



FITZROY BASIN ASSOCIATION

Our country. Our future.

Tilapia - Stop the Spread

Fitzroy Basin awareness campaign 2017



*Tilapia (*Oreochromis mossambicus*) are an aggressive pest fish regarded as one of the greatest threats to Australia's aquatic ecosystem. They are a highly successful invasive species due to a number of key characteristics: rapid reproduction with maternal care, adaptable food requirements and tolerance for a wide range of aquatic habitats. Tilapia have progressively established populations in waterways throughout south-east and northern Queensland and Western Australia since the 1970's.*

OBJECTIVE

A campaign led by Fitzroy Basin Association Inc. (FBA) in early-mid 2017 was driven by a need for awareness of the noxious pest fish. The primary components of FBA's campaign focused on identification, legal obligations and environmental implications. Following Severe Tropical Cyclone Debbie, significant flooding impacted upon the Basin and wider Queensland. The awareness campaign focused upon providing knowledge to individuals, stakeholders and industry groups in preventing inadvertent or deliberate Tilapia spread into priority areas within the Fitzroy Basin.

PARTNERS AND RESOURCES

The utilisation of existing partnerships, networks and previously engaged tilapia management stakeholders to establish a surveillance network has empowered FBA to make an impact on Tilapia awareness and education. An Industry Information Session was hosted by FBA on June 13 with invitations extended to all partners and waterway management groups. Involved organisations at all levels included Capricornia Catchments, Dawson Catchment Coordinating Association, Department of Defence, indigenous representative groups, Local and State Governments, Capricorn Pest Management Group, Gladstone Area Water Board, Universities, researchers, fish and catchment focus groups.

An additional partnership was established between FBA, Invasive Animals CRC, DAF Qld and Biosecurity Queensland.



APPROACH

FBA commenced the campaign through the formulation of a map indicating clear messaging of where infestation is known, and alert areas of where infestation may occur next. A core focus of the campaign began with documenting known infestation through e-DNA data and research to recruit the public to determine if spread had occurred following the extreme weather event.

The graphic was received with praise from audiences and stakeholders, with specific feedback stating that the map was able to succinctly communicate databases of information into relevant and digestible formats. FBA encouraged partners, stakeholders and media outlets to adopt the graphic material and distribute to respective audiences.

METHOD

Methodology adopted by FBA was multi-faceted and extensive, beginning with investing in quality training of waterway managers. Reporting, identification and management were once again the focus points. Production of additional tilapia models/ mounts Production of tilapia video, Media ,Development of a graphically designed map of current infestation and alert areas, Installing alert signs at 11 locations, FBA has been heavily promoting the use of Feral Fish Scan online portal and mobile app, setup to send alerts to DAF Qld, Biosecurity Queensland and FBA whenever tilapia sightings are recorded. This has the potential to allow more responsive management options including on-ground intervention.



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RESULTS

1761 people from **17** public events and forums shown tilapia models and informed on how to identify and report

16 waterway management professionals provided expert tilapia training

11,750 people reached through FBA's Facebook post linking to our tilapia video

300 YouTube views on FBA's tilapia video

3 local radio interviews

1 local Television news interview

2 print articles in
local newspapers
The Morning Bulletin
and The Gladstone
Observer

28 online articles
from Ipswich to the
Witsundays

11 new tilapia alert signs installed

6 new outlets
distributing tilapia
promotional material

1 new partnership with Invasive Animals CRC, DAF and Biosecurity Qld to use the FeralFishScan software to report and alert of tilapia

OUTCOMES

The evidence of success in this campaign is tangibly measured through the installation of new signs at priority alert areas and public engagement online. The interest held by the community in assisting to manage our natural assets and prevent further infestation has been resounding and exceeded expectations. FBA's public engagement campaign is very much ongoing. Opportunities to disseminate information at public events such as Rockhampton Show, Mount Larcom Show, The Rockhampton River Festival and the Fitzroy Barrage Open Day have been well received. Particularly notable is the interest shown by younger generation anglers in their ability to confidently identify Tilapia. In the

- including Scrubby Creek, Lake Awoonga, Boynedale, Lake Callemondah, Tarcoola Drive, Boyne River at Benaraby Bridge, Glenlyon Dr, South Trees Inlet and Calliope River Campgrounds.

the number of partners involved in training, installing signage or distributing information throughout the region the amount of media interest ongoing Expert review of FBA's implementation strategy for tilapia management.

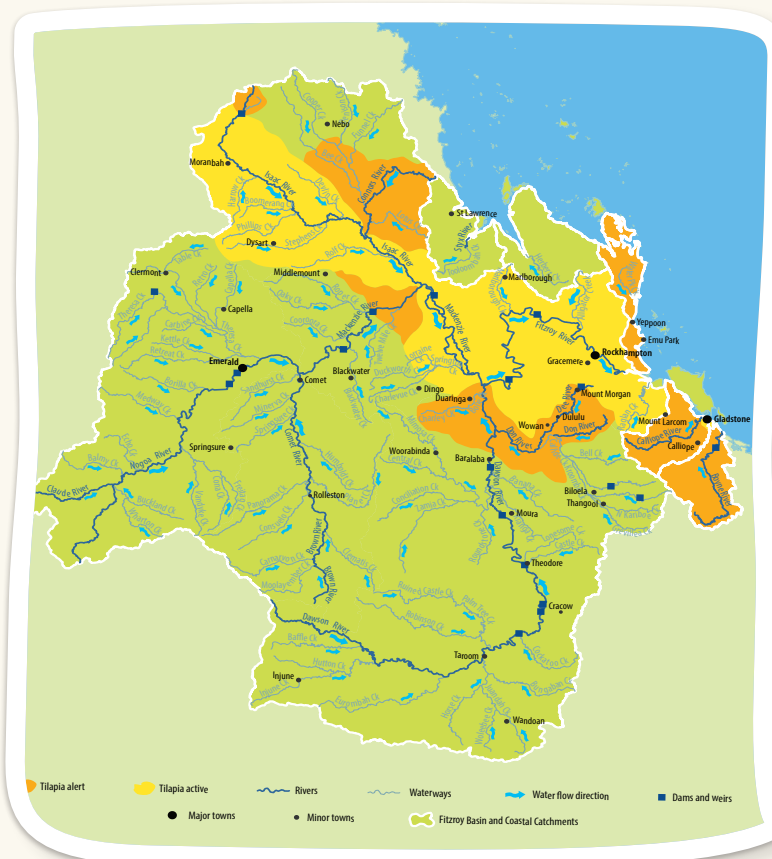
REFLECTION

Overall, the past 12 months of tilapia project work was highly successful. The cumulative approach adopted by FBA in terms of knowledge is at the forefront of project development. FBA will continue to build upon our current resources to adapt to changes into the future. The 2016-17 project picked up from the previous three years of tilapia management work within our region and build upon it. We were able to do this by using a process of refining our focus in regards to monitoring priority locations, providing information to key stakeholders and specific sectors of the community, which will continue to improve efficiencies in future tilapia management. The use of multiple communication materials, methods and stakeholder networks proved to be a key feature in helping this project achieve immediate on ongoing outcomes.

Whenever funding becomes available, it is recommended that FBA and other key stakeholders invest in continuing to determine

the extent tilapia have spread but also determine if there is a correlation between certain types of habitats and tilapia prevalence.

One area of improvement highlighted to be focuses further upon in future would be to further explain the mouth brooding characteristics of Tilapia.



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