where they bring their calves and come to socialise and feed, so maintaining good water quality and ecological health is essential to protect their food resources," she said.

Murdoch University dolphin expert Dr Hugh Finn said seven of the dolphins in FinBook have been resident in the river since at least 2001 when dolphin research in the estuary began.

"This year, we organised FinBook so that the dolphins all appear among their known associates," Dr Finn said.

"Like humans, dolphins are very social animals and tend to have long-term associates – so if you see one of these dolphins it is likely their associates will be nearby."

FinBook is a joint initiative of the Swan River Trust and Murdoch and Curtin universities.

The new edition was launched last night at a reception for hundreds of trained Dolphin Watch volunteers who report their dolphin sightings to the Trust to assist research by the two universities.

The photos showing the unique 'fin prints' or marks and scars that identify each dolphin were taken by Murdoch marine researcher Delphine Chabanne as she monitored their activities over the year.

All of the 'resident' river dolphins also spend time in coastal areas outside the Riverpark, sometimes venturing as far as Cockburn Sound to the south and Gage Roads to the north. The resident dolphins are unique in that they use the Riverpark on a daily or near-daily basis year-round.

Dr Finn said foraging for food was their main activity, and wherever the dolphins were sighted in the river usually reflected the availability of prey like mullet, herring and whiting.

The five calves seen during the year are Highhope (the youngest, born in July last year), Soul, who is slightly older, and Night, Gizmo and Zari who are aged 2-3 years.

[» Visit the River Guardians website to download Finbook](#)

Happy ending for entangled dolphin

Thursday, 21 June 2012

A young river dolphin that was severely entangled in fishing line for nearly two months has been rescued and is now swimming freely with its mother.

The three-year-old dolphin calf, Gizmo, was sighted by Water Police near the East Fremantle Rowing Centre this morning and police divers were able to approach the dolphin and capture it.

A rescue team from the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) Perth Zoo, Murdoch University and WA Police, supported by the Swan River Trust, placed the dolphin in a sling in the water and removed the line from its fin.

Statement issued by police

“At about 8:00am this morning, Senior Constable Bruce Rodgers of Water Police spotted a pod of dolphins swimming in the river. He was standing on the wharf looking to see if the injured dolphin calf was with them when Gizmo swam under the wharf dragging a fishing line which was tangled around his dorsal fin as well as part of a rope and a mass of seaweed.

Senior Constable Rodgers and two water police divers quickly went out in a rigid inflatable boat to locate Gizmo. When they reached the Rocky Bay East Fremantle area the water police divers went into the water but were unable to catch Gizmo.

They followed Gizmo and his mother along the river to about 100 metres off shore from the Swan Yacht Club. The divers entered the water in front of the dolphins. Gizmo and his mother Tupac dived under the divers.

Constable Brody Baker dived down and managed to grab Gizmo and bring him to the surface. Senior Constable Glenn Bott helped Constable Baker and they cut Gizmo free from the fishing line and rope immediately, fearing he would swim out of their grasp.

During the rescue, Tupac tried on three occasions to grab Gizmo by the tail and pull him back out of the diver's hands. Tupac calmed down realising the divers were helping Gizmo and the divers managed to swim with him to waist deep water.

A short time later, a DEC officer assisted police in putting Gizmo in a stretcher which enabled Perth Zoo veterinarians to treat his injuries. Once his injuries were treated, Gizmo was released into his mum's care.”

River Rangers set to expand

Thursday, 14 June 2012

The highly successful River Rangers cadet program connecting young people with Perth's rivers is set to expand after receiving a funding boost from the State Government.

Hosted by the Swan River Trust, River Rangers has run as a pilot program since the start of the 2011 school year with five schools in the Swan Canning Catchment.

\$1.8 million has now been allocated over four years to allow River Rangers to expand to 15 schools.

Most of the funding will be channeled directly into the participating schools to help pay for projects, an annual camp and uniforms and transport. The Trust will also receive additional funding to support the program.

Trust education officer Joselyn Fissioli said River Rangers helped young people develop a passion for caring for their environment, a strong sense of place and the tools to make positive change in their local area.

In the past year, River Ranger cadets have participated in activities as diverse as tree planting, growing sedges, recycling programs, litter surveys, developing native gardens and setting up worm farms, with a strong focus on developing river care projects for their schools

Update on dolphin entanglement

Wednesday, 13 June 2012

The Swan River Trust is again asking the public not to approach a young dolphin which is entangled in fishing line in the Swan Canning river system.

Sightings of the dolphin, Gizmo, were first reported on 27 April. Since then, there have been a number of further sightings in different parts of the river reported to the Trust, the most recent on Sunday, 13 May.

