

# Wombat Forest to Cairn Curran Reservoir THE UPPER REACHES

The **Loddon River** is an important tributary of the River Murray with a catchment area of almost 7% of Victoria. The Loddon flows a total distance of 360km on a northerly course from its headwaters near Trentham to the River Murray near Swan Hill.



## Barking Owl

The woodlands and river environment of the upper Loddon catchment provide essential feeding and breeding grounds for two threatened owl species. Pictured is the endangered Barking Owl, which can be heard at night making distinctive territorial calls or observed throughout the day roosting in large trees with dense canopies.

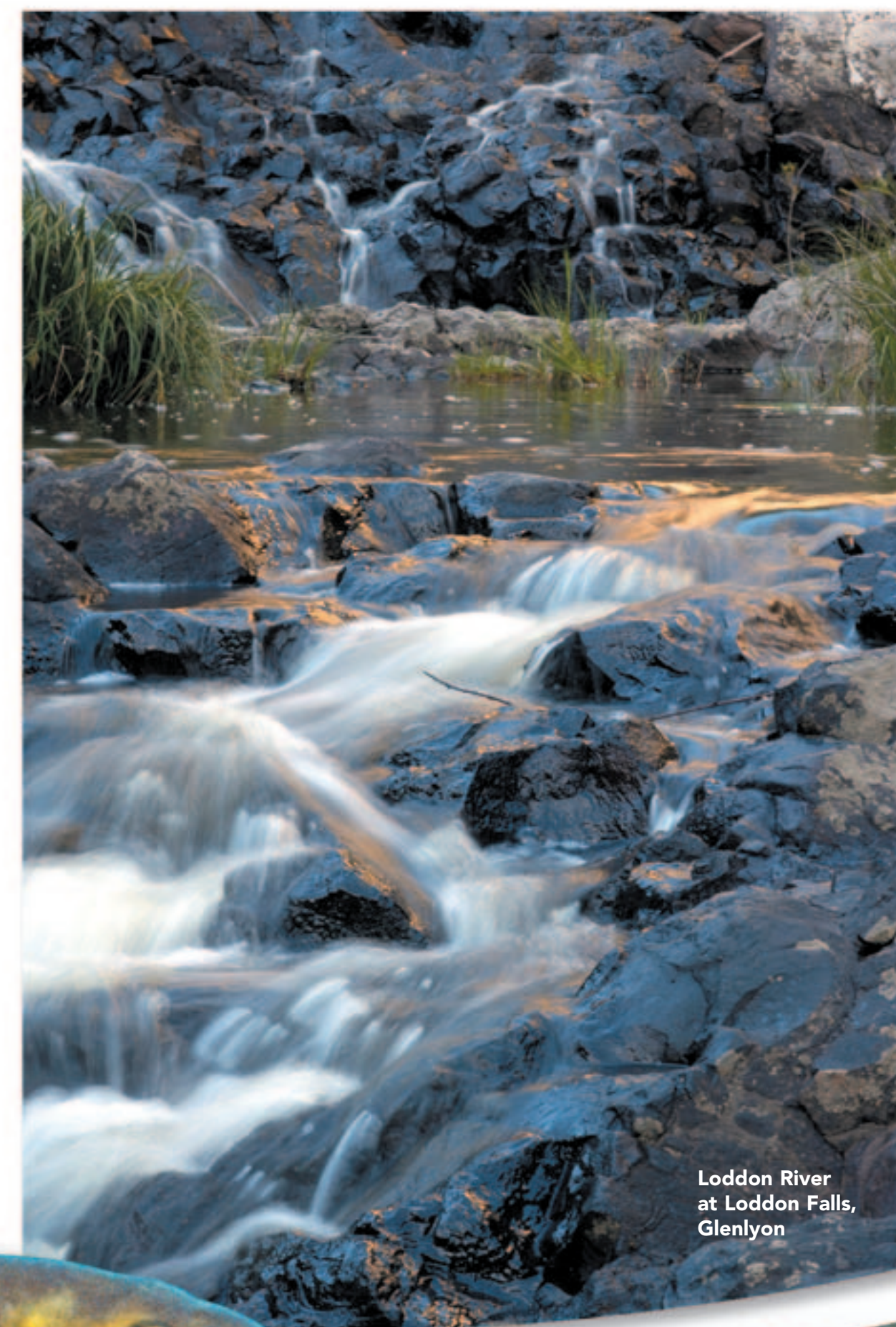
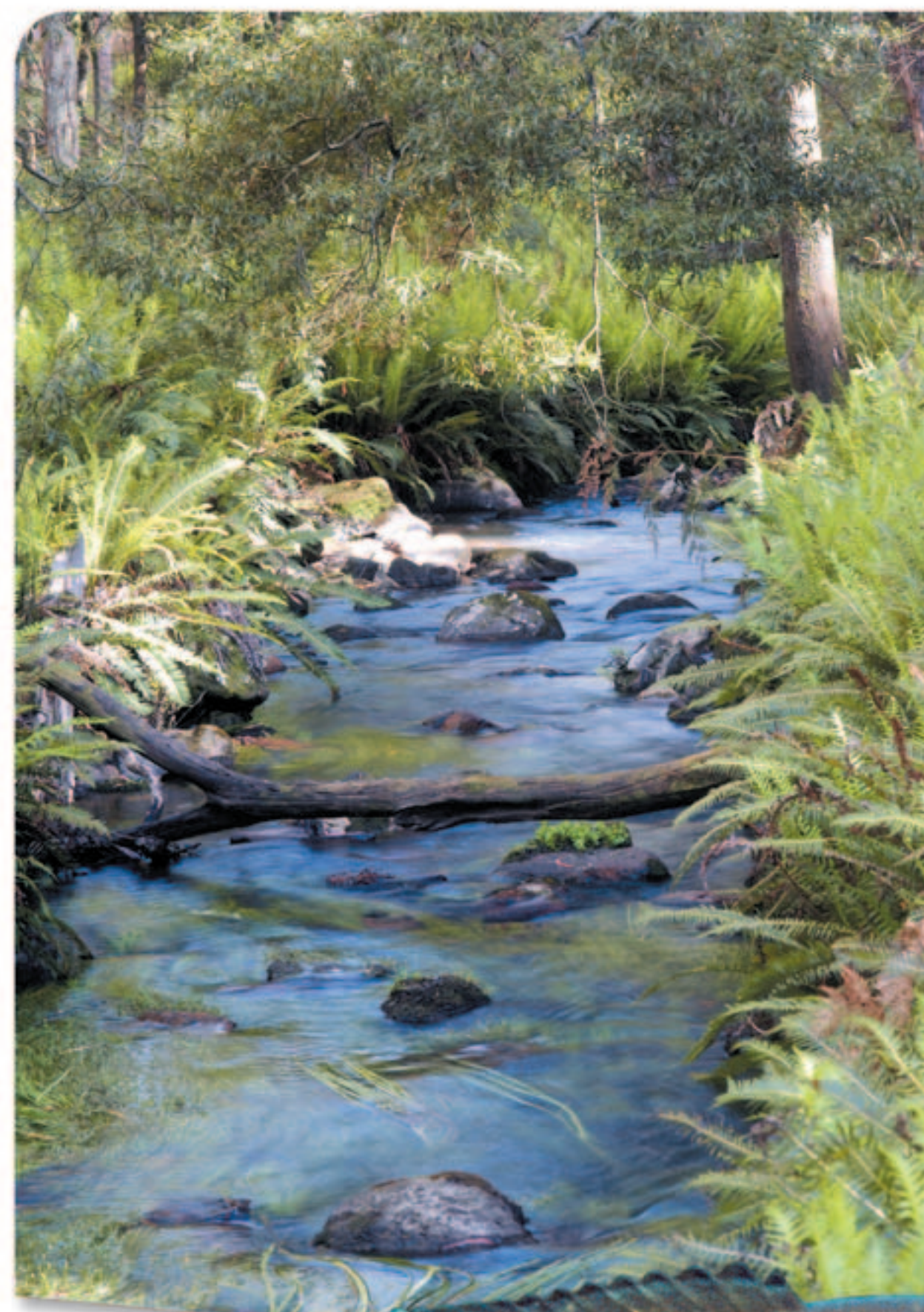
Photo: Ian Montgomery

