

December 2025

Recreational Fisheries Management Update

**Showcasing Lake Eildon
Murray cod to the world**

**Snapper fishing &
spawning success**

**Stocked estuary perch
alive and thriving**

**Fish habitat projects
funded all over the state**



*Cover photo: Kris Hickson with a
Murray Cod from Lake Eildon.*

*Through the Victorian Fisheries
Authority stocking program,
Lake Eildon has been stocked
with over 5.5 million Murray Cod
fingerlings since the 1990's,
leading to the creation of a
worldclass Murray Cod fishery.*



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Snapper Fishing & Spawning Success

Snapper season is well and truly underway and the snapper have been firing everywhere across Port Phillip and Westernport. Although this comes as no surprise to our fisheries scientists who undertook modelling that predicted the snapper boom prior to the season commencing.

Last year was one of the best snapper seasons recorded for both boat and land-based anglers. The trend continues this year with thousands of keen anglers getting outdoors and experiencing some of the best snapper fishing in the country, right here in Victoria.

With commercial nets removed from Port Phillip, free parking and launching at the state's public boat ramps and the last 7 years delivering two of the best snapper spawning events on record, it's a great time to be enjoying the sunshine and catching a fresh feed of fish.



To assess the abundance of juvenile snapper and compare breeding seasons, our fisheries scientists collect fish measuring between three and 10 centimetres at night using specialised nets. Results are then compared to a dataset of more than 30 years.

Spawning success varies depending on a range of environmental conditions and high producing seasons are often followed by smaller production years which is a typical natural variation within wild fisheries.

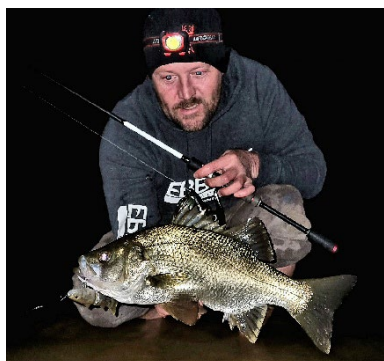
In 2017 we had a record spawning year and what we saw in 2024 was an unprecedented snapper season in terms of catch rates according to our creel surveys.

Creel surveys involve interviews of fishers to ascertain what they caught, what they kept and how long they fished for, and they're funded by your recreational fishing licence fees.

There was a spawning drop-off in 2018, but fish from the 2017-year class will continue to be caught over the next few years as they migrate into our bays. Our more recent 2022 monitoring showed the third highest abundance of baby snapper since surveys began in 1993, so we expect to see great fishing continue!

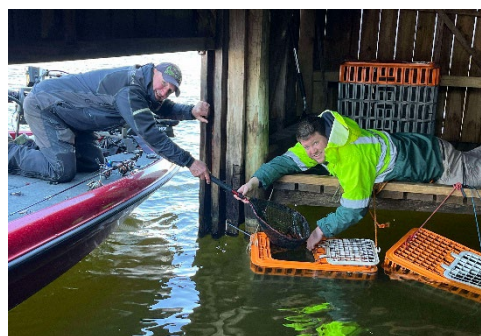


Stocked Estuary Perch Fisheries, Alive and Thriving



Over the last thirteen years, the VFA has stocked around 2.5 million estuary perch fingerlings into 30 Victorian waterways including lakes, rivers, estuaries, and impoundments. Prior to this, estuary perch breeding was experimental in nature with limited breeding and stocking success. This all changed in 2012 as we worked with recreational fishers to collect broodfish and send these broodfish to a marine hatchery facility in New South Wales. After a few years of trial and error, the production recipe for catching, transporting, and breeding estuary perch was developed and large-scale stocking became a reality. It's one thing to stock estuary perch, but how do we know if they are surviving, growing and most importantly contributing toward a recreational fishery?

In partnership with **Deakin University**, **Austral Research** and, with a grant through the Recreational Fishing Licence fund, ten stocked estuary perch waters were recently surveyed. Using a combination of electrofishing and netting and guided by local recreational fishing knowledge, estuary perch were collected for examination to determine age (and how this corresponds to stocking years), growth rates and fish condition. All of this tells us how stocked estuary perch are performing in each water, and into the future, which waters are best suited to creating an estuary perch recreational fishery.



