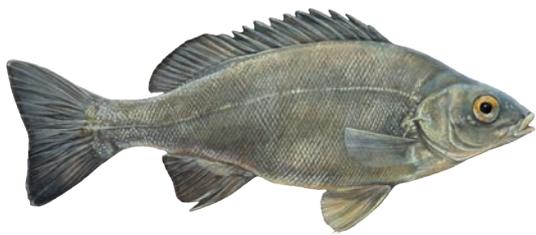


# 2016–17 Murray–Darling Basin Environmental watering priorities



To make the best use of environmental water available for the Murray–Darling Basin, the MDBA sets annual environmental watering priorities for the basin as a whole.

These priorities guide planning of environmental watering across the basin.

We identify these priorities in consultation with the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder, the basin states and local authorities. Local, regional and state priorities complement the basin-wide priorities.

For 2016–17, the whole-of-basin priorities anticipate dry conditions continuing but we have also identified priorities should conditions change and more water becomes available.

In dry conditions, the aim of environmental watering is to ensure environmental assets maintain their basic functions

and resilience by:

- ◆ supporting the survival and viability of threatened species and communities
- ◆ maintaining environmental assets and ecosystem functions, including by allowing drying to occur consistent with natural wetting-drying cycles
- ◆ maintaining refuges.

The whole-of-basin priorities help achieve the long-term expected environmental goals for native vegetation, waterbirds, native fish, and river flows and connectivity set out in the Basin-wide environmental watering strategy.

More detail about the priorities is available on our website [mdba.gov.au](http://mdba.gov.au)

## Native vegetation



### In dry conditions:

- Improve the condition of wetland vegetation communities in the mid-Murrumbidgee wetlands that provide critical habitat
- Improve the health and complexity of waterbird rookery habitat in the northern Narran Lakes system.

### In moderate conditions:

- Prevent critical deterioration of Moira grass in Barmah-Millewa Forest, subject to resolving natural resource management issues.

## Native fish



### In dry conditions:

- Contribute to the long-term recovery of silver perch by improving existing populations and enhancing conditions for recruitment and dispersal to and from suitable habitat.
- Support viable populations of threatened native fish by protecting drought refuges and maintaining in-stream habitats and essential functions.

### In moderate conditions:

- Maximise opportunities for range expansion and the establishment of new populations of silver perch and other threatened fish, as conditions allow.

## Waterbirds



### In moderate conditions:

- Support waterbird populations by watering critical breeding and feeding habitats at the important basin environmental assets for waterbirds, and coordinate watering at ecologically linked systems, particularly at the Macquarie Marshes and Narran Lakes.
- Capitalise on opportunities to support waterbird breeding.

## Flows and connectivity



### In dry conditions:

- Maintain waterholes in the Lower Balonne Floodplain to provide critical refuge for water-dependent species.
- Protect aquatic habitat conditions in the Coorong and support native fish movement by optimising flows into the Coorong and through the Murray Mouth.

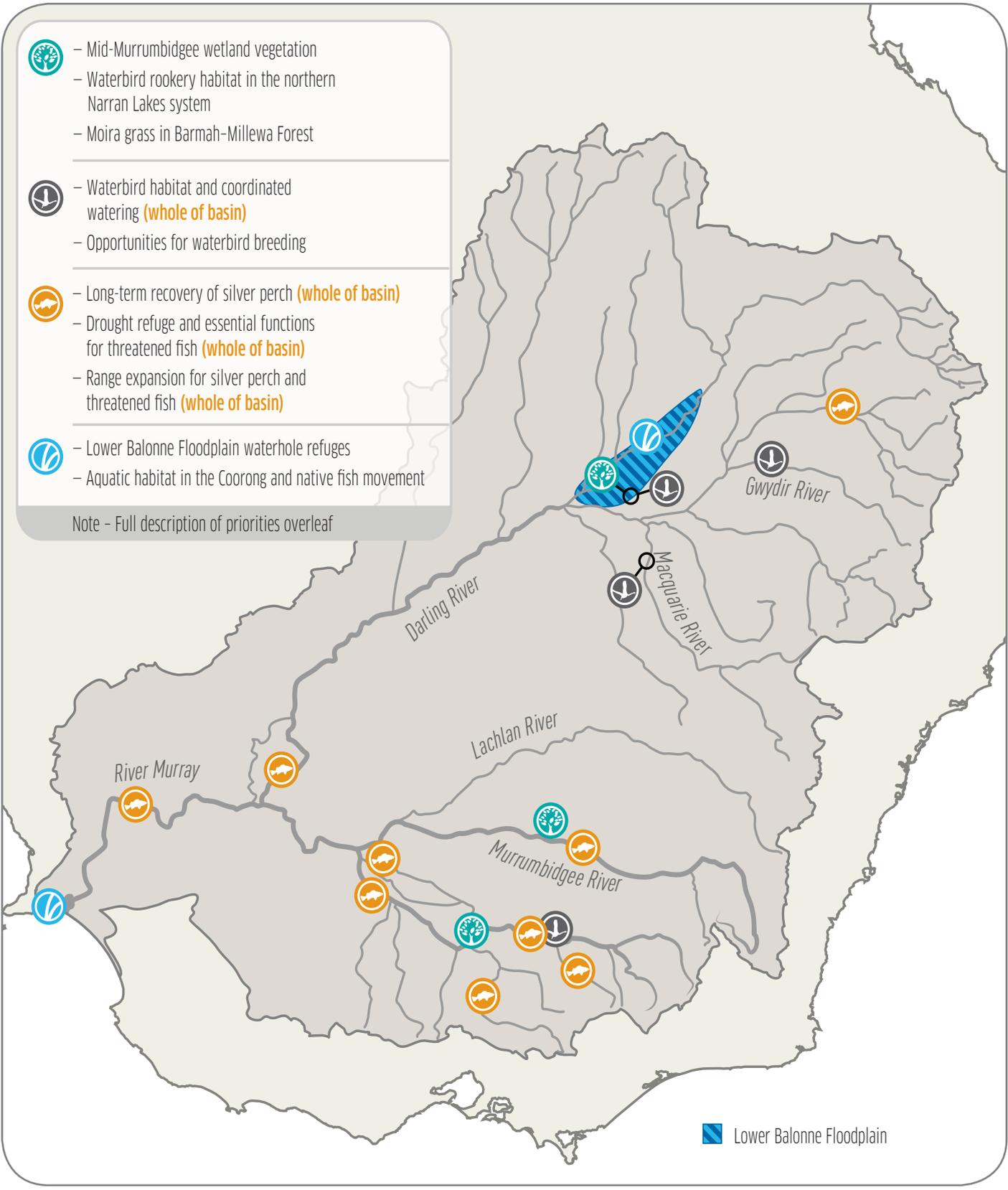


Australian Government





# 2016-17 Murray-Darling Basin Environmental watering priorities



### Photo credits

Box 1: Yarradda Lagoon, mid-Murrumbidgee (photo by Paul Doyle, MDBA)  
 Box 2: Waterbirds roosting in Macquarie Marshes (photo by Richard Kingsford)

Box 3: In-stream vegetation and fishway on Barwon River, Brewarrina (photo by Irene Dowdy)  
 Box 4: A waterhole on the Narran River (photo by Willem F. Vlotman, MDBA)