The upper reaches of the Loddon River begin in the Wombat State Forest on the Great Dividing Range and flow north into Cairn Curran Reservoir. From its headwaters near Glenlyon, this section of the Loddon River descend hilly State forests and parks before meandering through undulating open farmland along the edge of the Guildford Plateau. Along its course, the upper reaches of the Loddon River flows through the towns of Lyonville, Glenlyon, Glenluce, Vaughan, Guildford and Newstead. Several waterways enter the Loddon River along this reach, including Kangaroo, Campbells, Muckleford and Jim Crow creeks.

This reach is generally characterised by a well-shaded, clear, shallow, rocky stream with a high diversity of invertebrate fauna and small fish species. Candlebark and Manna gums border the stream in the moist foothills of the Great Dividing Range with a Black Wattle, River Bottlebrush and Tea Tree understorey. In the drier areas further downstream, River Red gums shade the river. The upper reaches provide habitat for the endangered Powerful Owl, Black Falcon and Barking Owl as well as the nationally significant Swift Parrot and Striped Legless Lizard.

Along the upper reaches of the Loddon River, waterfalls, mineral springs, forests and parks provide an attraction for visitors, while farmland adjoining the river supports dryland cropping and livestock production. Nearby, the Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park contains a unique array of culturally significant sites and landscapes that are reminders of the Loddon catchment's Indigenous and gold mining histories.

**Loddon River at Wombat State Forest, Glenlyon** (above right)



**Loddon River at Loddon Falls, Glenlyon**



## River Blackfish

River Blackfish have a small home range (of around 40m) in association with in-stream woody debris in which they lay several hundred sticky eggs. The eggs are then guarded by the male, who also fans away any silt that may settle on them, as this can suffocate and kill the eggs.

Photo: Rudie H. Kuiter



## Stonefly

Stonefly nymphs are aquatic, and are mostly found in the upper reaches of the Loddon River. This stonefly nymph is showing a tuft of gills at the tip of its abdomen that it uses to breath underwater.

Photo and text: WaterBug Book by J Gooderham and E Tsyrlin

# The LODDON RIVER'S JOURNEY



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# Cairn Curran to Serpentine THE MIDDLE REACHES

The **Loddon River** is an important tributary of the River Murray with a catchment area of almost 7% of Victoria. The Loddon flows a total distance of 360km on a northerly course from its headwaters near Trentham to the River Murray near Swan Hill.



