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# The Water Watcher

The newsletter of Hunter-Central Rivers Waterwatch

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## Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority

In January, the Hunter Catchment Management Trust was replaced by the Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority (CMA), forming one of 13 CMAs around the State. The change is part of the state government reform of natural resource management in NSW.

The Hunter-Central Rivers CMA will cover from Gosford in the south to Taree in the north, and from Newcastle, west to Ulan. The central office will remain at Tocal, with other smaller offices initially located in Gosford and Taree.

## Hunter-Central Rivers Waterwatch

Colin and Ingrid will continue to work with groups in the Hunter, Lake Macquarie and Lower North Coast regions. Contact details for Colin and Ingrid remain unchanged. Sally Hunt and Steven Honeywood at the Central Coast Community Environment Network, will continue to support Waterwatch the Central Coast Waterwatch groups.

Another piece of good news is that the Department of Education and Training Curriculum Support Directorate has appointed Colin as the Hunter Regional Waterwatch Coordinator for another year!

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## Invite a Waterwatch Coordinator to visit your Waterwatch Group!

Next time you head down to your local waterway to conduct some water quality monitoring or a water bug survey, consider inviting a Waterwatch Coordinator along. Throughout 2004, Colin and Ingrid would like to visit our Waterwatch groups throughout the Hunter, Lake Macquarie and Lower North Coast regions.

If you would like to arrange for a visit, please contact Ingrid or Colin on phone 02 4930 1030, or email [waterwatch@hcmt.org.au](mailto:waterwatch@hcmt.org.au)



Colin Mondy  
Regional Waterwatch  
Coordinator



Ingrid Berthold  
Waterwatch Coordinator



# 2004 AUTUMN WATER BUG SURVEY

Wednesday 24 March 2004 is the date for the Autumn Water Bug Survey. So it's time to dust off your nets and trays, and head down to your local waterway to find some water bugs. Sampling can be completed anytime between 21-27 March 2004.

If you registered online last year for either the Autumn or Spring surveys, and you are using the same site, you don't need to register again this year. Simply use your username and password from last year to enter your results. If you've forgotten your log-in details, contact Ingrid on phone 02 4930 1030 or email [waterwatch@hcmt.org.au](mailto:waterwatch@hcmt.org.au)

If you haven't registered before, go to [www.bugsurvey.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bugsurvey.nsw.gov.au) and follow the 'REGISTER HERE!' link.

There is plenty of information (including *Buglopedia*) and resources on the Water Bug Survey website at [www.bugsurvey.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bugsurvey.nsw.gov.au). If you need assistance with your Water Bug Survey, please contact Colin or Ingrid on phone 02 4930 1030 or email [waterwatch@hcmt.org.au](mailto:waterwatch@hcmt.org.au)

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## WELL DONE TO EAGER WATERWATCHERS!

Congratulations to the following groups for being the first Waterwatchers to upload data in 2004 on to the NSW Waterwatch website ([www.waterwatch.nsw.gov.au](http://www.waterwatch.nsw.gov.au)):

Community groups - Wollombi Hunter Community Salinity Monitoring Group  
- Riverview Hunter Community Salinity Monitoring Group  
- Warabrook Bushcare

School groups - Broke Public School (on the second day of school! Now that's keen!!!!)  
- St Josephs High School, Aberdeen  
- Lambton High School  
- Kotara High School

Thank you all for your wonderful enthusiasm, and we look forward to all Waterwatch groups uploading a record amount of data this year — GET OUT & GET MONITORING!!!!

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## *A sad state of affairs....*

At this point in time, Murder Under The Microscope (MUM) will not be run by the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR) and the Open Training and Education Network (OTEN) in 2004. OTEN is currently approaching potential sources of funding for the MUM program for 2005.



So to all the super sleuths out there, hold on to those magnifying glasses and keep your minds and investigative skills sharp, as your eco-crime game will hopefully be back soon!

# *Wetlands and Styrofoam don't mix!*

Metford Public School's Environment Team (Callan Stammer, Calvin Speechley, Caitlyn Upfold and Sophie Varcoe) form an active Waterwatch group who monitor Melaleuca Ponds at Metford each week. Towards the end of last year, the Waterwatchers faced a distressing problem—Styrofoam washing into the wetlands from a nearby residential development. The foam is used on building sites in the laying of concrete slabs, as it can be cut to specific sizes and shapes and concreted over, rather than using traditional building methods.

“At the beginning of the year the ponds did not contain any litter. However, by the end of the year it was a different story.” Sophie said.

The Metford Waterwatcher's found that every time it rained, the Styrofoam would wash down into the ponds through the drainage system. On a few occasions, the surface of the wetland was covered in pieces of Styrofoam of various sizes, from large blocks, to fine particles, as not all the foam could be caught in the Gross Pollutant Trap (GPT) that removes most of the litter from entering the wetlands.

“On many occasions we had to put on waders and go into the water. It took us many hours of hard work to clean up the Styrofoam, only to be disappointed again when we went back down to the ponds” said Callum.

