



## Water For Nature – Get Involved

Every one of us can do something to make the waters, plants and wildlife of the River Murray healthier. You could turn off a tap quicker, find a way to get water back to a thirsty wetland, or join a bird watching group to do a survey. We all want to see our river flowing and full of native fish, our wetlands teeming with birdlife, and the many thousands of young river red gums growing up to replace the giants that once flourished on our river banks. We want to share a healthy river with the irrigators, tourism operators, farmers and, most of all, our kids and our grandkids.

This factsheet forms part of the [My Healthy River Toolkit](#) which provides information to interested wetland owners, community people, and organisations about what environmental watering is and how you can help to improve the health of our river. The Toolkit is an initiative of Nature Foundation SA's [Water For Nature](#) program.

Commonwealth environmental water is recovered by the Australian Government under the [Basin Plan](#). Water For Nature supports community-driven watering projects along the South Australian River Murray at wetland and floodplain sites that are not receiving water from other sources.

We are a non-government organisation and have worked with the Commonwealth Environmental Water Office, the South Australian Government, irrigators and local community groups and landholders to deliver 6.22 gigalitres (that's 6.22 billion litres!) to more than 80 sites in the SA River Murray valley... **but there are many more sites that need water.**



“Environmental water refers to **“water used to improve the health of our rivers, floodplains and wetlands”**”

### How do I get involved in Water For Nature?

The first step is to contact Nature Foundation SA (see our details below) and let us know that you're interested! We can discuss with you the range of ways you can get involved, and help you choose an option that suits your lifestyle, this could include, for example:

- monitoring tree health, frogs, birds, water quality, or water delivery through Water For Nature monitoring programs or citizen science programs;
- moving equipment to pump water to a wetland/floodplain site;
- re-fuelling pumps and helping to maintain equipment;
- letting us know about places that need watering;
- making a donation.

Ron's story and the Greenways case study below are great examples of how people like you have been involved with Water For Nature.

Take a look at the other [Factsheets](#) in the My Healthy River Toolkit for more information about planning your own watering project and watching the results.





## Ron's Story – in his own words Who is Ron Kelertas?



Ron Kelertas

“ I’m an “accidental citizen scientist”!

I used to work as an electronic engineer, until I was in a serious car accident when I was 25.

I’m now 55 and I’m an accidental citizen scientist ”



Photo: Ron Kelertas

### What made you get involved with Water For Nature?

It was one sunny day about 2 years ago. I'd moved to the Riverland as part of my rehabilitation after major surgery, and I was relaxing under a river red gum, doing some of my rehab exercises. It was quiet, just the sounds of the river and nature, and then I notice this ute pull up towing a trailer and a couple of blokes in high-vis vests jump out and start setting up a big blue pump – a disturbance to the serenity.

I went over for a chat to find out what they were doing, and that's when I learnt about the Water For Nature program and the environmental watering project at Greenways Landing near Nildottie. I was intrigued!

I was encouraged to go along to the ecological monitoring day and asked if I wouldn't mind doing them a favour by turning the pump on and off that day. That was the first of many pump management days and monitoring days for me!

### How have you been involved?

I've helped with environmental watering at two sites: Greenways 'high-flow' Wetlands and Kroehn's Landing at Nildottie. I've done a lot of things to help:

- turned pumps on and off (recording times and flow data for my own interest!);
- attended and participated in various monitoring days;
- helped promote monitoring days and the Water For Nature program in my local community; and
- bird watching.

### What have you enjoyed most?

Turning on the pump at sunrise... afterwards I'd walk away from the pump noise, and I'd just watch nature! Watch as the light first touches the water and different insects emerge, then hundreds of swallows appear and start feeding on them...and then a whistling kite circling above me will

swoop in and pluck a swallow out in mid-flight – poor little swallow – but it's nature!

I also enjoyed collecting data – I started recording the time of day that I turned the pump on and off, and the water flow, volume and rate. I was delighted to present my experience at a recent Water For Nature Exchange Conference held in Renmark, with more opportunities to meet like-minded people.

