Cooper Creek Catchment
Local Knowledge Map

Resilient Queensland
Queensland Reconstruction Authority

Catchment Overview

The Cooper Creek Catchment comprises the Thomson River, Barcoo River and Cooper Creek sub-catchments.

The Thomson River is made up of permanent and semi-permanent waterholes which drain into Cooper Creek from seven local government areas as far north as Charters Towers. It collects water from across central Queensland's many creeks before becoming the Thomson River at Muttaburra. It continues through Longreach and Jundah before joining the Barcoo River at Windorah.

The Barcoo River adjoins the Thomson River sub-catchment to the south. Major towns on Barcoo include Barcaldine and Blackall. This large catchment area includes land within the local government areas of Barcaldine, Barcoo, Blackall-Tambo, Longreach and a small part of Quilpie Shire.

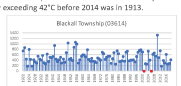
Where the Barcoo River meets the Thomson River lies the beginnings of true channel country.

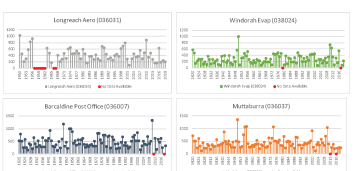
The principal town is Windorah, situated on the edge of the sprawling tributaries of the Cooper Creek where the abundant tributaries of the Thomson River and the Barcoo River join to form a riverbed some 70km wide in true channel country form. The catchment spreads across the Barcoo Shire to parts of Quilpie Shire and Bulloo, and across the border to South Australia.

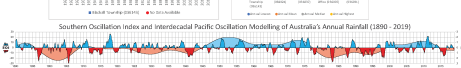
Climate & Rainfall

Weather and climate characteristics in the Cooper Creek Basin in the last 30 years from 1989 - 2018 (BoM, 2018):

- Annual rainfall has been relatively stable - increasing by around 20mm over 30 years while still naturally fluctuating.
- Dry years have occurred six times and wet years 11 times with the remainder remaining in the average range.
- Wet season rainfall averages have increased in some areas. The average rainfall during the wet season in Longreach was 344mm, which is 24mm higher than the average for the previous 30-year periods (1959-1988).
- Rainfall has been moderately reliable in the north east of the region around Longreach during monsoon season, however is less reliable during the early wet season.
- Useful rain events have occurred an average of twice a year. As of 2019, there have only been 13 summer seasons since 1900 that have had not 50mm rain event representing a 5% risk of occurring any year.
- Longreach has experienced runs of 10 or more days in a row exceeding 42°C during 2014-2018. The last time Longreach had 10 days in a row exceeding 42°C before 2014 was in 1913.





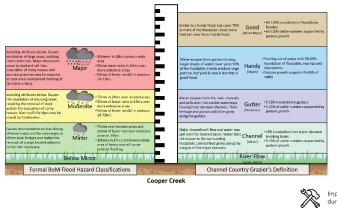


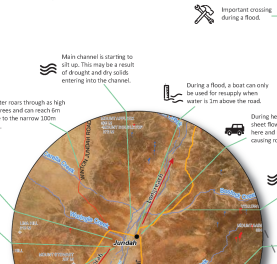
How to use this guide:

The information below provides local knowledge on landscape characteristics and flood behaviour. This is provided for local land managers, Council staff, and Government Agencies to better understand the Cooper Creek Catchment and its unique characteristics. This guide has used the best available information at present derived from updating a previous map developed and significant local input from a series of community meetings with locals in 2019. It is intended to help you assess what type of flood is likely to occur in your area and indicate what amount of feed you might expect. You may wish to record your own flooding and landscape characteristics on the map.

Timeline of Flooding within the Cooper Creek Catchment

Year	Grazier Flood Definition
1882	Handy
1885	Handy
1887	Handy
1890	Good
1892	Handy
1893	Good
1894	Handy
1898	Good
1903	Gutter
1906	Good
1907	Good
1908	Handy
1910	Handy
1911	Gutter
1912	Gutter
1917	Handy
1918	Handy
1920	Handy
1921	Gutter
1922	Good
1924	Handy
1925	Channel
1928	Channel
1930	Channel
1931	Gutter
1932	Gutter
1933	Handy
1934	Handy
1935	Channel
1936	Handy
1937	Gutter
1938	Gutter
1940	Good
1941	Good
1943	Gutter
1944	Good
1945	Gutter
1946	Handy
1949	Handy
1950	Good
1951	Good
1953	Handy
1954	Handy
1956	Handy
1957	Handy
1961	Handy
1963	Good
1964	Fresh in the river / Run
1966	Handy
1967	Handy
1968	Handy
1969	Fresh in the river / Run
1970	Gutter
1971	Good
1972	Handy
1973	Handy
1974	Good
1975	Fresh in the river / Run
1976	Handy
1977	Handy
1978	Channel
1979	Handy
1980	Gutter
1981	Gutter
1982	Channel
1983	Gutter
1984	Handy
1985	Channel
1986	Handy
1989	Handy
1990	Good
1991	Handy
1993	Handy
1996	Gutter
1997	Handy
1999	Handy
2000	Good
2001	Gutter
2002	Gutter
2003	Gutter
2004	Handy
2006	Handy
2007	Gutter
2008	Handy
2009	Handy
2010	Good
2011	Good
2012	Good
2013	Channel
2014	Gutter
2015	Fresh in the river / Run
2016	Channel
2017	Fresh in the river / Run
2018	Handy
2019	Handy




Cooper Creek
Longreach
Isisford
Yaraka
Stonehenge
Oma Downs
Muttaburra
Jundah
Windorah
Cordillo Downs
Durham Downs
Innamincka
Cooper Creek
Thomson River
Barcoo River
Diamantina River
Georgina River
Eyre Creek
Lake Eyre
Birdsville
Marree
Leigh Creek
Parachilna
Hawker
Quorn
Port Augusta
Port Pirie
Adelaide
Broken Hill
Tibooburra
Milparinka
Cameron Corner
Eromanga
Quilpie
Charleville
Cunnamulla
Thargomindah
Eulo
Noccundra
Bourke
Cobar
Nyngan
Brewarrina
Walgett
Lightning Ridge
Goodiwindi
Moree
Narrabri
Gunnedah
Tamworth
Armidale
Glen Innes
Inverell
Tenterfield
Warwick
Stanthorpe
Toowoomba
Dalby
Chinchilla
Miles
Roma
Mitchell
Injune
Taroom
Theodore
Biloela
Moranbah
Clermont
Alpha
Jericho
Longreach
Barcaldine
Blackall
Tambo
Augathella
Charleville
Cunnamulla
Eulo
Thargomindah
Noccundra
Windorah
Birdsville
Bedourie
Boulia
Mt Isa
Cloncurry
Julia Creek
Richmond
Hughenden
Winton
Kynuna
McKinlay
Longreach
Ilfracombe
Aramac
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Wilcannia