Chowilla Floodplain





The Chowilla Floodplain is a site of immense cultural significance which has an array of diverse terrestrial and aquatic habitats. The site is home to populations of rare, endangered and threatened species.

The Traditional Owners of the Chowilla Floodplain are the First Peoples of the River Murray and Mallee Region, and the Maraura Nation.

Water that rings a bell

The southern bell frog, once common throughout south-eastern Australia, has suffered a decline in recent decades and is now nationally vulnerable.

At Chowilla, annual surveys have consistently recorded bell frogs, indicating a relatively stable population, and marking Chowilla as one of the last remaining strongholds for the species in South Australia. Environmental water has been instrumental in creating this haven including small-scale temporary pumping to ephemeral wetlands regularly generating productive habitat in an otherwise dry landscape. Monitoring indicates that breeding is occurring at these wetlands, which are complemented by the refuge provided in the permanent creeks and pool connected wetlands.

Since 2014 the operation of the Chowilla regulator has intermittently inundated much larger areas of floodplain, multiplying the availability of breeding habitat and triggering successful widespread recruitment of tadpoles through to frogs.

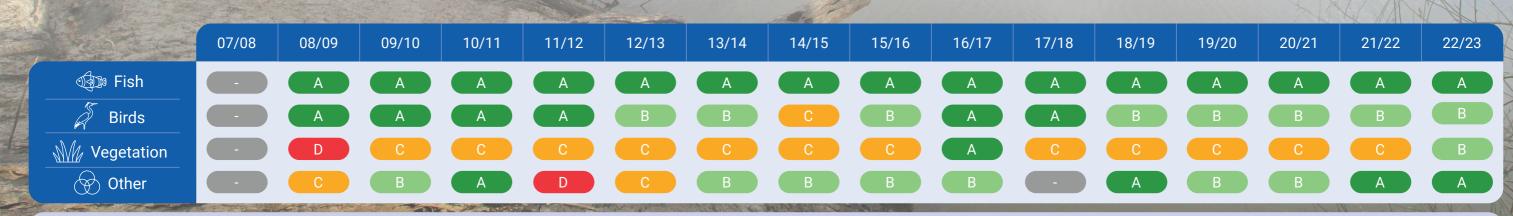
Water for the environment delivered to the site creates a mosaic of floodplain habitats at Chowilla, allowing exchange of individuals to help sustain a healthy population critical for the species ongoing survival in South Australia.

Aboriginal Waterways Assessment

Traditional Owners undertook an Aboriginal Waterways Assessment at Coombool Swamp in 2020. This coincided with the delivery of water for the environment and a number of culturally significant black swan were recorded nesting on the lake.

As water levels began to draw down, there were concerns that the swans would not complete their breeding cycle. Traditional Owners worked with Chowilla site managers to request additional water for the environment. The extra water was pumped into Coombool Swamp to mantain water levels, providing swans with the resources to hatch and sustain cygnets. Undertaking the Aboriginal Waterways Assessment enabled the sharing of valuable cultural and ecological knowledge and improved the management of the site.





Tades A

Excellent

Most (75-100%) of ecological
objectives have been met

B Good

More than half (50-74%) of ecological objectives have been met

Fair
Fewer than half (25-49%) of
ecological objectives have been met

D Ne

Needs attention Few (0-24%) of ecological objectives have been met Data not available

