

FREE

GO FISHING VICTORIA

*More people
fishing more often*
#gofishingvictoria



VICTORIAN RECREATIONAL FISHING

A GUIDE TO FISHING RULES AND PRACTICES

GUIDE

2023-2024



Your fishing
licence fees
at work



Victorian Fisheries
AUTHORITY



VICTORIA
State
Government

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How to contact the Victorian Fisheries Authority

General enquiries: ☎ 136 186. To report a fishing offence: 13 3474 (13 FISH)

Information for hearing impaired callers

Callers who are deaf, hearing impaired or have communication difficulties may call through the National Relay Service. To contact us via Voice Relay, dial 1800 555 727 or via Teletypewriter (TTY) on 133 677.

Information in another language

Copies of the Recreational Fishing Guide are available in Chinese and Vietnamese, and the FREE VicFishing app is also now available in Chinese and Vietnamese.

The VFA also has in-language webpages to help fishers whose first language is Chinese or Vietnamese stay across the rules. These are available at www.vfa.vic.gov.au/chinese and www.vfa.vic.gov.au/vietnamese

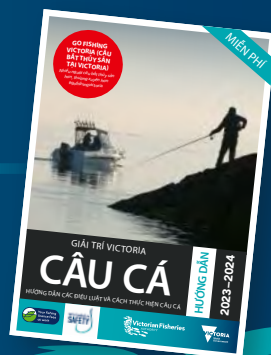
For assistance with fishing information in a language other than Chinese and Vietnamese please arrange a translator to call 136 186.

The 2023-24 Victorian Recreational Fishing Guide has been funded using Recreational Fishing Licence fees.

Giờ đây đã có Tài liệu Hướng dẫn Câu cá Giải trí tiếng Việt hoàn toàn mới của chúng tôi!

Tải xuống tại
vfa.vic.gov.au/vietnamese

Hãy gọi s **136 186** ặt xin tài liệu này ngay bây giờ!



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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER



Victoria boasts the best recreational fishing in all of Australia. We offer world-class game fishing for tuna and kingfish offshore, while our bays boast healthy stocks of snapper, whiting and calamari. Inland, anglers can pursue the iconic Murray cod and trout. With such a diverse range of fishing experiences, Victoria truly has something to offer for every angler.

I am thrilled to announce that the number of women in recreational fishing has rapidly increased since the establishment of our award-winning network for female fishers, *Women in Recreational Fishing*, which has recently expanded to include recreational boating.

Earlier this year, Melbourne hosted the World Recreational Fishing Conference, where hundreds of experts from across the globe gathered to share their knowledge and learn from each other, gaining a new appreciation of the wonderful fisheries we have and how we take care of them together.

The Andrews Labor Government recognises the incredible health, wellbeing, social and economic benefits that recreational fishing provides the community. That's why we're investing \$96 million into recreational fishing, boating, piers and aquaculture over the next four years, on top of the \$81m we've invested since 2014. We have delivered new recreational fishing reefs in Port Phillip Bay, stocked a record 10 million fish each year (almost more than every other State and Territory combined), provided more facilities, a new hatchery, improved access, free boat ramps and a net-free Port Phillip Bay and Gippsland Lakes.

Looking ahead, we plan to triple the size of the new Arcadia native fish hatchery, enabling us to grow even more of our own golden perch and Murray cod to restock lakes and rivers. We're also building new facilities at Snobs Creek to breed greater numbers of threatened fish like Macquarie perch and trout cod to accelerate their recovery in the wild.

For boat owners, Better Boating Victoria (BBV) is leading the state's largest ever boat ramp construction blitz, upgrading launching facilities at Avalon, Clifton Springs, Cowes, Kirk Point, Lake Burrumbeet, Limeburners and Mahers Landing. BBV is also planning upgrades at Inverloch, Lang Lang, Tooradin, and many other facilities across Victoria. We've also committed to open up recreational boating at Tarago Reservoir in Gippsland, which will be a first-class trout fishery, through the Better Boating Fund, which reinvests your boating licence and registration fees back into projects.

Our fishers of tomorrow aren't forgotten. We're excited to launch our Little Anglers program, which will distribute 95,000 rods and reels to primary school kids across the state. They'll be supported by our continuing VicFishKids program of free introductory events and the great work Fishcare volunteers do to help thousands catch a new hobby.

To support Victoria's diverse fishing community, we offer free fishing licences for veterans, grants to assist angling clubs in attracting more members, and the expanding *Women in Recreational Fishing and Boating Network*.

I look forward to seeing you out there on the water!

A stylized, handwritten signature in dark ink.

The Hon Sonya Kilkenny
Minister for Outdoor Recreation

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This fishing guide is produced by the Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA). Please contact the VFA if you wish to make comments about the guide or to obtain further copies.

For more information about the VFA, visit the website at www.vfa.vic.gov.au or call the Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

ISSN 1442-7494

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All requests and enquiries can be made via the Customer Contact Centre on 136 186.

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Illustrations: Alexis Beckett, Krystii Melaine, Paul Lennon, NSW Department of Primary Industries, Illustration © R.Swainston/
anima.net.au, AFN/Trevor Hawkins.

Front cover: Early morning boating and fishing at Geelong's Limeburners Point boat ramp. Photo: Dave Anderson.

Changes since the last edition

The 2023-2024 Victorian Recreational Fishing Guide includes changes to regulations. These are:

- Introduction of new regulations regarding labelling fishing equipment. See pages 36-37, 67, 69, 73 for details
- The introduction of a two-month fishing closure along a 200 m stretch of Lake Wendouree between June 1 and 31 July. See page 62.

This publication is a guide only. Fishing rules can sometimes change between editions. It is the responsibility of fishers to be aware of any changes that are made to fishing rules and regulations.

You can do this by:

- routinely checking the Fisheries Notices on the Victorian Fisheries Authority's website
- downloading the FREE VicFishing app
- following us on social media (see below).

General disclaimer

This publication may be of assistance to you, but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequences which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

This publication is a guide only, it does not replace the *Fisheries Act 1995*, or other Acts and subordinate legislation applying to, or affecting recreational fishing. This guide summarises the law at the time of publication and cannot be used as a defence in court. Fishing laws change from time to time. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are acting within the law.

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and stories on social media!



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Authority



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The Poddy
Mullet podcast

Go Fishing Victoria

Phase 1: 2014–2018

The state government has delivered its Go Fishing Victoria plan for recreational fishing, which encouraged more Victorians to fish more often.



Remove commercial netting in Port Phillip Bay



Save Lake Toolondo



Establish a marine stocking program



Open trout cod fisheries at Beechworth



Create an exciting barramundi fishery at Hazelwood Pondage



Remove boating restrictions at Blue Rock Lake



Deliver over 180 grants of \$2,000 to Victorian fishing clubs



Ban netting at Gippsland Lakes' river mouths



Make Fisheries Victoria a statutory authority



Increase stocking from 3 to 5 million fish a year

Go Fishing Victoria

Phase 2: 2018–2022

The state government extended its commitment to recreational fishers, building on its Go Fishing Victoria plan to get more people fishing, in more places, more often.

The renewed plan invested over \$35 million to:

-  **Scrap parking and launching fees at all Victorian public boat ramps**
-  **Stock Melbourne metro lakes with native Murray cod, golden perch and silver perch**
-  **Phase out commercial netting in the Gippsland Lakes through a compulsory buy out**
-  **Stock eastern king prawns into Lake Tyers**
-  **Deliver the Fishing for All initiative and continue the successful Vic Fish Kids Program**
-  **Build a new \$7 million native fish hatchery in northern Victoria**
-  **Increase stocking to 10 million fish by 2022**
-  **Develop a fishing tourism 'destination' plan to boost regional visitation and business opportunities**
-  **Invest \$600,000 in new fishing platforms and cleaning tables in Port Phillip Bay**
-  **Open inland reservoirs to kayaks, canoes and tinnies with electric motors**
-  **Mandate access to Crown land river frontage covered by grazing licences for recreational fishing and camping**
-  **Invest \$2.5 million in reef development in Port Phillip Bay to improve fish habitat**

Recreational fishing is important to our social and economic wellbeing. It is one of our most treasured pastimes, contributing significantly to families and communities. By working with fishers, Go Fishing Victoria has delivered on its commitments to help get more families outdoors.

Go Fishing Victoria

Phase 3: 2022-2026

The state government is investing \$96 million into phase three of its Go Fishing Victoria plan to further improve fishing, boating, piers and aquaculture.

This complements phases 1 and 2, worth \$81m since 2014, which has grown participation to more than one million recreational fishers in Victoria.

Phase 3 will:



Free fishing licences for veterans



Invest \$10m to triple the size of our Arcadia native fish hatchery



Build new facilities at our Snobs Creek fish hatchery to grow more Macquarie perch and trout cod



Improve 15 boat ramps, jetties and car parks with \$22 million from the Better Boating Fund



Upgrade boat ramps and car parks at Lang Lang, Tooradin and Inverloch, and extend the jetty at Cowes boat ramp



Rebuild piers at Dromana, St Leonards and the Warneet south and north jetties



Build a new boating facility at Tarago Reservoir



Deliver the Little Anglers program through schools



Further enhance recreational fishing through \$5.3m in grants



Establish a \$2.5m fish habitat improvement fund



Provide fishing clubs with grants to attract new members



Help Fishcare promote sustainable fishing practices

Marine and estuarine fishing

Whether it's fishing for snapper in Port Phillip Bay, chasing tuna in Portland or catching dusky flathead in Gippsland, we want you to enjoy the awesome marine and estuarine fishing Victoria has to offer.



Marine and estuarine fishing	9–35
Marine fishing equipment	36–41
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Intertidal zone fishing restrictions	45–46
Recreational fishing licence	78–79

It's important you know and follow the rules so we can keep Victoria's recreational fisheries in great shape for the future. Happy fishing!

MARINE AND ESTUARINE SCALE FISH

For all species of fish that are not listed in pages 10–34, a bag limit of 5 applies.

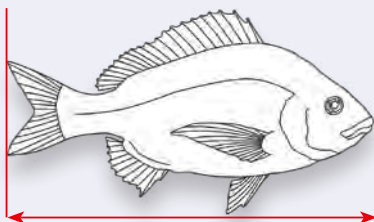
Measuring your catch

Scale fish: the legal size of fish must be checked at the first available opportunity. Measure fish from the tip of the snout with the mouth closed to the end of the tail.

Fish that you wish to keep should be dispatched immediately and placed on ice.

Unwanted and unrequired fish

Undersize, oversize, unwanted fish (e.g. puffers, toadies) or **fish that are not required** (you don't want to keep) **must be returned to the water immediately and without harm or injury.**



Albacore and skipjack tuna

Scientific name: *Thunnus alalunga* and *Katsuwonus pelamis*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: a combined total of 5 albacore and/or skipjack tuna.

Albacore: this fish can't be filleted in or on Victorian waters. It must be kept whole or in carcass form until you're away from the water. It's okay to fillet your fish on cleaning tables at the boat ramp (see definition of carcass on page 87).

See page 18 for other tuna.



Albacore

Anchovy, pilchard and other clupeoids

Scientific name: *Clupeidae* and *Engraulidae*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: a combined total of 40 for one or more species of clupeoid species.

Note: does not apply to purchased bait.



Australian sardine (pilchard)

Australian herring (Tommy rough)

Scientific name: *Arripis georgianus*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: a combined total of 20 Australian herring and/or Australian salmon.

Note: Australian herring can be mistaken for juvenile Australian salmon: see page 11 for diagrams that show the differences between the species.



Australian herring

SPECIES NOT LISTED HAVE A BAG LIMIT OF 5

Australian salmon

Scientific name: *Arripis trutta* and *Arripis truttaceus*.

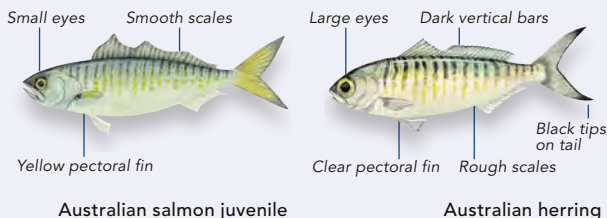
Minimum legal size: 21 cm.

Bag limit: a combined total of 20 Australian salmon and/or Australian herring.



Australian salmon

Distinguishing features of Australian salmon and Australian herring:



Australian salmon juvenile

Australian herring

Barracouta

Scientific name: *Thyrsites atun*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: 20.



Barracouta

Billfish including swordfish and marlin

Scientific name: *Istiophoridae*; *Xiphias gladius*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: a combined total of 1 billfish.



Swordfish



Striped marlin

Black cod

Scientific name: *Epinephelus daemeli*.

Protected species: taking or possessing is prohibited.



Black cod

Blue groper

Protected species: taking or possessing is prohibited.



Female blue groper



Juvenile blue groper



Male blue groper

Scientific name: *Pentacerotidae*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: a combined total of 1 for one or more species of boarfish.



Boarfish

Scientific name: *Acanthopagrus* Spp. and *Rhabdosargus sarba*.

Minimum legal size: 28 cm.

Maximum legal size: 38 cm (maximum size applies to black bream in Gippsland Lakes and tributaries only. The Gippsland Lakes does not include Lake Tyers.

Bag limit: a combined limit of 10 for one or more species.

Note: Bream can't be filleted in or on Victorian waters. It must be kept in whole or carcass form until you're away from the water. It's okay to fillet your bream on cleaning tables at the boat ramp (see definition of carcass on page 87).



Bream



SPECIES NOT LISTED HAVE A BAG LIMIT OF 5

Estuary perch (including Australian bass and hybrids)

Scientific name: *Macquaria colonorum*.

Minimum legal size: 27 cm.

Bag limit: **Lake Bullen Merri:** a combined total of 5 for one or more species of estuary perch, Australian bass and hybrid species.

All other Victorian Waters: a combined total of 5 fish (of which no more than 2 can be Australian bass).

Note: Estuary perch can be mistaken for Australian bass; see page 49 for diagrams that show the differences between the species.



Estuary perch

Flathead (all species except dusky flathead)

Scientific name: *Platycephalidae*.

Minimum legal size: 27 cm.

Bag limit: a combined total of 20 for one or more species of flathead (excluding dusky flathead).



Flathead

Dusky flathead

Scientific name: *Platycephalus fuscus*.

Minimum legal size: 30 cm.

Maximum legal size: 55 cm.

Bag limit: 5.

This fish can't be filleted in or on Victorian waters. It must be kept whole or in carcass form until you're away from the water. It's okay to fillet your fish on cleaning tables at the boat ramp (see definition of carcass on page 87).



Dusky flathead

Distinguishing features of dusky flathead and southern blue spotted (yank) flathead:



Southern blue spotted (yank) flathead

Single, large dark blotch (may be absent or faint in some fish)



Lack of dark blotches on lower half of tail

Dusky flathead

MARINE AND ESTUARINE SCALE FISH

Flounder (all species)

Scientific name: *Rhombosoleidae*.

Minimum legal size: 23 cm.

Bag limit: a combined total of 20 for one or more species of flounder.



Flounder

Garfish (all species)

Scientific name: *Hemiramphidae*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: a combined total of 40 for one or more species of garfish.



Garfish

Gemfish

Scientific name: *Rexea solandri*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: 5.



Gemfish

Goatfish (all species)

Scientific Name: *Mullidae*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: a combined total of 20 for one or more species of goatfish.



Goatfish

Gurnard (all species)

Scientific name: *Triglidae*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: a combined total of 10 for one or more species of gurnard.



Gurnard

King George whiting

Scientific name: *Sillaginodes punctatus*.

Minimum legal size: 27 cm.

Bag limit: 20.

This fish can't be filleted in or on Victorian waters. It must be kept whole or in carcass form until you're away from the water. It's okay to fillet your fish on cleaning tables at the boat ramp (see definition of carcass on page 87).



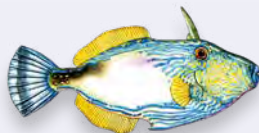
King George whiting

Leatherjacket (all species)

Scientific name: *Monacanthidae*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: a combined total of 20 for one or more species of leatherjacket.



Six spine leatherjacket



Toothbrush leatherjacket

SPECIES NOT LISTED HAVE A BAG LIMIT OF 5

MARINE AND ESTUARINE SCALE FISH

15

MARINE AND ESTUARINE FISHING

Ling (all species)

Scientific name: *Genypterus* spp.

Minimum legal size: 30 cm.

Bag limit: a combined total of 5 for one or more species of ling.



Ling

Longfin pike and snook

Scientific name: *Dinolestes lewini* and *Sphyræna novaehollandiae*.

Minimum legal size: 30 cm.

Bag limit: a combined total of 10 longfin pike or snook.



Longfin pike



Snook

Luderick

Scientific name: *Girella tricuspidata*.

Minimum legal size: 23 cm.

Bag limit: 10.



Luderick

Mackerel (all species of *Trachurus* and *Scomber* except yellowtail scad)

Scientific name: *Trachurus* and *Scomber*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: a combined total of 40 for one or more species of mackerel (except yellowtail scad).



Slimy mackerel

Morwong (all species)

Scientific name: *Latridae*.

Minimum legal size: 23 cm.

Bag limit: a combined total of 5 for one or more species of morwong.



Banded morwong



Adult dusky morwong



Juvenile dusky morwong

SPECIES NOT LISTED HAVE A BAG LIMIT OF 5

MARINE AND ESTUARINE SCALE FISH

Mullet (all species)**Scientific name:** *Mugilidae*.**Minimum legal size:** no minimum.**Bag limit:** a combined total of 40 for one or more species of mullet.

Mullet

Mulloway**Scientific name:** *Argyrosomus japonicus*.**Minimum legal size:** 60 cm.**Bag limit:** 5.

Mulloway

Seahorses, seadragons and pipefish**Scientific name:** *Syngnathidae*.**Protected species:** taking or possessing is prohibited.

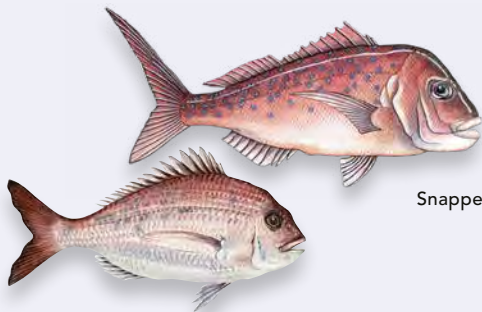
Seahorses

Silver trevally**Scientific names:** *Pseudocaranx* spp.**Minimum legal size:** 20 cm.**Bag limit:** a combined total of 20 for one or more species of silver trevally.

Silver trevally

Snapper**Scientific name:** *Chrysophrys auratus*.**Minimum legal size:** 28 cm.**Bag limit:** 10 (of which no more than 3 fish may be equal to or exceed 40 cm in length).

This fish can't be filleted in or on Victorian waters. It must be kept whole or in carcass form until you're away from the water. It's okay to fillet your fish on cleaning tables at the boat ramp (see definition of carcass on page 87).



Snapper

Juvenile snapper (pinky)

SPECIES NOT LISTED HAVE A BAG LIMIT OF 5

MARINE AND ESTUARINE SCALE FISH

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Southern rock cod and beardie (red cod, bearded rock cod, large tooth beardie, slender beardie)

Scientific name: fish of the genera
Lotella and *Pseudophycis*.

Minimum legal size: 23 cm.

Bag limit: a combined total of 20 for one
or more species of rock cod and beardie.



Southern rock cod

Sweep (all species)

Scientific name: *Scorpididae*.

Minimum legal size: 23 cm.

Bag limit: a combined total of 10
for one or more species of sweep.



Sweep

Tailor (skipjack)

Scientific name: *Pomatomus saltatrix*.

Minimum legal size: 23 cm.

Bag limit: 20.



Tailor

Toadies and puffers

Scientific name: *Tetraodontidae*.

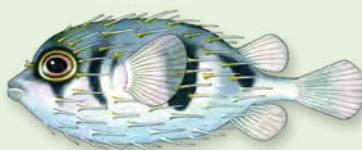
Unwanted species: Must not be eaten.

**Must be returned to the water
immediately and without harm or injury.**

Fines apply if you don't.



Toadfish



Puffer

MARINE AND ESTUARINE SCALE FISH

Tuna (southern bluefin, yellowfin and big eye)

Scientific name: *Thunnus maccoyii* and *Thunnus* spp.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: a combined total of 2 southern bluefin, yellowfin and/or big eye.

Possession limit for southern bluefin tuna:

2 or < 160 kg in any other form. This is the maximum number of a particular type of fish that a person can possess at any one time anywhere in Victoria (including your home). See page 10 for albacore and skipjack tuna.

These fish can't be filleted in or on Victorian waters. They must be kept whole or in carcass form until you're away from the water. It's okay to fillet your fish on cleaning tables at the boat ramp (see definition of carcass on page 87).



Southern bluefin



Yellowfin



Big eye

Warehou (haddock) (all species)

Scientific name: *Seriola* spp.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: a combined total of 20 for one or more species of warehou.



Warehou

Whiting (other than King George)

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: a combined total of 20 for one or more species of whiting (other than King George whiting).



Grass whiting

Wrasse (parrot fish) (all species excluding blue groper)

Minimum legal size: 27 cm.

Bag limit: a combined total of 5 for one or more species of wrasse (excluding blue groper).



