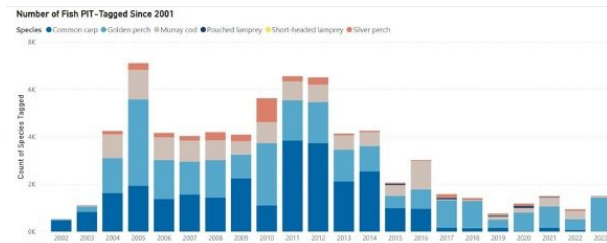# Project fact sheet

Citizen science: Integrating community groups into basin-scale fish tagging and recovery programs

ONE BASIN CRC

Some of Australia's leading freshwater ecologists assess whether members of the public could help to address the shortfall in tagged fish in the country's largest river system.

The challenge

Since 2012, government-led fish tagging efforts in the Murray–Darling Basin have declined, limiting data collection on fish migration and responses to environmental changes. This creates challenges in managing fish populations and sustaining river ecosystems in the face of barriers and environmental stressors like altered water flow.

No. of fish PIT-tagged since 2001. Source: Murray–Darling Basin Authority

Modelling this fish tagging project off a US program, OzFish and Dr Katie Doyle and her team at the Gulbali Institute at Charles Sturt University, with support from KarlTek, trained volunteers to tag fish with Passive Integrated Transponders (PIT) tags.

'When you handle fish for scientific purposes, strict ethical guidelines and fisheries regulations come into play,' explains Dr Doyle.

'Scientists have done a lot of work to refine the processes of catching, anaesthetising, and tagging fish – particularly the most appropriate placement of tags with different species.

'In effect, inserting a fish tag is considered a surgical procedure, and any procedure like this needs to be done in a way that's safe for the fish and this training was provided.'

Photo: Kate Read

The outcomes

The citizen science initiative in the Murray–Darling Basin. Workshops trained volunteers to tag fish ethically,. Engaging anglers and First Nations groups addresses data gaps, empowering communities and supporting informed conservation decisions.

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> **"** 'Some people travelled a long way to get to these workshops, if we can roll out these workshops more broadly, we're confident that lots of people will put up their hands.
>
> Michelle Slater **–** OzFish

Next steps

To find out more on this project visit https://onebasin.com.au/project/citizen-science-integrating-community-groups-into-basin-scale-fish-tagging-and-recovery-programs/

The webinar on this project can be found on the Australian Water School, and the One Basin CRC News & Events page.

Photo: Kate Read

One Basin CRC

Since our inception in mid-2022, the **One Basin Cooperative Research Centre** has brought together 85 partners across the Murray–Darling Basin.

Our purpose is to work together to grow value from water in a changing world.

From Queensland to South Australia, we are finding practical solutions to complex challenges, training the next generation of scientists, and nurturing regional communities.

Our collective goal is a productive, resilient and sustainable Murray–Darling Basin.

Key personnel

Katie Doyle	Charles Sturt University
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2