Through this survey, researchers caught hundreds of estuary perch and are still processing samples and analysing data. The full results of this survey are expected in the next few months, but we can share some interesting observations to date. The biggest estuary perch was caught in the Werribee River estuary, measuring a whopping 47cm (1.7kg). It's interesting because estuary perch in this river were stocked in the freshwater reaches and some may have migrated over the wall during a flood? More broadly and based on the surveying effort, it appears good numbers of stocked estuary perch were present in Devilbend Reservoir,

Albert Park Lake, as well as the Maribyrnong, Werribee, and Barwon rivers. This seems to reflect angler feedback of quality estuary perch catches in these waters.

We acknowledge the effort and goodwill of recreational fishers who have volunteered their time in support of our estuary perch breeding and stocking program. In particular, we honour the contribution of Doug Phayer who recently passed away from a long-term illness. Doug led our perch search team from the start, and we celebrated his outstanding commitment at the last perch search event on the Glenelg River. We also thank many recreational fishers who helped guide our researchers to where the fish were: Brad Hodges, Kevin Baldwin, Nic Tribonias, Connor Jackson and Silvio Grech.

We're looking forward to the final report on this survey which will inform our future stocking program.



Angler Support Confirms Kingfish Bag Limit Change

The bag limit for yellowtail kingfish has been changed from 5 to 2 ahead of this Summer thanks to strong support for the proposal from recreational fishers.

Yellowtail kingfish are a highly sought after and valued recreational fish species in Victoria, typically averaging 5-10kg each.

Over the past five years recreational fishers have raised concerns that current recreational fishing regulations for the species are outdated, particularly the 5 fish per person day bag limit, being seen as beyond a reasonable day's harvest.



The VFA, in partnership with recreational fishers, reviewed bag and size limits for the species as well as scientific research and neighbouring jurisdictions management and consulted extensively with stakeholders regarding a fisheries notice proposal to change the bag limit for kingfish from 5 to 2.

193 public submissions were received during the 30-day public consultation period between 1-30 September 2025. 79% of submissions were supportive of the proposal, including casual to avid recreational fishers, angling clubs, charter boat operators, spearfishing organisations and the tackle sector. 17% of submissions were opposed to the proposal and 4% of submissions did not provide a position on the proposal.

A [VRFish survey](#) of 1023 respondents found 72% were supportive of the proposal, and 28% were opposed to the proposal.

The bag limit change is expected to:

- Better reflect rec fisher views of a reasonable day's harvest
- Better share the catch amongst more fishers
- Reduce local depletion of the species during peak fishing periods
- Potentially improve the fishery quality through better sized fish
- Align with the bag limit of other offshore species such as gummy and school shark.

The VFA will re-consult with recreational fishers on maintaining these regulations in 2026. Given the shared stock of kingfish, the VFA will continue to discuss the scientific understanding, stock status and fishery management arrangements for kingfish with other jurisdictions including NSW and South Australia.



Twenty-two fish habitat projects funded under Victorian Fish Habitat Improvement Fund

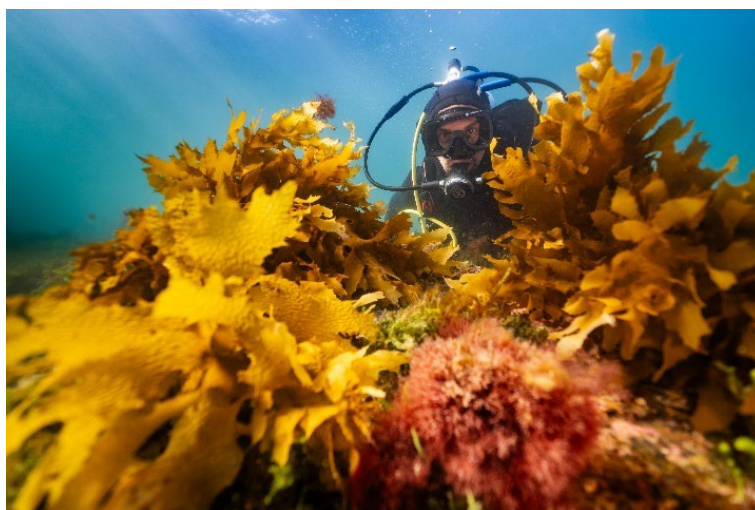
Applications have now closed for the VFA's fish habitat improvement fund: \$2.5 million in funding provided through the Victorian Government's Go Fishing Victoria plan, working with recreational fishers and partnering organisations to create better fish habitat across Victoria's waterways.

