

Adopt-a-pond

Are you fond of your local pond? Ever wondered what might be lurking just beneath the surface?

Western Australia's freshwater environments are among the most unique in the world. Unfortunately, they've also become home to some uninvited guests.

Introduced fish, like goldfish, can survive in poor water quality and their feeding habits stir up sediment. This releases nutrients such as phosphate, which can trigger algal blooms, and harm native species.

By observing and reporting what's happening at your local waterbody you'll help scientists monitor aquatic pests and better understand ecosystem health, even if you don't spot a fish!



Why it matters

Your observations matter. Every photo and water reading you share helps experts detect exotic fish, track invasive pests, and flag poor water health. Each observation strengthens biosecurity and supports healthier ecosystems. You're not just watching, you're helping infer patterns, revealing hidden threats and driving real-world science.

What to do



Download the [MyPestGuide® Reporter](#) app and get ready to report what's happening at your local pond, lake, creek or river.

1. **Understand the target symptoms:** Learn about freshwater lakes and ponds in WA, our native species and introduced fish species.
2. **Observe your nearest pond:** Look closely for signs matching specified water wellness signs (e.g. clarity, pH, biodiversity) and make your own observations about how murky the water is, using a pH test strip, if bright or big fish are present, or you see any algae blooms.
3. **Document thoroughly** - Take 4 photos:
 - a wide view of the waterbody
 - a photo of any fish or invertebrates observed
 - a detailed photo of indicators above
 - a picture of the test strip (if used)
4. **Describe your observations:** Complete your MyPestGuide® report:
 - **What kind of waterbody is it?** A stream, river, pond or an artificial lake?
 - Even if you didn't conduct a water test, do your observations indicate that there could be an introduced species? If so, **describe why you think is happening**. Make an informed decision (an **inference**)..



Activity

When to look

In October, timing is key! Aim to go early in the morning to see hatching insects and birds, while late afternoon and on sunset you might observe frogs, bats, and possums. As the sun sets you may observe fish feeding near the shore and nocturnal creatures start to emerge but wrap it up before it gets dark. By exploring from first light to nightfall you'll uncover the full rhythm of life around our waterbodies – all while staying safe.

What do you notice?

Here's a qualitative observation: the water is murky, has an 'off' smell, presence of algae bloom or oily film.

- **You might guess:** these signs indicate that water quality is poor, this could be caused by a big rain event if there has been one very recently, or it could indicate the presence of introduced pest fish.



How about a quantitative observation: there are lots of brightly coloured, large (greater than 10 cm) fish observed.

- **You might guess:** WA native freshwater fish are typically plain coloured, and most are relatively small so the big bright fish are likely to be non-native and could be pests.



Fun fact

A pond is a quiet body of water that is too small for wave action and too shallow for major temperature differences from top to bottom. It usually has a muddy or silty bottom with aquatic plants around the edges and throughout.

Make a report

Whether you spot something or nothing at all, your report matters. Submitting a report through the **MyPestGuide® Reporter app** is easy and the impact can last years. Every report helps scientists better understand the environment and detect pests and diseases early.



Report your observations

MyPestGuide® Reporter
via app or online
mypestguide.dpird.wa.gov.au



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