

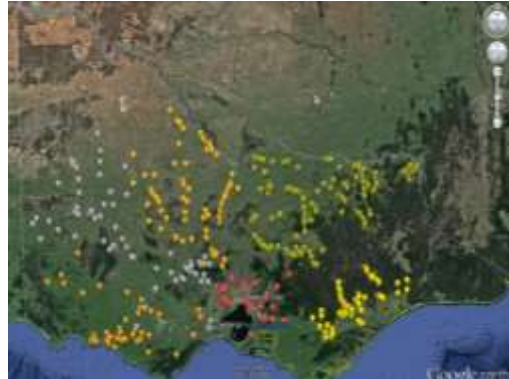
Freshwater Fisheries Management Update

Statewide Recreational Fishing Roundtable

17 June 2022

ANOTHER 10 million fish to be stocked across Victoria!

- In 2022-23 another 10 million fish, comprising 12 species are planned to be stocked across Victoria into over 239 waters, creating a smorgasbord of fishing opportunities.
- In May 2022 we hosted four Vic Fish Stock meetings to finalise the stocking plan that had previously been out for 3-months consultation, receiving over 65 submissions.
- A big thank you goes to the 40 recreational fishing representatives who attended the meetings and provided their valuable input, including from the Women in Recreational Fishing Network, VRFish, Australian Trout Foundation, Native Fish Australia, Futurefish Foundation, various angling associations as well as unaffiliated rec fishers.
- We'll now grow and deliver the fish thanks to the brilliant Snobs Creek and Arcadia teams and publish, print and release the Vic Fish Stock report in July 2022.



Greens Lake native fish salvage

- As part of the second phase of salvage operations at Greens Lake (near Corop) the VFA has continued to partner with Goulburn Murray Water, Keith Bell and local anglers to save and find new homes for large numbers of native fish from the decommissioned lake.
- To date, a total of 394 golden perch (largest 6.5kg) and 42 Murray cod (largest 1.2 metres) have been relocated to swim away and provide a boost to populations in Waranga Basin (goldens only) and the Goulburn River (near Murchison).
- This second phase of salvage operations culminated with a stakeholder day last week, involving the salvage of 17 large golden perch. Many eager Goulburn Valley anglers assisted with the salvaged fish being safely rehomed into Waranga Basin. The day also involved a BBQ and tour of Arcadia native fish.



