

Partners/Sponsors Natural Heritage Trust, Mallee Catchment Management Authority, Lower Murray Water, First Mildura Irrigation Trust, Mildura Rural City Council, Sunraysia Daily, Harvey Norman, National Action Program, WIN, Jamesprint.



Monitoring Groups/Site Information

50 Groups, 1170 participants, 87 sites

Coordinators

Darren Wilson, Joanne Wiebrecht, Michelle Dickson

Mallee

When students from Mildura West Primary School were searching for a presentation topic for the International River Health Conference in Mildura, they knew their Regional Waterwatch coordinator, Darren Wilson would come to the rescue.

Struggling to decide on a topic amongst all their ideas, Darren provided students with valuable background information on issues that were affecting their local stream - the Murray River. The students were eager to teach others about issues such as erosion, vegetation, river frontages and track use. With the importance of riparian zones to river health, they came up with the clever title - "Are you robbing the bank?"



"We chose this title to catch people's attention hoping they would tune in to what we had to say, and do something about protecting the river banks, by changing our behaviour,"

Marion Vorwerk, Mildura West Primary School.

In developing their presentation, Darren who works for the Mallee Catchment Management Authority provided students with a real life example of current management actions to protect river banks. Students learnt about the "Murray River Frontage Action Plan" with a catchment excursion to illustrate first hand the problems facing the Murray.

"We soon learnt that humans through recreation and leisure were the cause of many problems for the Murray," said Marion.



Mildura West Primary students carry out macroinvertebrate surveys on the Murray River.

Are you robbing the bank?



Students were able to look at the social, economic and environmental worth of the mighty Murray and how current uses can erode banks, vegetation and habitats. Students were able to come up with solutions and saw first hand the importance of pest plant and animal control, the strategic placement of bollards and fencing remnant vegetation to minimise impacts.

Through the mentoring process, the Mallee Catchment Management Authority staff supported the

students exploration, to oversee the progress, answer questions and offer advice. The students put Darren's knowledge and their own experiences to good use and developed a presentation that was well received at the International River Health Conference.

The importance of habitat to river health is certainly understood by these future natural resource managers!



Left. Mildura West Primary School students participating in School Science Night activities.

Above. Mildura West Primary School students engaged in drain stencilling activities.