

The Darling Catchment

WESTERN NSW

FACT SHEET

www.wirraminna.org/drdave-outback/

The Darling catchment is in the far western corner of the Murray-Darling Basin. This outback river travels through north-west and western parts of NSW and is just as important as the Murray River.

SIZE

- The Darling River, including all of its tributaries, is the longest river system in Australia at 2740 kilometres long.
- The floodplain of the Darling River ranges from 10 to 50 kilometres wide.

WATER

- The Darling River fills only from rain falling within the catchment, mainly in Queensland. This long, thin river carries rainwater from east of Bourke in north-western NSW, all the way down to where it meets the Murray River at Wentworth in south-western NSW.
- The Darling River is an unregulated river - it has no large dams to hold back its flow for drier times of the year.
- On average, all or parts of the Darling River usually dry up every two to three years.
- There are many important wetlands associated with the Darling River. These wetlands do not fill up as regularly anymore but they continue to be very important breeding grounds for many species of birds and fish.
- The Darling River is a whitish colour because of all the silt it picks up during its long journey.

USE

- The Aboriginal people of western and north west NSW continue to depend on the Darling River for food, recreation, shelter, trade, ceremonies and celebrations.
- Europeans have lived near the river for about 120 years.
- The human population of the Darling River is low compared to other river systems in Australia. There are about 18,000 people that live near the Darling River and depend on it for food and water.
- The Darling River system is important for grazing, irrigation, mining, tourism, fishing and the environment.



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ACTIVITIES

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1. There are many tributaries (small rivers and streams) that make up the Darling catchment including the Culgoa, Barwon, Balonne, Macintyre, Dumaresq, Severn, Langlo, Nive, Birrie, Bokhara, Mooki, Peel, Cockburn, Manilla, Macdonald (Bendemeer), Cobrabald, Gwydir, Horton, Moredun, Rocky, Mehi, Moonie, Boomi, Coolaburragundy, Little, Bell, Cudgegong, Turon, Crudine, Fish, Campbells, Duckmaloi, Weir, Maranoa, Merivale, Condamine, Beardy, Pike, Mole, Deepwater, Bluff, Namoi, Castlereagh, Macquarie, Bogan, Warrego and Paroo rivers.

Download and print a map of the Murray-Darling Basin. Highlight all of these rivers and follow the path of the Darling River.

www.mdba.gov.au/media-pubs/publications/murray-darling-basin-map-poster

2. List the differences between the Murray and Darling Rivers.
3. The Darling River was named after a governor of NSW. Find out who he was and why the river was named after him.
4. Research the industries that use the Darling River and find out how sustainable these industries will be in the future.
5. Research the length of Australia's rivers by visiting:
www.ga.gov.au/scientific-topics/geographic-information/landforms/longest-rivers
and explain why some people may call the Murray River the longest in Australia.