Twenty-two projects have been funded right across Victoria, giving a huge boost to fish habitat across fresh, estuarine and marine ecosystems. These amazing projects include:

- Establishing shellfish reefs and kelp forests in Port Philip
- "Fish hotels" for juvenile bream in the Hopkins River,
- European carp removal for catfish near Mildura, and
- Installation of log-jams and boulders for Macquarie perch and trout habitat in Victoria's high country.

Projects such as these will leave a huge legacy of continued improvement to some of our most valued recreational fisheries as well as iconic threatened fish like Macquarie perch. In some instances, like the shellfish reefs of Port Philip, these ecosystems are now "functionally extinct", however through programs such as this and the efforts of passionate recreational fishers, we can pave the way for their return!

And remember, even though this fund is closed for now, if you've got any great ideas for habitat improvement in your favourite waterway, we'd love to hear about them! The Recreational Fishing Licence program ("Your Licence Fees at Work!") is ongoing, as is the work of our other partners in restoring fish habitat: Catchment Management Authorities, Landcare and more.



Glenelg River Catfish Translocations



More catfish have been translocated to Northern Victoria in an effort to re-establish populations of the endangered native fish species.

On the weekend of the 15th of November, the VFA made the trip over to Casterton to collect catfish for translocation from the Casterton Angling Society's annual Carp/Catfish competition on the Glenelg River. We were greeted by many keen anglers not only from Casterton, but Dartmoor, Portland and Merino angling clubs as well!

The aim of the weekend was to collect as many catfish as possible as they are very common in the Glenelg River despite it not being their natural habitat. Once collected they are translocated to waterways where they are naturally occurring but are critically endangered to help establish and grow populations.

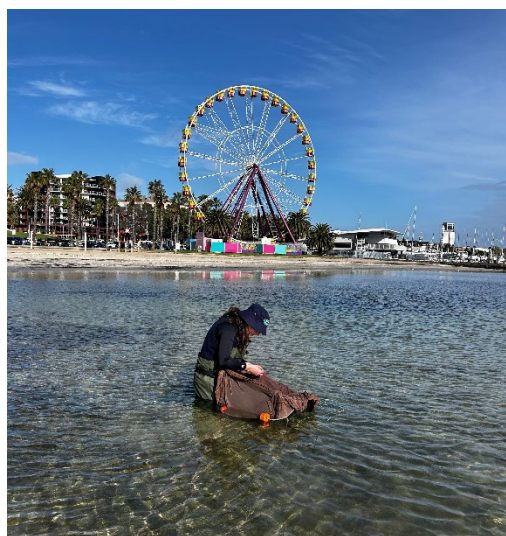
The competition was fierce as fishers tried to catch the most catfish and the biggest carp. It was awesome to see how passionate the local community were about preserving their waterways and helping to re-establish native catfish populations. Over the weekend there was a total of 31 catfish caught with the winning angler reeling in 7 catfish! They were all incredibly healthy and were at a mature breeding size, perfect to re-establish populations! A total of 146 carp were removed from the river!

Once all the catfish were collected, the VFA had the mission of delivering them safely to their new homes! Duryak Moira received 10 catfish while 21 catfish were released into the Goulburn River at Murchison. All fish swam off happy and healthy ready to enjoy their new homes and establish the next generation of catfish! It was a big team effort and we are incredibly thankful to the Casterton Angling Society for hosting such a wonderful event and for their ongoing support in helping the VFA with native catfish translocation.

With the help of recreational anglers, traditional owner groups and Catchment Management Authorities the VFA has translocated upwards of 12,000 catfish over the last two years to re-establish 22 populations in Northern Victoria. To re-establish this many populations of an endangered native fish is a massive step towards downlisting and recovery of the endangered native fish species.



Waves, Nets & Numbers – Whiting Surveys Underway



Spring is a key season for the VFA's science team as they embark on their annual King George whiting (KGW) pre-recruit surveys around Port Phillip Bay.

Occurring at 8 locations including Eastern Beach Geelong, Blairgowrie and Ricketts Point, they'll collect data on juvenile whiting found in shallow seagrass beds. The KGW captured are typically around 100 days old and are often only 2cm in length. Here, they'll continue to grow and reach the minimum legal catch size limit of 27 cm at 2-3 years of age.

Having undertaken these surveys annually for almost 30 years and coupling them with age estimates from larger fish, the VFA science team know that Port Phillip Bay's KGW only remain in the bay until they reach around 4-5 years of age. It's the long-term series of data collection that allow the VFA's science team to predict the success of the KGW fishery in 2-3 years' time.