## Growling Grass Frog

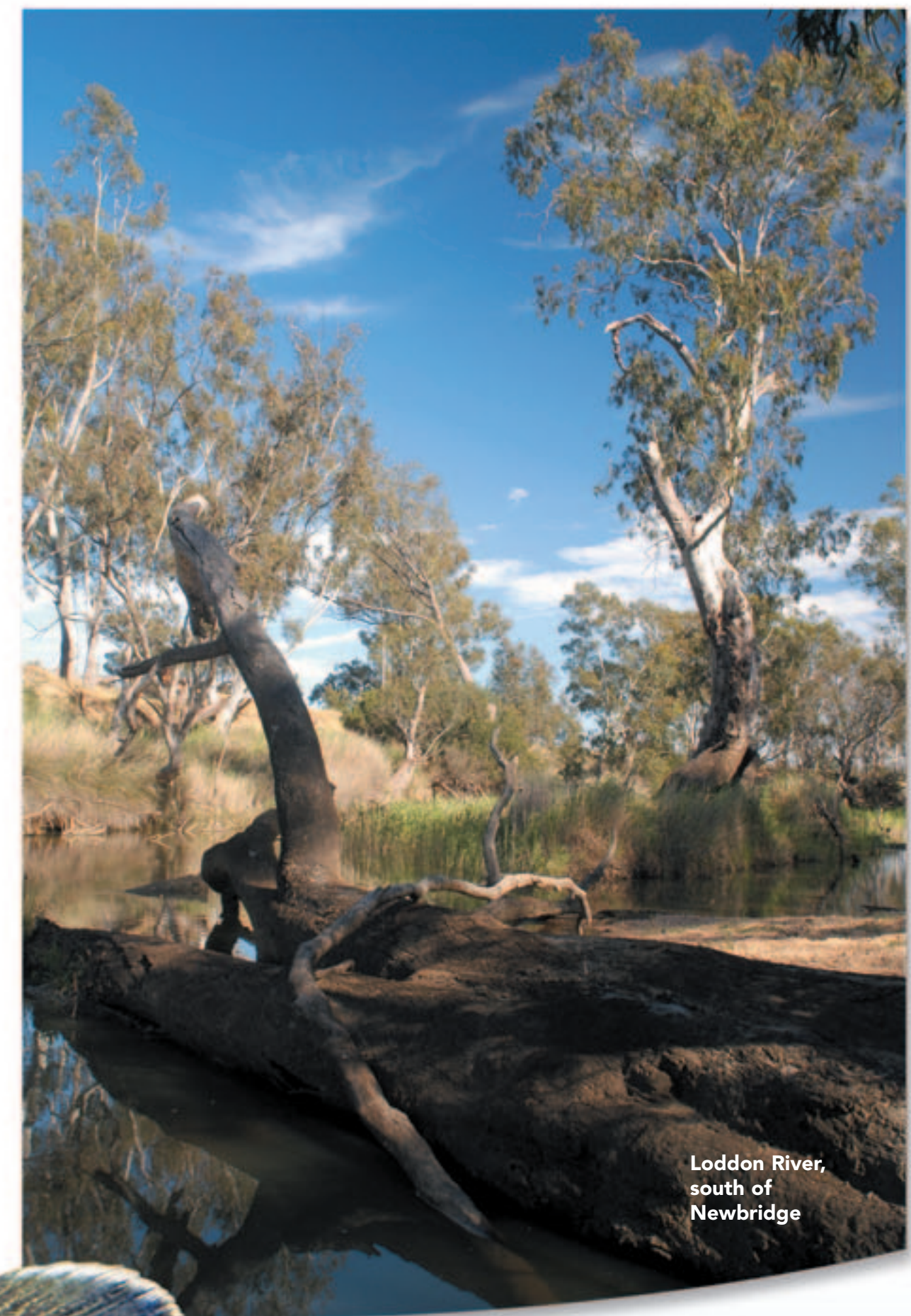
Although once widespread, the Growling Grass Frog (pictured) has now declined over most of its former range. Relying on clean water, the presence of this species is an indicator of a functioning riparian system.  
Photo: Garry Cheers, North Central CMA

The mid reaches of the Loddon River flow downstream from Cairn Curran Reservoir at Baringhup to Laanecoorie Reservoir at Eddington. It continues downstream across an open, undulating landscape through the towns of Laanecoorie, Newbridge and Bridgewater to the Serpentine Weir. Several waterways enter the Loddon River along this reach, including Tullaroop, Bet Bet, Little and Bullabul creeks.

This reach is generally characterised by steep banks and a gravel, rocky or silt-lined streambed with large woody debris, deep pools and overhanging vegetation. This provides a diversity of habitat for Murray Cod, Golden Perch and the invertebrates they feed upon. The large River Red Gums, native shrubs and grasses along the river and adjacent flats provide important habitat for several fauna species that are considered threatened, such as the Red-backed Kingfisher, Grey Crowned Babbler and Growling Grass Frog. Threatened flora species include Cane Grass, Tough Scurf-pea and Pale Spike-sedge.

The Loddon River provides water for stock, irrigated farmland, vineyards and several towns both along the river and in the surrounding district. Camping, waterskiing, boating and fishing are popular recreational pursuits and attractions for visitors, particularly upstream of the Bridgewater Weir.

**Loddon River, north of Newbridge** (above right)



**Loddon River, south of Newbridge**

## Dragonfly

Dragonflies occur in a wide variety of habitats, living amongst aquatic plants and deadwood. The mid reaches of the Loddon River support dragonflies as they can only withstand some slight environmental stresses.

