



NSW DEPARTMENT OF
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

MEDIA RELEASE

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ENDANGERED SPECIES USING NEW MURRAY RIVER SNAGS

Scientists are excited that several native fish species, including the endangered trout cod, have been found using new river snags between Hume Dam and Yarrawonga along the upper reaches of the Murray River.

The resnagging project, which began in 2006, is funded by the Murray-Darling Basin Commission (MDBC) to replace logs and dead trees at strategic places in the river to act as habitat for fish to spawn, feed and to avoid predators.

Chief Executive Dr Wendy Craik AM said she was delighted the project - managed by NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) - was already succeeding, despite the ravages of the extended drought.

"The snags were sourced from sites where trees were being cleared, such as Hume Highway and some agricultural areas and getting a second lease of life as snags rather than as firewood," Dr Craik said.

"And because this project does not rely on environmental flows – it uses releases from Hume for other purposes – it still delivers in the drought."

NSW DPI Conservation Manager Nathan Reynoldson said the project has already seen more than 3000 large woody habitats (snags) placed in the river with about 1000 more to be placed in 2008-09.

Scientist with Victorian DSE's Arthur Rylah Institute, Jarod Lyon, said recent scientific monitoring detected native fish using the resnagged reaches and especially pleasing was finding an endangered trout cod living on a new snag.

"The initial results are very exciting and further monitoring efforts in coming years will help refine exactly what role the new snags will play in the recovery of native fish populations in the River Murray," he said.

Mr Lyon also indicated that anglers play a key role in assisting the monitoring of the projects success.

"We have placed external tags in around 15 000 native fish between Lake Hume and Tocumwal. If anglers do catch a tagged fish, we would like them to record the number of the tag, the length of the fish and location of capture and call the number printed on the tag," Mr Lyon said.

"The information they provide is valuable to answering key questions about the benefits of resnagging for ensuring the recovery and long-term sustainability of native fish populations."

The project is a partnership between the MDBC the Victorian North East Catchment Management Authority, NSW DPI, NSW Department of Water and Energy and the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment.

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