Larger yearling trout stocking trial

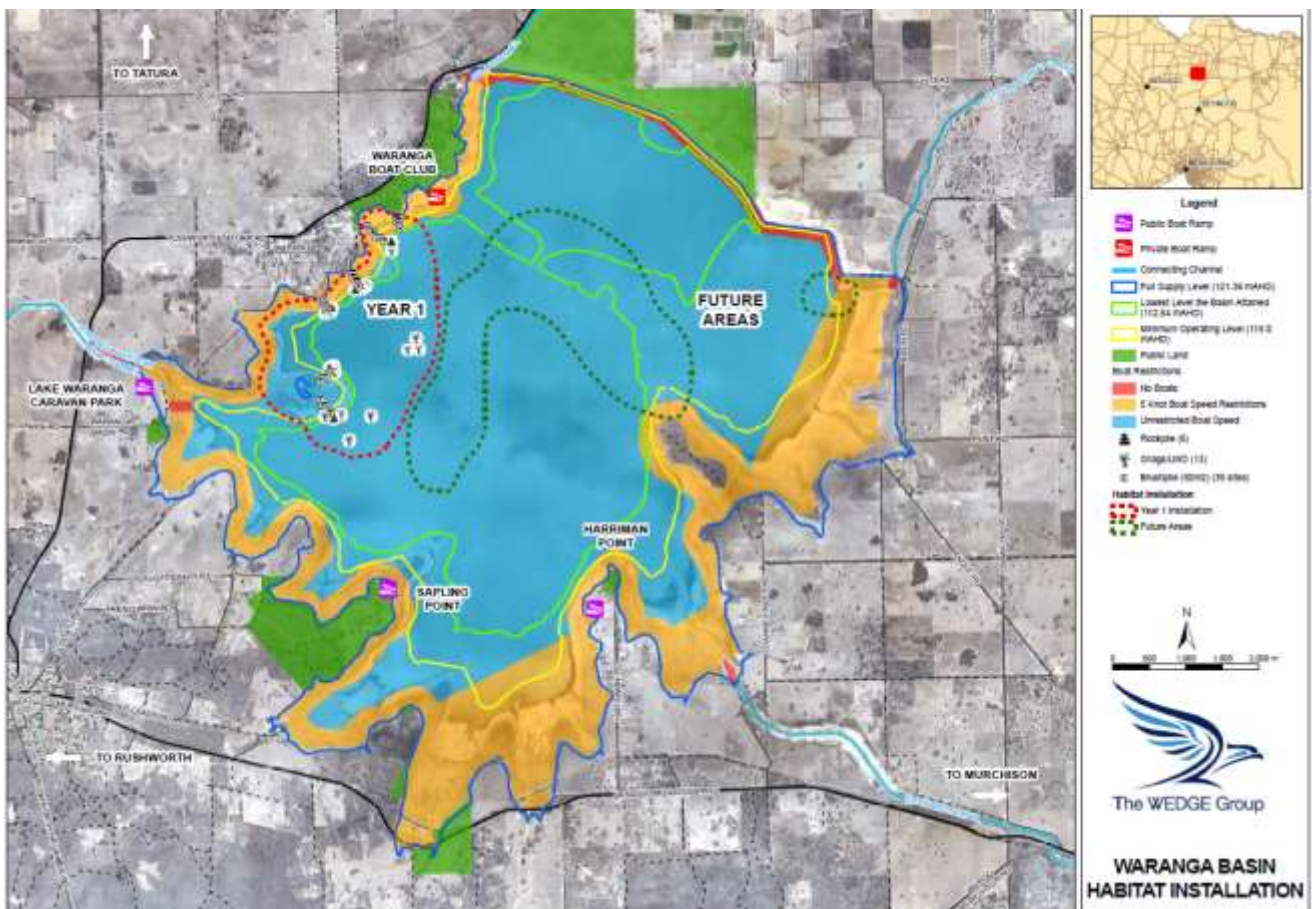
- The VFA have worked closely with VRFish, Ballarat District Angling Association, Australian Trout Foundation and prominent trout fishers and planned a larger trout stocking trial in four waters across Victoria.
- Lake Wendouree, Lake Fyans, Moorabool Reservoir and Tullaroop Reservoir will all be stocked with 50g or larger yearling brown and rainbow trout (see table)
- Over the next 3-4 years, anglers will record their catch and effort and this citizen science monitoring information of catch per unit effort, size of caught fish and condition of caught fish will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of stocking larger yearling trout compared with regular yearling trout.

Priority waters	Brown trout	Rainbow trout
Wendouree	6,000 50g+ (Ballarat), 7,200 50g+ (Snobs Creek)	6,000 50g+ (Snobs Creek)
Fyans	6,000 50g+ (Snobs Creek)	12,000 50g+ (Snobs Creek)
Moorabool	6,000 50g+ (Snobs Creek)	4,800 50g+ (Snobs Creek)
Tullaroop	20,000 20-40g (Snobs Creek)	30,000 50g+ (Snobs Creek)



Waranga Basin Fish Habitat Program

- Installation of fish habitat into Waranga Basin is getting closer thanks to the big steps taken by Roland Huber and the Goulburn Valley Association of Angling Clubs (GVAAC) successful Recreational Fishing Large Grant.
- To progress the installation of fish habitat a project steering committee has been formed (Jan 2022), a stakeholder engagement session held (Feb 2022) and the next deliverable will be the habitat installation plan (June 2022) - outlining the strategies for determining final habitat design, obtaining habitat supplies and determining a suitably qualified contractor to safely install the habitat (July 2022).
- The habitat installation plan is expected to recommend (1) installation of purpose-built habitat comprising of a natural timber-concrete beam complex to safely manage risk (boating and navigation) and manufactured within budget constraints and (2) a multi-year approach for habitat installation to fully optimise the recreational fishing growth opportunities for this waterbody (see proposed map below).
- The fishery enhancement project is complemented by the updated boat ramp for Waranga Basin (Harriman Point), delivered by Better Boating Victoria.



Arcadia Native Fish Hatchery – The last big step.

