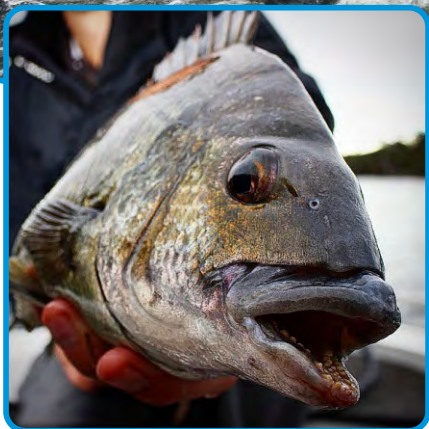
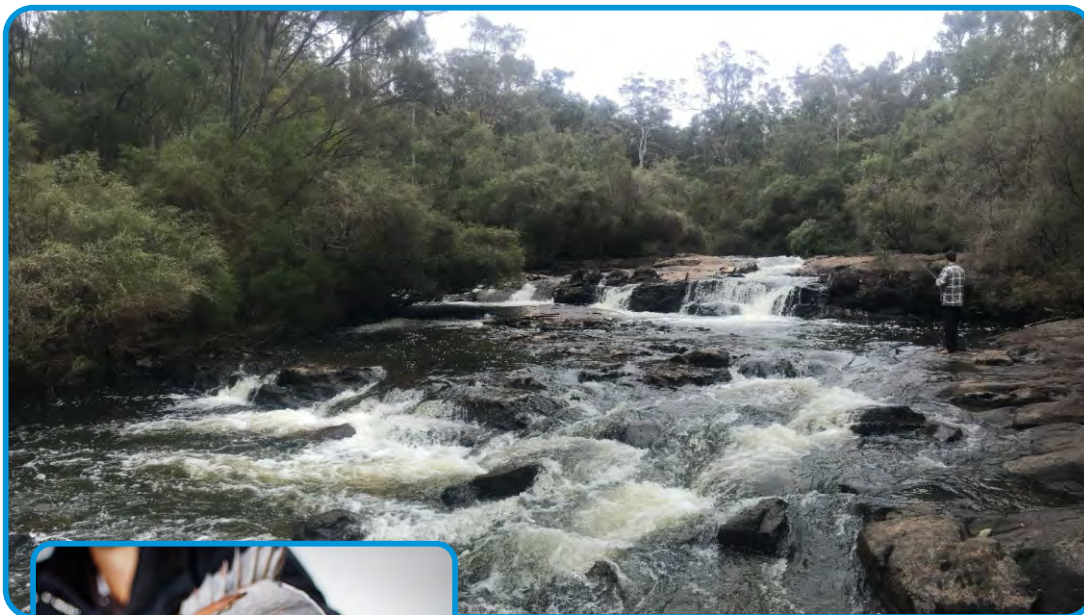


# Western Australia HABITAT FACT SHEET



## FRESHWATER FLOWS

We often hear about the flushing effect winter rains have on our estuaries and river systems, but just what do our seasonal freshwater flows mean for fish?



### Annual rainfall

In the southwest of WA we receive the majority of our rainfall over winter months. While heavy rains may shut down fishing in many systems in the days that follow, they play an important part in keeping those waterways healthy and ensuring they provide good fish habitat.

### Freshwater flows

- Oxygenate the water
- Flush out weed, algae, silt
- Opens seasonal estuary sand bars.
- Increase feeding sites such as flooded banks.
- Trigger spawning activity in some species such as mulloway.



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

# FRESHWATER FLOWS



## Effects of reduced flow

Systems which do not receive these regular flushes often have major problems with water quality, including algal blooms. Drying climate and increased pressure on water resources from a wide variety of users can mean decrease freshwater flows in our rivers.

In the Swan River, decreasing freshwater flows over the last decade have meant that in late summer, when flows are at their lowest, oxygen levels in some of the deeper areas of the river have been falling to lethal lows. This has reduced the habitat available to bream and may have contributed to decreased growth rates.

Marron are another species which thrive in clean water and need good winter flows to sustain their pools throughout summer. A particularly low rainfall year in 2015 led to the drying out of the south Collie River and the death of some Marron.



Given our drying climate careful management of water resources to allow sufficient environmental flows is crucial to support our favourite fish and their habitat.