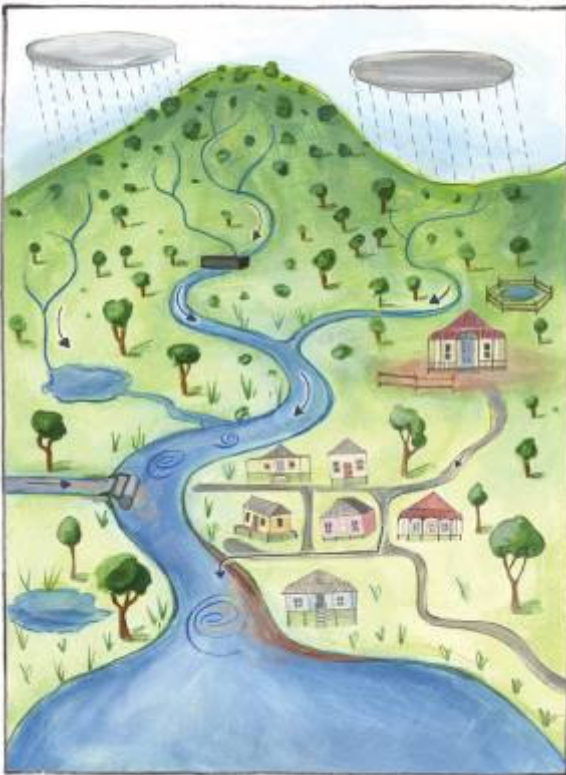




# Connecting catchments and backyards

## Understanding Catchments

A catchment is an area of land, usually bounded by mountains or hills, over which water flows and is collected by the natural landscape (Oceanwatch Australia, 2007).



As this diagram shows, water flows down through a catchment, forming creeks then rivers and eventually draining to the ocean. Wetlands are the intermediary between the catchment and watercourses.

In some places small catchment areas join up to form a larger catchment. These small catchments are called sub-catchments.

It is important to know what activities are taking place both upstream, in the whole catchment, and also within your sub-catchment. What happens further up in the catchment can have an effect further down on the health of the water and ecosystems.

## North Creek Catchment, East Ballina Sub-catchment and North Creek Wetland Reserve

The headwaters of North Creek catchment start around Ross Lane, Lennox Head as cane drains and flow down through the Ballina Nature Reserve. Within the catchment lies the Ballina airport and golf course, farmlands and several residential developments. Within this larger catchment there is the East Ballina sub-catchment (shown in green in the diagram below) where the North Creek Wetland Reserve is situated (in red below).



Above: North Creek catchment showing East Ballina sub-catchment in green and North Creek Wetland Reserve in red.

## East Ballina sub-catchment and North Creek

When rain falls in the East Ballina sub-catchment it follows the most direct path to North Creek, picking up particles along the way (anything from soil, car oil, chemicals, to leaves and seeds).



Photo: An overview of the East Ballina sub-catchment with North Creek in the distance (Adam Gosling, WetlandCare Australia)

Before the stormwater of the East Ballina sub-catchment enters North Creek it goes directly into the North Creek Reserve Wetlands, both overland and via stormwater drains (see photo below).



Photo: Stormwater entering North Creek Reserve wetland at Northumberland Drive (Adam Gosling, WetlandCare Australia)

As the water passes through the wetland, the wetland has a filtering effect, capturing soil, pollutants, rubbish and other matter. Maintaining wetland health is vital to water quality both in North Creek and in the Pacific Ocean locally.

### Catchment in Crisis!

Managing Australia's waterways is a huge challenge with climate change, increased demand for water and environmental problems putting our rivers under stress. Play Catchment Detox, an online game which gives an idea of just how difficult it is to manage a river catchment. Go to [www.catchmentdetox.net.au/](http://www.catchmentdetox.net.au/)

Are you up for the challenge?

WetlandCare Australia: Supporting the community to protect and restore Australian wetlands since 1991

## What it all means - North Creek Catchment and your Backyard

What you do at home and in your backyards has a cumulative effect on the health of North Creek, so play your part in the catchment and the bigger environmental picture.

What you do in your backyard affects the catchment, just as what happens in the catchment will affect your backyard and where you live.

Just as what happens upstream in a catchment affect the water, flora and fauna downstream in the catchment, what happens in your backyard also affects the environment.



Photo: XXXX(Adam Gosling, WetlandCare Australia)

### References

Oceanwatch Australia (2007) Our Valuable Estuaries, <http://www.oceanwatch.org.au/OurValuableEstuaries.htm>

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