

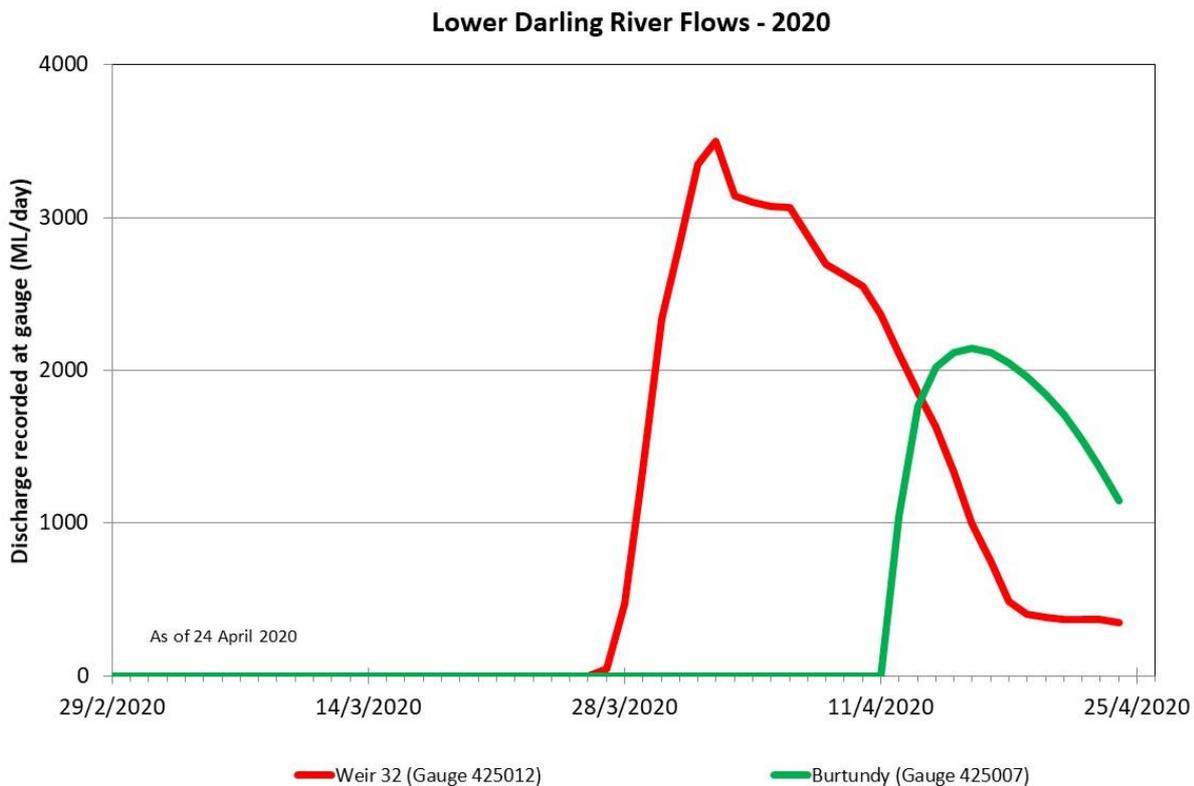
Flows

With further contributions from the northern tributaries, total flow into Menindee Lakes of around 450 gigalitres (GL) to 490 GL is now expected.

At 24 April 2020, Menindee Lakes is holding 311 GL (18% of capacity) spread across Lakes Wetherell, Pamamaroo and Tandure, including 2 GL in Copi Hollow. Lake Wetherell is close to full supply, so further inflows are being diverted to Lake Pamamaroo.

Some 46 GL was released as the initial pulse flow; for the remainder of April, releases will be maintained at 300 megalitres (ML)/day. Releases will then be reduced to around 200 ML/day from the start of May through to end of October, consistent with the minimum releases required under the water sharing plan to mitigate blue-green algae.

The following graph shows the flows at Weir 32 where releases are being made and the response at Burtundy as the flows arrive. Along the Lower Darling, flows are tapering with flows at Burtundy now just over 1,000 ML/per day.





Flows at Burtundy 11 April 2020 (photo courtesy of WaterNSW)

Flows are passing through Wentworth weir pool and joining with the Murray River. Water in Wentworth weir pool is well mixed with no evidence of the high salinity levels that occurred in 2016.

While turbidity has remained high, and the flows will increase turbidity levels in the Murray for some time, salinity and dissolved oxygen readings have quickly dropped to acceptable levels.

Fish response

Golden perch spawned in the Barwon-Darling River and northern tributaries in January/February in response to the higher flows. Fish and larvae have dispersed downstream with the flows, with sampling finding juvenile fish at Lake Wetherell (the Menindee Lakes system) in March. The lakes are an important nursery for golden perch.

It is expected that spawning by golden perch and silver perch has occurred in the Lower Darling downstream of Menindee in response to the recent resumption of flow. The flows will help to prime the system for the Murray cod breeding season, which will occur later in spring/summer. The Darling flows joining with the Murray will also provide opportunities for fish to move between the river systems.

The Department of Primary Industries - Fisheries is monitoring larvae dispersal and fish movement to provide further information on the response of fish to the flow events.

Allocations

The department is monitoring improvements to storage levels in Menindee Lakes and assessing whether sufficient water is available for a general security allocation. The next Water Allocation Statement for the Murray/Lower Darling will be published on 1 May 2020.

For further information on water allocations go to - www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/allocations/statements

For further information on water quality of the water as it travelled along the Lower Darling go to our water quality updates at - www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/droughts-floods/drought-update/drought-recovery/menindee-lakes-lower-darling-river