



Government
of South Australia



Australian Government

MURRAY **FUTURES**
Riverine Recovery

KATFISH REACH FLOODPLAIN

Major works to rehabilitate the Katfish Reach (Katarapko Floodplain) will take place under the *Riverine Recovery Project (RRP)*.

A project to improve the health of Katfish Reach

The \$100 million RRP, part of South Australia's \$610 million *Murray Futures* program, will take steps to improve the long-term ecological health and resilience of the river, floodplains and wetlands along the River Murray from the South Australian-Victorian border to Wellington.

The RRP includes funding for works at Katfish Reach to contribute to providing a healthier and more productive aquatic and floodplain ecosystem that everyone can enjoy.

Construction of infrastructure at Katfish Reach will enhance environmental water flows through 56 kilometres of waterway, introduce water level variation along 20 kilometres of waterway and associated wetlands, improve water quality and connectivity with the river channel, encourage native fish passage and support the recovery of valuable flora and fauna.

This work is in addition to RRP Early On-ground Works being undertaken at Katfish Reach, to manage the nationally threatened Murray hardyhead habitat, restore the Katarapko Island Saline Disposal Basin and enhance floodplain flow and fish passage.

The *Riverine Recovery Project (RRP)* is a key component of South Australia's \$610 million *Murray Futures* program which is funded by the Australian Government's *Water for the Future* initiative.

RRP aims to improve the river's health and the resilience of its wetlands and floodplains from the South Australian-Victorian border to Wellington.

The project will improve the long-term prospects of floodplains and wetlands by more efficient use of environmental water and deliver up to 15 gigalitres of environmental water savings to the Commonwealth.



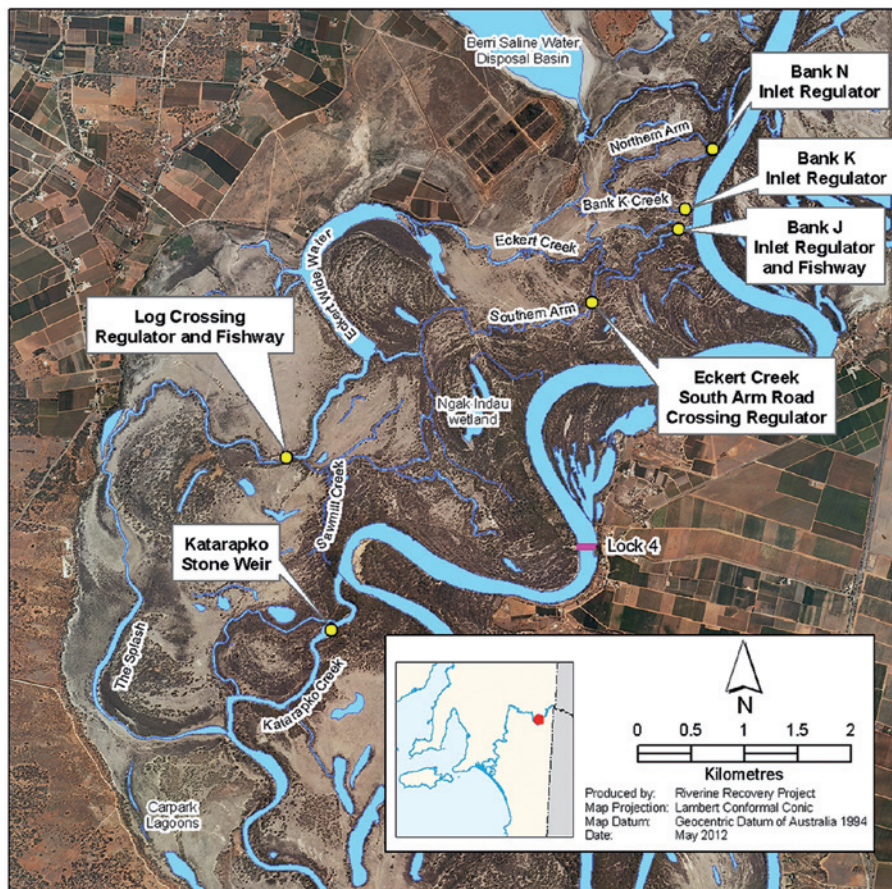
Katarapko.