The most disappointing thing for the Metford students and their teacher Mrs Lee Schulha was that a few children in the area were taking Styrofoam from building sites, and then jumping on it and breaking it up in the wetlands. “I am very worried about the ducks and other animals who use our ponds as their home. The people who throw this Styrofoam into the water don't seem to care about our environment” Caitlyn said.

Regional Waterwatch Coordinator, Colin Mondy, Metford Public School and Maitland City Council are now working together to try to keep the Styrofoam out of the wetlands, by discussing the problem with local builders, the students at Metford Public School, and the local community.

If there are any other Waterwatch groups working to solve similar environmental problems in their local area, or would like to help, please contact Colin or Ingrid on phone 02 4930 1030 or email [waterwatch@hcmt.org.au](mailto:waterwatch@hcmt.org.au)



*A large block of Styrofoam in the Melaleuca Wetlands, Metford in November 2003.*



## Need some funding for your Waterwatch group or an environment project?

### Check out Mitre 10 Junior Landcare Grants Program!

Landcare Australia and Mitre 10 have recently developed the Mitre 10 Junior Landcare Grants Program. This program provides funds for schools and youth groups across Australia wishing to participate in environmental projects. The program targets major issues relevant to our natural environment including:

- Energy
- Biodiversity
- Waste/Recycling
- Water
- Air
- Land

In addition to on-ground rehabilitation or restoration works, projects may also include conservation of natural resources, environmental monitoring programs (such as Waterwatch), waste minimisation, using school grounds as learning centres, or undertaking an environmental field trip. Grants are available up to a maximum of \$500.

*Closing dates for the 2004 Grant Rounds are: 26 February, 20 May, 29 July and 21 October.*

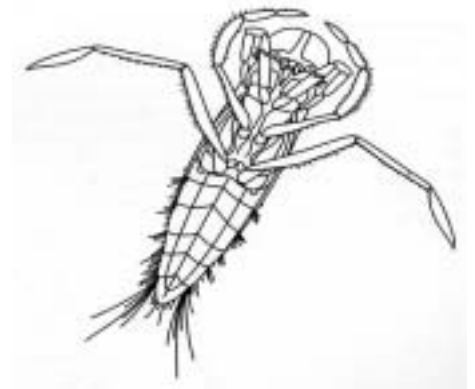
You can find further information on the Grants Program through Landcare Australia's website: [www.landcareaustralia.com.au](http://www.landcareaustralia.com.au) or freecall 1800 151 105.



## BUG in the spotlight

### VERY TOLERANT WATER BUG: BACKSWIMMER

**PHYLUM:** Arthropoda  
**CLASS:** Insecta  
**ORDER:** Hemiptera  
**SUBORDER:** Heteroptera  
**FAMILY:** Notonectidae  
**SIZE:** Up to 11mm long



**DESCRIPTION:** Backswimmers can be recognised by their curved back, a broad 'keel' on the abdomen, large eyes that occupy most of the head, and long hairy hind legs for swimming.

**HABITAT:** Backswimmers are found throughout Australia in still and slow-flowing ponds, creeks and rivers. They spend most of their time in water but can fly from pond to pond.

**DIET:** They eat smaller aquatic animals, including blood worms and aquatic larvae. They are predators (stalking other insects) and have sucking mouth parts.

**POLLUTION TOLERANCE:** *Very Tolerant, Rating 1*

While they can withstand pretty unhealthy water, backswimmers will fly from one pond to another if conditions get really bad.

#### INTERESTING FACTS:

I They carry a silvery air bubble for breathing. It is held in place by the little "hairs" that cover their body. When the air bubble is used up, the insect rises to the surface and with a quick, somersaulting motion it captures a new bubble.

I Backswimmers snatch bugs on the water surface, drag them under and eat them.

I The nymphs have to be very careful their parents don't eat them!

*Source: NSW Department of Infrastructure, Planning & Natural Resources—  
NSW Water Bug Survey—Buglopedia (2003 ed.)—www.bugsurvey.nsw.gov.au*