Department of Environment and Conservation wildlife officers have now made three attempts to disentangle the calf, which is swimming alongside its mother. However, it remains agile when approached and its mother is highly protective. The most recent attempt on May 18 used three boats to try to assist the pair but the mother dolphin put herself between the boats and her calf and the rescue had to be called off after several hours. The officers are continuing to monitor the pair and work on new strategies to assist them.

We recognize it is distressing to see a dolphin in this state and people wish to help - but it is crucial they do not try to intervene. These incidents are difficult to deal with and the best chance of helping the animal will occur when it tires. DEC experts can then attempt a disentanglement.

This is a long process that requires patience, consistency and good intelligence from the public.

Please continue to report any sightings immediately as the dolphin is continuing to travel long distances and the information is helping to establish a pattern of its movements.

The sightings reported by the public and River Guardians to date have helped identify areas the dolphin is frequenting and it is important that information continues to flow. This assistance is greatly appreciated by the Trust and the DEC.

Please report any observations of the dolphin immediately to:

Marnie Giroud on 9278 0971 or 0428 206 161

Rachel Hutton on 9278 0914

Weekends - contact the Swan River Trust Duty Officer on 0419 192 845 and include:

- sighting date
- time of day
- direction of travel
- accurate location
- entanglement description
- photos if possible

Boat based observers should stay at least 100m from dolphins at all times. Shore based observers should also take care to avoid disturbing river dolphins.

Algae in upper Swan River linked to fish kill

Monday, 4 June 2012

High levels of a fish-killing microalga in the upper reaches of the Swan River have been linked to more than 1,400 dead fish found floating in the river over the long weekend.

Swan River Trust officers spent the weekend retrieving the fish over a 13km stretch of the river from Bassendean to West Swan.

The Trust warned last week that high levels of the potentially fish-killing microalgae *Karlodinium veneticum* had been detected in the upper Swan River.

Oxygenation plants at Guildford and Caversham have been injecting additional quantities of oxygen into the river for the past fortnight to try to minimise the impact on fish as the algae levels increased.

Swan River Trust River System Manager Mark Cugley said the free-floating *Karlodinium veneticum* species was known to affect the capacity of fish to extract oxygen from the water.

"The oxygenation plants are continuing to be operated to maintain oxygen levels to provide some refuge for the fish," he said. "The alga is still prevalent in the area, but it is now declining in density."

The dead fish were predominantly black bream. Most were found around Middle Swan Bridge and Guildford Road Bridge on Sunday and Monday. A reddish discolouration of the water and 'fishy' odour may be noticeable in the area.

"While the *Karlodinium* algae can be toxic to fish it does not present a direct risk to humans, but sensible precautions should be taken," Mr Cugley said.

"The Department of Health advises that people should not swim in, or fish in, water with dead and decomposing fish. They should also keep pets and other animals away from the fish because they may contain high levels of bacteria.

"Sluggish and dead fish should also not be collected and used for bait or consumption because of the risk of high levels of bacteria. As a long-standing precaution, the Department of Health advises people not to eat mussels, cockles or oysters from the Swan and Canning rivers."

Mr Cugley said an additional concern was that a number of pearl cichlids – a feral fish native to South America - were also found among the dead fish by officers.

"Cichlids are aggressively territorial and disturb habitat for native fish with their bottom-feeding behaviour and it is a concern to find they are now present in the Swan," he said.

The cichlids are believed to have originated from unwanted animals dumped from aquaria into Perth wetlands and waterways.

Anyone noticing dead or sluggish fish in the area should report them to the Trust by calling 9278 0900, or after hours on 0419 192 845.

Increased algae levels identified in Swan River

Thursday, 31 May 2012

The Swan River Trust is monitoring high levels of the potentially fish-killing microalgae *Karlodinium veneficum* in the upper Swan River.

Sluggish fish were sighted today in waters where the Helena River enters the Swan River and a small number of dead fish were also collected at Middle Swan Bridge.

Trust officers have stepped up visual inspections and water sampling throughout the upper Swan River and oxygenation plants at Guildford and Caversham are being operated to maintain oxygen levels.

The free-floating *Karlodinium* microalga is found in most West Australian waterways and typically increases in density between mid-summer and autumn. High levels of the algae are currently occurring across a 15km stretch of the river from Ron Courtney Island in Ascot up to and beyond Jane Brook in Middle Swan.

[» More information regarding algal blooms](#)

Swan River Trust River System Manager Mark Cugley said *Karlodinium* was not considered toxic to humans but it was toxic to fish under some conditions.

"How 'Karlo' affects fish is not fully understood but we suspect the fish gills become damaged, impacting on their ability to extract oxygen from the water," Mr Cugley said.

The algae can position itself freely in the water column while feeding off other algae species. Water in the affected area may appear reddish brown in colour and exhibit an oily surface scum.