To undertake the surveys, VFA staff drag a fine mesh seine several times at each location around the bay in October and then again in November. By repeating these surveys our scientists can account for natural variation in our data. When collecting the net and counting how many juvenile KGW are found, we often come across other species such as pipefish, shrimp, juvenile leatherjackets or pufferfish. Following the surveys, fish are returned to the ocean to grow and enter the KGW fishery.

Following the surveys, the data will be analysed and published to inform Victoria's recreational fishers on the potential success of the King George whiting fishery in the years to come.



On Country Wetlands Stocking Trial

The VFA is wrapping up an exciting trial of an innovative stocking technique for golden and silver perch!

Funded by the Commonwealth's *Murray Darling Water and Environment Research Program*, this 15-month project simulated the natural "nursery areas" that natural floodplain wetlands once provided for these two iconic species.

Unfortunately, due to river regulation these fish effectively no longer have access to these incredibly productive "food bowls" for juvenile fish.



Working closely with Traditional Owners, Mallee and North Central CMA's and the Victorian Environmental Water Holder, water for the environment was pumped into three selected wetlands that had first been dried out to eradicate carp and prime the natural bank of "seed" plankton.

Fish were then stocked as tiny larvae (~1mm!), monitored closely and then harvested to be translocated into permanent homes. Growth rates were unbelievable, with some goldens exceeding 25cm in 5 months!

There's still a lot to learn to perfect this technique, but thanks to this project we're well on the way to developing another potential stocking strategy to work in with our existing stocking programs!

To learn more, visit: <https://vfa.vic.gov.au/science-in-fisheries/wetlands-stocking-enhancement-trial>



Murray Codference 2025



The 8th Murray Codference was held at Shepparton on Saturday, 8th November 2025. The day was action packed, with lots of learning, networking, tackle browsing and prizes! The theme of the day was “Fishing is More Than Catching” and we heard excellent talks from VFA’s own Taylor Hunt on Victoria’s native fish resurgence, Anthony Forster about decades of inaction on Carp and Andrew Briggs quest to save Macquarie perch and the wetland stocking trials.

Keynote speaker Taka Kawasaki discussed the international trends in Daiwa fishing technology and the enormity of the fishing industry and how it is a valuable to the economy. Gage Wright spoke on his story from how he went from making fishing lures for himself to turning it into one of Australia’s leading lure brands for chasing Murray cod.

Robbie Alexander gave a candid talk about the positive impacts fishing has on social and mental health followed by Steve Vidler opening up about his journey to establishing a long career in breeding and stocking native fish. Andrew Colston shared the importance of family and his passion for fishing and how he incorporates the two by fly fishing clearwater streams for cod with his son Tommy.

Cassie Price, CEO of OzFish discussed the large movement of recreational fishers standing up for river health by building and establishing habitat and fish hotels for native species. Annique Harris spoke about the collaboration between the VFA, DEECA and ARI and the undertaking of native fish research and monitoring.

Lubin Pfeiffer shared his best native fishing experiences and lessons. All while inspiring those still chasing a trophy sized cod to keep working hard to reel in the reward of a lifetime. Colby Lesko counted down the best impoundments to catch a large cod with Lake Eildon taking the top spot! For those living in the cities and suburbs, Alan Bonnici gave away secret tips for locations to target native fish in urban waterways.

The MC of the day was VFA board member Wambui Migwe who did an excellent job engaging the crowd and VFA Director of Fisheries Management and Boating, Luke O’Sullivan, chaired the Q&A sessions which saw a wide variety of questions on topics such as Murray cod, carp and fishing gear!



The day ended with a debate chaired by Steve Threlfall between Robbie and Colby on the topic “*To live scope of not, that is the question!*”. With good arguments from both sides the crowd was split evenly for the vote, and no winner was crowned.

Trelly’s Outdoor supplied a whole heap of prizes to be won from hats to fishing rods! There was plenty of tackle browsing to be done and exhibits to explore between sessions. It was a great day with around 300 happy cod punters attending! We’ve been inundated with loads of positive feedback about the day! A massive thank you to everyone who helped make the day a fantastic fisheries engagement event!

Daiwa showcase Lake Eildon as our best Big Murray cod recreational fishery

In November, two of our Recreational Fishery Managers, Anthony Forster, and Mark Adams met with representatives from global tackle manufacturer Daiwa, to showcase our work in developing Lake Eildon's amazing Murray cod fishery.

