

The Big (Little) 4

Saving four small-bodied fish species beyond the Millennium drought

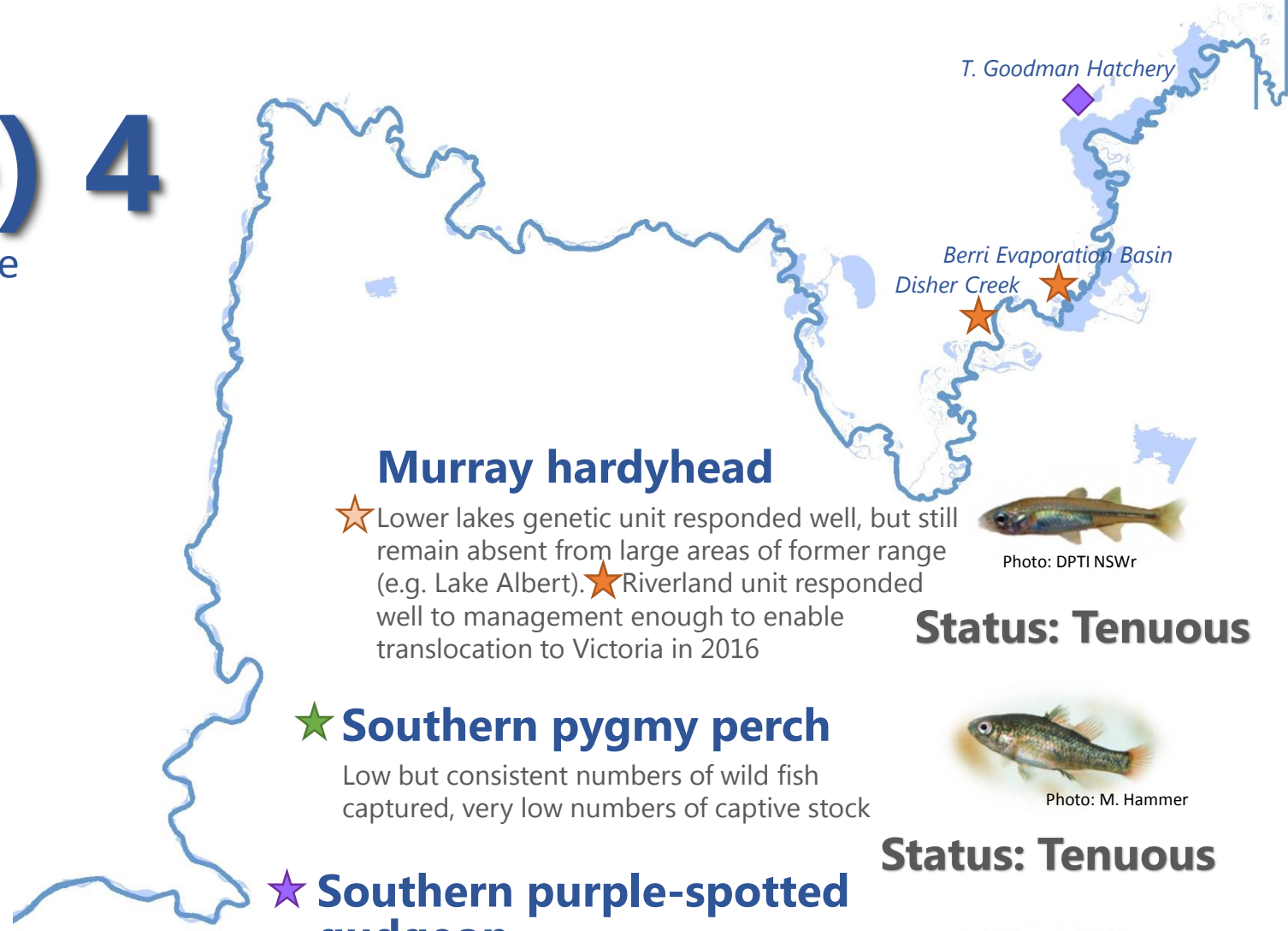
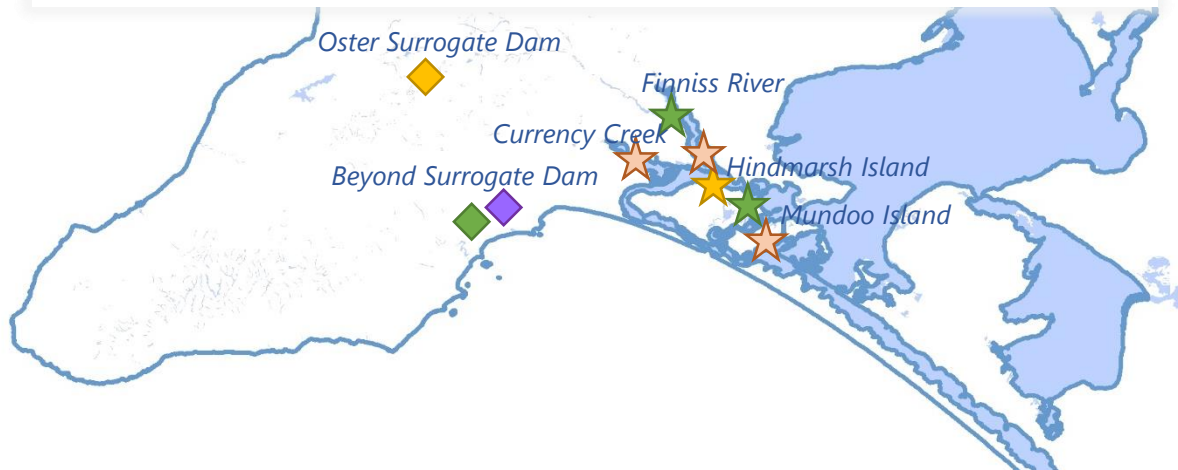
The issue: Loss of habitat, increased threats and the Millennium Drought nearly resulted in the extinction of four specialist small-bodied fish species in the SA Murray-Darling Basin.