"The recent rain may contribute to the impact the algae can have on fish. Runoff from the rainfall is likely to send additional nutrients and organic matter to the river system, fuelling the blooms and exacerbating oxygen depletion."

While *Karlodinium veneficum* does not present a direct risk to humans, Mr Cugley said sensible precautions should be taken if dead fish were sighted.

"The Department of Health advises that people should not swim in, or fish in, water with dead and decomposing fish. They should also keep pets and other animals away from the fish because they may contain high levels of bacteria," he said.

"Sluggish and dead fish should also not be collected and used for bait or consumption because of the risk of high levels of bacteria."

Anyone noticing dead or sluggish fish in the river should report them to the Trust by calling 9278 0900, or after hours on 0419 192 845.

Dolphin calf inspires Highhope

Wednesday, 30 May 2012

Perth's youngest river dolphin has a name - Highhope – symbolising the hope the baby dolphin inspires for the future of the river dolphins while also connecting to its mother, Highnitch.

Highhope was selected from over 1000 suggestions sent to the Swan River Trust's Name The Dolphin Calf Competition. It was submitted by 25-year-old dolphin enthusiast William Ross, a keen kayaker and jogger who loves watching the dolphins at play. He said he considered it a privilege to name the calf and he was very excited to be chosen.

Highhope was the unanimous choice of the three judges - Western Australia's Chief Scientist Professor Lyn Beazley, Swan River Trust principal scientist Dr Kerry Trayler, and Dr Chandra Salgado from Curtin University's Centre for Marine Science and Technology – who spent hours going through the 1036 entries.

Other popular suggestions included reflective names like Shimmer, Moondance, Silver and Wavewatcher, names drawn from mythology, such as Apollo, for the Greek god who changed himself into a dolphin, fun names like Splash, Squeaky, Bubbles, Snorkel and Fluffy, grand names like Dashing White Cloud, and Noongar, Latin, Hawaiian, Swedish and even Swahili interpretations.

Highhope is now almost 10 months old and will stay alongside its mother for up to five years.

These photos taken by Murdoch University researcher Delphine Chabanne show Highhope as a newborn calf, 'smiling' at six months, and now strong and healthy at nearly 10 months old.

Plea to public not to approach entangled dolphin

Tuesday, 22 May 2012

The Swan River Trust is urging the public not to approach a young dolphin in the Swan Canning Riverpark which has fishing line entangled on its dorsal fin.

Sightings of the dolphin calf and its mother have ranged from Perth waters to Fremantle. Trust principal scientist Kerry Trayler said wildlife experts were monitoring the dolphin and their efforts to assist the animal would be hindered if it was 'spooked' by well-meaning but untrained people. The calf is still physically strong.

"We recognise it is distressing to see a dolphin in this state and people wish to help - but it is crucial they do not try to intervene," Dr Trayler said.

"Dolphins are intelligent and learn to avoid anything or anyone who causes them distress. Under no circumstances should anyone jump into the water and approach the pair. It is unsafe, stressful for the dolphins and makes intervention by experts more difficult."

During a third attempt to disentangle the dolphin last Friday, 18 May, Department of Environment and Conservation officers spent several hours trying to help the calf. However, it remains very agile and its mother is highly protective. The officers are continuing to work on strategies to assist the pair.

The entangled dolphin has been identified as a dependent calf known as Gizmo, aged about three. It is swimming alongside its mother, Tupac, who has put herself between rescuers and the calf when they tried to assist it.

"These incidents are very difficult to deal with and take time and patience. The best chance of helping the animal will occur when it is fatigued and DEC experts can then attempt another disentanglement," Dr Trayler said.

"The dolphin's plight highlights the importance of people not dropping rubbish – particularly fishing line - in the Riverpark. What is really distressing is that these incidents are avoidable and the best thing people can do is pick up any rubbish they see."

Dr Trayler urged the public to continue to report any sightings of the dolphin to the Swan River Trust on 92780900, (a/h) 0419 192 845, or DEC's WILDCARE helpline on 94749055.

The information is helping to establish a pattern of its movements around the river.

Drainage project set to boost river health

Tuesday, 1 May 2012

The final phase of a \$375,000 project in Armadale to help reduce nutrient loads entering the Canning River has begun.

Revegetation and weed control at the Williams Road Main Drain (WRMD) site began in May 2011 with thousands of seedlings planted since then and more than 90 cubic metres of sediment and rubbish removed with the help of volunteers.

Earthmoving equipment is now on site to create a weir and widen the drain to increase capacity and reduce flow, install riffles to help stabilise the drain and oxygenate the water, and landscape a swale to filter silt and nutrients using native plants.

The drainage reserve was identified as a significant contributor of nitrogen and sediment into the Wungong River, which joins the Southern River to feed into the Canning River.

