



MEDIA RELEASE

27 October 2008

Community groups offered new weapon in war on carp



New carp cages, which have recently removed around seven tonnes of breeding carp from the Murray River in just 10 weeks at a single wetland, are now available to community groups, NRM Boards and catchment managers throughout the Murray-Darling Basin.

The Murray-Darling Basin Commission (MDBC) funded the development of the cages as part of its Native Fish Strategy which aims to return native fish populations to 60 per cent of pre-European settlement numbers.

Researchers at the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) have modified the cages to work with carp in wetlands.

MDBC Chief Executive Dr Wendy Craik AM said that together with a range of other options being investigated under the native fish strategy, the cages will boost efforts to control carp in the Murray.

“These wetland carp cages and their new cousin, carp pushing traps, are welcome refinements which can only enhance this process,” Dr Craik said.

The modified SARDI wetland carp separation cages contain specialised combination carp jump/push traps. These are being trialled in a project funded by the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre, at the Kingston-on-Murray Banrock Station wetland in SA’s Riverland, following its refilling in early June.

The cages are designed to exploit two unique behavioural traits displayed by carp; jumping over and pushing under in-stream obstacles. SARDI Senior Research Officer, Dr Leigh Thwaites says researchers hope that the traps will eventually be used to help control carp throughout the Murray-Darling Basin.

“We are now identifying carp recruitment hotspots and the best locations to exploit their behaviour, such as wetland outlets where they are drawn to the wetland smells by the flowing water, to make the traps as effective as possible,” Dr Thwaites said.

“As they are, the traps can be easily adapted for use at wetlands where there are currently structures of some sort, or where inlets are narrow. We are now working to get the cages automated so that eventually community/NRM groups or commercial fishers will be able to empty the cages in the same easy manner as garbage trucks empty roadside bins.”

Groups interested in using the cages are urged to seek advice from the Invasive Species team at SARDI Aquatic Sciences, to ensure the cages are used to their optimum advantage, and to promote communication to continue improving existing trap designs.

The designs for carp push traps are available on the SARDI website, along with further information about carp separation cages and SARDI’s work with invasive species – simply follow this link to the Invasive Species Sub-Program Home Page <http://tinyurl.com/653umo>.

For further information: Invasive Species Sub-Program Leader Dr Ben Smith email: smith.ben2@saugov.sa.gov.au or Invasive Species Sub-Program Senior Research Officer, Dr Leigh Thwaites email: thwaites.leigh@saugov.sa.gov.au.

For more information on the MDBC’s Native Fish Strategy go to www.mdbc.gov.au/NFS
MDBC media contact: Sam Leone Phone 0407 006 332