Photo: Bill Doyle



WATER  GOOD

Katfish Reach



Sites for the RRP infrastructure upgrades which are part of the Katfish Reach project.

A unique floodplain environment

The site is a South Australian River Murray priority floodplain, and is one of the seven Murray-Darling Basin Authority Native Fish Strategy Demonstration Reaches across the Murray-Darling Basin.

Katfish Reach is located on the Katarapko/Eckert Creek anabranch system, which comprises about 38 kilometres of waterfront. The floodplain covers 9000 hectares and is situated opposite the town of Loxton and south-west of Berri. The associated floodplain bypasses Lock and Weir 4.

It includes a range of habitats from permanent flowing creeks, freshwater complexes, saline wetlands and floodplains. Katfish Reach is home to a variety of wildlife, some of which are listed as threatened species under national and/or state legislation.

Within the area there are two reptiles, one frog and 14 bird species with a threatened rating at state level and one frog and two fish species with a national threatened rating. Katfish Reach also attracts large numbers of visitors who use Katfish Reach for recreational activities. Most of the site is part of the Murray River National Park (Katarapko) but also includes private and Crown land and the Gerard Aboriginal Reserve.

Katfish Reach is home to a variety of wildlife and also attracts large numbers of visitors who use the area for recreational purposes.



Canoeing at Katarapko Creek.

Photo: Bill Doyle



Darling lily (*Criminum flaccidum*).



It also features various sites of significance to Aboriginal and European heritage.

Katfish Reach is significantly affected by river regulation and the effects of past local management actions, such as the disposal of saline irrigation drainage water onto the floodplain and diverting water around Weir 4. The presence of numerous fish and flow barriers is having major impacts on fish passage and flow variation. As a result, the biodiversity health rating of this site is currently poor, with widespread decline in the health of trees throughout the Katfish Reach floodplain, and low numbers of large-bodied fish such as Murray cod and silver perch.

The RRP works will enable the reinstatement of a hydrological regime more similar to the natural regime, which will benefit flora and fauna and create a healthier aquatic ecosystem.

What will the project deliver?

The RRP works scheduled for Katfish Reach over the next four years include the replacement of major in-stream fish and flow barriers with new hydrological structures, installation of fish ways, construction of erosion control and flood protection works as well as relocation of five water diverter access points. These structures will enable the reinstatement of a hydrological regime more similar to the natural regime, which will benefit plants, fish, frogs and waterbirds and create a healthier aquatic ecosystem.

The project will also develop a hydrological operation plan and conduct ecological and surface water monitoring. Ongoing management of the site will work towards building resilience of Katfish Reach to protect it from future drought and the effects of climate change.

The Government of South Australia will continue to work with the local community including the Gerard Reserve Council in the management of Katfish Reach.



Southern bell frog (*Litoria raniformis*).



The Splash provides a variety of habitats.

Photo: Bill Doyle



Katarapko Creek is a slow flowing creek, with a diverse in-stream habitat including small and large bodied fish.

Photo: Bill Doyle





Freshwater catfish (*Tandanus tandanus*).

Photo: Gunther Schmida

Ongoing management of the site will work towards building resilience of Katfish Reach to protect it from future drought and the effects of climate change.



The Stone Weir is a major barrier to Katarapko Creek, and proposed to be modified to increase flow and fish passage.

Photo: Bill Doyle

For further information contact:

Department of Environment, Water
and Natural Resources
GPO Box 1047 Adelaide SA 5001
Phone: 1800 751 970
Email: RiverineRecovery@sa.gov.au
Web: www.waterforgood.sa.gov.au
www.environment.sa.gov.au
www.katfish.org.au



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