



River Action Plan for the Sabina, Abba and Ludlow Rivers

Volume 1. Maps and Recommendations for Sabina River and Woddidup Creek



2002



Soil and Land
Conservation
Council
Western Australia



Water and Rivers
Commission



GeoCatch



Natural Heritage Trust

River Action Plan for the Sabina, Abba and Ludlow Rivers

Volume 1. Maps and Recommendations for
Sabina River and Woddidup Creek

2002

Prepared for the Geographe Catchment Council - GeoCatch and the
Vasse-Wonnerup Land Conservation District Committee

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How to use this river action plan

This report was prepared for GeoCatch, the Vasse-Wonnerup LCDC and landholders in the catchments of the Sabina, Abba and Ludlow Rivers.

Sections 1 and 2 provide background information on the river action plan and the study area. Section 3 details the methodology used in assessing the condition of the rivers. Sections 4 and 5 outline the management issues identified and provide general management advice. Maps showing foreshore condition rating, fencing status, river features, management issues and weeds are included in Section 6 with specific management advice for each section of river.

There are three volumes of this report. One for the Sabina River and Woddidup Creek, one for the Abba River, and one for the Ludlow River and Tiger Gully. Sections 1 to 5 are the same in all the reports. Section 6 differs in each volume and contains maps and specific management advice for each of the river systems.

Figure 11 uses colour codes to show the foreshore conditions of the whole river system. It also provides an index to assist with locating specific sections of river.

Acronyms

NHT	Natural Heritage Trust
LCDC	Land Conservation District Committee
CALM	Department of Conservation and Land Management
GeoCatch	Geographic Catchment Council
WRC	Water and Rivers Commission
DOLA	Department of Land Administration

Acknowledgments

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The Vasse River Action Plan by Margaret Scott, and the Capel River Action Plan by Kirrily White and Sarah Comer were used extensively in the preparation of this report. They provided an excellent basis to work from.

The maps were prepared by Regional Support Branch of the Water and Rivers Commission.

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Reference details

The recommended reference for this publication is:
GeoCatch 2002, *River Action Plan for the Sabina, Abba and Ludlow Rivers*, Water and Rivers Commission.

This river action plan is dedicated to Dr Luke Pen in recognition of the enormous contribution he has made towards the understanding and management of our rivers.

HOW TO USE THIS RIVER ACTION PLAN	i
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ii
SUMMARY	1
1. INTRODUCTION	4
Background.....	4
Study Aims.....	4
2. STUDY AREA	5
Landform and soils.....	5
Vegetation.....	6
Climate.....	6
The river systems and the wetlands	6
Heritage.....	8
Land tenure.....	8
3. STUDY METHODOLOGY	10
Community involvement.....	10
River foreshore condition assessment.....	10
4. MANAGEMENT ISSUES	14
Erosion and siltation.....	14
Loss of native fringing vegetation.....	14
Weed invasion.....	15
Stock access.....	15
Water quality.....	15
5. MANAGEMENT ADVICE	19
Where to start	19
Stock control.....	19
Erosion control	21
Regeneration and revegetation	24
Weed control.....	25
Feral animal control	26
Water quality.....	26
General recommendations.....	28
6. RIVER FORESHORE CONDITION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT	29
7. REFERENCES	59

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Locality map.....	3
Figure 2: Town of Busselton rainfall data.....	7
Figure 3: The four grades of river foreshore condition - (A) pristine to ditch (D)	11
Figure 4: Time series nutrient data for the Sabina, Abba and Ludlow Rivers	17
Figure 5: Forms of nutrients in the Sabina, Abba and Ludlow Rivers.....	18
Figure 6: The correct placement of fences in relation to the river valley	20
Figure 7: Outside bend bank erosion	22
Figure 8: The use of structural works will prevent the process of undercutting.....	22
Figure 9: The process of bank slumping caused by excessive weight and lack of support.....	23
Figure10: Repositioning large woody debris.....	23
Figure11: Index map.....	30

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Summary of foreshore condition rating of the Sabina, Abba and Ludlow Rivers	2
Table 2: Length of fenced areas on the Sabina, Abba and Ludlow Rivers.....	2
Table 3: Reserves on the Sabina, Abba and Ludlow Rivers.....	9

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Species lists for areas of remnant vegetation on the rivers	61
Appendix 2: Planning advice from the Vasse River Action Plan.....	65

The Sabina, Abba and Ludlow River systems are found within the Vasse-Wonnerup Land Conservation District in the Geographe catchment. Extensive modification of the river systems has occurred as a result of clearing and drainage of the plains for settlement and agriculture. The desire to protect and improve the condition of the rivers has led to the development of this river action plan.

There are three volumes of this report.

- **Volume 1: Sabina River and Woddidup Creek;**
- **Volume 2: Abba River; and**
- **Volume 3: Ludlow River and Tiger Gully.**

The background information, discussion of management issues and general management advice is the same in each volume. The maps showing foreshore condition and related management advice for each of the rivers is contained within the relevant volume.

