



MEDIA RELEASE

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Research forms part of the National Carp Control Plan process

Researchers and government officials were given a preview of the research being undertaken as part of the National Carp Control Plan (NCCP) in Canberra last week.

The NCCP is being prepared to explore ways to improve the quality of our waterways, with one being the possible release of the carp virus cyprinid herpesvirus-3, through a \$15 million Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) planning process on behalf of the Australian Government.

As part of the plan, the NCCP is coordinating a large program of research to understand how the potential release of the virus to control the introduced carp species could be managed and community attitudes and opinions in relation to waterways.

At the Principal Investigator Workshop in Canberra last week researchers were able to gain a broad overview of each of the NCCP's research projects and to identify how they can best work together.

National Coordinator of the NCCP, Matt Barwick, says getting all of the researchers together highlighted the extensive work that needed to occur before a decision was made on if the carp virus is the best option to control carp.

"The National Carp Control Plan is a process, not a foregone conclusion," says Mr Barwick.

"Carp are one of the most destructive introduced pest species in Australia and cause major damage to native fish populations and the water quality of our waterways," says Mr Barwick.

"Different methods have been tried for decades to control carp without widespread success and that is why we find ourselves preparing the NCCP."

World-class social scientists, biologists, economists, risk assessment specialists and water quality experts are investigating the challenges, risks, costs, opportunities and potential benefits of carp biocontrol.

Some of the major research projects include: a biomass study to provide an estimate of carp density in Australian waterways; completion of trials testing susceptibility of non-target species to the carp virus; strategies for cleaning up dead carp if the carp virus is released; and a quantitative social, economic and ecological risk assessment of carp biocontrol.

Associate Professor in the University of Canberra's Health Research Institute & Institute for Applied Ecology, Dr Jacki Schirmer, is exploring community attitudes to carp biocontrol.

There will be four major surveys undertaken with significant sample sizes to determine what people think about carp control, and identify questions they may have.

Mr Barwick says carp impact on everyone and the aim of the plan is to solve the challenge together.

“Community consultation will continue to ensure the NCCP is aware of the ecological values of the affected waterways and any likely direct and indirect impacts that may eventuate from the use of this control method,” says Mr Barwick.

“Rivers and other waterways are the lifeblood of communities and industries like agriculture and tourism. The purpose of the NCCP is to return the waterways back to healthy and viable ecosystems to improve the water for drinking, fishing and recreational activities.”

“Healthy river systems and waterways result in healthier communities.”

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About the National Carp Control Plan

The National Carp Control Plan (NCCP) is being prepared to explore the release of the carp virus cyprinid herpesvirus-3. The Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) is leading the \$15 million planning process on behalf of the Australian Government. At the end of 2018, the FRDC will provide the completed NCCP to the Australian Government, which will then decide whether to release the virus or not.

For more information visit www.carp.gov.au

Media inquiries

Nicola Bell

0429 234 759

nicola.bell@seftons.com.au

