

Shoal Bay and Buffalo Creek

Summary

Water quality in outer Shoal Bay is in excellent condition. Several water quality indicators at some Shoal Bay upper estuary monitoring sites do not comply with water quality objectives, but water quality is in good condition. Water quality at the freshwater monitoring sites is in very good condition. The water-bug community is equivalent to reference condition at three out of four biological monitoring sites.

Estuarine water quality at monitoring sites in Buffalo Creek is in very poor condition. For some water quality indicators, water quality objectives are greatly exceeded. Of the sites monitored, the Buffalo Creek sites have the most degraded water quality in the Darwin Harbour region.

Nature of system

- Shallow embayment
- Series of sandbars changing with tides
- Light limitation during the wet season
- Perennial freshwater inflows from Howard River, typically most years in the wet and the dry seasons

Sources of pollution

- Wet season diffuse source loads are received from the Howard and Shoal Bay sub-catchments
- Sediment and nutrient loads are high with runoff during the wet season
- Sewage treatment plant wastewater discharge at Buffalo Creek



Migratory shorebirds feeding between Lee Point and Buffalo Creek. Dogs are not permitted in this section of the beach to prevent disturbance to shorebirds as they provision for their northward journey. Photo: Brian Thistleton