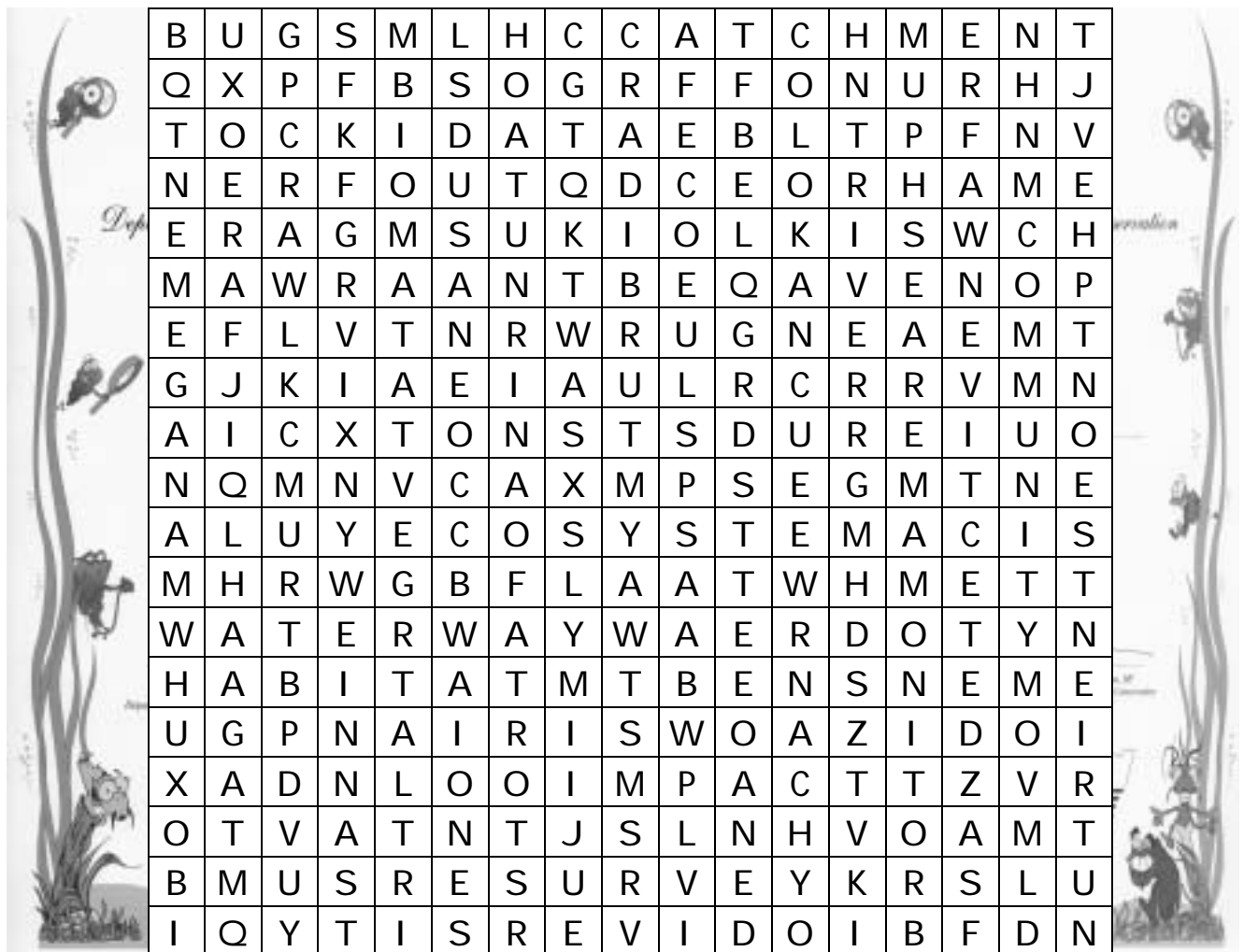
# FIND-A-WATERWATCH-WORD

AQUATIC  
BIODIVERSITY  
BUGS  
CATCHMENT  
COMMUNITY  
CRAWL  
CREEK  
DATA  
DETECTIVE

ECOSYSTEM  
FISH  
HABITAT  
HUNTER  
IMPACT  
MANAGEMENT  
MONITOR  
NUTRIENTS  
ORGANISM

POND  
QUALITY  
ASSURANCE  
RIVER  
RUNOFF  
STORMWATER  
SURVEY  
TOLERANCE  
TURBID  
VEGETATION

WATERWAY  
WEBSITE



# Important Waterwatch Dates for 2004



## March 2004

- 7 Clean Up Australia Day
- 7-9 Newcastle Regional Show
- 7-14 Seaweed: Exploring Our Oceans  
[www.mesa.edu.au/seaweed](http://www.mesa.edu.au/seaweed)
- 22 World Day for Water
- 24 Autumn Water Bug Survey  
[www.bugsurvey.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bugsurvey.nsw.gov.au) or Tel: 02 4930 1030

## April 2004

- 22 Earth Day

## May 2004

- 30/4 Total Field Days - volunteers needed to  
Hunter Waterwatch - Tel: 02 4930 1030  
2/5
- tbc 2004 Quality Assurance Trials - QA2004  
Hunter Waterwatch - Tel: 02 4930 1030

## June 2004

- 2-3 Planet Savers Extravaganza  
Wetlands EE Centre - Tel: 02 4955 8673
- 5 World Environment Day  
[www.ea.gov.au/events/wed/index](http://www.ea.gov.au/events/wed/index)

## July 2004

- 25 National Tree Day  
[www.planetark.org](http://www.planetark.org)

## August 2004

- 16-22 Landcare Week  
[www.landcareaustralia.com.au](http://www.landcareaustralia.com.au)

## September 2004

- 5-11 Keep Australia Beautiful Week
- 7 National Threatened Species Day  
[ea.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/information/ts-day](http://ea.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/information/ts-day)

## October 2004

- 16-24 Weedbusters Week  
[www.weedbusterweek.info.au](http://www.weedbusterweek.info.au)
- 17-23 National Water Week  
[www.savewater.com.au/waterweek](http://www.savewater.com.au/waterweek)
- 20 Spring Water Bug Survey  
[www.bugsurvey.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bugsurvey.nsw.gov.au) or Tel: 02 4930 1030

have you logged on: [www.waterwatch.nsw.gov.au](http://www.waterwatch.nsw.gov.au)



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