The effort: Rescued sub-populations successfully bred in captivity or surrogate dams were released back into the wild between 2012 and 2014. Continued small-scale releases and breeding has occurred since. While these species would most likely have been lost within this intervention, the recovery of suitable wild habitat has been slow and success has been mixed resulting in the need for imminent intervention.

The opportunity: The potential release of the carp herpes virus in the near future creates a golden opportunity to re-establish these four species far more securely than we have to date - *providing we can maintain populations in the interim.*



How is the work currently funded? Natural Resources SAMDB uses NRM levy base-funding to leverage grants (i.e., National Landcare) or other ad-hoc funding on a year-by-year basis. Much of the work is undertaken by the goodwill of individuals.



Murray hardyhead

★ Lower lakes genetic unit responded well, but still remain absent from large areas of former range (e.g. Lake Albert). ★ Riverland unit responded well to management enough to enable translocation to Victoria in 2016



Photo: DPTI NSW

Status: Tenuous

★ Southern pygmy perch

Low but consistent numbers of wild fish captured, very low numbers of captive stock



Photo: M. Hammer

Status: Tenuous

★ Southern purple-spotted gudgeon

Considered extinct in SA until 2002. Offspring of rescued broodstock released back in 2012 to original and another wild site. Original re-discovery site remains but low numbers detected. Semi-secure captive and surrogate stock



Photo: M. Hammer

Status: Tenuous

★ Yarra pygmy perch

Regionally extinct during drought, short reprieve (aided by reintroductions) but likely regionally extinction again, limited and tenuous captive stock



Photo: M. Hammer

Status: Critically tenuous



Collapsed Yarra pygmy perch dam



Ideal habitat at Beyond surrogate dam



Alberton School students