The aim of the foreshore condition survey was to provide landholders, the Vasse-Wonnerup LCDC and GeoCatch with information on the condition of the rivers so that the waterways can be better managed. The surveys were conducted in April, May and June 2001 using the Foreshore Condition Assessment method developed by Dr Luke Pen and Margaret Scott, 1995 (Pen & Scott, 1995). Many landholders assisted with the surveys.

A summary of the foreshore condition ratings and length of fencing for the rivers is presented in Tables 1 and 2 below.

The most prominent issues of concern identified during the foreshore surveys and community consultation were:

- Erosion and siltation of the river channels.
- Loss of native fringing vegetation and degradation of remaining vegetation by stock grazing and trampling.
- Weeds - it was noted that serious weed problems are developing in ungrazed and unmanaged sections of river.

- Constraints to landholders fencing the river to control stock access, including the current set out of paddocks, the need for bridges and other crossings, time and cost, and the increased requirements for weed and rabbit control after fencing.
- Water quality and the downstream impacts on the Vasse-Wonnerup wetland system.
- The need for a diverse suite of species to be used in revegetation including trees, shrubs, sedges, rushes and herbs. This is to ensure that revegetation achieves the aims of stabilising the banks and filtering out sediment to protect water quality.

In response to these issues, general recommendations to improve the condition of the rivers are as follows:

- Fence the waterways to exclude stock permanently, or to achieve management that allows for bank stability and native vegetation establishment and protection.
- Protect, as a priority, remaining native fringing vegetation along the rivers by fencing and restricting stock access and controlling weeds.
- Increase the amount and diversity of fringing vegetation along the rivers by revegetation, and restricting stock access to allow natural regeneration.
- Control weeds, rabbits and foxes.
- Seek advice from the Water and Rivers Commission regarding erosion problems and undertake remedial action where possible.
- Minimise nutrient export by establishing buffer strips adjacent to waterways, testing soils to determine fertiliser requirements and maximising vegetation cover on the soil.

Time and funding are the key to restoration works. Some financial assistance to assist with the implementation of these recommendations will be available through the Vasse-Wonnerup LCDC.

Table 1: Summary of foreshore condition rating of the Sabina, Abba and Ludlow Rivers (not including through State Forest in the Whicher Ranges)

Condition rating	Sabina River and Woddidup Creek		Abba River		Ludlow River and Tiger Gully	
	Total Length	Total %	Total Length	Total %	Total Length	Total %
A (pristine)	4.7 km	12%	2.2 km	6%	1.7 km	5%
B (weedy)	4.3 km	11%	18.1 km	51%	15.8 km	45%
C (erosion prone)	9.2 km	24%	7.7 km	22%	12 km	33%
D (ditch)	20.3 km	53%	7.5 km	21%	6 km	17%

Table 2: Length of fenced areas on the Sabina, Abba and Ludlow Rivers

	Sabina River and Woddidup Creek		Abba River		Ludlow River	
	Length Fenced	% of Length	Length Fenced	% of Length	Length Fenced	% of Length
West/south bank only	3.8 km	9.9%	2.6 km	6%	4.9 km	13.8%
East/north bank only	2.9 km	7.6%	1.8 km	4.1%	1.4 km	3.9%
Both sides	3.6 km	9.4%	5.9 km	13.6%	4.8 km	13.6%
Total fenced	10.3 km	26.9%	10.3 km	23.7%	11.1 km	31.3%

1. Introduction

Background

In recognition of a need to address the poor state of the rivers in the Geographe catchment, a Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) application for the development of river action plans was submitted by GeoCatch in 1997, following consultation with the relevant Land Conservation District Committees (LCDC). The project was funded through the National Rivercare component of NHT, which operates under the goal: *To ensure progress towards the sustainable management, rehabilitation and conservation of rivers and to improve the health of these river systems.*

That project led to the successful development and on-going implementation of river action plans for the Capel, Vasse and Carburnup Rivers and Yallingup Brook.

Building on the success of the earlier project, a follow-up application to NHT in 2000 made funding available to develop a combined river action plan for the Sabina, Abba and Ludlow Rivers. The partners in developing and implementing this project are GeoCatch and the Vasse-Wonnerup LCDC, with funding from WRC.

Study Aims

The primary aims of this river action plan are:

- To produce a description of the state of the Sabina, Abba and Ludlow Rivers and a prioritised plan of action to guide works to improve the health of these rivers.
- To provide a benchmark against which the local community's future work to protect and rehabilitate the rivers can be gauged.
- To provide a tool to guide the use of the funding and assistance available for fencing, weed control, erosion control, planting and rehabilitation of native vegetation.
- To provide a sound technical basis for future funding or project submissions.

It was an important aim of the project to involve landholders wherever possible. Much of the river surveying was conducted with landholders and a community meeting was held to report results of field assessments and obtain feedback.

The complete file and hard copy report of the River Action Plans for the Sabina, Abba & Ludlow Rivers Volume 1. Maps and Recommendations for Sabina River and Woddidup Creek are available from GeoCatch
Via email: geocatch@water.wa.gov.au