The tour started with the filming of newly hatched Murray cod fry at the Snobs Creek hatchery and, our newly built small-bodied native fish conservation hatchery. This highlighted the VFA's work to recover both large and small bodied threatened native fish. Next stop was on the water at Lake Eildon where Anthony was interviewed about how the VFA transformed Lake Eildon into one of the best Murray cod Fisheries in Australia by stocking 1 million Murray cod into Lake Eildon between (2010, 2011 and 2013).



By marking these Murray cod fingerlings with a food dye called Calcein, and by sampling Murray cod a few years later, we found Murray cod from this stocking project survived, grew well and accounted for around 90% of the Murray cod that were sampled. As a result of this bold stocking initiative, recreational fishers now regularly catch Murray cod between 12 to 14 years old, many of which are now 1+ metre long. To illustrate this, leading up to the Murray Cod Conference, Daiwa pro-anglers fished Lake Eildon and were delighted to catch a range of impressive Murray cod (60cm, 75cm, 85cm, 104cm and 104cm) in addition to some golden perch.

Buoyed by a great few days Fishing at Lake Eildon, Taka Kawasaki, Daiwa's Product Development Manager gave a great keynote presentation at the Murray Cod Conference about global trends in Fish freshwater fish technology. To cap it off, at the Murray Cod Conference, we heard from legendary Murray cod fisher Colby Lesko that Lake Eildon is now the number 1 big Murray cod fishery in the country.

Daiwa are currently developing a mini documentary that will showcase Lake Eildon and how the VFA developed that fishery to the world. This could not only promote Lake Eildon's fishery management outcome, but it could also spur on national and international interest in Lake Eildon as a destination fishery.



Fish Stocking Program Updates

The salmonid stocking season is wrapping up and, despite conditions limiting water availability, 360,000 salmonids have been stocked into 115 Victorian waterways since July 1st. Estuarine stockings began in November with Australian bass and estuary perch stocking across the Gippsland region and select waters in the State's west including Rocklands Reservoir and the Moyne River.

Stonker stockings were a big success again this year - 1,000 large rainbow trout were spread across 17 of Melbourne's most popular fishing lakes giving urban fishers the chance to catch the fish of a lifetime, while a further 1,500 were stocked into the Goulburn River between Eildon and Molesworth.

September school holiday stockings have been delivered in full after some much needed rain. 35,000 on grown rainbow trout were stocked across 78 waterways, including the Arcadia Native Fish Hatchery's fish out pond, and seven waters received an additional boost of fish prior to Gone Fishing Day in October.

The crater lakes received 18,300 Chinook salmon across September-October and have been fishing well. 9,000 were stocked into Lake Bullen Merri while the remaining went to Lake Purrumbete. This year's Chinooks were stocked at a larger size, on-grown to 50g and these stockings complement the tiger trout that were delivered in mid-July (Bullen Merri: 3,500, Purrumbete: 3,300).



VFA Fish Hatcheries – Capital Works Update



The Victorian Government has committed \$96 million as part of its 'More piers, jetties and opportunities for little anglers' election policy which includes \$15 million to expand the Arcadia and Snobs Creek fish hatcheries.

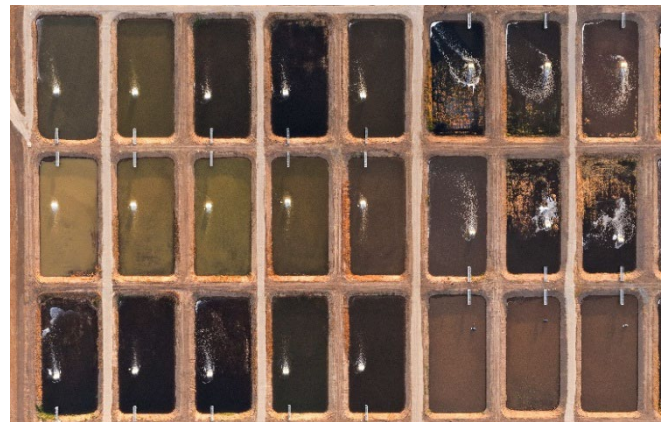
The Arcadia native fish hatchery and Snobs Creek hatchery expansion projects will significantly increase the production capacity of the hatcheries to meet the growing demand for recreational fish stocking with particular emphasis on Murray cod, golden perch, Macquarie perch and trout cod.

Arcadia Expansion

The expansion at Arcadia has been delivered in time for the 2025-26 native fish breeding season. The expansion now sees the Arcadia native fish hatchery's annual production capacity tripled to over 6 million fish, comprising predominantly Murray cod and golden perch. The expansion has increased the number of production ponds from 30 to over 125, extended the fish processing and fish hatchery buildings and built 50ML water storages to capture and re-use water throughout the farm.

