

Lock 2 weir pool raising

2025-26 proposed environmental water operations



Weir pool raising at Lock 2 is planned between August and December of this year. The final timing and scale of operation will depend on River Murray flow, availability of environmental water and approvals.

The weir pool raising at Lock 2 will involve raising water levels behind the weir by between 30 cm and 50 cm (up to 6.6 m AHD). This will inundate up to 295 ha of low-lying areas along the Lock 2 to Lock 3 reaches, replenishing soil moisture, improving tree condition and providing habitat for a range of floodplain fauna.

The raising of water levels (and the lowering back to normal operating levels at the end of the event) will be undertaken very gradually, to avoid erosion and stranding of native fish on the floodplain, and to preserve ecological benefits to vegetation along banks.

Boat operators should be mindful of raising and drawdown times, and ensure their boats are tied in a manner that accommodates the changing water levels.

Benefits of the operation

Wetting and drying cycles are essential for a healthy river environment. To aid in restoring the river system, River Murray locks and weirs are actively managed to create greater variation in water levels and connect floodplain habitats with the creeks and river channel for environmental outcomes (called weir pool manipulation).

With ongoing dry conditions and low river flows, recent monitoring results show deteriorating conditions on SA floodplains. Weir pool manipulation, along with wetland management, is one means of returning aspects of the natural hydrological regime and providing ecological benefits to in-channel habitat and low-lying wetlands, floodplains and backwaters.

River red gums, black box and river coobah trees that responded so well to the 2022-23 flood now require watering, as many seedlings that sprouted with the flood are in decline. The Lock 2 weir pool raising will provide essential follow-up watering to



An echidna enjoying a splash in a wetland in the Lock 2 Reach (2021).

ensure these seedlings survive to be recruited into the adult population.

The Lock 2 operation will also provide habitat for the threatened Southern bell frog, which was detected at Devlins Pound for the first time in 2024, as well as a range of other frogs, fish, birds and wildlife.

Lock 2 Reach wetlands that are expected to benefit from the raising of Lock 2 include, but are not limited to, Boggy Flat, Little Toolunka, Ross Lagoon, Toolunka Flat, Jaeschke's Lagoon, Yarra Wetland Complex, Devlins Pound and Overland Corner.

Ecological benefits

Ecological benefits expected to be achieved or contributed to through this operation include:

- Assisting plant growth to help create the pulses of productivity that support foodwebs in connected wetlands, floodplains and downstream.
- Supporting a wider and more diverse array of vegetation along the river and lower floodplains, with different species germinating and establishing on the rise and recession, resulting in increased diversity and abundance of shelter and food resources.
- Improving the health of long-lived floodplain trees.
- Providing habitat for waterbirds, frogs and fish in inundated wetland.



Spring tadpole surveys being undertaken at Devlins Pound in 2023.



A spotted marsh frog (*Limnodynastes tasmaniensis*) during 2024 tadpole surveys, Overland corner.

More information

For further information about weir pool manipulation, please visit

www.environment.sa.gov.au/water-for-weir-pools

or read the weir pool manipulation fact sheet at

www.environment.sa.gov.au/wpm-factsheet

If you would like to be notified of future weir pool operation updates, please join our subscriber list at environment.sa.gov.au/ewater-subscribe and select the locations you are interested in.

Alternatively, you can email your preferred details to DEW.ewater@sa.gov.au

Updates regarding water for the environment planning, including operations at the Pike, Katarapko and Chowilla floodplains, weir pool manipulations and other activities are also provided in the weekly SA River Murray Flow Report (released each Friday). To view the Flow Report or subscribe to receive it directly to your email, please visit www.environment.sa.gov.au/flow-report

If you have further queries about the proposed weir pool operations, please contact the Department for Environment and Water's Environmental Water Team at DEW.ewater@sa.gov.au