Wrasse (parrot fish)



Juvenile bluetthroat wrasse



Female bluetthroat wrasse



Male bluetthroat wrasse

SPECIES NOT LISTED HAVE A BAG LIMIT OF 5

MARINE AND ESTUARINE SCALE FISH

Yellowtail kingfish

Scientific name: *Seriola lalandi*.

Minimum legal size: 60 cm.

Bag limit: 5.



Yellowtail kingfish

Yellowtail scad

Scientific name: *Trachurus novaezelandiae*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

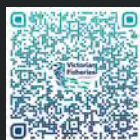
Bag limit: 40.



Yellowtail scad

Download the

Vic Fishing Recreational Fishing Guide app!



FREE

on the App Store/iTunes
and Google Play



SPECIES NOT LISTED HAVE A BAG LIMIT OF 5

SHARKS, SKATES AND RAYS

Measuring your catch

Shark: Measure shark from the rear most gill slit to the base of the tail fin on any side of the body.

Rays: Measure rays from wing tip to wing tip (i.e. the maximum distance across the body).

Elephantfish

Scientific name: *Callorhynchus milii*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: 1.

This fish can't be filleted in or on Victorian waters. It must be kept whole or in carcass form until you're away from the water. It's okay to fillet your fish on cleaning tables at the boat ramp (see definition of carcass on page 87).



Elephantfish

Gummy shark

Scientific name: *Mustelus antarcticus*.

Minimum legal size: 45 cm (partial length).

Bag limit: a combined total of 2 gummy shark and/or school shark.

This fish can't be filleted in or on Victorian waters. It must be kept whole or in carcass form until you're away from the water. It's okay to fillet your fish on cleaning tables at the boat ramp (see definition of carcass on page 87).



Gummy shark
Minimum legal size: 45 cm (partial length)

School (snapper) shark

Scientific name: *Galeorhinus galeus*.

Minimum legal size: 45 cm (partial length).

Bag limit: a combined total of 2 school shark and/or gummy shark.

This fish can't be filleted in or on Victorian waters. It must be kept whole or in carcass form until you're away from the water. It's okay to fillet your fish on cleaning tables at the boat ramp (see definition of carcass on page 87).



School shark
Minimum legal size: 45 cm (partial length)

SHARKS, SKATES AND RAYS

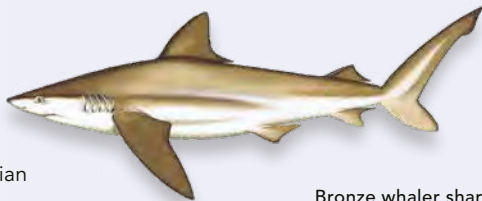
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Shark (all species other than school and gummy shark, great white shark, grey nurse shark and elephantfish)

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: 1 of each species.

These fish can't be filleted in or on Victorian waters. They must be kept whole or in carcass form until you're away from the water. It's okay to fillet your fish on cleaning tables at the boat ramp (see definition of carcass on page 87).



Bronze whaler shark



Port Jackson shark



Broadnose sevengill shark

Skates, rays and guitarfish (all species)

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

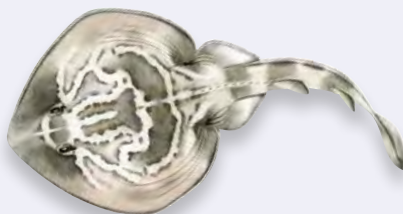
Maximum legal width: 1.5 m.

Bag limit: a combined total of 1 skate, ray or guitarfish.

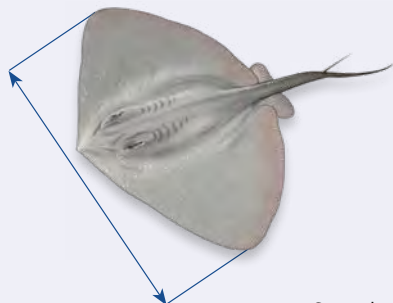
Must not be taken within 400 m of any pier, jetty, wharf, rock wall or breakwater.

These fish can't be filleted in or on Victorian waters. They must be kept whole or in carcass form until you're away from the water. It's okay to fillet your fish on cleaning tables at the boat ramp (see definition of carcass on page 87).

Measure rays from wing tip to wing tip.



Southern fiddler ray (banjo shark)



Smooth ray



Southern eagle ray

SPECIES NOT LISTED HAVE A BAG LIMIT OF 5

SHARKS, SKATES AND RAYS

Great white shark and grey nurse shark

Scientific name: *Carcharodon carcharias* and *Carcharias taurus*.

Protected species: taking or possessing is prohibited.



Great white shark



Grey nurse shark

Great white shark interaction: handling procedures

- Fishers must not target great white shark. If taken incidentally, fishers must release them unharmed as quickly as possible.
- For your safety, do not attempt to remove the shark from the water. Keep the shark in the water alongside the boat to minimise stress and injury to the shark.
- For your safety, do not attempt to remove the hook. Take great personal care when severing the fishing line or trace. Use a line cutter and cut as close as practicable to the shark.
- You can assist in research by emailing details of the interaction to Russ Bradford (CSIRO) at Russ.Bradford@csiro.au

Be **SharkSmart**

- Never swim, dive or surf alone
- Keep informed of the latest sightings at emergency.vic.gov.au
- Always swim between the flags on patrolled beaches
- Avoid swimming in areas that sharks may be attracted to
- Watch for signs of a shark such as unusual behaviour of wildlife or fish

Help others be informed –
vfa.vic.gov.au/shark-smart



Crabs (all species except European green shore crab, spider crabs including giant spider crab, Eastern Sea Spider and giant crab*)

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

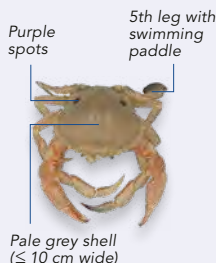
Bag limit (outside of restricted areas):

- 30 crabs or,
- 1 litre of whole crabs or parts of crabs which cannot exceed 30 crabs in total

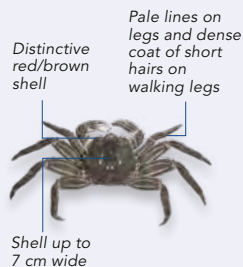
Restricted areas:

- You can't collect crabs in waters less than 2 m deep (the intertidal zone) in Port Phillip Bay (see pages 45–46 for more info).
- You can't collect crabs in Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries (see page 43).

Note: Bag limit does not apply to purchased bait.



Sand crab



Red shore crab

European green shore crab

Scientific name: *Carcinus maenas*.

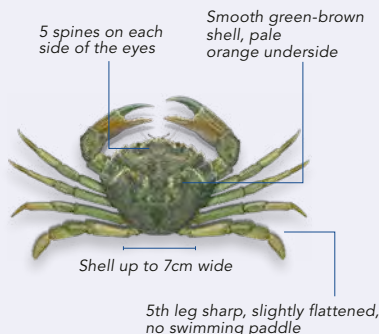
Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit (outside of restricted areas): no limit.

Restricted areas:

- You can't collect crabs in waters less than 2 m deep (the intertidal zone) in Port Phillip Bay (see pages 45–46 for more info).
- You can't collect crabs in Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries (see page 43).

Note: LIVE European green shore crab MUST NOT be used as bait in or on any Victorian waters. Unless released immediately upon capture, live European green shore crab must not be released into or next to any Victorian waters.



European green shore crab



Dead green shore crabs can be used as bait. To ensure the crab is dispatched humanely please place in an ice and seawater slurry for at least 20 minutes then cut it in half vertically between the eye stalks.

CRABS

Spider crabs including giant spider crab

Scientific name: *Family majidae*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit (outside of restricted areas): a combined total of 15 spider crabs of one or more species.

Restricted areas:

- You can't collect crabs in waters less than 2 m deep (the intertidal zone) in Port Phillip Bay (see pages 45–46).
- You can't collect crabs in Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries (see page 43).

Note:

- The bag limit is the maximum number of crabs you can take and possess in, on or next to any Victorian waters on any one day. (i.e. you can't take 15 crabs, take them back to the car, and come back and collect another 15 on same day).
- Collecting for other people contributes to your bag limit.
- Only use legal fishing gear. **Open top lift nets and opera house nets cannot be used to catch crabs.**



Giant spider crab

Eastern Sea Spider (False spider crab)

Scientific name: *Amarinus laevis*

Minimum legal size: no minimum

Bag limit (outside of restricted areas):
30 crabs

Restricted areas:

- You cannot collect crabs in waters less than 2m deep (the intertidal zone) in Port Philip Bay (see pages 45–46 for more info)
- You cannot collect crabs in Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries (see page 43)



Eastern Sea Spider

Collection methods for crabs

Outside of restricted areas, only these methods can be used to collect crabs in marine waters:

- by hand
- by using up to 2 bait traps (see page 38)
- by using up to 2 hoop nets (closed season for hoop nets from 15 September to 15 November each year. During this time, hoop nets can only be used in Port Phillip Bay, Western Port, the Gippsland Lakes and any other inlet).

The number, size and shape of the equipment used is important. Only use legal fishing gear. Open top lift nets and opera house nets cannot be used to catch crabs.

Unwanted catch must be immediately returned to water with the least possible injury or damage. Put unused bait into a rubbish bin. Discarding bait (into the water or on land) is littering, penalties apply.

See page 87 for an explanation of bag limits if you are fishing in a group.

SPECIES NOT LISTED HAVE A BAG LIMIT OF 5

SHRIMPS AND PRAWNS

Burrowing shrimp (all species including bass yabbies)

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit (outside of restricted areas): a combined total of 0.5 litres of burrowing shrimp from one or more species.

Restricted areas: You can't collect burrowing shrimp in Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries (see page 43).

Note: Does not apply to purchased bait.



Bass yabby

Swimming shrimp

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit (outside of restricted areas): a combined total of 0.5 litres of swimming shrimp from one or more species.

Restricted areas:

- You can't collect prawns in waters less than 2 m deep (the intertidal zone) in Port Phillip Bay – see pages 45–46.
- You can't collect swimming shrimp in Marine Parks and Sanctuaries (see page 43).

Note: Does not apply to purchased bait.



Swimming shrimp

Prawns (all species)

Scientific name: *Penaeidae*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit (outside of restricted areas):

- A combined total of 30 litres of whole prawns from one or more species, or
- 5 litres of meats from one or more species.

Restricted areas:

- You can't collect prawns in waters less than 2 m deep (the intertidal zone) in Port Phillip Bay – see pages 45–46.
- You can't collect prawns in Marine Parks and Sanctuaries (see page 43).

Note: Does not apply to purchased bait.



King prawn

Collection methods for shrimps and prawns

Outside of restricted areas, the following methods can be used to collect shrimps and prawns:

- by hand
- by using 1 dip net
- by using up to 2 bait traps
- by using 1 bait pump only
- by using 1 bait net only.

Bait nets can only be used in waters at least 30 m from any jetty or pier and at least 400 m from the mouth of any creek or river in the Gippsland Lakes (excluding the North Arm and Cunninghame Arm), Lake Tyers (excluding those waters shown on the map on page 39), the Lower Lake of Mallacoota Inlet, Corner Inlet, Shallow Inlet, Anderson Inlet and in marine waters on the seaward side of the mouths of any inlet or river.

Note: Bait nets cannot be used in any other marine waters. The use of bait nets is also restricted in some inland waters (rivers). See page 74 for further details of where bait nets can be used in inland waters. The number, size and shape of the equipment used is important. Page 36 summarises the fishing gear that can be legally used in marine waters in Victoria.

- Remember that collecting for other people contributes to your bag limit.

SPECIES NOT LISTED HAVE A BAG LIMIT OF 5

ROCK LOBSTER

Rock lobster (all species)

Scientific name: *Palinuridae* including eastern rock lobster (green crays), *Sagmariasus verreauxi*, *Jasus edwardsii* (southern rock lobster).

Minimum legal size:

- Male 11 cm carapace length.
- Female 10.5 cm carapace length.

Bag limit (outside of restricted areas): 2 tail-clipped lobster.

Possession limit: 4 tail-clipped lobster. Lobster catch must be reported within 7 days.

Restricted areas: You can't collect rock lobster in waters less than 2 m deep (the intertidal zone) in Port Phillip Bay (see pages 45–46).

You can't collect rock lobster in Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries (see page 43).

Closed season:

- Male 15 September to 15 November inclusive.

During the male closed season hoop nets must not be used, set or immersed in any marine water other than

- Port Phillip and Western Port
- the Gippsland Lakes
- any inlet.

- Female 1 June to 15 November inclusive.



Rock lobster

Note:

- Rock lobster must be retained whole or with the tail and carapace still attached to each other.
- You must not take or possess female rock lobster with eggs (in berry) or remove eggs.
- You must not take soft-shelled rock lobster.
- You must return females in berry or with young and soft-shelled lobsters to the water immediately and without further harm.

Collecting rock lobster

You must register your intent to be active in the current lobster season via the GoFishVic app before you target lobster. See page 29 for details on how to register.

A quick guide on what equipment you can and can't use for collecting rock lobster

Outside of restricted areas, ONLY the following methods can be used to collect rock lobster:

- by hand ONLY using snorkel or captive air (scuba or hookah)
- by using up to 2 hoop nets from a boat
- by hand or using up to 2 hoop nets from shore. Hoop nets must be no wider than 77 cm in diameter with a drop of 50 cm (see page 36 or 37 for details).

No other equipment can be used to capture or assist in the capture of rock lobster. Some equipment can be possessed but it cannot be used to capture rock lobster (see table below).

Equipment	Status		Explanation
Hoop nets from shore or boat	✓	Legal to possess	Legal when used from the shore and boat only.
	✓	Legal to use	
Hoop nets while snorkelling or diving	✗	Illegal to possess	Hoop nets are NOT legal equipment when used when underwater diving or snorkelling for rock lobster.
	✗	Illegal to use	
Bait only (held in hand)	✓	Legal to possess	Bait must not be attached to anything. It must only be held in your hand.
	✓	Legal to use	
Spear gun/ hand-held spear	✓	Legal to possess	Spear guns can be carried but cannot be used in any way to capture or assist in the capture of rock lobster.
	✗	Illegal to use	
Catch/mesh bag (whether empty or containing fish of any kind)	✓	Legal to possess	A catch/mesh bag can be used to hold your catch (fish or rock lobster) (usually while diving or snorkelling, or collecting from the shore). A catch/mesh bag cannot be used to net, entangle or lure rock lobster.
	✗	Illegal to use	
Torch	✓	Legal to possess	A torch can be carried and used as a light source whilst underwater but cannot be used in any way to leverage or assist in the capture of rock lobster.
	✗	Illegal to use	
Camera equipment (e.g. GoPros attached to a pole)	✓	Legal to possess	Camera equipment can be carried to record your diving experience but it must not be used to capture or assist in the capture of rock lobster.
	✗	Illegal to use	
Chemicals of any sort (e.g. dishwashing liquid)	✗	Illegal to use	Chemicals cannot be squirted into crevices. The use of chemicals in marine waters is also illegal under environmental legislation.
Snare/gaff	✗	Illegal to use	These devices are prohibited by regulation
Hook	✗	Illegal to use	
Lever/stick/bar/probe/ prong baited or unbaited	✗	Illegal to use	
Dive equipment (e.g. removed fin)	✓	Legal to possess	Dive equipment is for assisting with snorkelling and diving only. Dive equipment cannot be used to capture or assist in the capture of rock lobster.
	✗	Illegal to use	

SPECIES NOT LISTED HAVE A BAG LIMIT OF 5

ROCK LOBSTER

Measuring your rock lobster

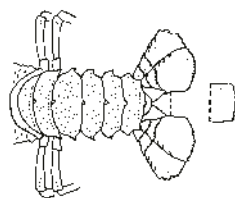
Place one end of the measuring device firmly into the groove between the antennae and measure from this groove to the rear edge of the carapace. Hairs do not form part of the carapace. Divers are required to measure lobster at the first available opportunity before the lobster is landed.



Measuring devices are available free of charge from the Customer Service Centre on 136 186

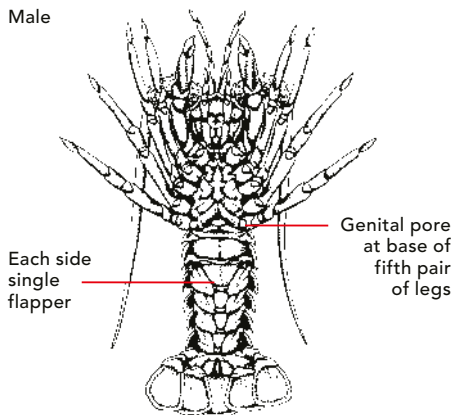
Marking and reporting of rock lobster

All rock lobster taken by recreational fishers are to be tailed-clipped or tail-punched with a hole not less than 10 mm in diameter. This must be done within 5 minutes of bringing the rock lobster onto a boat, or if taken from the shore, within 5 minutes of landing and within 50 m of the place of landing. Lobster catch must be reported via the GoFishVic app within 7 days of landing.

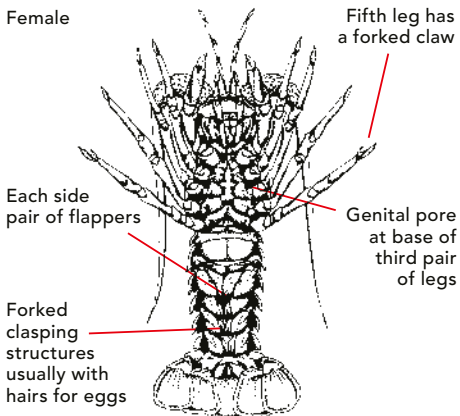


Rock lobster tail clipping

Male



Female



SPECIES NOT LISTED HAVE A BAG LIMIT OF 5

ROCK LOBSTER

Rock Lobster tags 2023-2024

Recreational tagging provides valuable information to improve our understanding of recreational annual catch

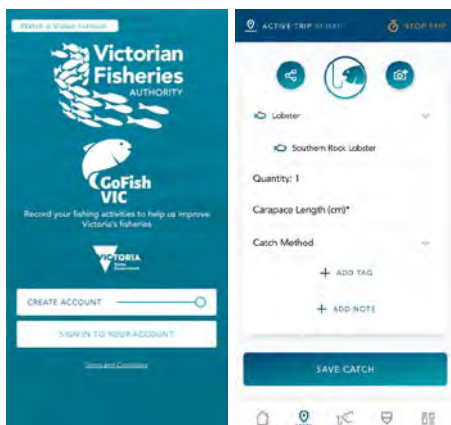
- tagging this year is entirely digital
- all fishers wanting to catch rock lobster MUST register on the GoFishVic app BEFORE they start fishing
- reporting your rock lobster catch through the GoFishVic app is also mandatory
- the number of digital tags you can assign is unlimited
- digital tags are 100% free
- you can only use (digital) tags that are assigned to you
- tail punching rock lobster is still mandatory.



How to register for a rock lobster tagging season

- Download the GoFishVic app (from App Store or Google Play) or access the online web portal
- create an account
- create your profile, including:
 - your level of interest
 - your preferred species (note if you select 'rock lobster only', you will only be able to record your lobster catches. If you select all species you can record all your fishing activities.)
- register your intent to be active in the season from the home screen of the app.

You can also opt into the citizen science program to unlock additional app features.



To report catch:

- start a new trip
- add your catch details (including date, location, carapace length, sex, catch method and trip duration)
- add a digital tag, and
- save catch and finish the trip

Need help? Call 136 186 or visit www.vfa.vic.gov.au/lobstertag

The rock lobster reporting program is improving the accuracy of annual harvest estimates to benefit the sustainable management of the fishery.

SHELLFISH

Abalone (all species)

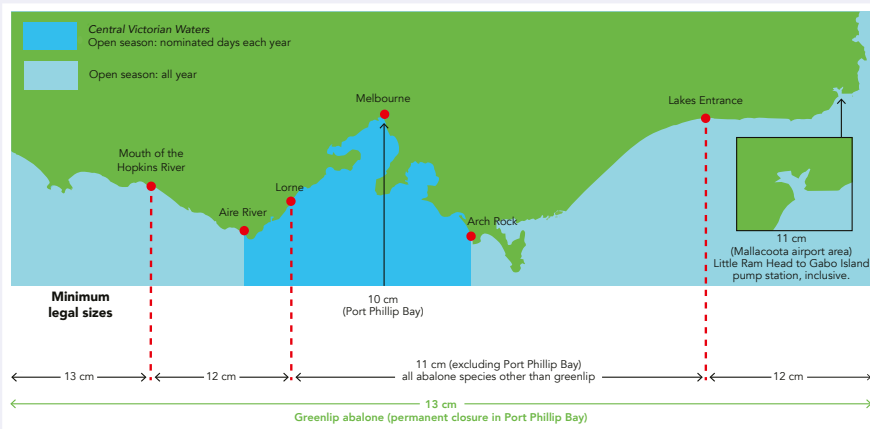


Blacklip abalone



Greenlip abalone

Minimum legal sizes: see map below.



Bag limit (outside of restricted areas):

- Port Phillip Bay: 5 (0 greenlip abalone).
- All other Victorian waters: 5 (of which no more than 2 can be greenlip abalone).

Possession limit: 10 (of which no more than 4 can be greenlip).

The possession limit is the maximum number of a particular type of fish that a person can possess at any one time anywhere in Victoria (including your home).