Photo and text: WaterBug Book by J Gooderham and E Tsyrlin



## Murray Cod

Murray Cod lay up to 60,000 sticky eggs on fallen timber in spring/summer when water temperatures increase to around 20°C. They are known to migrate upstream for many kilometres to spawn, before returning to their home territory

Photo: Rudie H. Kuiter



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# Serpentine to the River Murray

## THE LOWER REACHES

The **Loddon River** is an important tributary of the River Murray with a catchment area of almost 7% of Victoria. The Loddon flows a total distance of 360km on a northerly course from its headwaters near Trentham to the River Murray near Swan Hill.



### Great Egret

During times of flood the internationally significant Kerang Wetlands support an abundance of water birds. The Great Egret (pictured) is a distinctive species which specialises in stalking prey in wetland shallows.  
Photo: Ian Montgomery

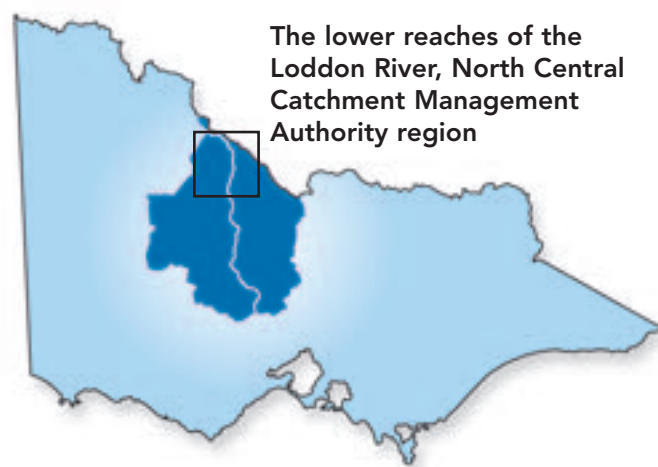
The lower reaches of the Loddon River wind north across a relatively flat, open floodplain from the Serpentine Weir to the River Murray. While the Loddon River flows through the towns of Kerang and Benjeroop, it also passes through the districts of Kinypanial, Fernihurst, Boort East, Yando, Canary Island and Appin South.

The lower reaches are generally characterised by shallow, warm turbid water with a mud streambed. Several waterways enter the Loddon River along this reach, including Pyramid and Barr creeks. Typical of floodplain rivers, several creeks flow out of the lower reaches either to wetlands or to re-enter the river further downstream, such as the Serpentine, Kinypanial and Wandella creeks. As a result, the river gradually becomes shallower and narrower.

As the river winds its way to the drier north of the Loddon catchment, River Red Gums are replaced by Black Box trees, Lignum and Saltbush. These species are indicative of the heavy, water-logged soils of the floodplain. Instream snags and reeds provide important habitat for Murray Cod, Water Rats and Platypus.

The Loddon River feeds into the many lakes that make up the internationally significant Kerang Wetlands. Found along the lower reaches are a number of threatened flora species, including Umbrella Wattle, Cane Grass and Reade's Daisy. Threatened fauna include the Great Egret, Intermediate Egret, Australasian Shoveller and White-bellied Sea Eagle.

The Loddon River forms part of the irrigation system that supports the area's highly productive dairy, horticulture and mixed farming enterprises.



