



A. Peter 2016

Rivers and wetlands

Rivers and wetlands are vital places for waterbirds like pelicans, cormorants, herons, egrets and grebes. These birds feed on aquatic plants and animals, particularly yabbies, freshwater shellfish and mussels. Reeds and rushes provide cover for shoreline foragers including crakes, rails and swamphens. Mudflats and shallow water are filled with the invertebrates that birds like spoonbills and ibis feed on.

In the Murray–Darling Basin, freshwater rivers and wetlands are home to around 44 native fish species. These range from small carp gudgeons (which are around 5cm long), up to the iconic Murray cod, which can grow up to 1.8m in length and weigh up to 114kg. Different freshwater fish species have their own habitat requirements. Some, like the Murray cod, spend almost their entire life in the channels and pools of fast-flowing rivers. Others, including many gudgeon species, prefer slow-flowing or still habitats amongst aquatic vegetation. Some species (like golden perch and silver perch) often spawn and produce offspring after flooding. The extra water triggers the adults to move upstream to breeding places. It also lets young fish get into parts of rivers and wetlands where they can feed and hide from predators.

This image shows a spoonbill, ibis, golden perch, Murray cod and short-finned eel.

About the artist

Kristie Peters is a Wiradjuri woman from southern New South Wales and was born in Bathurst in 1980. Kristie is a twin from a large family of 15 brothers and sisters, and now resides in Canberra with her partner, six young children, and family.

Kristie's style is a mix of contemporary and traditional, creating eye-catching artworks. She completed her Certificate IV in Aboriginal Art and Fashion Design at the Yaruna Centre, Canberra Institute of Technology and is now painting as a profession.