Restricted areas:

- You can't collect abalone in waters less than 2 m deep (the intertidal zone) in all Victorian waters including Port Phillip Bay (see pages 45–46 for more info).
- You can't collect abalone in Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries (see page 43).
- You can't collect abalone from the Central Victorian waters except on the nominated open days (see page 31).

Free abalone tools are available by calling 136 186.

Central Victorian waters

Central Victorian waters are defined as marine waters east of the mouth of Aire River to Arch Rock (near Cape Liptrap) including Port Phillip Bay. The southern boundary is a line running three nautical miles from the coast, which is the seaward limit of state waters.

SHELLFISH

Recreational Abalone Open Days for Central Victorian waters

There is a permanent closed season on the take of abalone from Central Victorian waters, except for these nominated open days each year:

- Every Saturday and Sunday between 16 November and 30 April the following year inclusive.
- Every declared public holiday in Victoria between 16 November and 30 April the following year.
- 25 December through to the second Sunday in January the following year inclusive.

Collection methods for abalone

- You must carry a measuring device.
- You must use a blunt instrument when taking abalone.
- You must not use knives, screwdrivers or sharp items that could cut the abalone.
- You must not shuck abalone, or be in possession of shucked abalone, or land shucked abalone, in, under or on Victorian waters (you may only shuck abalone upon the place of consumption).
- You can take abalone only between sunrise and sunset.



Free abalone tools are available by calling 136 186.

Measuring your catch

Abalone: Abalone must be measured at the widest part of the shell whether it is whole or damaged, immediately upon removal and returned to the location of take if found to be undersized.

Free measuring devices are available by calling 136 186.



Cleaning your equipment

Our oceans are full of wonderfully diverse life. You can help to keep it that way.

Check for disease outbreaks before you go and avoid the areas

Clean all of your equipment, which could be your boat, dive gear or hoop nets, with soapy fresh water.

Dry all of your equipment completely before you use it again.

Abalone Viral Ganglioneuritis (otherwise known as AVG or abalone disease) was most recently detected in Victoria in early 2022 and recent surveillance has returned no positive signs. However to support the recovery of abalone populations, an area off the coast of Portland is closed to recreational abalone fishing.

For more information visit vfa.vic.gov.au/abalonedisease

Be safe when diving

Diving for abalone is relatively safe, but there is a risk of drowning. To stay safe, you **must**:

- Dive when sea conditions are good
- Always dive and stay with a friend so there is someone there to help if you get into trouble. Use a dive flag to let others know where you are.
- If conditions are not right, find a better spot or dive on another day.

SPECIES NOT LISTED HAVE A BAG LIMIT OF 5

Be prepared. Be safe.

**DIVING FOR ABALONE IS RELATIVELY SAFE,
BUT THERE IS A RISK OF DROWNING.**

TO STAY SAFE, YOU MUST:

- be able to swim well in the sea
- dive when sea conditions are good
- always dive and stay with a friend so there is someone there to help if you get into trouble
- move to a different dive spot or dive another day if the conditions are not right.



Visit vfa.vic.gov.au/safediving for more safety tips.

SHELLFISH

Cockles (all species)

Other names vongole, sand cockle, mud cockle, mud ark

Scientific name: *Katelysia* spp; *Anadara* spp.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit (outside of restricted areas): a combined total of:

- 5 litres of cockles from one or more species, **or**
- 1 litre of split or shucked cockles from one or more species.

Restricted areas:

- You can't collect any cockles in waters less than 2 m deep (the intertidal zone) in Port Phillip Bay (see pages 45–46 for more info).
- You can't collect any cockles in Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries (see page 43). Collection methods: by hand only.

Note: Digging implements cannot be used to collect cockles in the intertidal zone.

- The bag limit is the maximum number of cockles you can take and possess in, on or next to any Victorian waters on any one day. (i.e. you cannot take 5 litres of cockles, take them back to the car, and come back and collect another 5 litres on the same day)
- You can only possess (have with you) 5 litres of cockles. (i.e. you cannot possess your catch and someone's else catch)
- Collecting for other people contributes to your bag limit. (i.e. you cannot collect 5 litres of cockles, give 1 litre to someone else and then collect another litre for yourself)



Cockle

Mussels (all species except Glenelg freshwater mussel)

Scientific name: *Mytilidae*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit (outside of restricted areas): a combined total of:

- 10 litres of whole mussels from one or more species, **or**
- 1 litre of split or shucked mussels from one or more species.

Restricted areas:

- You can't collect mussels in waters less than 2 m deep (the intertidal zone) in Port Phillip Bay (see pages 45–46 for more info).
- You can't collect mussels in Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries (see page 43).



Mussel

Oysters (all species)

Scientific name: *Ostreidae*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit (outside of restricted areas): a combined total of 50 oysters from one or more species.

Restricted areas:

- You can't collect oysters in waters less than 2 m deep (the intertidal zone) in Port Phillip Bay (see pages 45–46 for more info).
- You can't collect oysters in Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries (see page 43).



Oysters

SHELLFISH

Pipis

Scientific name: *Donax deltoides*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit (outside of restricted areas):

- **Cape Liptrap Coastal Park** between Point Smythe and Arch Rock including Venus Bay: 2 litres of whole pipis or 0.5 litre of shucked pipis.
- **In all other Victorian waters:** 5 litres of whole pipis or 1 litre of shucked pipis.

Possession limit: 100 kg of pipis anywhere in Victoria. This is the maximum number of a particular type of fish that a person can possess at any one time anywhere in Victoria (including your home).

Collection methods: by hand only.

Note: Digging implements cannot be used to collect pipis in the intertidal zone. Remember, collecting for other people contributes to your bag limit.

Restricted areas:

- You can't collect pipis in waters less than 2 m deep (the intertidal zone) in Port Phillip Bay (see pages 45–46 for more info).
- You can't collect pipis in Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries (see page 43).



Pipis

Scallop

Scientific name: *Pecten fumatus*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit (outside of restricted areas): 100.

Restricted areas:

- You can't collect scallops in waters less than 2 m deep (the intertidal zone) in Port Phillip Bay (see pages 45–46 for more info).
- You can't collect scallops in Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries (see page 43).



Scallop

SQUID, OCTOPUS AND CUTTLEFISH

Squid (including calamari), octopus and cuttlefish (all species)

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit (outside of restricted areas): a combined total of 10 from one or more species of squid, calamari, octopus and cuttlefish.

Restricted areas:

- You can't collect squid, octopus or cuttlefish in Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries (see page 43).



Southern squid



Sand octopus



Cuttlefish

SPECIES NOT LISTED HAVE A BAG LIMIT OF 5

MOLLUSCS*

All species other than abalone, mussels, oysters, pipis, scallops, squid, octopus and cuttlefish

* All other molluscs include snails, slugs, periwinkles, dogwhelks, chitons and limpets.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit (outside of restricted areas): a combined total of:

- 5 litres of whole mollusc from one or more species, **or**
- 1 litre of split or shucked mollusc from one or more species.

Restricted areas:

- You can't collect any mollusc in waters less than 2 m deep (the intertidal zone) in Port Phillip Bay (see pages 45–46 for more info).
- You can't collect **single shelled molluscs** in waters less than 2 m deep (the intertidal zone) in all Victorian waters including Port Phillip Bay (see pages 45–46 for more info).
- You can't collect any mollusc in Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries (see page 43).

OTHER INVERTEBRATES

Invertebrates are animals without a backbone.

Sandworm and other marine worms (all species including polychaete bristle worms)

Scientific name: *Polychaeta*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit (outside of restricted areas): a combined total of 0.5 litres of worm from one or more species.

Note: Does not apply to purchased bait.

Restricted areas:

- You can't collect sandworms and other marine worms in Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries (see page 43).

Sea urchins

Scientific name: *Echinoidea*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit (outside of restricted areas): a total combined of 40 urchins from one or more species.

Note: Roe and other soft tissues must not be removed from sea urchins in, on or next to Victorian waters.

Restricted areas:

- You can't collect sea urchins in waters less than 2 m deep (the intertidal zone) in Port Phillip Bay (see pages 45–46 for more info).
- You can't collect sea urchins in Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries (see page 43).



Sea urchin

MARINE FISHING EQUIPMENT

The number, shape and size of recreation fishing equipment used to catch fish in Victoria is important in determining whether it is legal or illegal to use. In addition, some types of legal equipment cannot be used in certain locations (e.g. closed waters), at certain times (closed seasons) or to catch some species (e.g. spear guns to take rock lobster).

Not all the fishing gear for sale in tackle shops or online is legal to use in Victorian waters.

Marine waters

Marine waters are: the Gippsland Lakes, the Lower Lake of Mallacoota Inlet, Lake Tyers and Wingan Inlet and Victorian waters that are not inland waters such as (but not limited to) Port Phillip Bay and Western Port. See pages 88–89 for further details.

Summary of legal equipment for marine waters

The following equipment can only be used to catch or attempt to catch fish (including invertebrates species) in Victoria's marine waters. Before you use this equipment you must be aware of the rules that govern its use (see pages 36–40).

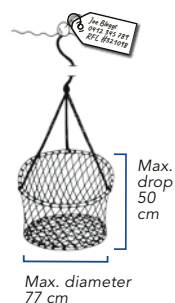
Equipment type	Maximum number permitted in marine waters
Lines with hooks	4; see page 37
Hooks per line	2, or 1 bait jig; see page 37
Baited lines with no hook	10; see page 37
Bait pump (hand-operated suction)	Can be used; see page 37
Bait traps — labelled	2; see page 38
Dip/landing net	Can be used; see page 39
Hand-cranked electric reels	Can be used; see page 38
Bait net (hauling net)	Can be used in certain waters only; see page 38
Hoop nets — labelled	Can be used in certain waters only; see page 37
Handheld spear (barbed and multiprong)	Can be used in certain waters only; see page 39
Spear gun	Can be used in certain waters only; see page 40

Note:

- Gaffs can only be used to assist in landing your fish (see page 38).
- Open top lift nets cannot be used in marine waters.**
- An abalone tool can be used to collect abalone (see page 31).
Abalone tools are blunted instruments that are not knives or screwdrivers.

Labelling your gear correctly

Hoop nets and bait traps must be attached to a tag that remains above the water's surface with the recreational fisher's full name and telephone number OR full name and recreational fishing licence number clearly and legibly written.



Hoop net

USING EQUIPMENT IN MARINE WATERS

Equipment rules need to be read in conjunction with the intertidal zone restrictions listed on pages 45–46.

Lines, hooks and jigs

Lines: You must not leave a line or rod unattended. Your line must be in sight and within 50 m of your position.

Hooks and jigs:

One hook is defined as:

- a single hook
- a group of 4 hooks linked together by the eye
- a lure
- a squid jig
- a bait jig.

Keeper hook:

A keeper hook:

- is defined as an assembly of 2 hooks arranged to keep bait in one position at the line
- has 1 hook attached to the end of the line and 1 hook that can slide down the line and touch the attached hook.

Bait jig:

A bait jig is:

- defined as a continuous series of no more than 6 unbaited lures with hooks less than 2 cm in length, attached to a line with a total rig length of up to 3 m.

In marine waters, each licensed or exempt fisher may use a maximum of 4 lines per person (these can be a combination of either hand lines or rods with reels), with no more than 2 hooks or 1 bait jig attached to each line.

Baited lines

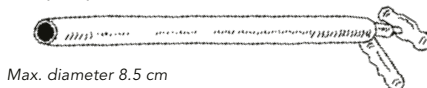
Baited lines are lines without hooks. Baited lines must not have any hooks tied to them.

A maximum of 10 baited lines (per licensed or exempt fisher) may be used and possessed in any marine water.

Bait pumps

Hand-operated suction bait pumps with a barrel diameter not exceeding 8.5 cm may be used to extract burrowing shrimp (including bass yabbies), marine worms and other invertebrate species. A sieve can be used in conjunction with the pump.

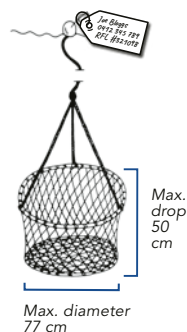
Bait pump



Note: You must not use a bait pump as a tool to dig with.

Hoop nets

A hoop net is a cylindrical net open at the top, consisting of 1 or 2 hoops not exceeding 77 cm in diameter. The net must not have a drop of more than 50 cm. Nets must be labelled if set from a boat or left unattended. The label must float at the water's surface. The label must display clearly the recreational fisher's full name and telephone number OR full name and recreational fishing licence number clearly and legibly written.



Hoop net

A maximum of 2 labelled hoop nets (per licensed or exempt fisher) may be used or possessed in or on any marine water during the open season.

Closed season for hoop nets

Each year from 15 September to 15 November (inclusive) you must not use a hoop net in any marine water other than Port Phillip Bay, Western Port, the Gippsland Lakes or any inlet of the sea.

Gaffs

Gaffs (including barbed flying gaffs) can only be used to assist fishers to land fish (other than invertebrates).

Barbless gaffs are a barbless hook or series of barbless hooks (with or without a handle).

A barbed flying gaff consists of a single hook (with or without a barb) with a rope or cord attached to both the hook and a rigid pole, such that the hook detaches from the pole when it penetrates the body of a fish.

Harpoons are not permitted.

Hand-cranked electric reels

These are permitted for use by recreational fishers if they have a hand cranking mechanism, are fitted to a conventional recreational fishing rod and can be hand held when retrieving fish.

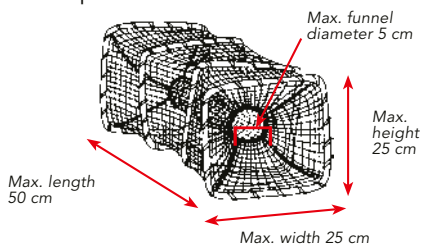
Other types of powered devices are considered commercial fishing equipment and cannot be used by recreational fishers. If a person with a disability has a legitimate need to use a powered device other than a hand-cranked electric reel, they may apply for a permit from the VFA.

Bait traps

Funnel entrance diameter must not exceed 5 cm. The height of the trap must be no more than 25 cm. The size of the trap must be less than 25 cm wide and 50 cm long.

A maximum of 2 labelled bait traps (per licensed or exempt fisher) may be used in or on any marine water.

Bait trap



Bait nets (hauling nets)

A bait net must not exceed 6 m in length. Hauling ropes attached to each end also must not exceed 6 m. Bait nets do not include cast nets, which are illegal equipment.

A licensed or exempt fisher can use a maximum of 1 bait net to collect bait from permitted marine waters. Bait nets must not be used in restricted waters.

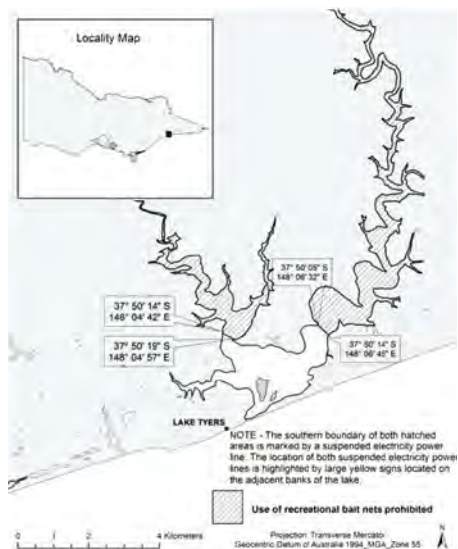
Restricted waters: A bait net must not be used in:

- Port Phillip Bay and Western Port
- the North Arm and Cunninghame Arm of Gippsland Lakes
- the waters of the Toorloo Arm and Nowa Nowa Arm of Lake Tyers that flow upstream of the lines shown on the map on page 39
- Tamboon Inlet
- Sydenham Inlet.

Note: You must not tow, drag or haul any net behind a motor under propulsion in any Victorian waters.

Permitted waters: A bait net is permitted to be used in waters at least 30 m from any jetty or pier and at least 400 m from the mouth of any creek or river in the following permitted waters:

- Gippsland Lakes (excluding the North Arm and the Cunninghame Arm)
- Lake Tyers (excluding those sections of the Toorloo Arm and Nowa Nowa Arm listed above and shown on the map on page 39)
- the Lower Lake of Mallacoota Inlet
- Corner Inlet
- Shallow Inlet
- Anderson Inlet
- any other marine waters that occur on the seaward side of the entrance of the mouth of any inlet or river.

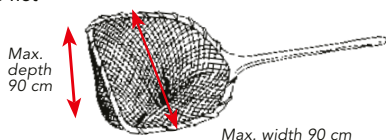


Dip/landing net

A dip net consists of an open-faced net with a width and depth not exceeding 90 cm, attached to a handle.

A licensed or exempt fisher can use dip nets to take a variety of fish or invertebrate species, with or without a light.

Dip net



Intertidal restrictions

Dip nets cannot be used to take any invertebrates from the intertidal zone in Port Phillip Bay or single-shelled molluscs from the intertidal zone of all other Victorian waters.

Spear fishing

- Spear fishing is permitted in some marine waters only. It is **not** permitted in a marine national park or a marine sanctuary.
- The use of any spear or spear gun to take rock lobster is prohibited.

Hand-held spear

A hand-held spear means a spear with one or more prongs (with or without barbs). The spear is held in the hand and is designed so that the prongs do not detach from the spear when they penetrate the body of a fish.

It may be used to take fish (other than rock lobster and abalone) in marine waters.



Hand-held spear

The use or possession of a hand-held spear is prohibited:

- within 30 m of any jetty or pier
- within 30 m of the mouth of any creek or river (see definition on pages 88–89)
- in a marine national park or marine sanctuary
- in or on the waters of Curdies Inlet, Tamboon Inlet, Mallacoota Inlet, Swan Bay, Sydenham Inlet, Lake Tyers and Wingan Inlet
- in or on the waters of the North Arm of Gippsland Lakes
- in, on or next to the waters of Corner Inlet **west** of a line from the mean high water mark on the most northerly point of Entrance Point (on Wilsons Promontory) to the most westerly part of Little Snake Island at the mean high water mark then following the coastline of Little Snake Island generally north and then east to a point directly south of the long jetty at Port Welshpool and then on a north-south line to the end of that jetty and along the jetty to the shore.

Spear guns (including slings)

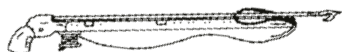
A spear gun is a mechanical device capable of imparting propulsive energy to a spear or arrow.

Each licensed or exempt fisher can use or possess a spear gun in, on or next to any marine water that is NOT a restricted water.

Hawaiian sling



Triggered spear gun



Restricted marine waters: The use or possession of a spear gun is prohibited:

- within 30 m of any jetty or pier
- within 30 m of the mouth of any creek or river (see definition on pages 88–89)
- in a marine national park or marine sanctuary
- in or on the waters of Curdies Inlet, Tamboon Inlet, Mallacoota Inlet, Anderson Inlet, Corner Inlet, Lake Tyers, Shallow Inlet, Wingan Inlet
- in or on most of the Gippsland Lakes (see below).

The use or possession of a spear gun is ONLY permitted in Gippsland Lakes in waters that are within:

- 20 m of the 3 rocky groynes off the eastern end of Rigby Island
- 20 m of the 'barrier' in Hopetoun Channel located to the west of the barrier landing
- 50 m of each of the compass beacons in Eagle Point Bay
- imaginary lines running from Wattle Point to Trouser Point and from Waddy Point to Pelican Point in Lake Victoria (see map above).



Hand-held spears and spear guns in prohibited waters

You may possess a spear gun or hand-held spear in a boat on prohibited waters only if you are proceeding by the most direct route to, or from, a boat ramp or mooring to waters in which the use of a spear gun or hand-held spear is permitted.



ILLEGAL FISHING EQUIPMENT

You must not use or possess illegal equipment in, on or next to Victorian waters, including private waters. Explosives, firearms and bows and arrows cannot be used to take, attempt to take, injure or destroy fish.

You may not tow, drag or haul any net behind a motor boat under propulsion in any Victorian waters. The following equipment is illegal to use in Victoria:

• Set lines	• Mussel rakes
• Mesh nets, cast nets	• Harpoons
• Snares	• Crab pots
• Snoods	• Bow and arrows
• Explosives	• Open top lift nets in marine waters
• Firearms	• Drum nets
• Opera House nets	
• Any equipment that does not conform to the size and shape of the legal equipment detailed on pages 36 to 40.	

BAIT AND BERLEY

Note: It is an offence to release live bait in a water other than where the bait was initially caught.

The release of live bait in other water bodies can result in the spread of undesirable fish species and/or disease.

Berley

Berley is any plant or animal tissue or extract that is placed in the water for the purpose of attracting fish.

Berley must not be used to attract fish for any purpose other than as part of a fishing operation.

You must not use more than 10 litres of berley to assist in the taking of fish in Port Phillip Bay, Western Port, the Gippsland Lakes, any inlet or within 1 nautical mile of the Victorian coastline (including Victorian Islands) or within 3 nautical miles of Lady Julia Percy Island.

Outside of these areas, there is no restrictions on the amount of berley that can be used.

Mammal blood or offal

The use of berley that contains mammal blood or offal to attract any species of fish is **prohibited** in Victorian waters. Please note: bait pellets that contain mammal blood or offal can be used.

Bait restrictions

Undersize fish: You must not use undersize fish as bait in Victorian waters.

Noxious fish: You must not use LIVE noxious species (including European carp, koi carp), or LIVE European green shore crabs as bait in Victorian waters.