When completed, the work will ensure significant quantities of sediment and gross pollutants are removed from the river system.

The appearance and amenity of the reserve will also be significantly enhanced for residents.

The project is part of the Swan Canning Water Quality Improvement Plan (SCWQIP), which is the Government's blueprint for action to reduce levels of nitrogen and phosphorus moving from catchments to the rivers.

Computer modelling suggests that up to 250 tonnes of nitrogen and 26 tonnes of phosphorus enter the Swan Canning system each year from coastal catchments, which is nearly double the acceptable load. The SCWQIP aims to slash the nitrogen load by 120 tonnes a year and phosphorus by 12 tonnes a year.

The WRMD project is being managed by the South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare (SERCUL) in partnership with the Swan River Trust, Department of Water, Water Corporation, City of Armadale and the Armadale Gosnells Landcare Group (AGLG).

Volunteers have contributed more than 720 hours of work. The AGLG has been heavily involved in the revegetation weed control, Cecil Andrews High School planted over 10,000 seedlings, Dale Christian College also held a tree planting day and Chevron volunteers spent two days helping out on site.

Monday, 30 April 2012

Minister condemns river rubbish

- Tonnes of rubbish being dumped in the river
- Minister urges the community to report offenders

Environment Minister Bill Marmion has urged people to take better care of Perth's Swan and Canning rivers by not dumping rubbish in the water and on the foreshores.

Mr Marmion said 14 tonnes of rubbish was retrieved from the Riverpark by Swan River Trust officers last financial year and a similar amount was accruing this year.

"That's on top of the rubbish picked up by councils and community groups and it has to stop," he said.

"We're pulling everything from couches and fridges to safes, tyres and shopping trolleys out of the river.

"Equally disturbing is the amount of plastic bags, bait boxes and discarded fishing line dropped by people who are using the river for fishing. Their actions can have potentially devastating impacts on the river wildlife, including dolphins."

Some of the larger items retrieved by the trust last year included 48 shopping trolleys, 46 tyres, 51 chairs and 20 pallets or crates.

"Recently, we pulled a dumped motorbike from the river and whoever did that clearly gave no thought to the polluting impact of the oil and petrol leaking out," the Minister said.

"If you measured all the discarded fishing line we find, it would stretch for kilometres. The river is an amazing asset and millions of dollars are spent each year on initiatives to protect and maintain it.

"The issue of rubbish is everyone's responsibility and I encourage anyone who sees items being dumped to report it to the trust."

The trust can impose \$200 on the spot fines for littering but it needs the public to report offenders immediately. For more serious offences, people caught dumping rubbish in waterways can be fined up to \$62,500 under environmental protection laws enacted last year.

Fact File

14 tonnes of general refuse and 186 large items were removed from the water and foreshores by Swan River Trust officers last year

To report rubbish being dumped, contact the Swan River Trust on 9278 0900

Healthy horse pastures boost river health

Sunday, 22 April 2012

Want to turn tired sandy soil into productive pasture while also helping to protect our rivers?

Why not come along to one of the free Great Gardens Horse Property Planning workshops being held at Bullsbrook and Upper Swan in May for great tips on sustainable property management.

Modelling of the impact of different land uses on water quality suggests that horses, catteries and kennels combined contribute around 6 per cent of the total nitrogen and 8 per cent of the total phosphorus loads entering the Swan Canning river system, mainly through concentrated animal waste.

Excess nutrients entering the rivers through drains and groundwater run-off can cause algal blooms and fish deaths.

Proudly supported by the Swan River Trust and the WA Horse Council, the free workshops provide advice on pasture and fodder types, fertilising, soil improvement, nutrient management, pests, weeds, water savings and landscaping to reduce nutrient run-off into our waterways.

The award-winning Great Gardens program was created by independent environmental consultants in 2003 and hundreds of free sustainable gardening workshops have been held since then, helping to reduce nutrient discharge from domestic gardens by an estimated 6-8 tonnes of phosphorus and 50-60 tonnes of nitrogen.

The free Horse Property Planning workshops are on:

- Sunday, 6 May from 9am-12pm at Brookleigh Equestrian Estate, 1235 Great Northern Highway, Upper Swan; and
- Sunday, 20 May from 9am-12pm at Lynward Park, 2140 Great Northern Highway, Bullsbrook.

To register phone the Great Gardens hotline on 1300 884 764 or register online. Bookings are essential.

Name a dolphin and win a Captain Cook cruise

Tuesday, 10 April 2012

A rare opportunity to officially name a dolphin calf is up for grabs. Perth's newest baby Bottlenose dolphin is now a healthy eight months old and can be seen swimming in the Swan Canning Riverpark with its protective mum, Highnitch, who was first sighted there in 2001.