On top of the traditional production ponds, a series of custom designed production ponds have been constructed for threatened and endangered species such as freshwater catfish.

A dedicated office/admin area has also been built for the VFA staff located at the hatchery. The new, modern area is attached to the main fish hatchery building and replaces the temporary facilities staff had been using since the property was purchased by the VFA in 2021.



Snobs Creek Expansion

Once completed, the expansion of the Snobs Creek fish hatchery will deliver a dedicated Macquarie Perch Recovery Centre capable of producing up to 500,000 Macquarie perch and 500,000 trout cod each year for stocking into Victoria waterways.

The Macquarie Perch Recovery Centre will use cutting edge recirculating aquaculture technology and equipment to manipulate water temperature, oxygen levels and ambient light intensity to create the optimal breeding conditions for each species.

On ground works began in June 2025 on the construction of the new Macquarie Perch Recovery Centre Building, while offsite fabrication of its custom-built aquaculture system also began in the same period. Practical completion and commissioning are expected by late 2025.

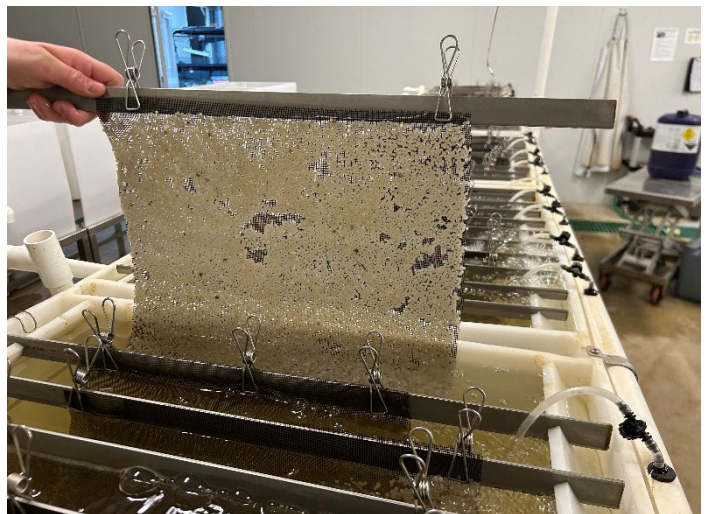
Arcadia Hatchery Update

We've had over 50 Murray cod spawning events at Arcadia since the start of October to mid-November 2025. The majority took place in existing brood ponds, with four resulting from recently arrived broodfish held in temporary ponds. These spawning's were unexpected as the fish arrived late in the season and were not completely settled into pond life. This is a great testament to the health of the brood fish and our stringent hatchery procedures. As a result of the early spawning several of our plankton ponds have been stocked with Murray cod larvae, where they will feed and grow on natural foods for about 6 weeks until they are harvested for stocking at about 40-50mm in size.



This season's golden perch are well-conditioned and are developing nicely. These iconic fish are feeding well and the females are starting to fatten around the bellies. The males are becoming more active, starting to show their true colouring and displaying early signs of spawning activity.

We will begin to move Murray cod into the new brood ponds once their breeding season has concluded in December/January. The ponds have been filled in advance to allow the ecosystem to develop, once established, the ponds will receive shrimp and yabbies prior to the introduction of broodfish to aid pond ecology and provide a secondary food source.



