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MEDIA RELEASE

Alexandrina acknowledges National Threatened Species Day

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National Threatened Species Day is recognised across the country on 7 September each year, to raise awareness of plants and animals at risk of extinction. The day also celebrates the amazing work that is done by passionate conservationists, researchers and volunteers to support threatened species recovery.

Australia is home to more than 500,000 animal and plant species, many of which are found nowhere else in the world. Sadly, over the last 200 years, more than 100 animal and plant species have become extinct and here in South Australia, the number of plants and animals at risk is increasing.

This year, at the request of its Environmental Advisory Panel, Alexandrina Council has partnered with not-for-profit environmental organisation, Nature Glenelg Trust, to help raise awareness about local threatened fish species.

Alexandrina is proud to be known as a region of national and international environmental importance, with a diverse network of bushland, coastal and aquatic habitats, but in a changing climate, our native, small-bodied fish are very much at risk of decline and even extinction.

Nature Glenelg Trust has loaned Council a large fish tank which is now on display at Goolwa Library. The tank will remain at the library for the next 12 months.

The tank is home to four endangered fish species from the Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges and Lower Lakes region including the Yarra Pygmy Perch, Mountain Galaxias, Southern Purple Spotted Gudgeon and Murray-Darling Rainbow Fish. Experts are concerned the Yarra Pygmy Perch might be the first fish species driven to extinction in the Murray Darling Basin, with the species not found in the wild for at least three years.

There is also a Short-Necked Turtle in the tank keeping the fish company. All three species of River Murray turtles (long neck, short neck and broad shell) are considered under threat with research showing that the population declined significantly during the Millennium Drought.

As National Threatened Species Day approaches, Mayor Parkes offers his thanks to the many environmental volunteers working to restore habitat and support threatened species recovery across the Alexandrina Council district.

“We are lucky in Alexandrina to have many passionate and hard-working volunteer groups looking after our local biodiversity to ensure we leave a healthy environment for the benefit of future generations.”

“Rivers die from the mouth up and despite the hard work of local conservationists, losing a local native fish like the Yarra Pygmy Perch reinforces the status of the Coorong and Lower Lakes region as a ‘litmus test’ for the entire river system,” he said.

Alexandrina Council supports the call for a Wetlands Research Centre to be established in the Lower Lakes region, which could monitor, investigate and evaluate options for supporting the recovery of freshwater and estuarine wetland species and environments. There are a number of resources and materials about local native fish to take home at the Goolwa Library, so be sure to drop in and have a look at these special creatures, and remember to take a minute on 7 September to think about what you can do to protect our threatened species.