Environment Minister Bill Marmion announced the competition to name the calf – one of at least 20 Bottlenose dolphins now resident in the Riverpark – to mark the release of new information indicating the river population is growing.

Preliminary results from a major research project involving Murdoch and Curtin Universities and hundreds of Dolphin Watch volunteers suggest there are four mother and calf dolphin pairs now resident in the Riverpark along with 12 other adults and juveniles. Their numbers are boosted by occasional 'visits' from coastal dolphins, including several other mother and calf pairs.

The Swan-Canning dolphins have been spotted as far afield as the river mouth at the Port of Fremantle all the way to Caversham. Around half have names, such as Arrow, Blackwall, Bottomslice, Claw, Hii, Moon, Highnitch, Tworakes and Tupac. Many were coined by Murdoch University dolphin expert Hugh Finn and his colleagues while they studied the dolphins over many years.

The competition coincides with the launch of the new Swan River Trust dolphin education display at Scitech, which includes new photos, a replica dolphin skull, a fin skeleton and educational DVD.

Entries to name the calf can be lodged through the following:

- at Scitech
- sent to the Swan River Trust at PO Box 6829, East Perth, 6892, or
- emailed to DolphinName@SwanRiverTrust.WA.GOV.AU

The competition closes on May 25.

The winner will receive a prize pack valued at around \$500 consisting of:

- a Captain Cook Family ZOOCROOZ (2 adults + 4 children)
- a 1-yr Family Pass to Scitech (2 adults + 2 children), and
- a 1-yr DEC National Parks Pass and a framed photo of Highnitch's calf

Come along to a free Great Gardens workshop

Sunday, 1 April 2012

Want to smarten up your garden while also helping to protect our rivers? Why not come along to one of the free Great Gardens workshops being held in South Perth, Vincent and Melville this month for great tips on sustainable gardening.

Proudly supported by the Swan River Trust, the free workshops cover everything from improving your soil and effective planting and watering techniques, through to best practice fertiliser use, composting, worm farming and becoming more waterwise and riverwise.

Participants learn how to make smart gardening decisions that reduce the risk of harming our rivers by minimising the flow of nutrients from drains and groundwater run-off leaching into the Swan and Canning rivers.

The award-winning Great Gardens program was created by independent environmental consultants in 2003 and hundreds of free workshops have been held since then. Research indicates that these workshops have helped reduce nutrient discharge from domestic gardens by an estimated six to eight tonnes of phosphorus and 50-60 tonnes of nitrogen since the program's inception.

South Perth

April 4, 6.30pm - 9.30pm at the South Perth Community Centre, corner Sandgate Street and South Terrace, South Perth

Vincent

April 12, 6.30pm - 9.30pm in the upstairs function room, City of Vincent Administration and Civic Centre, 244 Vincent Street, Leederville

Melville

April 17, 6pm to 9pm at Piney Lakes Education Centre, Leach Highway (between Murdoch Drive and Risely Street, Winthrop)

Register and participate

To register phone the Great Gardens hotline on 1300 884 764 or register online.

Bookings are essential.

Wednesday, 21 March 2012

Check out the ferals invading the Swan

The Swan River Trust will feature an eye-catching display of live feral fish in its marquee at this year's Autumn River Festival on Sunday, April 1, to draw attention to the serious problems caused by people dumping unwanted aquarium pets into Perth waterways.

Introduced exotic fish – ranging from Asian koi carp and giant goldfish through to South American gambusia and even some perch native to other Australian states – are threatening the future of some native fish in the Swan Canning Riverpark by damaging habitats and preying on eggs and young, and it is critical people know that they should never dispose of their unwanted fish in waterways.

The Trust's marquee will also feature an experiment to show what happens when fertilizer is added to a jar of river water – a green, gunky mess. There will be a kid's colouring-in competition, information on all sorts of river animals, including dolphins, access to a microscope, and even a display of feral snails – so make sure you drop in.

The Autumn River Festival - from 10.00am to 4.00pm on April 1 – is at Riverside Gardens in Bayswater. It's a great day of free fun for the family, with a range of community stalls, arts and crafts, live entertainment and children's activities.

River Protection Strategy - have your say now

Wednesday, 14 March 2012

The deadline for public submissions on future protection and management strategies for the Swan Canning Riverpark is approaching fast.

The Draft River Protection Strategy is a blueprint for managing the Riverpark over the next 50 years and describes the responsibilities that more than 20 state government agencies and 21 local governments have to protect the Swan and Canning rivers.

It was released on December 22 for a three-month public comment period.

The Draft Strategy notes that population growth, increasing land development and demand for recreational opportunities are increasing pressure on the Riverpark's natural resources, while human induced changes and a drying climate are putting pressure on natural systems to cope with increased nutrients, changes in oxygen levels and changes in flow regimes and storm surge events.

