

Dead mullet mystery

DEAD fish were strewn across the shores of the Cooks River last week with passersby reporting "hundreds" of fish along the banks.

A spokesperson from the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) said they are not aware of how many fish washed up on shore, although they're investigating and reasons "could be many and varied".

"We've inspected the site and area, and collected water and fish samples for analysis," the spokesperson said. "It does happen from time to time in areas with industrial development around."

The DECC said that a passerby observed white discharge from the storm water drains, which is also under investigation.

Canterbury Greens Councilor Linda Eisler said this could possibly be a result of toxic chemical spills in the water.

"I would like to know what has happened and why," she said.

The Sydney Metro Catchment Management Authority (CMA) told the *Torch* that although they're active on the Cooks River, they weren't aware of the incident.

"There has been some fish kills in the past," a spokesperson from the CMA said.

Peter Munro from the Cooks River Valley Association (CRVA) was working on the bush regeneration project at Croydon Park on Saturday, two days after the first sighting, and said that several canoes passed and reported hundreds of dead fish along the river.

"They were mainly 30cm mullet," Mr Munro said. "I called Sydney Water and they checked the sewers and said they were intact."

Gale Adams, coordinator of Stream Watch, a group who test the water regularly, is conducting an investigation to determine what the source of the killings is.

"It's a rather unusual event," Ms Adams said. "We aren't able to say definitively what the reason is yet."

Canterbury Council's General Manager Jim Montague said they were notified by the DECC of the incident on Friday.

Anyone observing dead fish in or along the river can contact the DECC 24 hour pollution line on 131 555.