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Scientists fly in to study birds after the floods

By Laurissa Smith

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International researchers are keen to learn more about some of Australia's iconic waterbirds following recent floods in the Murray-Darling Basin.

The study is comparing the biology of water birds like herons, ibis and spoonbills and their relationship to high water flows.

Visiting bird expert Dr Dale Gawlick, from Florida Atlantic University, says the research will hopefully reveal more about their behaviour.

"This boom and bust system you have in Australia, where you have hydrologic pulses or big rain events, usually followed by big nesting events, is something that happens worldwide to different degrees," he said.

"What we're starting to do is explore that globally to try and understand better the importance of these hydrologic pulses."

Dr Gawlick is working alongside Professor Richard Kingsford and other academics at the University of NSW.

The team will be visiting sites including the Barmah-Millewa, Murrumbidgee, Macquarie Marshes, Condamine and Balonne and expects to finish the report in 12 months.