These pressures all require a coordinated management response to protect and enhance the ecological health and community benefit of the Riverpark.

The Draft Strategy looks at ways to improve the management, health and amenity of the river and achieve better coordination, cooperation and collaboration between the many stakeholders.

The closing date for submissions is March 30.

Monday, 12 March 2012

New chairman to steer Swan River Trust board

Thursday, 1 March 2012

Environment Minister Bill Marmion has paid tribute to outgoing Swan River Trust chairman Jim Freemantle, who this month left the board after eight years' service.

Mr Marmion praised Mr Freemantle for his commitment to the Trust, and protection of the Swan Canning Riverpark.

The Minister said he was very pleased to appoint deputy chairman Mick Poole as the new chairman of the Swan River Trust.

"Professor Poole wears the coveted Farrer Memorial Medal for his groundbreaking contributions to agricultural research in areas such as salinity control, weed control, sustainable cropping and crop production," he said.

\$300,000 boost for environmental groups

Wednesday, 29 February 2012

- Government announces \$300,000 in funding for environment groups
- Swan River Trust and Alcoa Landcare Program enters its 14th year

Environment Minister Bill Marmion today announced more than \$300,000 in funding for 30 community groups to help improve water quality in the Swan Canning Riverpark.

The funding will be distributed through the Swan River Trust and Alcoa Landcare Program (SALP), which has supported more than 800 environmental projects across Perth since 1998.

Mr Marmion said the program, managed by Perth Region NRM (Natural Resource Management), gives local environment groups access to funding for projects in their area.

“On-ground work by community groups is extremely important to the environment, as many of the projects help improve the quality of water flowing into the Swan and Canning rivers,” he said.

“Some of the catchment and environment groups have received funding every year since the project began 14 years ago.”

The State Government has contributed nearly \$3million to the Swan River Trust and Alcoa Landcare Program since 1998, with the latest round of funding totalling \$150,000.

“The benefits of this funding are enormous as it is estimated that each grant draws matching contributions of about 80 per cent through volunteer work and in-kind support,” the Minister said.

Projects across the catchment this year include revegetating wetlands and degraded creeks; fencing wetland areas to protect them from overuse; improving vegetation around drainage networks; and the removal of feral weeds in urban streams.

“I would like to thank the corporate partners Alcoa and the Burswood Park Board for their great contribution to environmental projects across the State,” Mr Marmion said.

“Without this program many volunteers would not be able to invest the time and resources needed to keep our Riverpark in a state that we can all enjoy.”

Fact File

In the 14 years since this program began, 1,500 hectares of vegetation, 4,000 hectares of weed control and 1,100 tonnes of mulch have been spread

Since 1998, the Swan Alcoa Landcare Program has funded 800 different projects across the Perth NRM region

Swan River patrols boosted with new vessel

Sunday, 26 February 2012

The State Government today boosted the enforcement and compliance functions of the Swan River Trust with a new patrol vessel.

The Booneenboro was named by Noongar Elders after the body of water between Heirisson Island and the Victoria Park foreshore, where the Trust's Ellam Street work centre is located.

Environment Minister Bill Marmion said the inflatable hulled vessel was the first purpose-built patrol boat the Trust has owned and operated.

Draft Car Parking and Access Policy

Tuesday, 21 February 2012

The Swan River Trust is preparing a new policy to address the development of public car parking within the Parks and Recreation reserve around the Swan and Canning rivers.

Although providing access for cars is an important part of connecting the wider community with the river, hardstand and parked vehicles can detract from the visual amenity of the river landscape.

Car parks can also impact on the water quality by trapping and transporting hydrocarbons, sediment and other pollutants into the river.

The draft Car Parking and Access Policy (SRT/D26) aims to balance the visual impact of car parking infrastructure against the need for the community to access the river.

It will ensure car parking proposals along the river include the most up-to-date design standards addressing issues such as public safety, landscaping and water quality considerations.

Submissions on the draft Car Parking and Access Policy can be made via [email](#) at or via post prior to 22 June 2012.

New feral fish category at 25th annual Swanfish event

Monday, 20 February 2012

Concern over the number of exotic fish being released from home aquariums and ponds into the river system has prompted the Swan River Trust to sponsor a new prize category at this weekend's Swanfish 2012 fishing competition.

Swan River Trust Senior Environmental Officer Jeff Cosgrove said introduced exotic fish pose a significant threat to the river system and the new feral fish prize sponsored by the Trust would help educate people on the extent of the problem.

"Increasing numbers of feral fish are being detected in the Swan Canning Riverpark, threatening the future of other species, and it's very important people realise the problems that result when they dump unwanted aquarium fish into drains and waterways," Dr Cosgrove said.

"Introduced fish can affect catchments in much the same way that feral foxes, cats and rabbits cause damage to the landscape.

