Have you heard of BLACKFISH?

Southern Queensland Landscapes

River Blackfish (Gadopsis marmoratus), also known as Long Cod, is an important little native fish found in the Condamine River Headwaters near Killarney. Blackfish live in cool, spring fed water and the population is at risk due to the geographic isolation of the populations, climate change and land use. As an indicator of ecosystem health or 'canary in the Condamine', landholders have been implementing a number of activities to improve the habitat of Blackfish.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO LOOK AFTER BLACKFISH?

Create alternative water points - If stock access water away from our waterways, they cause less damage to the banks, which means less sedimentation in the water. Sedimentation smothers habitat and in some cases reduces depth, which is important because Blackfish like cool and deep pools.

Install creek crossings - Adding crossings for stock and vehicles helps to reduce the cloudiness of the water. For properties along Spring Creek, this will also improve water quality for the Killarney township which draws water from Spring Creek.

Fence along creeks - Limiting grazing along creeklines means less damage to the banks. Smaller paddocks along the edges of the rivers can be occasionally grazed to keep weed numbers down.

Revegetate creek banks - Planting native vegetation helps stabilise banks, provide shade to keep water temperatures cool and create habitat when branches fall into the water.

SEEN SOMETHING INTERESTING?

Farmers have been working with organisations including Southern Queensland Landscapes for onground actions, all with the aim of improving the Blackfish habitat.

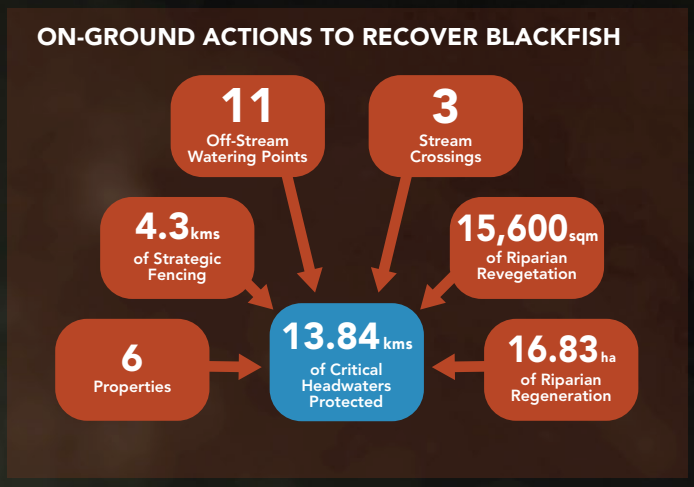
Blackfish are an important indicator of the ecosystems health, so monitoring their numbers is important.

Please help by reporting any blackfish sightings **here**

For further information on this project.

Australian Government | MURRAY–DARLING BASIN AUTHORITY | NATIVE FISH RECOVERY STRATEGY

ON-GROUND ACTIONS TO RECOVER BLACKFISH



Laurie Dagg and Ren Holz from Southern Queensland Landcsapes. **Photo:** Peter McAdam

CASE STUDY

Laurie Dagg | 'The Farm' | Killarney

Laurie Dagg remembers seeing Blackfish as a child on his parent's farm. Now as a fourth generation cattle farmer, with the headwaters of Spring Creek just outside his boundary, he is proud to be doing his bit to improve Spring Creek for both Blackfish and the community of Killarney.

Laurie continues to build on the work done through landcare groups in the early nineties. Most recently, three box culverts (1800mm deep x 1500mm high x 1500mm wide) were added to two creek crossings to make it possible for cattle to cross without damaging creek banks. The area around the crossing was stabilised using logs, rocks, soil and grass, and the crossings can carry up to 32 tonnes.

"We had a couple of crossings with smaller pipes, but the water still had to flow over the top, so we thought it would be much better if we put a bridge or a culvert in and Southern Queensland Landscapes agreed to that," explains Laurie Dagg.

"We made rock walls around the entrance on the upside and the bottom side and then we put timber logs and about 70-80 centimetres of soil over the top of the concrete so it's like a natural walkway for the cattle.

"There was some concern about whether the banks would wash during the flood but we have had a flood and that hasn't been an issue."

Laurie has also added one tank and two troughs away from the creek, which allows native vegetation to grow, the water quality to improve and degradation to be reduced at the creek's edge. Laurie notes his cattle prefer to drink from the troughs.

Rotational grazing is an important tool for Laurie. By using funding to fence some areas of creekline into smaller paddocks, he is able to rotationally graze about 40 head of cattle for three weeks every nine months so the weeds don't get away and the country can regenerate.

Photos: Laurie Dagg

For Laurie, making these changes to his farm improves both the ecosystem and his property.

"It was really excellent to get involved because the new crossings have made it much easier for us to manage cattle and for the fish to breed, without having any disturbance in the creek," he says.

"With the crossings we had before, if the flood blocked up the pipes, then the water would run across the paddock and it'd take a fair bit of soil with it, so the creeks would be very dirty after a flood event.

"Well now it hasn't even changed the colour of the water and there's no wash there, so there's no soil going into the stream at all which improves the water quality for Killarney".

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