

# IMPROVING FISH HABITAT

## Why are native fish important?

Fish play vital roles in the balance and ecology of rivers, wetlands and water bodies. Native freshwater fish are excellent indicators of waterway health. Changes to waterway flows, in particular construction of creek crossings that are not fish-friendly, can significantly alter fish movement and breeding. The introduction of exotic pest fish such as Carp into our waterways is also a major problem, resulting in predation of native fish and reduced water quality due to feeding habits.

## What can be done to increase native fish numbers?

There are different ways to increase fish numbers, some examples are:-

- ⇒ Improve water quality - eg. reduce erosion, nutrient and fertiliser runoff
- ⇒ Reduce the drainage of wetlands and Acid sulfate soils
- ⇒ Improve fish habitat - eg. Retaining large woody debris in streams
- ⇒ Stop the spread of exotic fish - eg. Cull exotic fish when possible
- ⇒ Boost numbers by stocking with local native fingerlings



**Riparian** areas are places where land adjoins rivers and streams. They support a wide range of plants and animals that contribute to water quality in the Richmond River.

# Best Practice for improving fish habitats

Checklist	Yes	No	Solution
<p>Are the creek and drain crossings on my property fish friendly?</p> <p>Can I reduce the number of crossings?</p>	✓	✓	It is important that fish can move throughout a waterway, Some river crossings prevent fish from moving up or downstream. Inspect your crossings and refer to information provided on fish friendly crossings for advice on thing you can do to provide a better environment for native fish.
Do waterways have trees and debris intact?	✓		Leave fallen trees in place where possible as they provide habitat for fish and aquatic species.
Have you observed fish kills adjacent to your property or in the local area?	✓		Report to local authorities.
Can you identify exotic fish in waterways?		✓	Refer to fish identification information provided. Report to local authorities.
Is there riparian vegetation shading the waterways?	✓		Shading of waterways reduces water temperature variations and improves habitat for fish and aquatic species.

## Where to find help.

### Your local Contacts:

#### Richmond River County Council

Floodplain Project Officer

**P:** 0266 218 314 **E:** floodplain@rrcc.nsw.gov.au

#### Lismore City Council

Environmental Strategies Team

**P:** 1300 878 387

#### Office of Environment and Heritage

Coast and Estuaries Officer

**P:** 0266 270 200

#### North Coast Local Land Services

**P:** 1300 795 299 **E:** admin.northcoast@lls.nsw.gov.au

### For advice on weed management:

#### Far North Coast Weeds

**P:** 0266 233 833 **E:** fncw@fncw.nsw.gov.au

#### Northern Landcare Support Services

**P:** 02 6632 3722 **E:** info@nlss.com.au

### For advice on funding options:

#### Richmond Landcare inc.

**P:** 0266 191 582 **E:** info@richmondlandcare.org

#### Northern Landcare Support Services

**P:** 02 6632 3722 **E:** info@nlss.com.au

### Further reading:

"Revegetating Streams in the Richmond Catchment", Provides detailed information on species selection and planting.

"Stock and Waterways—a managers guide"  
lwa.gov.au/files/products/river-landscapes/pr061132/pr061132.pdf

**Note: The information and best practice approaches provided in the enclosed publications are current, however some of the contact details may have changed.**

**For further information refer to the contact list provided**