Fish ova (eggs): You must not use fish ova or any form of uncooked trout or salmon as bait or berley to take or attempt to take any species of fish in Victorian waters.

Frogs: Frogs' eggs, tadpoles and frogs — dead or alive — are protected wildlife under the *Wildlife Act 1975* and must not be used as bait in Victorian waters.

Protected fish: You must not use as bait any fish protected under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, unless an authorisation has been made under that Act.

MARINE WATERS CLOSED TO RECREATIONAL FISHING

Fishing restrictions are in place in some waters to:

- protect critical habitats and endangered species
- ensure fisher safety (shipping lanes)
- protect aquaculture infrastructure
- protect heritage sites (e.g. shipwrecks).

Restrictions will vary with location. It is your responsibility to know what restrictions, if any, apply to the area where you intend to fish.

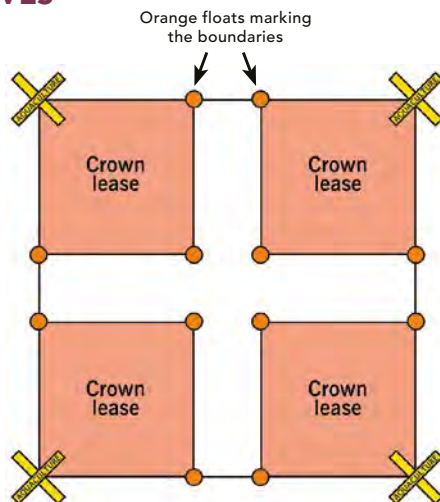
AQUACULTURE FISHERIES RESERVES

Marine aquaculture is undertaken in Port Phillip Bay and Western Port within individual farming sites (Crown leases), ranging from 3 ha to 27 ha located within nine Aquaculture Fisheries Reserves (AFRs).

AFRs are clearly identified with yellow special marks (piles or buoys) with 'AQUACULTURE' inscribed in black lettering on the X top mark and yellow synchronised lights placed at the external boundaries (see below).

Crown leases within AFRs are not accessible to the general public and lease holders install orange floats to mark the boundaries (see right).

It is an offence to tie up or otherwise interfere with any commercial aquaculture equipment that is within a Crown lease within an AFR.



Crown leases within AFRs



Aquaculture Fisheries Reserves (piles or buoys)



Aquaculture Fisheries Reserves in Port Phillip Bay and Western Port

VICTORIA'S MARINE NATIONAL PARKS AND SANCTUARIES

43

WATERS CLOSED TO RECREATIONAL FISHING



Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries protect representative areas of Victoria's unique and diverse marine environments, now and for the future.

All forms of commercial and recreational fishing are prohibited in these areas. This means you can't:

- fish from the shore or a boat
- dive to spear or collect fish or shellfish
- collect bait
- set traps and nets.

Heavy penalties apply.

It is your responsibility to know what restrictions, if any, apply to the area where you intend to fish or collect shellfish or crustaceans.



BOUNDARY MARKERS



Shoreline boundary markers are located on land at the edge of the park and point inwards to the protected area.



Inwater special markers are located at the sea boundary of the protected area.

Maps with boundary coordinates are available from Parks Victoria offices. Call 13 19 63 or visit: www.vfa.vic.gov.au/marineparks

The free Victorian Recreational Fishing Guide app has a "Can I fish here?" function that uses a smartphone's internal GPS to allow users to determine whether they are approaching or within a marine park or sanctuary. Go to www.vfa.vic.gov.au/vicfishingapp



RESTRICTED AREAS

Shipwreck protected zones

Protected zones are declared for 10 fragile and highly significant historic shipwrecks.

It is an offence to enter, anchor, fish, trawl or dive in a protected zone without a permit. People found within a protected zone without a permit can be issued with on-the-spot fines of more than \$295, and multiple fines can be issued if more than one offence is detected. If prosecuted, people may be issued with fines of more than \$7,000.

The protected zones are (WGS 84):

HMVS Cerebus	
0.5 h rectangle	-37. 967382; 145. 007876
SS City of Launceston	
250 m radius	-38. 076829; 144. 826321
Clarence	
100 m radius	-38. 202570; 144. 723253
Joanna	
100 m radius	-38. 207960; 144. 730102
Will O' The Wisp	
50 m radius	-38. 241498; 144. 701159

William Salthouse	
250 m radius	-38. 272943; 144. 705493
SS Alert	
500 m radius	-38. 486944; 144. 750556
PS Clonmel	
50 m radius	-38. 744000; 146. 677800
SS Glenelg	
500 m radius	-38. 552400; 147. 207400
SS Federal	
800 m radius	-38.122200; 147.730800

Other shipwrecks

All shipwrecks 75 years or older are declared historic under state and Commonwealth legislation. Historic shipwrecks are fragile structures that often have weakened and vulnerable hull remains due to their long submersion underwater. Fishers are allowed to fish near historic shipwreck sites that aren't in protected zones. However, fishers should be careful about placement of their anchors (and also weighted shot lines) because it is illegal to interfere with, damage or destroy historic shipwrecks and their relics, and severe penalties apply.



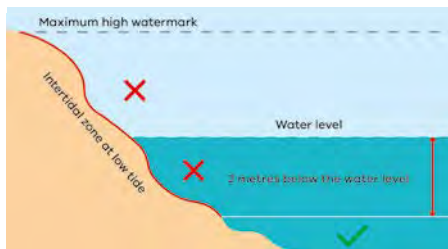
INTERTIDAL ZONE RESTRICTIONS

The intertidal zone is defined as the area starting at the maximum high-water mark to a point where the water is 2 m deep at any time.

All animals and plants that live in the intertidal zone are critical parts of the food chain. Removal of invertebrates (animals without backbones such as crabs, snails, shellfish and sea urchins) from this zone may seem harmless, but it represents a loss of food for other species. For this reason Victoria's intertidal zones are protected areas.



Intertidal zone at high tide



Intertidal zone at low tide

Intertidal protected areas

Port Phillip Bay

From the intertidal zone in Port Phillip Bay you may only collect marine worms, sandworms, burrowing shrimp, squid, octopus and cuttlefish.



All other invertebrates (animals without backbones) are **protected** in the intertidal zone and must not be collected.

Victorian waters

(excluding Port Phillip Bay)

From the intertidal zone in all other Victorian waters you may collect bivalve shellfish (animals with 2 hinged shells such as pipis, scallops, mussels, oysters), crabs, lobster, marine worms and burrowing shrimps.



All single shelled molluscs (such as abalone, limpets, periwinkles and turbo shells) are **protected** in the intertidal zone and must not be collected.

INTERTIDAL RESTRICTIONS FOR DIFFERENT VICTORIAN WATERS



Port Phillip Bay intertidal zone

You can collect:

- ✓ Marine worms
- ✓ Burrowing shrimp
- ✓ Squid
- ✓ Octopus
- ✓ Cuttlefish
- ✓ Sandworms

You can't collect

ALL other invertebrates including:

- ✗ Abalone
- ✗ Crabs
- ✗ Pipsis
- ✗ Mussels
- ✗ Scallops
- ✗ Urchins
- ✗ Shells
- ✗ Snails

Intertidal zone other than Port Phillip Bay

You can collect:

- ✓ Bivalve shellfish such as pipsis, scallops, mussels, oysters
- ✓ Crabs
- ✓ Rock lobster
- ✓ Marine worms
- ✓ Burrowing shrimp
- ✓ Urchins
- ✓ Octopus
- ✓ Squid
- ✓ Cuttlefish

You can't collect:

ANY single-shelled molluscs such as:

- ✗ Abalone
- ✗ Limpets
- ✗ Periwinkles
- ✗ Turbo shells

INTERTIDAL ZONE EQUIPMENT RESTRICTIONS

Only certain equipment is permitted to be used in the intertidal zones across Victoria to collect these permitted animals. Catch limits apply to these species (pages 23–35).

Intertidal protected area equipment restrictions

The use of any type of hand-held digging implement to collect marine invertebrates is prohibited in the intertidal zone.

For example, gardening trowels, childrens plastic toys, forks, spoons and sticks, cannot be used to collect pipsis, worms, cockles and bass yabbies in the intertidal zones.

Where collection in the intertidal zone is permitted, **only the following methods are allowed:**

- hands and feet
- hand-held bait pumps (see page 37 for dimensions)
- bait traps (see page 38 for dimensions)
- a fishing line, speargun or hand-held spear to catch fish, squid, cuttlefish and octopus (see pages 39–40 for the areas where spear guns and hand-held spears can and can't be used)
- hoop nets and bait nets (see pages 37–38 as these can only be used in some waters or at certain times).



Be **safe** when rock fishing

**We want to reduce unnecessary drownings,
which is why rock fishers must wear a lifejacket
at these 10 high risk locations:**

1. Cape Bridgewater — rock platform near blowholes carpark
2. Artillery Rocks, west of Lorne
3. Rock platform opposite Sheoak Falls, south of Lorne
4. Sorrento Back Beach rocks
5. Rye back beach number 16
6. Cape Schanck lighthouse rocks
7. Bushrangers Bay rocks, east of Cape Schanck
8. Pyramid Rocks, Phillip Island.
9. San Remo — rocks at the southern end of Potters Hill Road
10. Punchbowl Rocks near San Remo

For more information visit
www.vfa.vic.gov.au/rockfishing or scan here:



Lifejacket must comply with the Australian Standard (AS 4758) and be a Level 50S lifejacket or greater (i.e. Type 3 or greater), your correct size, in good working order, worn correctly with all zippers, buckles and tapes secured, and be regularly serviced if inflatable.

Children under your supervision must wear a lifejacket at the 10 locations, even if not fishing.

Freshwater (inland) fishing

Whether it's fishing for wild trout in North East Victoria, chasing cod in our northern rivers or catching Australian bass in East Gippsland, we want you to enjoy the awesome recreational freshwater fishing Victoria has to offer.



Freshwater fishing	48–70
Freshwater fishing restrictions	71
Freshwater fishing equipment	72–76
Recreational fishing licence	78–82

It's important that you know the rules and follow them so we can keep Victoria's recreational fisheries in great shape for the future. Happy fishing!

FRESHWATER SCALE FISH (NATIVE)

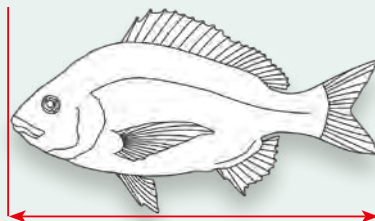
Measuring your catch

Scale fish: the legal size of fish must be checked at the first available opportunity. Measure fish from the tip of the snout with the mouth closed to the end of the tail.

Undersize, oversize or unwanted fish must be released immediately and with the least amount of harm.

Carp (a noxious species) must not be returned to the water alive.

Fish that you want to keep or that cannot be released should be dispatched immediately. Dead carp may be returned to the water.



Australian bass (including estuary perch and hybrids)

Scientific name: *Perkalates novemaculeata*.

Minimum legal size: 27 cm.

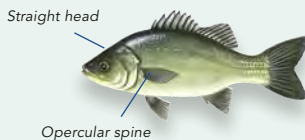
Bag limit: **Lake Bullen Merri:** a combined total of 5 for one or more species of Australian bass, estuary perch and hybrid species.

All other Victorian Waters: a combined total of 5 fish (of which no more than 2 can be Australian bass).

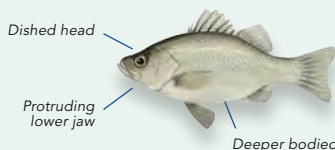
Distinguishing features of Australian bass and estuary perch (see page 13 for estuary perch rules).



Australian bass



Australian bass



Estuary perch

Australian grayling

Scientific name: *Prototroctes maraena*.

Protected species: taking or possessing is prohibited.



Protected species: Australian grayling

Australian smelt, broad-finned galaxias, common galaxias, flat-headed galaxias, mountain galaxias, spotted galaxias

Scientific name: *Retropinna semoni* and *Galaxiidae*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: a combined total of 40 fish from one or more species.



Mountain galaxias



Australian smelt

SPECIES NOT LISTED HAVE A BAG LIMIT OF 5

FRESHWATER SCALE FISH (NATIVE)

Eel (long and short-finned)

Scientific name: *Anguilla* spp.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: a combined total of 10 eels for one or more species.



Short-finned eel

Flathead gudgeon

Scientific name: *Phlypnodon grandiceps*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: 40.



Flathead gudgeon

Freshwater catfish

Scientific name: *Tandanus tandanus*.

Minimum legal size: 30 cm.

Permitted waters: freshwater catfish can be taken only from waters within the Wimmera Basin.

Restricted waters: taking of freshwater catfish is prohibited in all other Victorian waters.

Bag limit:

- Wimmera Basin: 2.
- All other inland waters: 0.

This fish can't be filleted in or on Victorian waters. It must be kept whole or in carcass form until you're away from the water. It's okay to fillet your fish on cleaning tables at the boat ramp (see definition of carcass on page 87).



Freshwater catfish

Brown and dwarf galaxias

Scientific name: *Galaxias fuscus* and *Galaxiella pusilla*.

Protected species: taking or possessing is prohibited.



Protected species: Dwarf galaxias

Golden perch (yellowbelly)

Scientific name: *Macquaria ambigua*.

Minimum legal size: 30 cm.

Bag limit: 5.

This fish can't be filleted in or on Victorian waters. It must be kept whole or in carcass form until you're away from the water. It's okay to fillet your fish on cleaning tables at the boat ramp (see definition of carcass on page 87).



Golden perch

FRESHWATER SCALE FISH (NATIVE)

Hardy head (all species other than Murray hardyhead and unspecked hardyhead)

Scientific name: *Atherinidae*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: a combined total of 40 fish from one or more species, except Murray hardyhead and unspecked hardyhead.



Hardyhead

Murray hardyhead and unspecked hardyhead

Scientific name: *Craterocephalus fluviatilis* and *Craterocephalus fulvus*.

Protected species: taking or possessing is prohibited.

Range: Murray hardyhead and unspecked hardyhead have been recorded from wetlands near Kerang, Swan Hill and Mildura (Victoria). The Murray hardyhead has been found in Cardross Lakes, Lake Hawthorn, and several lakes in the Swan Hill-Kerang district, including Cullen, Elizabeth, Golf Course, Long, Round, Tuchewop, Wandella, Woorinen North and Yando Lakes.

The exact distribution of the Murray hardyhead is not known because it is easily confused for other species of hardyheads, including the unspecked hardyhead.



Murray hardyhead



Unspecked hardyhead



Protected species: Hardyhead

Macquarie perch

Scientific name: *Macquaria australasica*.

Minimum legal size: 35 cm.

Permitted waters: Macquarie perch can only be taken from Lake Dartmouth and the Upper Coliban Reservoir (and their tributaries).

Restricted waters: the taking of Macquarie perch is prohibited in all other waters.

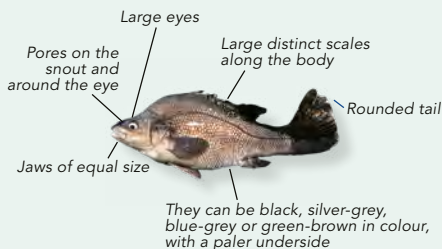
Bag limit (outside of restricted waters):

- Lake Dartmouth (and its tributaries): 1.
- Upper Coliban Reservoir (and its tributaries): 2.



Macquarie perch

How to identify a Macquarie perch



Closed season: 1 October to 31 December inclusive. This fish can't be filleted in or on Victorian waters. It must be kept whole or in carcass form until you're away from the water. It's okay to fillet your fish on cleaning tables at the boat ramp (see definition of carcass on page 87).

FRESHWATER SCALE FISH (NATIVE)

Murray cod

Scientific name: *Maccullochella peelii*.

Minimum legal size: 55 cm.

Maximum legal size: 75 cm.

Bag limit:

Specified lakes and impoundments:

- 2 (see below).
- Urban lakes: 2 (see below).
- All other waters: 1.

Possession limit: 5 or < 30 kg in any other form anywhere in Victoria. This is the maximum number/ amount of a particular type of fish that a person can possess at any one time anywhere in Victoria (including your home).

Closed season: 1 September to 30 November inclusive. **Note:** The closed season does not apply in the following waters:

- Lake Eildon, except for waters south of the fixed marker at Jamieson boat ramp, see page 58
- Waters south of the Great Dividing Range, except the Yarra River
- Waters of the Wimmera and Millicent basins, except the Wimmera River



Murray cod

Murray cod are commonly confused with trout cod (see page 53 for distinguishing features). This fish can't be filleted in or on Victorian waters. It must be kept whole or in carcass form until you're away from the water. It's okay to fillet your fish on cleaning tables at the boat ramp (see definition of carcass on page 87).

Specified lakes and impoundments

Barkers Creek Reservoir	Eppalock Lake	Nagambie Weir (defined as all impounded waters upstream of Nagambie Weir to Chinamans Bridge on the Goulburn River and inclusive of Lake Nagambie)
Benalla Lake	First Reedy Lake	
Big Meran Lake	Greens Lake	
Booroopki Swamp	Hume Lake	
Boga Lake	Kangaroo Lake	
Buffalo Lake	Kow Swamp	Nillahcootie Lake
Cairn Curran Reservoir	Laanecoorie Reservoir	Rocklands Reservoir
Charlegrark Lake	Lascelles Lake	Taylors Lake
Charm Lake	Lauriston Reservoir	Victoria Lake (Shepparton)
Cullulleraine Lake	Moodemere Lake	Upper Coliban Reservoir
Eildon Lake		Walkers Lake
		Waranga Basin

Urban lakes

Albert Park Lake	Melton Reservoir	Roxburgh Park Lake
Casey Fields Lake (Cranbourne East)	Navan Park Lake (Melton)	Spavin Lake (Sunbury)
Karkarook Lake (Moorabbin)	Quarry Lake (Ferntree Gully)	

SPECIES NOT LISTED HAVE A BAG LIMIT OF 5

Trout cod

Scientific name:

Maccullochella macquariensis.

Protected species: taking or possessing is prohibited, except for two lakes:

- Lake Sambell
- Lake Kerferd.

These two lakes are located in North East Victoria.

Trout cod inadvertently caught in waters other than lakes Sambell and Kerferd, must be immediately returned to the water with the least possible damage or injury.

Legal size (Lakes Sambell and Kerferd):

- Minimum: 40 cm.
- Maximum: 50 cm.

Bag limit (Lakes Sambell and Kerferd): 1.

Closed season: None.

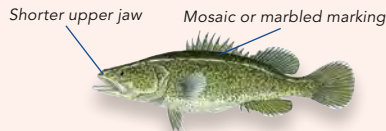
Possession limit: 2 fish.

This fish can't be filleted in or on Victorian waters. It must be retained whole or in carcass form until you're away from a Victorian waterway (see definition of carcass on page 87).

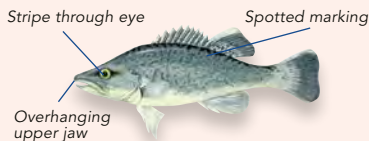


Trout cod

Distinguishing features of trout cod and Murray cod:



Murray cod



Trout cod

River blackfish (including twospine blackfish)

Scientific names: *Gadopsis marmoratus* and *Gadopsis bispinosus*.

Minimum legal size: 30 cm.

Bag limit: a combined total of 2 for one or more species of river blackfish.

Closed season: 1 September to 31 December inclusive (only applied south of the Great Dividing Range).



River blackfish

FRESHWATER SCALE FISH (NATIVE)

Silver perch

Scientific name: *Bidyanus bidyanus*.

Minimum legal size: 30 cm.

Bag limit:

Rivers and streams north of the Great Dividing Range, excluding the Wimmera Basin: 0.

Basin: 0.

Silver perch inadvertently caught in rivers north of the range excluding the Wimmera Basin must be returned to the water alive and with the least possible injury.

Lakes and impoundments north of the Great Dividing Range: 5.

All other Victorian waters: 5.

Restricted waters: the taking of silver perch is prohibited in rivers north of the Great Dividing Range (excluding those in the Wimmera Basin).

This fish can't be filleted in or on Victorian waters. It must be kept whole or in carcass form until you're away from the water. It's okay to fillet your fish on cleaning tables at the boat ramp (see definition of carcass on page 87).

Permitted waters: silver perch can be caught and possessed in all waters south of Great Dividing Range including the Wimmera Basin.



Silver perch



Permitted waters: silver perch can only be caught and possessed in **lakes and impoundments** north of Great Dividing Range (excluding the Wimmera Basin).

Tasmanian whitebait (Australian whitebait)

Scientific name: *Lovettia sealii*.

Protected species: taking or possessing is prohibited. Critically endangered in Victoria and known to occur at Anderson Inlet and the Tarwin River in Gippsland.



Tasmanian whitebait

Western carp gudgeon

Scientific name: *Hypseleotris klunzingeri*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: 40.



Western carp gudgeon



Male western carp gudgeon

SPECIES NOT LISTED HAVE A BAG LIMIT OF 5

FRESHWATER SCALE FISH (INTRODUCED)

European carp

Scientific name: *Cyprinus carpio*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: no limit.

NOXIOUS species: Must not be returned to the water alive. Kill the carp immediately.

Do not leave the dead fish on shore at the fishing location. Dead carp can be returned to the water — cut the carcass so that it sinks.