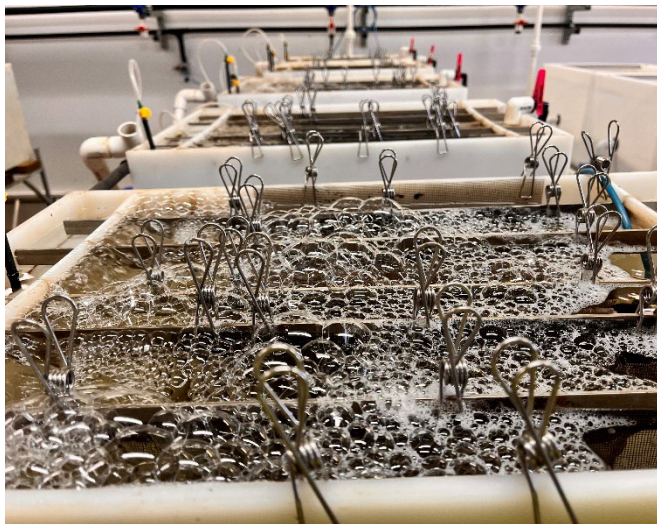
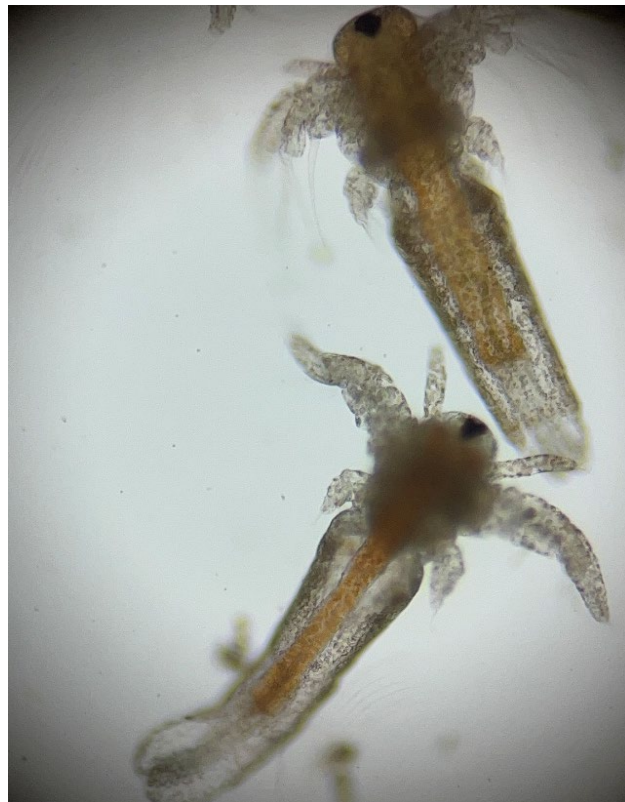
Snobs Creek Hatchery Update

Native breeding season began mid-October 2025 with both Murray cod and trout cod producing quality eggs. There's a long-held belief that a storm today means a busy time tomorrow collecting nest boxes full of eggs - it may sound superstitious, but this proved true again for us with the first spawning events of the season. The fish became noticeably more active in the lead-up to a low-pressure system, moving in and out of boxes and chasing each other around the ponds.

Macquarie perch wild broodstock collection were undertaken during November in preparation for the upcoming breeding season. We keep a close eye on water temperatures to make sure collections take place as the fish start to move and prepare to spawn.

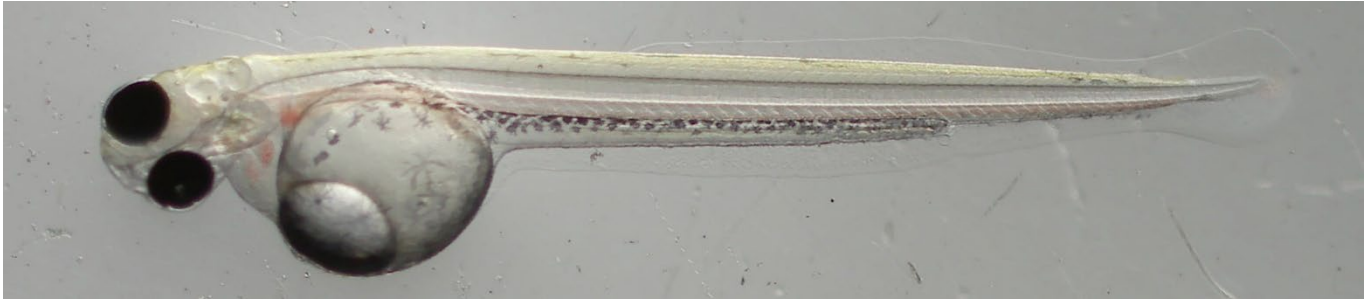
Water temperatures through September and October were optimal for growing the 2025 salmonid juveniles. Growth rates have been excellent, with feed conversion for browns and rainbows sitting around 800g of feed producing 1kg of fish. Why so efficient? They're not fighting gravity, don't need to regulate body temperature, and have a low skeletal mass - some of the most efficient converters of protein on Earth, you'd say.

Salmonids develop quickly at this time of year, outgrowing their troughs, tanks, and raceways in no time. Keeping on top of this takes active management, regularly shifting and splitting ponds to make sure the fish have plenty of space to keep thriving. While this is taking place, we carefully inspect fish to select future broodstock for our program.