Standing watching nature also led me to my new passion of bird watching – I bought a camera fairly early on, then I got a grant to purchase high quality binoculars...yes, the bug has bitten me.

### Who has helped you?

One of the most inspirational people I've met has been John Gitsham (Birds SA) – he knows so much about birds and wetlands and I've picked his brain over many interesting and passionate discussions!

Matt Turner (Water For Nature) was the first person I met, he's helped a lot with answering my questions and also making Council connections and providing advice on dealing with community concerns.

I've met Sylvia Clarke (Natural Resource SA Murray-Darling Basin) at monitoring days and citizen science days, and a lot of people in my local community who are interested in what's happening and what I'm doing. I've connected these people with Nature Foundation SA too so they can also help in their own way.

Also Natalie Stalenberg, (Nature Foundation SA Water For Nature Program Manager), and various members of Nature Foundation Council, like Dr Barbara Hardy AO. This association with Nature Foundation and what I have experienced has been good for me.





## Thank you to Ron for making a difference!

If Ron's story has inspired you to get involved with Water For Nature or join the many thousands of citizen scientists, you will find the contacts below useful for further information.

### **Nature Foundation SA**

**Natalie Stalenberg**

Phone: 08 8340 2880

Email: [natalie.stalenberg@nfsa.org.au](mailto:natalie.stalenberg@nfsa.org.au)

### **Commonwealth Environmental Water Office**

**Michelle Campbell (Local Engagement Officer)**  
(Berri, SA)

Phone: 08 8595 2120

Email: [Michelle.Campbell@environment.gov.au](mailto:Michelle.Campbell@environment.gov.au)

### **South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board**

**Sylvia Clarke (Project Officer Community)**

Phone: 08 8391 7500

Email: [sylvia.clarke@sa.gov.au](mailto:sylvia.clarke@sa.gov.au)

Also check out the details of the Greenways Landing Wetland case study at the end of this Factsheet.

This is a great example how one person can join others in making a big difference.

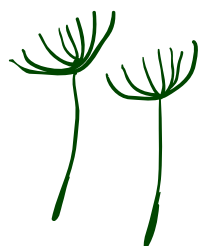






Photo: Matt Turner



Photo: Ron Kelertas



Photo: Matt Turner



Photo: Matt Turner

## CASE STUDY Greenways Landing

**PARTNER/S:** Landowner Mark Bond, Eastern Hills Murray Plains Catchment Group, Nildottie Progress Association, Natural Resources SA Murray-Darling Basin.

**WATERING SITE:** Greenways Landing, near Nildottie, SA.

- WATERING AIM/S:**
- Providing reproduction and recruitment opportunities for riparian native vegetation (particularly river red gum, lignum shrublands and samphire)
  - Supporting and maintaining red gum juvenile regeneration
  - Improve feeding habitat for waterbirds and increase waterbird abundance and diversity.

**WATERING DELIVERY:**

- commenced 2015-16;
- total water delivered to date = 38.61 Megalitres;
- water pumped from the river into a channel that runs to the wetland.

**OUTCOMES:**

- improved condition of lignum, samphire and river red gum trees;
- recruitment and sustained growth of tree seedlings;
- large numbers of wetland birds including the threatened Freckled Duck trees
- successful and positive engagement of the local community



Photo: Matt Turner

### Further information

Anyone can help to deliver environmental water and improve nature along the River Murray...every drop counts! Are you concerned about the health along the River? Or do you want to register your interest in lending a "watering" hand?

**CONTACT:** Nature Foundation SA on 8340 2880, or email Natalie at [natalie.stalenberg@nfsa.org.au](mailto:natalie.stalenberg@nfsa.org.au)

**VISIT:** the [My Healthy River Toolkit Facebook page](#) for all factsheets and tutorials.



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Australian Government



Government of South Australia

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