Noxious species: European carp

Redfin (English perch)

Scientific name: *Perca fluviatilis*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: no limit.

Fishers are encouraged not to return redfin to the water as they prey on native fish and can impact other recreational species.

Fishers are reminded it is illegal to transport live fish without appropriate VFA approval.



Redfin

Roach

Scientific name: *Rutilus rutilus*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: no limit.

Fishers are encouraged not to return roach to the water as they can impact other recreational species.

Fishers are reminded it is illegal to transport live fish without appropriate VFA approval.



Roach

Tench

Scientific name: *Tinca tinca*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: no limit.

Fishers are encouraged not to return tench to the water as they can impact other recreational species.

Fishers are reminded it is illegal to transport live fish without appropriate VFA approval.



Tench

FRESHWATER SCALE FISH (TROUT AND SALMON)

An introduction to the trout and salmon regulations

Victoria's rivers and lakes are classified into groups for the purposes of regulating trout and salmon fisheries. Each group is defined by whether or not it has a trout and salmon closed season, the bag/possession limit and the minimum legal size.

Trout and salmon (salmonids)

Scientific names:

Brown trout – *Salmo trutta*.

Rainbow trout – *Oncorhynchus mykiss*.

Chinook salmon – *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*.

Atlantic salmon – *Salmo salar*

Brook trout – *Salvelinus fontinalis*.

Cheetah trout – *Oncorhynchus mykiss* x *Salvelinus fontinalis*. Cheetah trout is a sterile hybrid of the rainbow trout and the brook trout.

Tiger trout – *Salmo trutta* x *Salvelinus fontinalis*. Tiger trout is a sterile hybrid of the brown trout and the brook trout.

Minimum legal size: varies with water body and/or river section; some waters have no minimum size.

Bag limit: varies with water body and/or river section (see pages 57–64). These fish can't be filleted in or on Victorian waters. They must be kept whole or in carcass form until you're away from the water. It's okay to fillet your fish on cleaning tables at the boat ramp (see definition of carcass on page 87).

Closed season: The 2023 trout and salmon closed season on rivers and streams is from Tuesday 13 June until Friday 1 September inclusive. The first open day is on Saturday 2 September 2023.

The 2024 closed season is from 11 June to 6 September. The first open day is Saturday, 7 September 2024.



Brown trout



Rainbow trout



Chinook salmon



Atlantic salmon



Brook trout



Tiger trout



Cheetah trout

SPECIES NOT LISTED HAVE A BAG LIMIT OF 5

WATERS WITH SEASONAL CLOSURES (TROUT AND SALMON)

The following regulations apply to rivers and streams in general. They do not apply to rivers, river sections and streams with specific regulations listed on pages 57–62.

Rivers and streams (general)

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: 5 salmonids per day, of which no more than 2 fish may exceed 35 cm.

Closed season: Yes. During the closed season, fishers must not take or possess salmonids in, on or next to these river sections, rivers and streams.

WATERS WITH VARYING BAG AND SIZE LIMITS (TROUT AND SALMON)

The following rivers have specific regulations that apply to certain sections along their course.

Nariel Creek (upstream of Colac Colac Bridge)

Minimum legal size: 25 cm.

Bag limit: 3 salmonids of which no more than 2 fish may exceed 35 cm.

Closed season: Yes. During the closed season, fishers must not take or possess salmonids in these rivers and streams.

Nariel Creek (all other sections)

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: 5 salmonids of which no more than 2 fish may exceed 35 cm.

Closed season: Yes. During the closed season, fishers must not take or possess salmonids in these rivers and streams.

Mitta Mitta River (upstream of Lake Dartmouth)

Minimum legal size: 25 cm.

Bag limit: 3 salmonids of which no more than 2 fish may exceed 35 cm.

Closed season: Yes. During the closed season, fishers must not take or possess salmonids in these rivers and streams.

Mitta Mitta River (downstream of Peters Bridge)

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: 5 salmonids of which no more than 2 fish may exceed 35 cm.

Closed season: Yes. During the closed season, fishers must not take or possess salmonids in these rivers and streams.

Ovens River (upstream of Porepunkah Bridge)

Minimum legal size: 25 cm.

Bag limit: 3 salmonids of which no more than 2 fish may exceed 35 cm.

Closed season: Yes. During the closed season, fishers must not take or possess salmonids in these rivers and streams.

Ovens River (all other sections)

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: 5 salmonids of which no more than 2 fish may exceed 35 cm.

Closed season: Yes. During the closed season, fishers must not take or possess salmonids in these rivers and streams.

SPECIES NOT LISTED HAVE A BAG LIMIT OF 5

TROUT AND SALMON REGULATIONS

Rivers with total fishing bans during the trout and salmon closed season

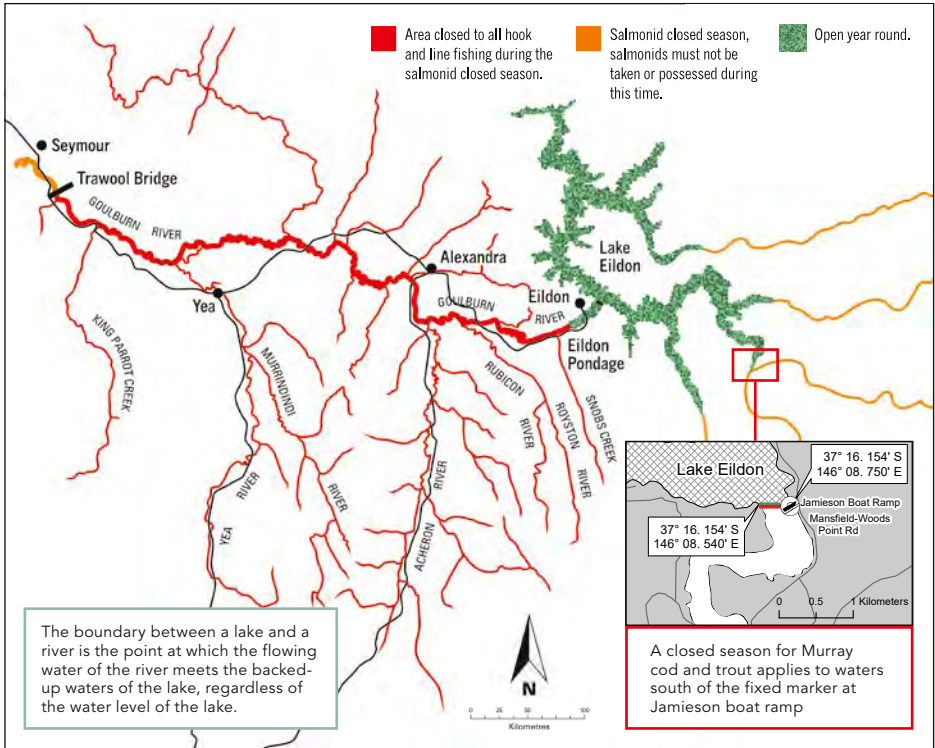
Sections of the Goulburn, Mitta Mitta, Tanjil and Kiewa rivers are closed to ALL hook and line fishing during the trout and salmon closed season, regardless of the fish species being targeted. Maps on pages 58–61 show the areas that are closed to all hook and line fishing during the trout and salmon closed season.

Goulburn tailrace

The section of the Goulburn River below Lake Eildon Pondage to Trawool Bridge and its tributaries are classified as a tailrace river and subject to the following regulations.

- Minimum legal size:** no minimum.
- Bag limit:** 5 salmonids of which no more than 2 fish may exceed 35 cm.
- Closed season:** Yes — there is a total ban on hook and line fishing during the closed season. The 2023 trout and salmon closed season on rivers and streams is from Tuesday 13 June until Friday 1 September inclusive. The first open day is on Saturday 2 September. See page 56 for 2024 closed season dates.
- During the closed season:**
- Fishers must not take or possess any fish from the tailrace sections of the river.
 - Fishers must not be in possession of a hook and line in, on or next to the Goulburn tailrace river below Lake Eildon Pondage to Trawool Bridge. This is an offence.
 - Fishers may fish for Murray crays during the trout and salmon closed season provided they are not using or possessing hook and line, in, on, or within 20 metres of the banks.

Map 1: Goulburn River and tributaries



SPECIES NOT LISTED HAVE A BAG LIMIT OF 5

TROUT AND SALMON REGULATIONS

Rubicon River

The Rubicon River is part of the Goulburn River tailrace. However, it is subject to slightly different size and possession regulations.

Minimum legal size: 25 cm.

Bag limit: 3 salmonids of which no more than 2 fish may exceed 35 cm.

Closed season: Yes. Total ban on all hook and line fishing during salmonid closed season.

The Kiewa River and tributaries

The section of the Kiewa River below Rocky Valley Dam to Keegans Bridge (near Dederang) and its tributaries are classified as a tailrace river and subject to the following regulations.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

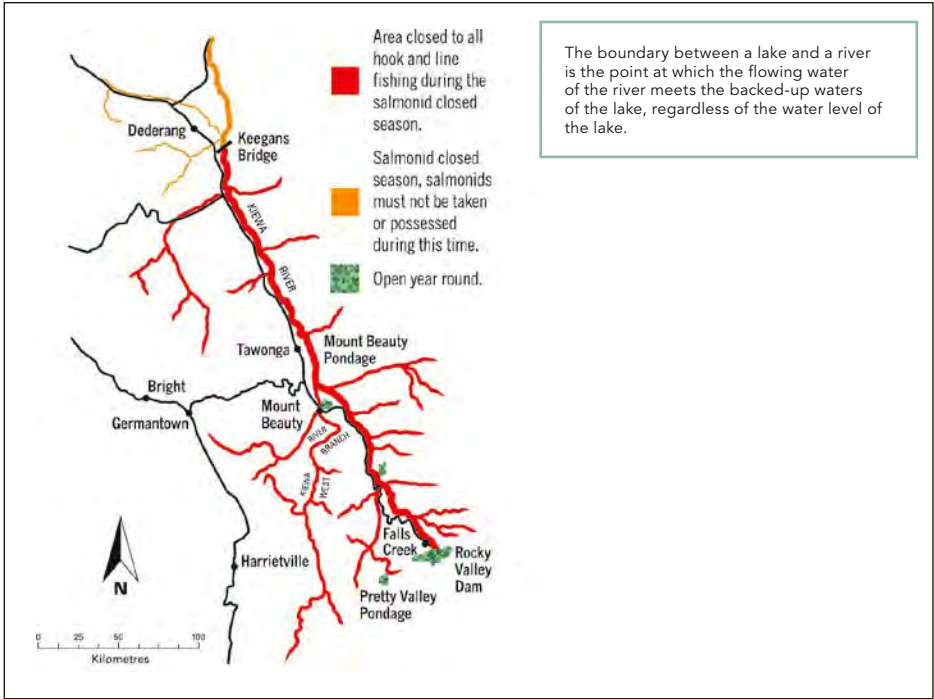
Bag limit: 5 salmonids of which no more than 2 fish may exceed 35 cm.

Closed season: Yes — there is a total ban on hook and line fishing during the closed season. The 2023 trout and salmon closed season on rivers and streams is from Tuesday 13 June until Friday 1 September inclusive. The first open day is on Saturday 2 September. See page 56 for 2024 closed season dates.

During the closed season:

- Fishers must not take or possess any fish from the tailrace sections of the river(s).
- Fishers must not be in possession of a hook and line in, on or next to the Kiewa tailrace river below Rocky Valley Dam to Keegans Bridge. This is an offence.
- Fishers may fish for Murray crays during the trout and salmon closed season provided they are not using or possessing hook and line, in, on, or within 20 metres of the banks.

Map 2: Kiewa River and tributaries



SPECIES NOT LISTED HAVE A BAG LIMIT OF 5

TROUT AND SALMON REGULATIONS

Mitta Mitta tailrace

The section of the Mitta Mitta River below Lake Dartmouth Pondage to Peters Bridge (Tallandoon) and its tributaries are classified as a tailrace river and subject to the following regulations.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

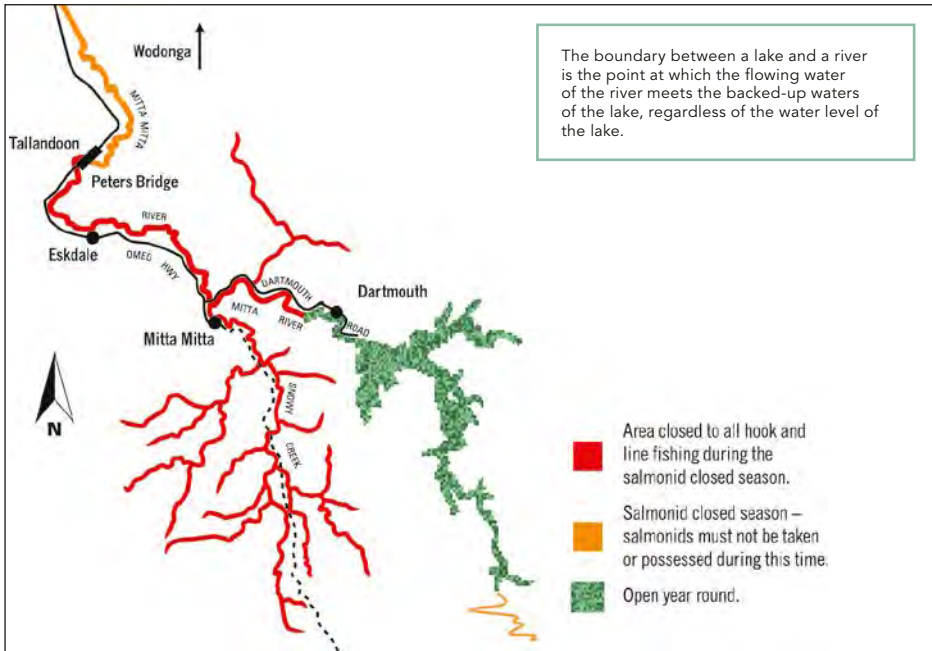
Bag limit: 5 salmonids of which no more than 2 fish may exceed 35 cm.

Closed season: Yes — there is a total ban on hook and line fishing during the closed season. The 2023 trout and salmon closed season on rivers and streams is from Tuesday 13 June until Friday 1 September inclusive. The first open day is on Saturday 2 September. See page 56 for 2024 closed season dates.

During the closed season:

- Fishers must not take or possess any fish from the tailrace sections of the river(s).
- Fishers must not be in possession of a hook and line in, on or next to the Mitta Mitta tailrace river below Lake Dartmouth Pondage to Peters Bridge. This is an offence.
- Fishers may fish for Murray crays during the trout and salmon closed season provided they are not using or possessing hook and line, in, on, or within 20 metres of the banks.

Map 3: Mitta Mitta River and tributaries



TROUT AND SALMON REGULATIONS

Tanjil tailrace

The section of the Tanjil River upstream from Lake Narracan to below Blue Rock Dam and its tributaries are classified as a tailrace river and subject to the following regulations.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

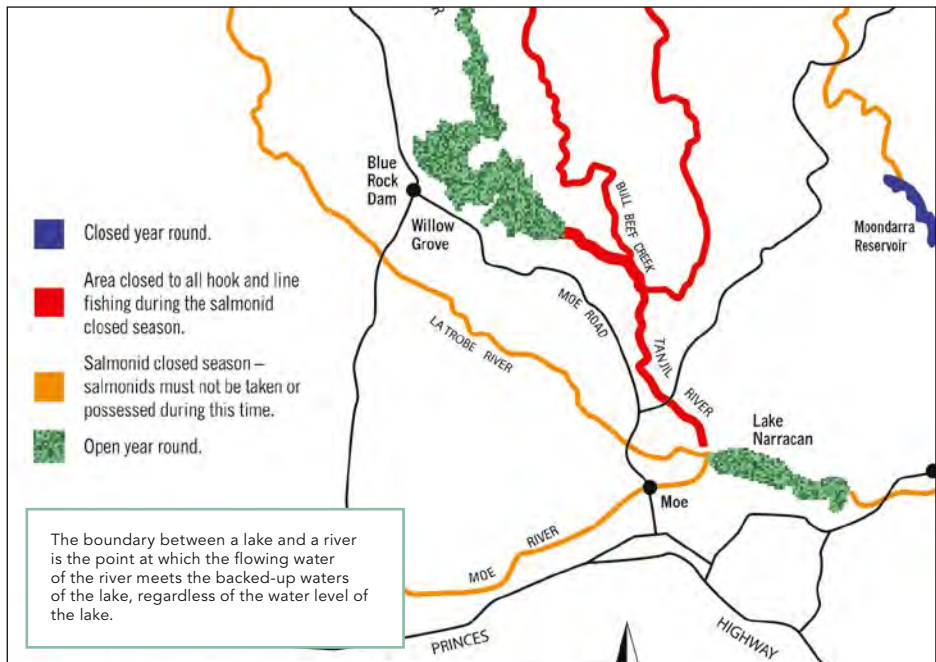
Bag limit: 5 salmonids of which no more than 2 fish may exceed 35 cm.

Closed season: Yes — there is a total ban on hook and line fishing during the closed season. The 2023 trout and salmon closed season on rivers and streams is from Tuesday 13 June until Friday 1 September inclusive. The first open day is on Saturday 2 September. See page 56 for 2024 closed season dates.

During the closed season:

- Fishers must not take or possess any fish from the tailrace sections of the river(s).
- Fishers must not be in possession of a hook and line in, on or next to the Tanjil tailrace river upstream from Lake Narracan to below Blue Rock Dam. This is an offence.

Map 4: Tanjil River and tributaries



YEAR-ROUND TROUT AND SALMON FISHERIES

The following waters do not have a closed season and can be fished for trout and salmon all year.

Merri, Hopkins, Moyne rivers and Mt Emu Creek

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: 5 salmonids of which no more than 2 fish may exceed 35 cm.

Closed season: no closed season.

Sea-run trout rivers

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: 5 salmonids of which no more than 2 fish may exceed 35 cm.

Closed season: no closed season.

Description: the specified sections of the following waters contain populations of sea-run brown trout that provide angling opportunities for trout and salmon all year:

Aire River – downstream of the Great Ocean Road Bridge

Avon River – downstream of the Stratford Railway Bridge

Ford River – downstream of the Great Ocean Road Bridge

Gellibrand River – downstream of the Great Ocean Road Bridge

Mitchell River – downstream of Princes Highway Bridge at Bairnsdale

Tambo River – downstream of the Bruthen Road Bridge.

Lakes and impoundments

The boundary between a lake and a river is the point at which the flowing water of the river meets the backed-up waters of the lake, regardless of the water level of the lake.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: 5 salmonids per day.

Closed season: no closed season.

The following lakes have specific regulations that only apply to them.

Lake Toolondo

Minimum legal size: 45 cm for brown trout and 30 cm for rainbow trout.

Bag limit: 3 salmonids per day.

Closed season: no closed season.

Hepburn Lagoon

Minimum legal size: 45 cm for brown trout and rainbow trout.

Bag limit: 3 salmonids per day.

Closed season: no closed season.

Lake Wendouree

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: 5 salmonids per day.

Closed season: Temporary closure to all recreational fishing from 1 June - 31 July inclusive applies to a small area of the lake near Windmill Drive. View coordinates here – www.vfa.vic.gov.au/wendouree.

For up-to-date stocking information visit www.vfa.vic.gov.au/db

SPECIES NOT LISTED HAVE A BAG LIMIT OF 5

TROUT AND SALMON FAMILY FISHING LAKES

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: 5 salmonids per day of which no more than 2 may exceed 35 cm.

Closed season: no closed season.

These fisheries occur in small lakes, ponds and retarding basins.

They are usually stocked prior to Victoria's winter (June) and spring (September) school holidays, providing angling opportunities for children and people with limited mobility.

Albert Park Lake, Albert Park	Cato Lake, Stawell	Expedition Pass Reservoir, Golden Point (Castlemaine)
Alexandra Lake, Ararat	Caulfield Racecourse Lake, Caulfield	Felltimber Creek Wetlands, West Wodonga
Allans Flat Dredge Hole, Allans Flat	Cobden Lake, Cobden	Ferntree Gully Quarry Lake, Ferntree Gully
Anderson Lake, Chiltern	Coleraine Lagoon, Coleraine	Forest Lake, Kangaroo Flat
Arboretum Dam, Euroa	Crusoe Reservoir, Big Hill (Bendigo)	Garfield Lake, Garfield
Bannockburn Lagoon, Bannockburn	Darlingsford Lake, Melton	Glenlyon Dam, Glenlyon
Barge Dam, Stanley (also known as Stanley Ditch Dam)	Don Lake, Healesville	Glenrowan Recreation Reserve Lake, Glenrowan
Bartlett Lake, Tatura	Donald Caravan Park Lake, Donald (also known as Foletti Caravan Park Lake)	Goldfields Reservoir, Maryborough
Belvoir Park Lake, (also known as Sumsion Gardens Lake), Wodonga	Dunkeld Arboretum Dam, Dunkeld	Goldfields Reservoir, St Arnaud
Berwick Springs Estate Lake, Narre Warren South	Eildon Pondage Weir,* Eildon	Golf Course Dam, Longwood
Boys Waters, Waurin Ponds	Emerald Lake, Emerald	Great Western Recreation Reserve Lake, Great Western
Calembeen Lake, Creswick	Esmond Lake, Ballarat	Guthridge Lake, Sale
Casey Fields Lake, Cranbourne	Ess Lagoon, Casterton	Haddon Reservoir, Haddon

* Although Eildon Pondage is classified as an impoundment, it is listed here because it shares 'family fishing lake' regulations.

