

Each year National water week provides an opportunity for natural resource management agencies and communities to get involved in river health activities and promote water conservation across Victoria. As last year, this years theme, "Water for life" encourages Victorian communities to "Protect, Conserve and Get Involved!" Activities such as Corangamite's "Catch a Carp", East Gippslands catchment tours and North Central's launch of education resources are testimonial to Waterwatch's comprehensive activity base during the week long event.



Students in the Wimmera region conduct macroinvertebrate assessments.

National Water Week 2003

Corangamite Waterwatch's 5th year of Geelong's catch a carp competition managed to register 280 competitors, which ended in a total of 47 carp caught. Fishcare volunteers and the local Angling Club conducted "Come 'n Try Fishing" clinics and assisted Waterwatch with fish related inquiries. Environmental performance troupe "the Connies" were on board to help spread information on our native fish assets and the threats to existing fish communities. Colac's 2nd Catch-a-carp saw 120 people registered with an impressive total of 176 carp caught, amongst the caught carps was one weighing in at over 9kg!

East Gippsland Waterwatch in conjunction with East Gippsland CMA and the North East CMA held a number community workshops throughout the Tambo and Snowy River catchments. Fish and macro-invertebrate ecologists from the Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Arthur Rylah Institute spoke to students and community members about the importance of fish and macro-invertebrates in our waterways. Of particular interest was the electro-



Goulburn Broken's Wet and Wild Swim Carnival.

fishing demonstration by the Arthur Rylah Research Institute staff, where a number of fish were caught, including a short finned eel and a blackfish.

Highlighting National Water Week in the Glenelg Hopkins region was the schools activity day, which brought together 280 primary school students from 3 Warrnambool schools. Held at the St. Pius X Parish Hall Warrnambool, students experienced at first hand an array of river health related activities. Workshopping in conjunction with Waterwatch, were programs like Coastcare, Workers for Wetlands,

Alcoa Frogwatch and DPI Fisheries, providing students with a unique view of aquatic animals up close, whilst learning how these creatures and their various aquatic environments are linked.

There is nothing quite like good healthy competition between local agencies and authorities in the Mallee region. In it's second year of National Water week activities, the local Dryland Regatta requires entrants to use their master building skills to construct a "boat" to hold a team of seven. This year's competition was tough with teams being water bombed and skirted

with fire extinguishes. Competition for line honours was fierce with formidable entrants like Lower Murray Water's "splash gang" and Department of Primary Industries "Pirates". But on the day, the Mallee Catchment Management Authorities team took line honours.

A significant milestone for the North Central region was the launch by the Hon. Elaine Carbinas MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Environment, of the new environmental education resources. Dignitaries and community members gathered at Sacred Heart Primary School in Elmore as



Wimmera students show off their macroinvertebrate identification skills.

Goulburn Broken CMA staff celebrate their victory.



Mallee's dryland regatta.



West Mildura students participate in National Water Week activities through Waterwatch's macro-invertebrate snapshot.

students presented to Ms Carbines information on activities they have undertaken along the Campaspe River.

All three water authorities throughout the Goulburn Broken region (Goulburn Valley Water, Goulburn-Murray Water, Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority) and 2 local Council's (City of Greater Shepparton & Campaspe Shire Council) helped to develop and sponsor a number of activities, including the inaugural 'Wet & Wild' Swim Carnival. Over 50 people participated in the event drawing a number of spectators. City of

Greater Shepparton Mayor, Ann McCamish, presented the WACCA (Bunyip mascot) Trophy, a golden kickboard to the winning team, the staff of the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority.

Lasting a marathon 5 days was West Gippsland Waterwatch activities in the Sale area, revolving around the newly developed Heyfield Wetlands and Vox Bandicoot theatre. South Gippsland region was busy with 5 school visits and 340 students taking part in activities. The "Water for Life" photo competition in the Latrobe region resulted in Traralgon Secondary

College student Miranda Halma coming runner up (yr 9/10) in the state judging.

Nineteen schools, twenty-four classes and more than 500 students got involved in Wimmera Community Waterwatch activities during National Water Week for 2003. Students were involved in stormwater tours, macro-invertebrate and turbidity snapshots, wetland tours, river studies, catchment tours; and some students even dressed up as aquatic invertebrates and tried to emulate the swimming techniques of these small but amazing animals.

These NWW activities were all undertaken in the name of increasing awareness of water quality issues and long term environmental sustainability.