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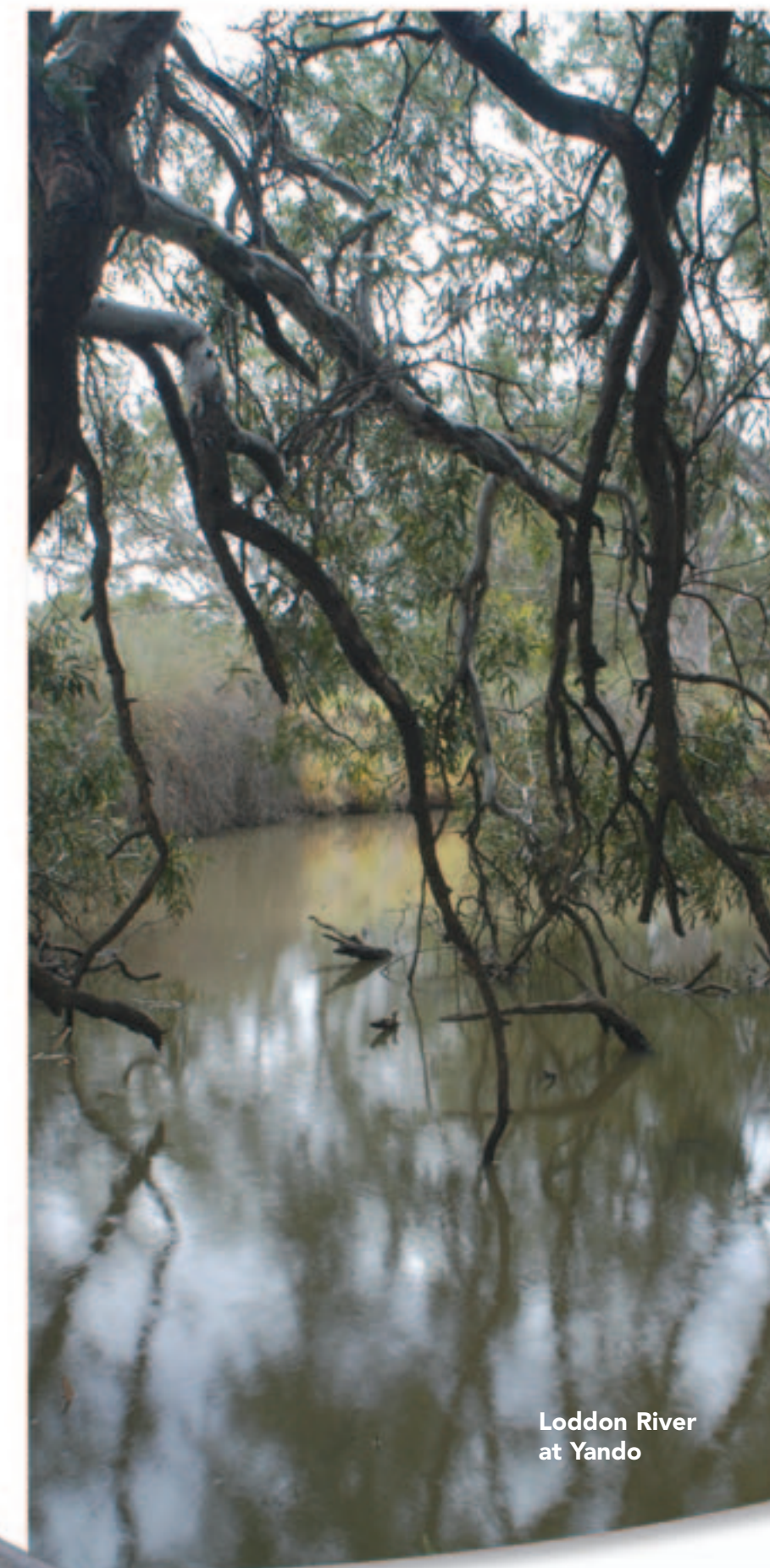
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A number of weirs located along the river at Serpentine, Fernihurst, Appin South and Kerang are designed to regulate flows and redirect water along channels and creeks for irrigators, stock and town water supplies both along the river and throughout the surrounding area.

Indigenous communities today continue to place a high value on the Loddon River and its wetlands, which are seen as culturally and socially significant.

**Loddon River at Jarklin** (above)



**Loddon River at Yando**



### Golden Perch

Golden Perch require a rise in water level and an increase in water temperature to around 23°C to induce spawning in mid spring to late summer. They migrate upstream for many kilometres to spawn. Golden Perch lay up to 650,000 semi-buoyant, non-adhesive eggs.

Photo: Rudie H. Kuiter

### Yabby

Yabbies are a special large crustacean species which survive in this dry region by burrowing into damp soil on the Loddon riverbank to keep from drying out. Yabbies feed on the abundant vegetable matter and small aquatic animals.

Photo and text: WaterBug Book  
by J Gooderham and E Tsyrlin



Loddon River photos: Stephen Malone Photography