SPECIES NOT LISTED HAVE A BAG LIMIT OF 5

Hanging Rock Lake, Hanging Rock	Marysville Lake, Marysville	Rokewood Reservoir, Rokewood
Harrietville Dredge Hole, Harrietville	Merriwa Park Lake, Wangaratta	Roxburgh Park Lake, Roxburgh Park
Heyfield Racecourse Lake, Heyfield	Minyip Wetlands, Minyip	St Augustines Water Hole, Highton
Hill Lake, Rowville	Mooroopna Recreation Reserve Lake, Mooroopna	Sambell Lake, Beechworth
Hyland Lake, Churchill	Morwell Lake, Morwell (also known as Kernot Lake)	Sandy Creek Reservoir, Sandy Creek
Jack Emmett Billabong, Rupanyup (also known as Jack Emmett Lagoon)	Mt Beauty Pondage, Mt Beauty	Simpson Recreation Reserve Lakes, Simpson
Jubilee Lake, Daylesford	Navan Park Lake, Harkness (Melton)	Spavin Lake, Sunbury
Jubilee Lake, Skipton	Neangar Lake, Eaglehawk	Sutton Lake, Rowville
Karkarook Lake, Moorabbin	Nhill Lake, Nhill	Tchum Lake, Narraport
Kennington Reservoir, Strathdale	Numurkah Lake, Numurkah	Tea Tree Lake, Mortlake
Kerferd Lake, Stanley	Nursery Reservoir, Macedon	The Gong, Buninyong
Les Stone Park Lake, Wodonga	Old Hamilton Reservoir, Hamilton	Tom Thumb Lake, Eaglehawk
Lethbridge Lake, Lethbridge	Ouyen Lake, Ouyen	Victoria Park Lakes, Ballarat
Lilliput Lane Reserve Lake, Pakenham	Pakenham Lake, Pakenham	Victoria Lake, Shepparton
Lillydale Lake, Lilydale	Pertobe Lake, Warrnambool	Walter J Smith Reserve Lake, Riddells Creek
Lismore Golf Club Dam, Lismore	Police Paddock Dams, Dooen	Yarrambat Lake, Yarrambat
Marma Lake, Murtoa	Quarry Street Reserve Lake, Trentham	

SPINY CRAYS

Murray spiny freshwater crayfish

Scientific name: *Euastacus armatus*.

Minimum legal size: 10 cm carapace length.

Maximum legal size: 12 cm carapace length.

Bag limit: 2.

Possession limit: 4.

Closed season: 1 September to 31 May for waters north of the Great Dividing Range.

Regulations on catching Murray spiny freshwater crayfish:

- You must not possess female Murray spiny crayfish with eggs, or with young attached.
- You must not remove eggs or young from a female at any time.
- You must return females in berry or carrying young to the water immediately and without further harm.



Murray spiny freshwater crayfish

Important: Murray spiny freshwater crayfish must be retained whole or in carcass form. This means you need to keep your crayfish in whole form (i.e. don't remove the tail from the carapace) until they are cooked, eaten or taken home. See page 87 for definitions and further details.

Collection methods for Murray spiny freshwater crayfish

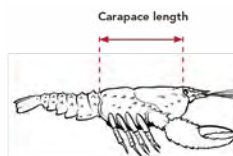
You may collect Murray spiny freshwater crays:

- by hand
- by using up to 10 baited lines (no hooks)
- by using up to 5 labelled hoop nets in the streams, tributaries and impoundments of the following 11 waters:

Carrol's Creek	The Ovens River System	The Mitta Mitta River System (excluding Lake Dartmouth)
Ryans Creek	The Tarra River System	The Glenelg River System (excluding Rocklands Reservoir)
Wodonga Creek	The Latrobe River System	The Goulburn River System (excluding Lake Eildon)
	The Kiewa River System	Waranga Basin

- by using a combined total of 10 labelled nets (either hoop nets or open top lift nets) in all other inland waters, including Lake Eildon, Rocklands Reservoir and Lake Dartmouth.

How to measure your Murray spiny freshwater crayfish



Murray spiny freshwater crayfish are measured from the rear of the eye socket to the nearest part of the rear edge of the carapace (main body shell).

Measuring devices: call our Customer Service Centre on 136 186 to get a **FREE** measure.

The number, size, shape and labelling of equipment used is important. See page 67 for details.

SPECIES NOT LISTED HAVE A BAG LIMIT OF 5

SPINY CRAYS

Spiny freshwater crayfish (all species other than Glenelg spiny freshwater crayfish and Murray spiny freshwater crayfish)

Scientific name: *Euastacus* spp.

Minimum legal size: 9 cm carapace length.

Bag limit: 5 (of which no more than 1 crayfish may exceed 12 cm carapace length).

Range: Many other species of spiny freshwater crayfish species are found in different river systems across Victoria.

Regulations on catching spiny freshwater crayfish:

- You must not possess female spiny freshwater crayfish with eggs, or with young attached.
- You must not remove eggs or young from a female at any time.
- You must return females in berry or carrying young to the water immediately and without further harm.



Central Highlands spiny crayfish

Important: spiny freshwater crayfish must be retained whole or in carcass form. This means you need to keep your crayfish in whole form (i.e. don't remove the tail from the carapace) until they are cooked, eaten or taken home. See page 87 for definitions and further details.

Collection methods for spiny crays

You may collect spiny freshwater crays:

- by hand
- by using up to 10 baited lines (no hooks)
- by using up to 5 labelled hoop nets in the streams, tributaries and impoundments of the following waters:

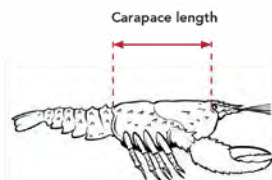
The Tarra River System

The Latrobe River System

The Glenelg River System (excluding Rocklands Reservoir)

- by using a combined total of 10 labelled nets (either hoop nets or open top lift nets) in all other inland waters, including Lake Eildon, Rocklands Reservoir and Lake Dartmouth.

How to measure your spiny freshwater crayfish



Spiny freshwater crayfish are measured from the rear of the eye socket to the nearest part of the rear edge of the carapace (main body shell).

Measuring devices: call our Customer Service Centre on 136 186 to get a FREE measure.

The number, size, shape and labelling of equipment used is important.
See page 67 for details.

SPECIES NOT LISTED HAVE A BAG LIMIT OF 5

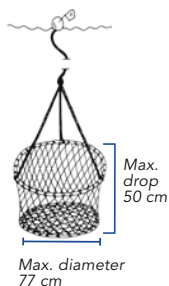
SPINY CRAYS

Permitted equipment and legal dimensions of equipment for collecting ALL species of spiny freshwater crayfish (except the protected Glenelg spiny freshwater crayfish)

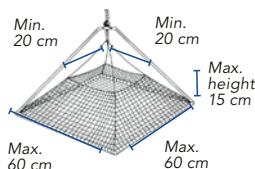
Important: Nets that don't adhere to the design and dimensions of the below nets are not permitted for use in Victorian waters.

Labelling your gear correctly: Hoop nets and open top lift nets must be attached to a tag that remains above the water's surface, with the recreational fisher's full name and telephone number OR full name and recreational fishing licence number clearly and legibly written.

Labelled hoop net
(in all waters)



Labelled open top lift net
(in all but 11 waters: see page 65)



Note: Fishers may fish for Murray crays during the trout and salmon closed season provided they are not using or possessing hook and line, in, on, or within 20 metres of the banks.

Glenelg spiny freshwater crayfish

Scientific name: *Euastacus bispinosus*.

Protected species: taking or possessing is prohibited within its range.

Range: Glenelg spiny freshwater crayfish are found in most of the southern flowing streams and rivers west of Warrnambool and the Grampians. In this region Glenelg spiny freshwater crayfish are found on both sides of the range.

Note: Glenelg spiny freshwater crayfish are not found in the Otway Ranges. This fishery has been closed because of sustainability concerns for the Glenelg spiny freshwater crayfish.



Protected species:
Glenelg spiny freshwater crayfish

YABBIES

Yabby (freshwater)

Scientific name: Cherax spp.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit:

- a maximum of 20 litres of whole yabbies; **or**
- 150 whole yabbies; **or**
- 5 litres of yabby meat in any form not exceeding 150 tails (including claws and other parts).

Possession limit:

- 60 litres of whole yabby; **or**
- 400 whole yabby; **or**
- 10 litres of yabby (other than whole yabby) not exceeding 400 tails.

The possession limit is the maximum number of a particular type of fish that a person can possess at any one time anywhere in Victoria (including your home).

Note:

- You must not possess female yabbies with eggs (in berry) or with young attached.
- You must not remove eggs or young from a female at any time.
- You must return females in berry or carrying young to the water immediately and without further harm.

Berried female yabbies must be returned to the water.



Yabby

Collection methods for yabbies

You may collect yabbies:

- by using open top lift nets in private waters such as farm dams
- by using up to 10 baited lines (no hooks)
- by using up to 2 labelled bait traps
- by using up to 5 labelled hoop nets in the streams, tributaries and impoundments of the following waters:

Note: These river systems contain lots of Murray spiny crays or protected spiny cray species. In light of this, only hoop nets can be used to collect yabbies. Open top lift nets can't be used in these systems because they will catch spiny crays and that is not what they were intended for.

Carrol's Creek	The Ovens River System	The Mitta Mitta River System (excluding Lake Dartmouth)
Ryans Creek	The Tarra River System	The Glenelg River System (excluding Rocklands Reservoir)
Wodonga Creek	The Latrobe River System	The Goulburn River System (excluding Lake Eildon)
	The Kiewa River System	Waranga Basin

- by using a combined total of 10 labelled nets (either hoop nets or open top lift nets) in all other inland waters, including Lake Eildon, Rocklands Reservoir and Lake Dartmouth.

SPECIES NOT LISTED HAVE A BAG LIMIT OF 5

YABBIES

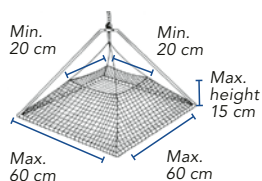
Permitted collection methods for yabbies

The use of opera house nets is banned in all Victorian waters, public and private.

Opera house net: no longer allowed for use in Victoria.

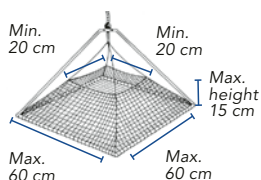


Open top lift nets can be used in private waters and in most public waters



Permitted equipment and legal dimensions of equipment for collecting yabbies in Victoria

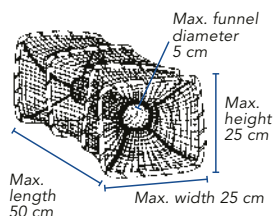
Open top lift net



Hoop net



Bait trap



Important: Nets that don't adhere to the design and dimensions of the above nets are not permitted for use in Victorian waters.

Labelling your gear correctly

Hoop nets and open top lift nets must be attached to a tag that remains above the water's surface, with the recreational fisher's full name and telephone number OR full name and recreational fishing licence number clearly and legibly written.



FRESHWATER SHRIMP AND MUSSELS

Freshwater shrimp

Scientific name: *Paratya australiensis*.

Minimum legal size: no minimum.

Bag limit: 0.5 litres.

Note: does not apply to purchased bait.

Collection methods:

- By hand.
- 1 dip net.
- Up to 2 labelled bait traps.



Freshwater shrimp

Glenelg freshwater mussel

Scientific name: *Hyridella*

(*Protohyridella*) *glenelgensis*.

Protected species: taking or possessing is prohibited.

Range: Glenelg freshwater mussel is found within the Glenelg and Wannon Rivers and their tributaries.



Glenelg freshwater mussel

Let's make
**Fishing
Better**

**VICTORIA'S RECREATIONAL
FISHING PEAK BODY**

HABITAT



WATER



ACCESS



BEST PRACTICE



PROMOTE



Visit the VRFish website www.vrfish.com.au
to join and contact us on issues affecting
recreational fishing. ✉ info@vrfish.com.au



#makefishingbetter



SPECIES NOT LISTED HAVE A BAG LIMIT OF 5

FRESHWATER FISHING RESTRICTIONS

Fishing restrictions are in place in some waters to:

- protect endangered native species and breeding populations of important species
- ensure fisher safety (near weir and dam spillways)
- protect the purity of domestic water supplies.

Restrictions will vary with location. It is your responsibility to know what restrictions, if any, apply to the area where you intend to fish.

Seven Creeks: You must not take fish, use or possess fishing equipment in, on or next to the banks of Seven Creeks between the retaining wall of Polly McQuinn's Dam and the Galls Gap road bridge (which crosses Seven Creeks near the Euroa-Mansfield Road).

Goulburn River: You must not take fish, use or possess fishing equipment in or next to the banks of the Goulburn River from the walkway over the Eildon Pondage Weir release gates (adjacent to Bourke Street) to the fishing boundary gates 200 m downstream.

Domestic water storages: Many water storages are totally closed to the public and to any form of fishing. Where fishing is allowed, it's often restricted to specific locations around the water body. Water storages are managed by local water authorities. Fishers must check with the relevant authority before entering these areas.



Goulburn River,
below the Eildon Pondage

USING EQUIPMENT IN INLAND WATERS

The number, shape and size of recreational fishing used to catch fish in Victoria is important in determining whether it is legal or illegal to use. In addition, some types of legal equipment cannot be used at all (e.g. spear guns in inland waters), or in certain locations (e.g. closed waters). Not all the fishing gear for sale in tackle shops or online is legal to use in Victoria.

Inland waters

Inland waters are any waterway from its mouth to its source and any inlet or lagoon connected with it AND any swamp, lake, lagoon, backwater, billabong, dam, river, stream or public water storage reservoir. Inland waters do not include the Gippsland Lakes, Lower Lake of Mallacoota Inlet, Lake Tyers and Wingan Inlet and Victorian waters that are not inland waters such as (but not limited to) Port Phillip Bay and Western Port. See pages 88–89 for further details.

Summary of legal equipment for inland waters

The following equipment can only be used to catch or attempt to catch fish (including invertebrate species) in Victoria's inland waters. Before you use this equipment you must be aware of the rules that govern its use (see pages 73–76).

Equipment type	Maximum number permitted in Inland waters
Lines with hooks	2; see page 73
Hooks per line	2, or 1 bait jig; see page 73
Baited lines with no hook	10; see page 73
Bait pump (hand-operated suction)	Can be used; see page 73
Bait traps — labelled	2; see page 74
Dip/landing net	Can be used; see page 74
Hand-cranked electric reels	Can be used; see page 75
Bait net (hauling net)	Can be used in certain waters only; see page 74
Hoop nets — labelled	Up to 5 hoop nets can be used in 11 river systems (see page 75). In all other inland waters a combined maximum total of 10 hoop nets and/or open top lift nets can be used.
Open top lift net — labelled	Cannot be used in 11 river systems (see page 75). In all other inland waters a combined maximum total of 10 hoop nets and/or open top lift nets can be used.

Note:

- Hand-held spears and spear guns cannot be used in inland waters.
- Gaffs can only be used to assist in landing your catch (see page 74).

USING EQUIPMENT IN INLAND WATERS

Labelling your gear correctly

Hoop nets, open top lift nets and bait traps must be attached to a tag that remains above the water's surface, with the recreational fisher's full name and telephone number OR full name and recreational fishing licence number clearly and legibly written.



Max.
drop
50 cm

Max. diameter
77 cm

Example of a correctly
labelled hoop net

Lines, hooks and jigs

Lines:

You must not leave a line or rod unattended. Your line must be in sight and within 50 m of your position.

Hooks and jigs:

One hook is defined as:

- a single hook
- a group of 4 hooks linked together by the eye
- a lure
- a squid jig
- a bait jig.

Keeper hook:

A keeper hook is defined as an assembly of 2 hooks arranged to keep bait in one position at the line.

It has 1 hook attached to the end of the line and a second hook that can slide down the line and touch the attached hook.

Bait jig:

A bait jig is defined as a continuous series of no more than 6 unbaited lures with hooks less than 2 cm in length, attached to a line with a total rig length of up to 3 m.

In inland waters, each licensed or exempt fisher may use a maximum of 2 lines per person (can be a combination of either hand lines or rods with reels) with no more than 2 hooks or 1 bait jig attached to each line.

Baited lines

Baited lines are lines without hooks. Baited lines must not have any hooks tied to them.

A maximum of 10 baited lines (per licensed or exempt fisher) may be used and possessed in any inland water.

Bait pumps

Hand-operated suction bait pumps with a barrel diameter not exceeding 8.5 cm may be used. A sieve can be used in conjunction with the pump.

Note: You must not use a bait pump as a tool to dig with.

USING EQUIPMENT IN INLAND WATERS

Bait nets (hauling nets)

You may use a bait net to take bait from the following inland waters only:

- any lake, swamp, marsh or lagoon
- Curdies River between the 'Narrows' and the bridge on the Great Ocean Road at Peterborough
- Fitzroy River downstream from the boat ramp
- Glenelg River downstream from the southern boundary of the lower Glenelg National Park
- Hopkins River downstream from Rowans Lane to within 200 m of the mouth of the river
- Merri River downstream from the Princes Highway
- Snowy River downstream from the Government Wharf at Marlo
- Surrey River downstream from the Princes Highway at Narrawong
- Wimmera River downstream from the bridge on the Stawell-Marnoo Road to Lake Hindmarsh.

A bait net must not exceed 6 m in length. Hauling ropes attached to each end also must not exceed 6 m. Bait nets do not include cast nets, which are illegal equipment.

Note: You must not tow, drag or haul any net behind a motor under propulsion in any Victorian water.

A licensed or exempt fisher can use a maximum of 1 bait net to collect bait from permitted inland waters. Bait nets must not be used in restricted waters.

Gaffs

Gaffs (including barbed flying gaffs) can only be used to assist fishers to land fish (other than invertebrates).

Barbless gaffs are a barbless hook or series of barbless hooks (with or without a handle).

A barbed flying gaff consists of a single hook (with or without a barb) with a rope or cord attached to both the hook and a rigid pole, such that the hook detaches from the pole when it penetrates the body of a fish.

Harpoons are not permitted.

Bait traps

A **maximum** of 2 bait traps are permitted per person to take fish or invertebrate species. Maximum dimensions of bait traps are listed on page 75.

Dip/landing net

A dip net consists of an open-faced net with a width and depth not exceeding 90 cm, attached to a handle.

Each licensed or exempt fisher can use 1 dip net to take a variety of fish or invertebrate species, with or without a light.

USING EQUIPMENT IN INLAND WATERS

Hoop nets

A hoop net is a cylindrical net open at the top, consisting of 1 or 2 hoops not exceeding 77 cm in diameter. The net must not have a drop of more than 50 cm.

- Up to 5 labelled hoop nets (per licensed or exempt fisher) may be used or possessed in or on the following 11 creek/river systems: Carrol's Creek; Ryans Creek; Wodonga Creek; The Ovens River System; The Kiewa River System; The Tarra River System; The Latrobe River System; Waranga Basin; The Mitta Mitta River System (excluding Lake Dartmouth); The Glenelg River System (excluding Rocklands Reservoir) and The Goulburn River System (excluding Lake Eildon).
- In all other inland waters a combined maximum total of 10 hoop net and/or open top lift nets can be used.

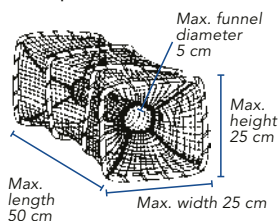
Open top lift nets

Open top lift nets are any square or rectangular pot or net open at the top not exceeding 60 cm long or more than 60 cm wide or with a mesh net height of no more than 15 cm and a top opening of no less than 20 cm by 20 cm without any internal device. They are designed for catching yabbies.

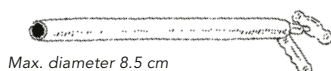
- Open top lift nets can be used in private waters such as dams.
- Open top lift nets can be used in most public waters but can't be used in the 11 river/creek systems listed in the left-hand column.
- In all other inland waters a combined maximum total of 10 hoop net and/or open top lift nets can be used.

Permitted fishing equipment and legal dimensions of equipment

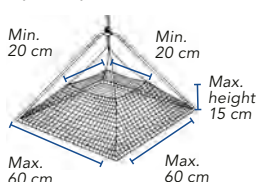
Bait trap



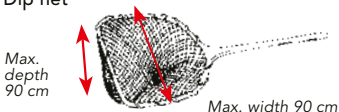
Bait pump



Open top lift net



Dip net



Hoop net



Important: Equipment that doesn't adhere to the design and dimensions of the above nets are not permitted for use in Victorian waters.

Hand-cranked electric reels

These are permitted for use by recreational fishers if they have a hand cranking mechanism, are fitted to a conventional recreational fishing rod and can be hand held when retrieving fish. Other types of powered devices are considered commercial fishing equipment and cannot be used by recreational fishers. If a person with a disability has a legitimate need to use a powered device other than a hand-cranked electric reel, they may apply for a permit from the VFA.

ILLEGAL FISHING EQUIPMENT

You must not use or possess illegal equipment in, on or next to Victorian waters, including private waters.

Explosives, firearms and bows and arrows cannot be used to take, attempt to take, injure or destroy fish.

