



Traditional Owner groups across the icon site include Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation, Bangerang Aboriginal Corporation, Moama Local Aboriginal Land Council and Cummeragunja Local Aboriginal Land Council.

Bitterns are considered a flagship species for encouraging and promoting healthy wetland management.

Barmah-Millewa Forest is estimated to support at least 30% of the Australian population of Australasian bittern and is an extremely significant site for their breeding. This endangered species is estimated to have a global population of no more than 2,500.

Bitterns are of great cultural significance. Their eerie booming mating calls in spring and summer are thought to be linked to Dreaming Stories of the bunyip.

Bitterns are very mysterious and rarely seen. Working out how many and where they are is best estimated using the sound of their distinctive calls.

Together with Traditional Owners, Barmah-Millewa site managers have been monitoring bitterns and their breeding response since 2015.

In years where more water enters the forest, a greater number of bittern calls are detected. Additionally, water levels are crucial for the breeding timing and success for the Australasian bittern.





Findings are being used to manage water in the forest to support this endangered and culturally significant bird.



The landscape and all it contains are part of cultural beliefs and feature in living cultural stories and practices. It is important that the cultural values of the Barmah-Millewa Forest are protected, and cultural practices continue.

The Millewa Indigenous Partnership Program works with Traditional Owners to:

- Influence water planning and management - Aboriginal Waterways Assessment of rivers and wetlands throughout the forest is a tool designed by and for Traditional Owners.
- Care for ancestors - Careful Edward River Aboriginal burial mound excavation and repatriation work resulted in the permanent protection of ancestral remains, moving them away from areas of high erosion.
- Care for culturally significant species – Education programs involving youth are monitoring culturally significant species such as turtles.

	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23					
 Fish	B	B	B	B	B	D	D	B	B	A	A	B	B	B	B	B					
 Birds	D	D	D	D	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	B	B	B	A					
 Vegetation	D	D	C	B	C	C	C	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B					
 Other	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	B	A	A	B	A	B	B	B					
Grades																					
	<div>A</div> <b>Excellent</b> Most (75-100%) of ecological objectives have been met					<div>B</div> <b>Good</b> More than half (50-74%) of ecological objectives have been met					<div>C</div> <b>Fair</b> Fewer than half (25-49%) of ecological objectives have been met					<div>D</div> <b>Needs attention</b> Few (0-24%) of ecological objectives have been met					<div>-</div> <b>Data not available</b>



First trial of early opening of forest regulators for gradual inundation of creeks.

Water Managers started to target the delivery of water to benefit native perch breeding

For first time all the site ecological objectives are met or partially met

A fish exit strategy was trialled to reduce the risk of native fish being stranded and trapped in the forest when regulators are closed.



20 years of The Living Murray  
*Much achieved, much to do*

Yellow Bladderwort is a small carnivorous wetland plant common in Barmah-Millewa Forest – it eats small bugs that swim too close to it! When it flowers, it has bright fan-shaped petals above the water surface – this gives the plant its other common name: Fairy's Aprons.



Barking Marsh Frog has steadily increased in numbers over the past five years at Barmah-Millewa Forest. The males of this small frog make a remarkably loud breeding call like a dog barking.



Ecologists have been tracking the movements of dozens of Murray River Turtles in Barmah-Millewa Forest. They have found males tend to range further than females, with one male having moved over 100km in just two years of being tracked.



A new species of freshwater crayfish (Swamp Yabby) has only recently been described. Barmah-Millewa Forest is thought to represent a stronghold for this uncommon and poorly known species.

