CLIMATE IN 2012

Hobart rainfall totalled 20% lower than average, resulting in lower river and stormwater flows, and consequently, lower nitrate, phosphorus, faecal bacteria, sediments, nutrients and litter.

SWIMMING IN THE DERWENT

Each year, the recreational water quality is monitored at about 35 beaches and river sites. For example, the maximum recorded level of zinc in the 2000 survey was 59,000 mg/tl, compared to a similar survey carried out in 2000. Samples were collected at 123 sites between May and June in both surveys. Although many beaches have low levels of faecal bacteria, sediments, nutrients and litter, some are still elevated.

WATER QUALITY INDICATORS

The DEP continues a water quality monitoring program that integrates sampling carried out by the University of Tasmania (University of Tasmania), Nystrom, Hobart, and Island Health (IH) that is carried out each month at 26 sites along the estuary. This includes monitoring at locations which indicate high water quality, such as in the upper estuary, and low water quality, such as in the lower estuary.

Some locations have been selected for detailed monitoring of particular contaminants, such as zinc, lead and cadmium. At these sites, water samples are collected for analysis on a quarterly basis.

Contaminated sediments

Levels of heavy metals in Derwent estuary sediments are among the highest in Australia. Derwent sediments tend to be fine-grained and organic-rich and are sensitive to sediment disturbance. Although nutrient enrichment and nutrients are elevated in some locations, they do not indicate poor water quality.

At least 79 introduced species have been recorded in the Derwent estuary. For example, introduced water cress (Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum) has not been a significant issue in the Derwent in recent years, although it is a problem in other estuaries in the region. At least 79 introduced species have been recorded in the Derwent estuary. The introduction of new species, such as Asian carp (Ctenopharyngodon idella), has been a significant concern in recent years. However, the introduction of new species, such as Asian carp (Ctenopharyngodon idella), has been a significant concern in recent years. Despite these concerns, the Derwent estuary remains a valuable resource for recreational and commercial fishers.

Although nutrient enrichment and nutrients are elevated in some locations, they do not indicate poor water quality. Contaminated sediments and wetlands are areas of particular concern. Areas of particular concern include the upper estuary, where levels of arsenic, cadmium, lead and zinc are elevated. These areas are sensitive to sediment disturbance and are of concern to fishers and other users of the estuary.

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HEAVY METALS IN SEAFISH

Dolphins and rays from the Derwent estuary are among the highest in Australia. Derwent estuary dolphins tend to be fine-grained and organic-rich and are sensitive to sediment disturbance. Although nutrient enrichment and nutrients are elevated in some locations, they do not indicate poor water quality.

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