You may not tow, drag or haul any net behind a motor boat under propulsion in any Victorian waters.

The following equipment is illegal to use in Victoria:

- Set lines
- Drum nets
- Mesh nets, cast nets
- Snares
- Snoods
- Explosives
- Firearms
- Mussel rakes
- Harpoons
- Crab pots
- Bow and arrows
- Spear guns
- Hand-held spears
- Opera House nets
- **Any equipment that does not conform to the size and shape of the legal equipment detailed on page 72.**

BAIT AND BERLEY

Please note: It is an offence to release live bait in a water other than where the bait was initially caught.

The release of live bait in other water bodies can result in the spread of undesirable fish species and/or disease.

Berley

Berley is any plant or animal tissue or extract that is placed in the water for the purpose of attracting fish.

Berley must not be used to attract fish for any purpose other than as part of a fishing operation.

There are restrictions on the amount of berley that can be used in marine waters. See page 41.

Mammal blood or offal

The use of berley that contains mammal blood or offal to attract any species of fish is **prohibited** in Victorian waters.

Please note bait pellets that contain mammal blood or offal can be used.

Bait restrictions

Live fish: A person must not use live fish as bait in Seven Creeks or in any tributary to that system upstream from the Galls Gap Road Bridge which crosses Seven Creeks downstream from its junction with Watchbox Creek.

Undersize fish: You must not use undersize fish as bait in Victorian waters.

Noxious fish: You must not use LIVE noxious species (including European carp, koi carp) and live European green shore crabs as bait in Victorian waters.

Fish ova (eggs): You must not use fish ova or any form of uncooked trout or salmon as bait or berley to take or attempt to take any species of fish in Victorian waters.

Frogs: Frogs' eggs, tadpoles and frogs — dead or alive — are protected wildlife under the *Wildlife Act 1975* and must not be used as bait in Victorian waters.

Protected fish: You must not use as bait any fish protected under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, unless an authorisation has been made under that Act.

Port Phillip Bay now free of commercial nets

All commercial net fishing has now ceased in Port Phillip Bay.

That means more fish for recreational fishers on Melbourne's doorstep: more snapper, more whiting, more calamari and more flathead.

The compulsory buyback of netting licences in the bay commenced in 2015 and was funded by the Victorian Government as part its ground-breaking \$81 million investment into recreational fishing over the last eight years.

Not one cent of your fishing licence fees has funded this buyback! That means more money left in the Recreational Fishing Licence Trust Account to do other great things like record fish stocking, more fish habitat, and improved access and facilities.

From 1 April 2022, eight commercial operators have remained in the bay, continuing to supply fresh snapper to consumers. They no longer use nets and the fishery is carefully managed by limits on catch and gear restrictions.

There's never been a better time to be a recreational fisher in Victoria. See you out there!

Learn more at www.vfa.vic.gov.au



Go Fishing Victoria
More people fishing, more often

LICENCE INFORMATION

Who needs a licence?

A Recreational Fishing Licence (RFL) covers all forms of recreational fishing in all of Victoria's marine, estuarine and inland waters.

Unless you are exempt, an RFL is required when:

- taking, or attempting to take, from public waters, any species of fish by any method, including line fishing, bait or shellfish collection, yabby fishing, prawning and spearfishing and/or
- using or possessing recreational fishing equipment in, on or next to Victorian waters.

Unless you are exempt, it is your responsibility to hold a current RFL when fishing in Victoria. Your RFL may not be loaned or transferred to another person.

Exemptions

You will not need an RFL to fish if you are:

- under 18 years of age
- 70 years of age or over
- the holder of a Victorian Government Seniors Card or interstate equivalent
- the holder of a Victorian Veterans Card
- the holder of a Department of Veteran's Affairs Gold Card coded (TPI)
- the holder of a Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card relating to age, disability or carer status, coded DSP, AGE, CAR and/or
- a person that identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Ordinary HealthCare Card, PPS (Parenting Payment Single) and Newstart benefit cards, Seniors Business Discount Cards issued by the Victorian government and DVA White and Orange Cards are not exempt from purchasing a Fishing Licence.

Carrying your RFL or proof of exemption

You are advised to carry your RFL with you at all times (unless you are exempt from the requirement to hold an RFL). Fishers exempt from holding an RFL are advised to carry evidence of their exemption.

If you take or attempt to take fish from inland or marine waters, or use or possess recreational fishing equipment in, on or next to Victorian waters, and you claim to hold an RFL, you must produce your licence for inspection on the demand of an authorised officer or member of the police force, either immediately, or, if you do not have a licence in your possession, within 7 days at a time and place stipulated by the authorised officer or member of the police force. Penalties apply for fishing without a licence.

Licence fees and availability

An RFL can be purchased for 3 days, 28 days, 1 year or 3 years. The RFL is GST exempt.

The easiest way to purchase a Victorian RFL is through the Service Victoria portal. You can access Service Victoria via the VFA website:
www.vfa.vic.gov.au/fishinglicence

You can select a digital RFL to store on your phone in the Service Victoria app for all licence durations. You can access your digital RFL immediately after purchase. For 1 and 3-year licences purchased online you have the option of a plastic card which will be mailed to you within two weeks. You can still purchase your licence from one of our authorised agents. Visit the VFA website for the current list.

An RFL can be purchased to start on a date up to three months in advance.

Licence renewal

Renewal reminders will be sent via email for 1 and 3-year fishing licences purchased online or from an online agent. If you have a paper licence, we'll send out a renewal letter. You'll only receive the reminder if we have your current email or postal address so remember to keep these details updated.

Contact the recreational licensing team at rec.licensing@vfa.vic.gov.au with any RFL questions or to update your details.

Interstate visitors

Recreational Fishing Licences issued by other states or territories are not valid in Victoria.

A Victorian RFL is not valid in other states or territories, so check if you need a licence when you intend to fish interstate.

Private or public waters

If the waters to be fished are 'private' waters (i.e. a dam or other structure built by the landholder on private land) then no fishing licence is required. If the waters to be fished are 'public' waters (i.e. a stream, creek or river), even if it crosses private property, then a licence is required. Permission from the landholder is needed to cross private land.

State boundaries

Murray River, New South Wales

A NSW recreational fishing licence is required for fishing in the Murray River. The southern bank of the Murray River, including the original location of that bank beneath impounded waters, is the state boundary between Victoria and New South Wales. South of that border, all Victorian fishing regulations apply, except at Lake Mulwala.

Lake Hume and Lake Mulwala

The Victorian and NSW governments have agreed on fisheries management arrangements for the border waters of Lake Hume and Lake Mulwala:

- Lake Hume comes under Victorian jurisdiction and regulations. Unless exempt, only a Victorian RFL is required for fishing in Lake Hume. NSW recreational fishers who hold a NSW fishing licence will not require a Victorian fishing licence to

fish at Lake Hume, which is managed as a solely Victorian fishery. Victorian fishing regulations apply to all parts of Lake Hume, upstream to the Seven Mile Creek near Talmalmo.

- Lake Mulwala comes under NSW jurisdiction and regulations. Unless exempt, only a NSW fishing licence is required for fishing in Lake Mulwala. NSW fishing regulations apply to all parts of Lake Mulwala, upstream from the Yarrawonga Weir wall to the point where the Ovens River enters the Murray, marked by the Bundalong boat ramp.

Note: Holders of Seniors' Cards, Health Care Cards and Repatriation Health Cards are not exempt from purchasing a NSW recreational fishing licence. Please contact NSW Fisheries on 1300 550 474 or visit www.fisheries/nsw.gov.au/licence-free/exemptions to determine if you are exempt from purchasing a licence before fishing in the Murray River or Lake Mulwala.

Glenelg River, South Australia

Victorian fisheries regulations apply to the short section of the Glenelg River in South Australia. A Victorian RFL is not required in this section of river.

Commonwealth and interstate waters

Fish caught in Commonwealth or other state waters and landed in Victoria must conform to Victorian catch and size limits if there are no recreational limits in the region in which they were caught. For example, if a recreational fisher catches a gummy shark in waters greater than 3 nm (nautical miles) off the Victorian coast (i.e. in Commonwealth waters) and lands it in Victoria, then Victorian catch and size limits apply, since there are no Commonwealth recreational catch or size limits for this species.

Buy a licence online!

If you have access to the internet, why not buy a recreational fishing licence online – www.vfa.vic.gov.au/fishinglicence it's cheaper!

Your licence will be emailed to you instantly.

There are several advantages:

- It is cheaper to buy a 1-year and 3-year licence online.
- You will receive a PDF version of your licence that can be printed at home or saved on your mobile phone. If you purchase a 1-year or 3-year RFL you will receive a plastic licence in the post or you can opt to receive a digital licence.
- Should you lose your licence, it can be sent to you by calling 03 8392 6867.
- It reduces administration costs, meaning more can be spent on worthwhile projects.

YOUR FISHING LICENCE FEES AT WORK



The grants program

Every year the Victorian Government disburses

revenue from the sale of recreational fishing licences to projects that will improve recreational fishing in Victoria.

Since 2001, the Recreational Fishing Grants Program has funded over 750 projects throughout Victoria.

The program includes:

- the Small Grants Program open year-round for projects up to \$5,000
- the Intermediate Grants Program open year-round for projects up to \$50,000 and specifically aimed at angling clubs
- the Large Grants Program for projects up to \$100,000
- the Commissioning Program for projects generally over \$100,000 (which are determined by consulting directly with fishers)

Large Grant applications are sought each year in these four categories:

- Fishing access and facilities
- Fisheries' sustainability and habitat improvement
- Fisheries-related education, information and training
- Fisheries-related research

For ALL fish stocking proposals contact the VFA on (03) 5770 8045 during normal business hours.

Who can apply?

Grants will be offered to incorporated, statutory and government bodies. But if you're an individual with a great idea, get your angling club, association or local council to help you prepare an application. For more information, contact VFA on (03) 8392 6872 or visit www.vfa.vic.gov.au/fishinggrants to apply online.

Recreational Fishing Licence Trust Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee provides advice to the Minister on the expenditure of fishing licence revenue. Membership includes eight recreational fishers (plus an independent Chairperson) who collectively provide a range of knowledge, experience and views regarding recreational fishing from across the State.



Installing fish habitat on the Maribyrnong River



Funding 13 extra fisheries officers



New cutting boards at Hastings

Your fees at work



Since 2010, the popular Small Grants Program has funded over 400 projects worth more than \$1,070,000

to local fishing clubs and groups.

In the last year the Intermediate Grants Program has seen funding provided to the following projects:

- \$55,000 to extend the Ouyen Lake Floating Fishing Pontoon and Walkway
- \$51,865 to improve access for recreational fishers to Painkalac Creek at Airey's Inlet
- \$50,000 to improve access to Lake Purrumbete
- \$50,000 to establish a reliable water supply to Nhill Lake
- \$38,402 for habitat works on the Ovens River, in an area close to Bright
- \$19,796 for the construction of a staircase to provide better access at Corinella

The 2022–23 round of the Large Grants Program saw \$1,233,563 allocated to 10 new projects including:

- \$317,514 to Ozfish Unlimited to enhance recreational fishing reefs in Port Phillip Bay
- \$293,750 to the North Central CMA to upgrade the Gunbower Weir fishway
- \$110,000 to the East Gippsland CMA for habitat restoration
- \$109,999 to City of Greater Bendigo to increase fish habitat and access at Kennington Reservoir
- \$67,000 to Ozfish Unlimited to host a series of forums on the importance of fish habitat in northern Victoria
- \$50,000 to Goulburn Murray Water to construct an all-abilities amenity block at Picnic Point, Cairn Curran Reservoir
- \$47,400 to Parks Victoria to upgrade the submersible bore pump at Karkarook Lake

These projects are in addition to \$403,692 which will be allocated to the following two projects through the 2022-23 Commissioning Program:

- \$276,512 for the production of a range of popular education and communication products that assist recreational

fishers to understand and comply with fishing regulations

- \$127,180 to monitor key recreational fish species in the Port Phillip, Western Port, Corner Inlet, Gippsland Lakes and Lake Entrance coastal fisheries

A further \$836,677 was allocated towards the implementation of the Go Fishing Victoria plan, which included the state-wide fish stocking program, infrastructure and access projects, and recreational fishing festivals and events.

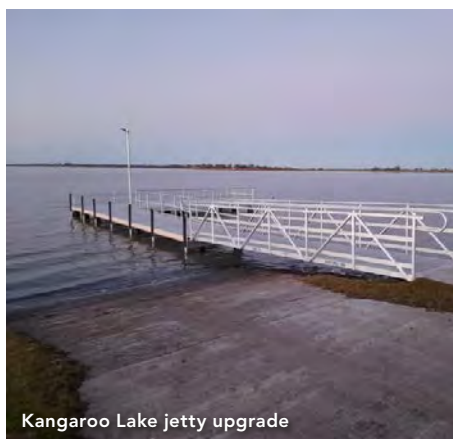
During 2022–23, recreational fishing licence (RFL) revenue also funded:

- The purchase and liberation of native fish and trout, made in consideration of, and to complement the planned annual stocking program conducted by the Victorian Fisheries Authority.
- The Victorian Fishcare program
- The administration of the RFL trust account and Grants Programs
- VRFish
- The deployment of thirteen Fisheries Officers.

Each year, a report is tabled in Parliament showing all RFL trust account revenue and expenditure.

www.vfa.vic.gov.au/feesatwork







Inspiring and empowering women
in fishing and boating



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Go Fishing Victoria
More people fishing, more often



FOOD SAFETY

One of the joys of fishing is being able to bring home some fish for your meal. If you intend to eat your catch, there are some important tips to follow to help you remain healthy when enjoying your bounty.

Safe handling of your catch

Important tips for catching or collecting aquatic species include:

- Keep fresh catch cold and covered by putting it in ice or a refrigerator straight away.
- Keep equipment and surfaces clean.
- Don't let recreational catch or bait drip onto other food.
- Only catch or collect when water quality is good. Remember that water quality can change and not all harmful things can be seen with the naked eye.
- Obey all public health signage.

Shellfish

Be particularly careful when eating shellfish caught recreationally, including pipis, oysters, mussels and scallops. Shellfish are filter feeders that consume algae and other microscopic organisms in the water. If the water is polluted, shellfish can accumulate the harmful substances in their flesh and

organs, increasing the risk of being exposed to toxins causing disease such as paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP). Eating catch contaminated with such toxins can result in serious illness or death. To minimise your risks, avoid consuming shellfish from all waters where the water quality may be poor.

For example, it is always unsafe to eat wild shellfish collected near:

- marinas or other places where boats discharge waste
- sewage, industrial or stormwater outfalls
- areas with septic tanks
- places affected by recent heavy rain
- areas affected by toxic algal blooms.

Commercially sold shellfish in Victoria is subject to strict food safety quality assurance programs and are safe to eat. To minimise risks to recreational fishers, the VFA is undertaking routine pipi and water quality testing around Venus Bay — an area identified as a key recreational shellfish area. It is recommended that fishers observe all signage in the area. Remember that cooking will not destroy or remove toxins that might be present in shellfish.

For more information on toxins in Venus Bay pipis please visit: www.vfa.vic.gov.au/toxinsinvenusbaypipis

Be prepared. Be safe.

**DIVING FOR ABALONE IS RELATIVELY SAFE,
BUT THERE IS A RISK OF DROWNING.**

Visit vfa.vic.gov.au/safediving for tips on how to dive safely.



Let's make fishing
better, for everyone.



RECREATIONAL FISHING CODE OF CONDUCT

VRFISH HAS DEVELOPED THIS CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RECREATIONAL
BOAT, SHORE, RIVER, STREAM AND JETTY FISHERS IN VICTORIA.

Recreational fishers have a responsibility to look after fisheries resources for the benefit of the environment and future generations of fishers. This Code of Conduct provides guidelines to minimise conflicts on the water, demonstrate best practice for responsible fishing and result in a more enjoyable fishing experience for all.

1

Awareness of and compliance with fishing **REGULATIONS**.



2

RESPECT the rights of other anglers and users.



3

PROTECT and restore the environment and fish habitat.



4

Carefully return **UNDERSIZED**, oversized, protected or unwanted catch back to the water.



5

Fish species and other organisms must not be **RELOCATED**/transferred into other water bodies.



6

Always seek **PERMISSION** when entering private property.



7

Use **ESTABLISHED** access roads and tracks.



8

ATTEND to your fishing gear and value your catch.



9

EDUCATION - pass on your knowledge.



10

Respect Aboriginal sites, **CULTURE** and values.



RESPONSIBLE FISHING BEHAVIOURS

Gear selection

- Use tackle that is appropriate for the size and type of fish (light gear can result in a fish dying of exhaustion or stress soon after its release).
- Use circle hooks to increase a fish's chance of living once it is released.
- Stay with your gear to ensure that fish are retrieved as soon as they are caught (minimises stress and potential injury).

Removing hooks

Whenever possible **try to remove the hook while the fish is still in the water** (try not to remove the fish from the water).

- If the fish is hooked in the jaw or mouth, remove the hook using a hook remover or long-nosed pliers.
- If the fish is hooked deep in the stomach leave it there and cut the line as close as possible to the mouth.

Unwanted fish

When you catch a fish:

- out of season
- outside of legal limits (size, bag, possession)
- that you do not wish to keep (e.g. toadfish, rays, native seastars, non-target species) **release it immediately and with the least amount of damage or injury** (i.e. the least amount of handling).

Handling fish

A fish's body has a slimy protective coating, which can be damaged by excessive handling. Incorrect handling damages fish and reduces their chances of survival after release. Fish can also suffocate (lack of oxygen) and suffer internal soft tissue injury (organs are crushed) when lifted incorrectly or inappropriately handled.

If you must handle a fish (to check its identity or size) reduce damage by:

- using a landing/dip net without knotted mesh
- using wet hands or a wet towel to handle it
- placing the fish on cool and wet surfaces (not on hot and dry surfaces).

Releasing fish

When releasing fish, hold the fish horizontally and gently under the water, if possible. Wait until it revives then release your hold so it can swim away.

DO NOT release noxious fish species

— **this is illegal** (see page 97). You must kill noxious species, such as carp, and take the carcass away with you.

Dispatch fish

It is good practice to immediately kill the fish you intend to keep.

- Dispatch them with a quick blow to the head.
- Place dead fish in an ice slurry and store them away from sunlight (preferably in a moist bag or cooler).

Cleaning your fish

Some species must not be filleted while you are fishing. This is to ensure that size and catch limits for key species are adhered to.

Before you clean your fish remember to check if the species you have caught is to be kept in carcass form or not (pages 10–35 and 49–70).

Disposing of old fishing line and fish waste

Dispose of old fishing line and fish waste (carcasses, frames, guts, etc.) in bins. If no bins are provided, take it home and dispose of it in general domestic waste. Don't throw fish waste into the water on beaches or near cleaning tables because it can attract sharks and rays. Do your bit. Please leave your fishing spot cleaner than you found it.

FISHING DEFINITIONS

Catch limit: A general term used to describe any limits on catching or possessing fish. Bag and possession limits are types of catch limits. **Responsible fishers catch/collect their own fish.**

Bag limit: The maximum number of a particular type of fish that a person may take on any one calendar day while in, on or next to Victorian waters AND possess in, on, or next to Victorian waters. Once you have taken your bag limit you must not catch more of that species for other people to keep, or high grade your catch (i.e. return smaller fish caught earlier to the water and keep the bigger fish).

- *Bag limit examples:* Tiffany can have more than the bag limit at her caravan (which is 10 bream) because she is not in, on or next to the water. When Tiffany is fishing from her boat or at the boat ramp or fishing from the shore (in, on or next to Victorian waters) Tiffany must not possess more than 10 bream. So the previous day's catch must stay at the caravan park.
- *Bag limit example for fishing trips spanning midnight:* Trevor is a surf fisher and he is fishing overnight. Trevor can only possess 2 gummy or school shark on the beach, even though he caught them before midnight.
- *Bag limit example for fishing or collecting in groups:* A family is collecting spider crabs. A person can only catch up to 15 spider crabs on any one day. If you choose to give some away of these spider crabs to another person, they still count towards your bag limit. You cannot collect any more on that day.

Possession limit: The maximum number of a particular type of fish that a person can **possess at any one time anywhere in Victoria (including your home).** Applies to Southern bluefin tuna, Murray cod, abalone, yabbies, Murray spiny freshwater crayfish and rock lobster.

Carcass (scale fish): The body of a fish that is not cut or mutilated in any manner other than to remove the gut, gills or scales.

Carcass (sharks including elephant fish): The body of a shark or elephant fish that is not cut or mutilated in any manner other than to remove the gut and head forward and clear of the rear-most gill slit.

Carcass (skates, rays and guitarfish): The body of a skate, ray or guitarfish that is not cut or mutilated in any other manner than to remove the gut.

Carcass (spiny freshwater crayfish): The body of a crayfish that is not cut in any way other than to remove one or more legs or claws, or is not mutilated in any way other than the absence of one or more legs or claws.

Scale fish: Species of fish with fins other than sharks, skates and rays.

Seasons: A 'closed season' for a particular species is a period during which you must not take, attempt to take or possess that species. Species for which there is a closed season may be fished only during their open season. Fish caught accidentally during the closed season must be released immediately with as little harm as possible.

Lake and river boundaries: For the purposes of regulations, the boundary between a lake and a river is the point at which the flowing water of the river meets the backed-up waters of the lake, regardless of the water level of the lake.

