



Media Statement

Monday, 28 October 2019

Update on Capel River fish kill event

The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) continues to investigate a fish kill incident along a section of the lower Capel River.

Officers from DWER, Department of Health, and the Shire of Capel attended the site, to collect water and fish samples for analysis following the report of fish deaths on 7 October 2019.

Officers estimated between 700-1000 fish died across the area, including marron, freshwater cobbler, redfin perch, turtles, carp and mullet. Most of the fish affected were exotic carp.

DWER Scientific Officer Tim Storer said analysis of the samples showed low dissolved oxygen and high bacteria counts, suggesting recent contamination.

“This was likely due to flushing from recent rain in the area, which washed off the catchment,” he said.

“The low dissolved oxygen levels were below tolerance levels for fish species, suggesting that this caused or significantly contributed to fish deaths.

“Other water quality testing, which included salinity, pH, temperature, metals, pesticides and herbicides, showed no significant issues.”

No further fish deaths have been reported since the initial incident.

Capel Shire’s warning signs were removed on Friday (25 October) after water quality testing results showed water quality met recreational and environmental guidelines.

DWER and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development’s (DPIRD) [Revitalising Geographe Waterways](#) initiative includes programs to reduce nutrient inputs from agriculture impacting on the region’s waterways.

Members of the public are asked to report any fish deaths or fish strandings by ringing the DPIRD [Fishwatch hotline](#) on 1800 815 507.

For questions related to recreational safety please contact the Department of Health and the Shire of Capel for the latest advice.

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