"For example, introduced carp and goldfish can cause significant habitat disturbance, while Gambusia, which are native to North and Central America but are now established in our rivers, bite and damage the fins of native fish as well as preying on their eggs.

"The introduced fish do not have to come from overseas. Even fish native to other parts of Australia can cause problems in our rivers. Silver Perch, native to the eastern states, is an example of a feral fish that is now threatening some of our local species."

Dr Cosgrove said all introduced species compete with local species for food and there was also a risk of diseases or parasites being introduced.

"You should never put a fish into a river or other local water body that it was not caught in, and anyone who suspects a fish they have caught is an introduced species should place the fish on ice and call FISHWATCH on 1800 815 507," he said.

"The Swan River Trust hopes to use this popular fishing event to let people know that non-native species can damage the ecology of our rivers.

"Once caught, these fish should be destroyed so they do not re-enter the waterways"

Two State Government agencies support Swanfish: the Swan River Trust and the Department of Fisheries. Trust officers will be at the event to distribute information and help identify the feral fish.

Foreshore protection grants made available

Wednesday, 15 February 2012

- State Government invites applications for Riverbank grants funding
- Since 2002, almost \$8million in grants has funded 162 projects

Local government authorities looking to help protect the Swan Canning Riverpark are being invited to apply for funding through the 2012 Riverbank Grants Scheme.

Environment Minister Bill Marmion said the State-funded grants would be allocated to projects focused on shoreline protection and rehabilitation works on the Swan and Canning rivers.

Mr Marmion said the scheme, run through the Swan River Trust, offered grants to a range of projects, from tree-planting projects to larger infrastructure developments.

“Riverbank is just one of the initiatives the State Government is taking to ensure the health and vitality of the Swan Canning Riverpark for generations to come,” he said.

“Successful applicants last year included the City of Melville which is undertaking a \$458,590 rehabilitation project at Point Walter Reserve, an area that has been subject to many environmental pressures over the years.

“The Riverbank Grants Scheme will help to improve the vegetation structure and protect some areas from overuse.”

Riverbank Grants Projects are based on a cost-sharing arrangement with local government authorities and must be carried out on publicly-owned land in the Swan Canning Riverpark.

Fact File

Applications for 2012 grants close 5pm on Friday, April 13

For more information on how to apply and details of past projects visit <http://www.swanrivertrust.wa.gov.au> or call the Trust on 9278 0900

Last year's successful recipients include:

- City of Melville - \$229,295 to help restore and upgrade amenities at Point Walter foreshore, with funding matched by State Government
- Town of Bassendean - \$103,471 to implement the Success Hill Concept Plan by removing the old jetty and improving access to the foreshore

Apply now for Riverbank grants!

Monday, 12 March 2012

Local governments are being urged not to miss out on the latest round of state-funded Riverbank grants for projects to protect and rehabilitate areas of shoreline in the Swan Canning Riverpark.

Since 2002, more than \$7.9 million in Riverbank grants have been distributed to 162 projects, and applications for the 2012-13 grants close at 5pm on April 13.

The scheme, which is run through the Swan River Trust, has helped make a string of visionary projects, ranging from tree planting to large infrastructure development, a reality for many councils over the past decade with huge benefits for the community.

The grants are matched dollar-for-dollar by the recipients. With partner contributions, the 162 projects funded to date are worth around \$16 million.

Guidelines and application forms are available on the Riverbank Grants Scheme page.

Applications now open for 2013 SALP funding

Sunday, 11 March 2012

More than 100 representatives from local catchment groups joined Environment Minister Bill Marmion, Alcoa Chief Executive Alan Cransberg, Swan River Trust chairman Mick Poole, and mayors and council officials from across the city on February 29 to celebrate the 14th year of funding under the Swan River Trust and Alcoa Landcare Program (SALP).

The Swan River Trust and Alcoa combined to provide \$300,000 for SALP this year to fund 70 community environmental projects, ranging from improving drainage networks and removing weeds in urban streams to revegetating wetlands and creeks.

Mr Marmion commended the many volunteers who contribute their time and energy to the projects, which play a crucial role helping to improve water quality in the Swan Canning Riverpark.

Applications now open for SALP grants

Applications are now open for community groups to apply for next year's SALP grants. Guidelines and applications can be downloaded from the Perth Region NRM website.

Applications close on April 30.

Since its inception in 1998, SALP has supported more than 800 environmental projects from Perth and surrounding areas and has logged more than 126,000 volunteer hours from community catchment groups.

Feral fish in the Swan Canning Riverpark

Monday, 5 March 2012

The problems caused by people dumping unwanted pet fish in the river system is being highlighted by the Swan River Trust, which is concerned by the impact they are having on other species.