Size limits: The smallest (minimum legal size) and the largest (maximum legal size) fish you can legally keep. Fish outside the legal size range must be returned to the water immediately and without harm. The legal size of fish must be checked quickly. Measure fish from the tip of the snout with the mouth closed to the end of the tail. Fish that you wish to keep should be dispatched immediately and placed on ice.

WATER DEFINITIONS

Inland waters are:

- any waterway from its mouth to its source and any inlet or lagoon connected with it; and
- any swamp, lake, lagoon, backwater, billabong, dam, river, stream or public water storage reservoir.

Inland waters do not include:

- the Gippsland Lakes, Lower Lake of Mallacoota Inlet (see map 5), Lake Tyers (see map 7) and Wingan Inlet (which are considered marine waters).

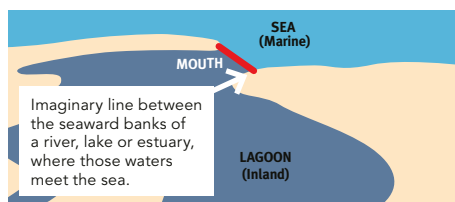
Marine waters are:

- the Gippsland Lakes, Lower Lake of Mallacoota Inlet (see map 5), Lake Tyers (see map 7) and Wingan Inlet
- Victorian waters that are not inland waters such as (but not limited to) Port Phillip Bay and Western Port.

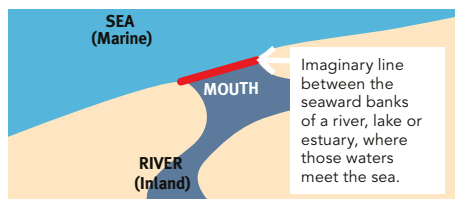
Note: Water on private property, such as farm dams, are neither inland nor marine waters.

Mouth: Imaginary line between the most seaward banks of a river or estuary where:

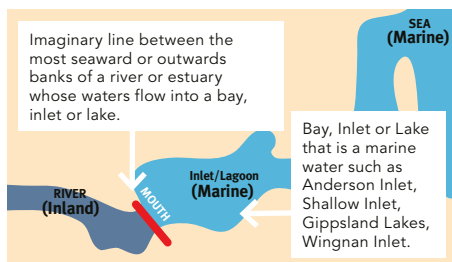
- those waters meet the sea (maps 1 and 2)
- those waters flow into a bay, inlet or lake (e.g. Port Phillip Bay, Wingan Inlet, Gippsland Lakes) (see map 3).



Map 1: Example of an inland and marine water boundary

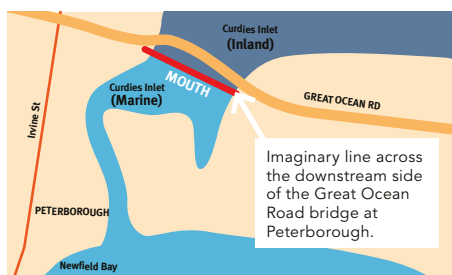


Map 2: Example of an inland and marine water boundary

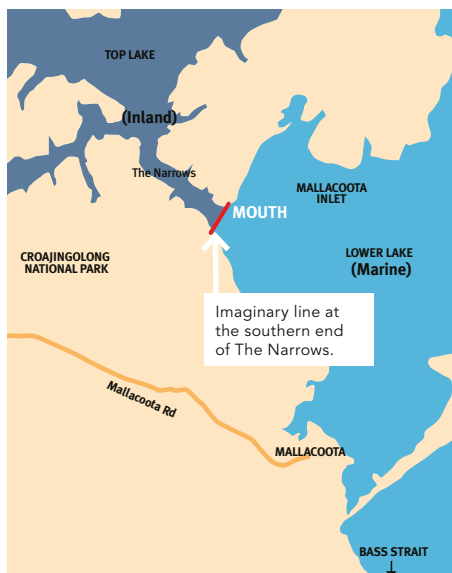


Map 3: Example of an inland and marine water boundary

The location of the inland/marine water boundary (mouth) differs for the following waterways (see maps 4–9).



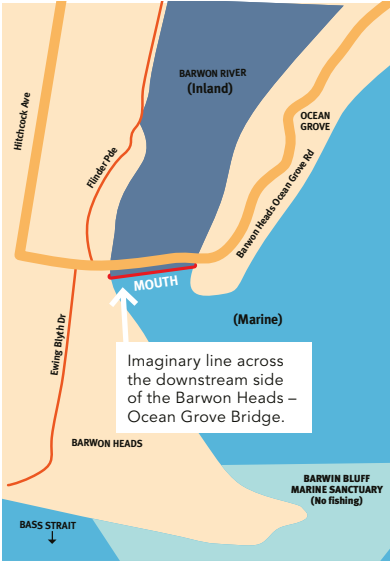
Map 4: Inland and marine water boundary at Curdies Inlet



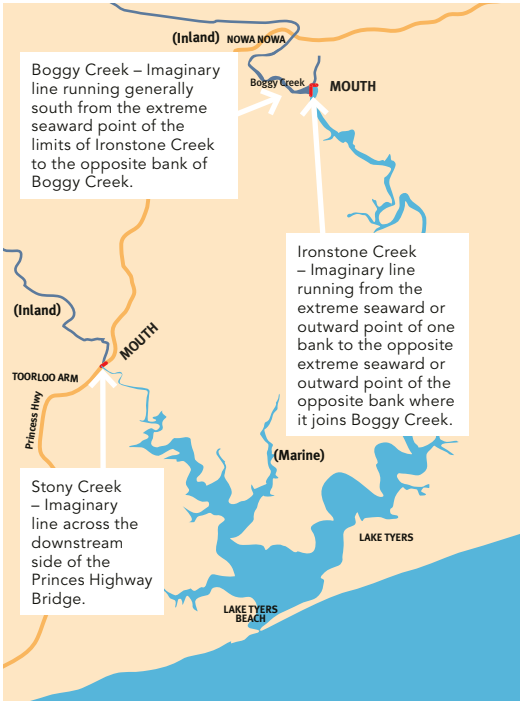
Map 5: Inland and marine water boundary at Mallacoota Inlet



Map 6: Inland and marine water boundary at the Merri River



Map 8: Inland and marine water boundary at the Barwon River



Map 7: Inland and marine water boundaries at Lake Tyers



Map 9: Inland and marine water boundary at the Yarra River

FISHERIES OFFICERS

Fisheries officers are employed to protect our fisheries and promote responsible fishing and boating. One of their roles is to ensure compliance with fishing regulations. Officers are also authorised to enforce laws pertaining to: litter (discarding cigarette butts, fishing tackle, bait and general rubbish); marine national parks (illegal fishing activity); boating safety (speeding in a vessel, incorrect safety gear); wildlife; use of public land (campfires, vehicle use and park and forest regulations); and shipwrecks.

What can I expect during an inspection?

During a routine fisheries inspection, you can expect a fisheries officer to:

- give you information about your obligations in relation to fishing
- ask you to produce a current fishing licence or permit, or evidence of an exemption
- ask to access your bag, fishing equipment, esky, container, vehicle or vessel for inspection
- measure and count fish in your possession to check compliance with size and bag limits.
- if you are in charge of a boat, ask you to produce a boat licence and the required safety equipment for inspection.

What powers do fisheries officers have to protect Victorian fisheries?

Fisheries officers can by law:

- stop any water vessel or vehicle to carry out an inspection
- ask for your name and home address
- search any equipment such as baskets, eskies or other containers
- place alleged offenders under arrest
- issue infringement notices

- seize any fish, fishing gear or other equipment, including boats and vehicles, that have been used in an alleged offence or is in the possession of a suspected offender.

What happens if I am detected committing an offence?

If detected or the officers believe you have committed an offence they will:

- explain the nature of the alleged offence
- request your full name and home address
- invite you to participate in an interview
- issue a seizure receipt if any fish, property or documents are seized
- advise you of the likely course of action.

What are the compliance options used by fisheries officers?

Options range from providing educational material to prosecutions. Where it is apparent that a breach of the legislation has occurred, the VFA will take the appropriate action depending on the severity of the offence.

Compliance options include:

- education
- verbal and official warnings
- issuing an infringement notice
- prosecution
- cancellation of a licence or permit.

What happens if I don't comply with a fisheries officer's directions?

During an inspection or enquiry, an officer may request certain things of you in accordance with their legislative powers.

Failure to comply with a lawful request from an officer may result in you being:

- arrested and conveyed to a police station
- charged and summonsed to appear before a court
- placed under bail conditions.

REPORTING ILLEGAL FISHING

If you suspect someone is breaking our fishing rules, do not approach them, move well away and then please phone 13 FISH (13 3474) and tell us what you see.

- This number will be answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- You will be asked to leave your telephone number and name.
- The fisheries officer on duty will be paged and will return your call.
- All information will be treated in strict confidence.

While fisheries officers may not always be able to immediately respond, the information you provide helps us to catch irresponsible fishers and to prevent illegal fishing. We use your 13 FISH information to help us target our enforcement efforts.

General fisheries enquiries should be directed to the Customer Service Centre on 136 186.



RULE REMINDERS

- **It is an offence to sell your recreational catch:** You must not take fish, including bait, for sale, barter or exchange or sell fish or expose fish for sale. The maximum penalties for people convicted of illegally selling, trading or buying recreational catch are fines of more than \$30,000 and up to 12 months in prison. Maximum penalties for people convicted of illegally selling, trading or buying recreationally caught abalone, rock lobster, Murray cod or bluefin tuna are fines of more than \$180,000 and up to 10 years in prison.
- **Set lines are illegal:** When you are using a rod and line or handline you must at all times while the line is in the water be in a position where that rod and line or handline is in sight and be within 50 m of that rod and line or handline.
- **Tethering live fish is illegal:** You must not place or retain a live fish on a tether in, on or next to Victorian waters. You may retain fish you wish to keep in keeper nets. Remember every fish you place in a keeper nets counts towards your bag limit.
- **It is illegal to share your fishing licence:** Your RFL is yours alone and cannot be shared. Each person using fishing equipment must hold their own RFL or valid exemption.
- **It is illegal to high-grade your fish:** High-grading of fish involves a person who has caught and retained their daily catch limit of legal sized fish, BUT who then continues to catch more of that species, subsequently discarding the previously caught fish, dead or alive.

REMEMBER: Fish caught that are retained in live wells, catch-bags, eskies, buckets, any other container or given to someone else COUNT TOWARDS YOUR bag limit.

- **It is an offence to tamper with or interfere with commercial fishing equipment:** All commercial gear must be labelled with the licence number of the commercial fisher to whom it belongs. If you think equipment is being used illegally call 13 FISH (13 3474) and report it.
- **Defacing or interfering with fisheries signs is illegal.** You must not remove or interfere with damage or deface a fisheries sign, fishing boundary posts or shark hazard signs.
- **It is an offence for recreational fishers to use or be in possession of commercial fishing equipment:** Please check what equipment you must never use and which equipment you can use in some places and at some times (pages 36–41 and 72–76).
- **It is an offence to use firearms, explosives and bow and arrows to take, attempt to take, injure or destroy fish (INCLUDING sharks):** Sharks can be dangerous, so if you are not targeting sharks and see one in the vicinity STOP fishing immediately and move away from the animal. If you catch a shark accidentally then cut the line well away from its mouth. Useful tips for dealing with sharks are listed on page 22.

Rules can and do change. Please check regularly for any rule updates

See fisheries notices listed on www.vfa.vic.gov.au or call the Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

FISHING IS A FUN AND HEALTHY ACTIVITY FOR EVERYONE

We all are Hooked on Safety

For a **SAFE** fishing adventure (of any type):

- CHECK water and weather conditions before you go
 - NEVER fish alone: always fish with a friend.
 - ALWAYS tell friends or family of your plans — where you are going, when you will be returning, who is going with you and what your plan B is (if conditions are not suitable at your planned destination).
- WEAR a lifejacket, carry safety gear (including a phone) and a first-aid kit.
 - WEAR appropriate clothing and footwear with non-slip soles.
 - WATCH the water at all times as conditions can change dramatically in a short time.

Have a great day fishing and tight lines.

SAFE ROCK FISHING

Rock fishing is a great way to catch a fish and enjoy the outdoors. But it can also be dangerous. Since July 2000, 20 people have died in Victoria while rock fishing. We want to reduce unnecessary drownings, which is why rock fishers **MUST** wear a lifejacket at these 10 high risk locations:

- Cape Bridgewater — rock platform near blowholes carpark
- Artillery Rocks, west of Lorne
- Rock platform opposite Sheoak Falls, south of Lorne
- Sorrento Back Beach rocks
- Rye back beach number 16
- Cape Schanck lighthouse rocks
- Bushrangers Bay rocks, east of Cape Schanck
- Pyramid Rocks, Phillip Island
- San Remo — rocks at the southern end of Potters Hill Road
- Punchbowl Rocks near San Remo

Your lifejacket must comply with the Australian Standard (AS 4758) and be a Level 50S lifejacket or greater (i.e. Type 3 or greater), your correct size, in good working order, worn correctly with all zippers, buckles and tapes secured, and be regularly serviced if inflatable. Children under your supervision must wear a lifejacket at the 10 locations, even if not fishing.

When fishing from rocks you **ALSO** need to:

- WEAR easy-to-swim in clothing
 - DO NOT WEAR waders
- Avoid high tides — this is the most dangerous time to fish from rocks
- OBSERVE first and fish later.
 - Take time to judge your intended spot before fishing to get an idea of tidal and sea conditions
 - Determine escape routes
 - Make sure you have phone coverage

- ALWAYS obey danger signs
 - never trust access and escape aids such as ropes and makeshift steps
- HAVE an escape plan
 - Be aware of what the weather and sea are doing
 - If the swell threatens your position, leave immediately
- NEVER turn your back on the sea.

IF you are swept into the water — DEPLOY the lifejacket and swim way from the rock. Your friend will CALL 000 and get help.

For more information go to www.vfa.vic.gov.au/rockfishing

SAFE SPEARFISHING

To ensure you do not hurt yourself or others with the speargun:

NEVER

- carry a loaded speargun in public places
- load a speargun out of the water
- shoot a speargun out of the water
- point a loaded spear gun at another person
- tether your fish to your body

ALWAYS

- UNLOAD your speargun BEFORE taking it out of the water
- identify your target and know what is behind your target before you shoot
- make sure your float line is not tangled
- leave the safety lock on until you're ready to fire
- keep your finger away from the trigger until you are about to shoot.
- carry a dive knife.

BOATING SAFETY

Ending up in the water is one of the greatest risks to the safety of boaters and paddlers in cool Victorian waters. So if you fish from a boat or kayak make sure you Prepare to survive: Know the five:

1. Know the weather

Know the forecast conditions for your whole trip, not just the time to head out

2. Practise getting back on

Being able to get back on board your boat will improve your chance of survival

3. Carry a distress beacon

Ensure you can get help as soon as possible

4. Lock in a buddy plan

Have someone who knows your plans, regardless of your experience

5. Wear a lifejacket

Lifejackets keep you afloat and buy you time to call for help

For information about boating safety visit www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au

SITUATIONS OF HEIGHTENED RISK — YOU MUST WEAR A LIFE JACKET

Wearing a lifejacket is mandatory when fishing from a boat or kayak in situations, that are designated to have a heightened risk. Lifejackets must be worn:

- when crossing cross a bar
- when you are alone on a boat
- at night
- one hour after sunset and ending one hour before sunrise
- when the boat is disabled
- when visibility is restricted
- in designated hazardous areas (for vessels under 12 m)
- Port Phillip Heads (the waters within a radius of three nautical miles from Point Lonsdale).
- when a BOM warning is current,
 - gale warning
 - storm force wind warning
 - hurricane force wind warning
 - severe thunderstorm warning
 - severe weather warning.



Head to: www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au/maritime-safety

KEEP CLEAR OF

**BIG
SHIPS**



“Be safe on the water”

PAUL WORSTELING, IFISH Host

PORTS VICTORIA

ports.vic.gov.au

NOXIOUS AQUATIC PESTS

Aquatic noxious species are non-native species that have been introduced into Victoria. These species have the potential to rapidly spread and invade native habitats and environments. If they become established, aquatic noxious species can feed on, or out compete, our native aquatic wildlife and can seriously affect fish habitat and fish stocks.

Aquatic noxious species:

- Freshwater species include carp, marron, mosquito fish and weather loach.
- Marine species include Northern Pacific sea star, European fan worm and Japanese kelp.

For a full list of aquatic noxious species go to **www.vfa.vic.gov.au/noxiousspecies**

You can help prevent the spread of aquatic noxious species by:

- checking your boats, kayaks, jet skis, fishing gear, ropes, anchors and wetsuits. Removing any attached weed, animals, water or sediment AND putting it in a bin (do not put it back into the water)
- thoroughly washing your boat and gear after each trip with fresh water in your yard or in a carwash draining all the water onto the ground. Do not let it drain back into a waterway. (Tiny eggs and plant spores can survive for months in damp areas)
- drying your boat and gear completely
- not using LIVE aquatic noxious species or European green shore crabs as bait
- reporting suspected sightings of aquatic noxious species if you see an aquatic noxious species outside of its known range. If you do, please take a photo and make a note of the date, time and location and email this info along with your name and contact details to: **enforcement@vfa.vic.gov.au**
OR phone 136 186.

PLEASE DO NOT collect or remove suspected aquatic noxious species (except for European carp — see page 55) as some native species can easily be mistaken for noxious species.

The Northern Pacific sea star

The Northern Pacific sea star is commonly found in Port Phillip Bay and is a noxious aquatic pest in Victoria. A threat to fish stocks and the marine environment, these sea stars release millions of eggs and can grow a full body from a single arm. They are often mistaken for native species, so make sure you can tell the difference.

If you think you see a Northern Pacific sea star outside of Port Phillip Bay please report it.

Pest

Northern Pacific sea star

Pointed tips →

- Five arms with pointed upturned tips
- Mainly yellow but may have purple detail
- Arms are covered in many small spines with jagged ends that are arranged irregularly along arms



CRIMP, CSIRO
Marine Research

Native

Eleven-armed sea star

Rounded tips →

- Colour brown or blue-grey
- Usually 11 arms, may be less
- Large well-spaced spines



T. Bogue

Zig zag sea star

Rounded tips →

- Colour brownish-yellow with mauve tinges
- Five arms with rounded, blunt tips



T. Bogue



Help our Murray cod fisheries

Improve your catch and release practices

- Be Prepared
- Gently Does It
- Reduce Air Time
- Use the Right Gear

Learn more at www.vfa.vic.gov.au/careforcod

Useful information

Fishcare Victoria

www.fishcare.org.au

Illegal Fishing

Reporting Line

13 FISH (13 3474)

Inland Angling Guide

www.vfa.vic.gov.au

Litter Report

1300 372 842

www.epa.vic.gov.au/litter

Noxious aquatic pests

136 186

enforcement@vfa.vic.gov.au

Transport Safety Victoria

1800 223 022

www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au

NSW Department of

Primary Industries

1300 550 474

[information-advisory@dpi.](mailto:information-advisory@dpi.nsw.gov.au)

nsw.gov.au

Parks Victoria

13 1963

www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

Futurefish Foundation

03 5996 6614

www.futurefish.com.au

Tide Information

Australian Bureau of

Meteorology

bom.gov.au/australia/tides

VICTAG

1800 677 620

Marine and Freshwater

Discovery Centre

(Queenscliff)

03 5258 3344

www.vfa.vic.gov.au/mfdc

VRFish

info@vrfish.com.au

www.vrfish.com.au

Water Police

1800 135 729

www.police.vic.gov.au

Weather: Bureau of

Meteorology

Forecasts General – 24hrs

www.bom.gov.au

Customer Service Centre

For all phone enquiries call 136 186

Our offices

Altona North

136 186

Apollo Bay

136 186

31 Nelson Street, 3233

Bacchus Marsh*

03 5367 2922

219A Main Street, 3340

Ballarat

03 5336 6856

402–406 Mair Street, 3350

Bendigo

03 5430 4444

Cnr Midland Hwy & Taylor
Street, Epsom, 3551

Braeside

136 186

55 Mills Road, 3195

Cowes

136 186

Horsham

03 5362 2111

110 Natimuk Road, 3400

Lakes Entrance

03 5155 8100

10 Staunton Street, 3909

Mallacoota

136 186

Cnr Buckland Street & Allan
Drive, 3892

Mornington

136 186

Archer Drive, 3931

Portland

136 186

83 Bentinck Street, 3305

Queenscliff

03 5258 0111

2A Bellarine Hwy, 3225

Snobs Creek

136 186

Swan Hill

03 5033 1290

324 Campbell Street, 3585

Tatura

03 5833 5222

Ferguson Road, 3616

Warrnambool

136 186

703–709 Raglan Parade, 3280

Wodonga

02 6043 7900

1 McKoy Street, 3690

Yarram

03 5183 9100

310 Commercial Road, 3971

Report illegal fishing

Call 13 FISH (13 3474)



Helpful information includes:

- Time and date of activity and if observed activity is continuing or has finished
- Location
- Number of people involved
- Vehicle/boat registration
- Activity
- Equipment

All information will be treated in strict confidence. Information provided will assist in planning patrols and enforcement operations when no immediate field response is possible.

For further information visit www.vfa.vic.gov.au/13FISH