- Now that earthworks are done and, we have a successful first harvest season under our belt, all efforts are now focussed on the last piece of the jigsaw puzzle - construction and fit out of our native fish hatchery building at Arcadia. The hatchery building will measure 48 metres x 16 metres and once operational, will enable us to close the production cycle at Arcadia. This means, over the next few years, Arcadia will become self-sufficient, bringing broodfish into condition, breeding from them and, rearing larvae through to fingerling stage all on site.
- To make sure the hatchery can be fully utilised and ready for Spring, we have stocked our brood ponds with more than 150 thumping Murray cod and golden perch. To make them feel at home and, to build their condition, we've been feeding them on a rich diet of carp fillets and yabbies. There was quite a commotion when the first batch of 250 kilograms of yabbies were released into the broodstock ponds.
- All broodfish going to Arcadia are first put through fish health screening and treatment as part of a quarantine process. This also involves sexing, pit tagging, slat bathing and fin clipping broodfish for DNA analysis. It's important we keep fish health in top condition and ensure we maximise the genetic diversity of all broodfish used for breeding.
- Despite frustrating rain delays, we expect to complete the hatchery concrete slab by the end of next week and, by mid-July the hatchery shed will be erected. Soon after this, the internal walls and ceilings will be installed followed by electrical works and heating cooling systems. Around this time more than 70 specialised tanks, pumps filtration equipment will be installed by our highly skilled crew at Arcadia.
- The hatchery shed will be operational by September, in readiness to receive the first batch of Murray cod eggs laid down at Arcadia in October. It usually takes up to two seasons for Murray cod to settle in and reliably breed in ponds so, we will continue to receive larvae from Snobs Creek hatchery to ensure we maximise the use of plankton ponds this season.
- Last season we harvested 480,000 fish from the ponds. We have set ourselves an ambitious production target of reaching 1 million native fish at Arcadia this season.



Record amount of fish habitat installed in freshwater fisheries

- Over the past 6 months, the VFA have helped repurpose record amounts of tree debris (large logs and root balls) from storm damage, into valuable in-stream habitat for Murray cod, golden perch and a range of other species.
- An amazing 1194 root balls/stumps (188 truckloads) have been installed across 13 locations in Victoria. Key fisheries receiving woody habitat included the Goulburn River, Barwon River, Lake Eppalock, Lake Boga, Merrigum Lake (Burnanga Indigenous Fishing Club), Arcadia Native Fish Hatchery Visitor Pond and Rainbow Lake.
- In October 2021, the VFA formed a working group with our contacts across six Catchment Management Authorities (CMA's), OzFish Unlimited, VRFish, DELWP and private contractors, to connect with Bushfire Recovery Victoria and best utilise available root balls and logs following storm damage.
- A big thanks go to Bushfire Recovery Victoria for supplying and delivering the timber. This is a great example of working in partnership across Government, bringing together fish and land management, to build better recreational fisheries and improve river health in Victoria.



World Recreational Fisheries Conference 10 (WRFC 10)

- Planning is well underway for hosting the World Recreational Fishing Conference (WRFC) at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre on the 18th to the 23rd of February 2023.
- The WRFC International Scientific Committee and the Local Organising Committee have each met twice to provide advice to the VFA on Conference Themes, events, abstract review and promotion.
- The website for the conference was launched on the 16 June with the conference themes and calls for abstracts (presentations): <https://wrfc10.com/> The website will be updated regularly with event information and will be supported by a strong social media campaign.
- The WRFC will include exhibitions and also combine the Talk Wild Trout Conference and Murray Codference with the world-class event. Some exciting keynote speakers have been approached which we will announce as soon as we can.
- The WRFC is the world's most prominent gathering of the recreational fishing community and is held every three years in major cities around the world.
- The four-day event is expected to attract hundreds of international visitors from at least 20 countries, as well as recreational fishers and fishing experts from across Australia.



Welcome Cam Westaway!

- We are delighted to welcome Cam Westaway to the VFA Fisheries Management team - to lead the coordination and organisation of the fisheries content for the World Recreational Fishing Conference
- Cam has decades of experience managing recreational and commercial fisheries in NSW and WA, plus extensive networks across Australia and abroad in fisheries management and science. He's also a pretty handy cod fisher – welcome aboard Cam!



If you have any questions or comments about these or other projects, feel free to get in contact with the Freshwater Fisheries Management Team:

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