[» Watch Channel 10's news feature on feral fish in the Riverpark](#)

Senior Environmental Officer Jeff Cosgrove says introduced fish threaten the future of other species in the same way that feral foxes, cats and rabbits can cause damage to the landscape.

“Increasing numbers of feral fish are being detected in the Swan Canning Riverpark and it’s very important people realise the problems that result when they dump unwanted aquarium fish into drains and waterways,” Dr Cosgrove said.

“For example, introduced carp and goldfish can cause significant habitat disturbance, while Gambusia, which are native to North and Central America, but are now established in our rivers, can bite and damage the fins of native fish as well as preying on their eggs.”

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“On-ground work by community groups is extremely important to the environment, as many of the projects help improve the quality of water flowing into the Swan and Canning rivers,” he said.

“Some of the catchment and environment groups have received funding every year since the project began 14 years ago.”

The State Government has contributed nearly \$3million to the Swan River Trust and Alcoa Landcare Program since 1998, with the latest round of funding totalling \$150,000.

“The benefits of this funding are enormous as it is estimated that each grant draws matching contributions of about 80 per cent through volunteer work and in-kind support,” the Minister said.

Projects across the catchment this year include revegetating wetlands and degraded creeks; fencing wetland areas to protect them from overuse; improving vegetation around drainage networks; and the removal of feral weeds in urban streams.

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Public invited to comment on development applications

Monday, 20 February 2012

Members of the public are invited to comment on the following development applications:

- SRT3955 - Replacement of Northern Public Toilet Block at Matilda Bay Reserve
- SRT4001 - Redevelopment of Department of Fisheries Operations Centre at 5 Ellam Street, Victoria Park

Submissions should be made by close of business on 14 March 2012.

For details of these applications please visit our development applications page.

Update on fish deaths in upper Swan River

Sunday, 5 February 2012

Laboratory tests of fish that died in the upper Swan River have been inconclusive as to the cause of death.

Swan River Trust Riverpark officers removed more than 4,000 dead fish between Middle Swan Bridge and the Jane Brook confluence last week, largely from recreational use areas.

An unconfirmed number of fish sank to the riverbed and could not be retrieved.

Swan River Trust River System Manager Mark Cugley said a clean-up of the 10 km stretch of river where the fish were found is now complete and many of the fish have been taken away to landfill.

"While the laboratory tests have been inconclusive, we believe that low oxygen levels triggered by rainfall and organic loading to the river, were a key factor in the demise of these fish," Mr Cugley said.

Although the majority of fish collected were initially thought to be Black Bream, they have since been confirmed as being Yellowtail Grunter (*Amniataba caudavittatus*) and Six Line Trumpeter also known as Western Striped Grunter (*Pelates octolineatus*).

"Testing of oxygen levels this week shows that concentrations are now at levels suitable for fish with the two oxygenation plants at Guildford and Caversham continuing to operate further down the river, helping the situation," Mr Cugley said.

Monitoring conducted by the Swan River Trust and Department of Water on Monday 30 January 2012 confirmed that water quality had improved. No potentially harmful species of algae exceeded guideline values.

"Weekly testing by the Swan River Trust will continue as normal to make sure these levels are closely monitored."

The Trust encourages the public to report dead or sluggish fish in the Swan Canning Riverpark. Please contact the Trust on 9278 0900 or 0419 192 845.

The Trust provides a weekly Microalgae Activity Report to the community through The West Australian newspaper and on the Trust website.

As a long-standing precaution, the Department of Health advises people not to eat wild shellfish from the Swan Canning Riverpark.

Fish deaths in upper Swan River

Monday, 23 January 2012

Swan River Trust Riverpark officers are responding to reports of approximately 5000 dead fish in the upper reaches of the Swan River.

Trust River Systems Manager Mark Cugley said officers have been on site to determine the exact number and investigate possible causes of the deaths.

“The Trust was notified by the public on the weekend that a number of fish were seen floating in the water between Middle Swan bridge and the Ellen Brook confluence,” Mr Cugley said.

“Most of the fish appear to be juvenile black bream with the remainder being trumpeter.”

Mr Cugley said monitoring results have shown there are currently low oxygen levels in that part of the river largely as a result of high water temperatures and approximately 10mm of rain that fell in the area last Friday.

“Sudden rainfall often drags nutrient rich organic matter into the river and this typically causes oxygen levels to rapidly drop below levels suitable for fish and other aquatic fauna,” he said.

“However the exact cause of the deaths is yet to be determined and additional sampling will be carried out.

“We have two oxygenation plants providing refuge downstream and they have since been ramped up to full capacity.”

The Trust encourages the public to report dead or sluggish fish in the Swan Canning Riverpark on 9278 0900 or after hours on 0419 192 845.

The Trust provides a weekly [Microalgae Activity Report](#) to the community through The West Australian newspaper and on the Trust website.