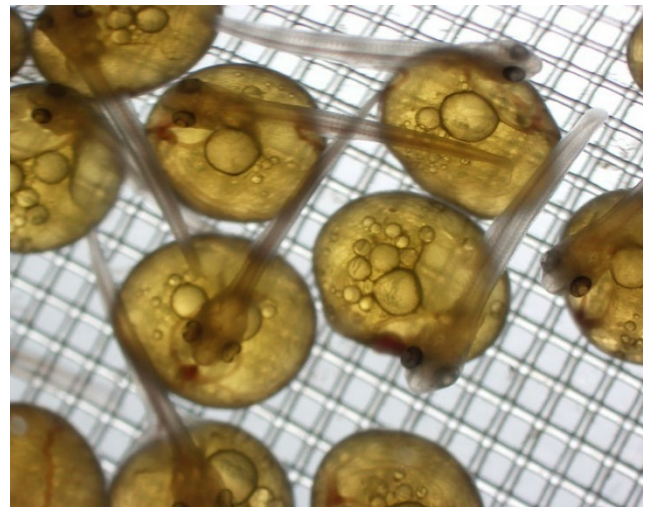
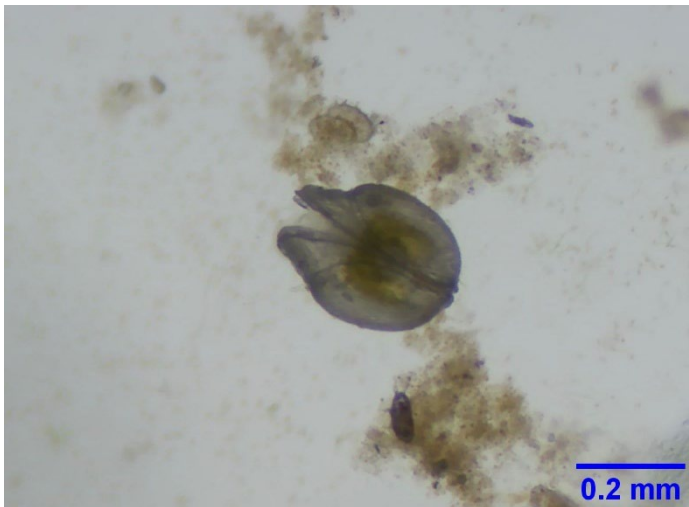
Conservation Hatchery Update

We have successfully bred tapered and Yalmy galaxias for the first time ever in captivity and West Gippsland galaxias for the first time in the Conservation Hatchery. Larvae of tapered and West Gippsland galaxias are now feeding and growing fast, while the Yalmy galaxias eggs are expected to hatch shortly.



We now have several batches of fertilised eggs on hand for high-high altitude species Moroka and McDowall's galaxias following stripping in October, building on our success of breeding both species in the Conservation Hatchery for the first time in 2024. Last year's fry are nearly 12 months old and samples are already showing some males to be mature.

Repeating the success of our six month light and temperature trial, Glenelg freshwater mussels have produced glochidia in a 12 month trial indicating these mussels mature and breed in both normal and shortened cycles. Glochidia inoculation trials are underway using different sized hosts from eight species of fish. Juvenile mussels have been recovered from five host species, the most successful being riffle galaxias, and are being reared in a range of systems.



Following on from our first successful spawning of river blackfish in 2024, we have had successful spawning's from two batches of broodstock received from the Grampians and Wimmera regions. We are now waiting for the recently hatched fry to use up their egg yolks and begin feeding on artemia.

Southern purple-spotted gudgeon bred at the hatchery are scheduled to be released in November and December 2025 across multiple sites around the state in collaboration with Catchment Management Authorities and Traditional owners.

Recreational Fishing Licence (RFL)

Grants Update

In 2024-25, 26 Large RFL Grant applications were received and assessed by the RFL Trust Advisory Committee and recommendations for funding have been made to the Minister, the Hon. Steve Dimopoulos.

Applications for the 2025-26 round of the Large Grants program close 28th February 2026 - now is the time to think about how fishing can be improved in your local waterways and to discuss ideas with relevant agencies such as shires, CMA's and waterway managers.

Applications for Intermediate and Small RFL Grants are open year-round. 2025-26 is already off to a great start with 27 Small Grant applications and 3 Intermediate Grant applications approved for funding.

Here are some examples of recently completed projects showing how your recreational fishing licence funds are being used:

SMALL GRANTS

Ballarat District Anglers Association – Tullaroop Creek Angler Access Project

The Ballarat District Anglers Association (BDAA), with support from the Clunes Anglers Club and local landowners, has improved angler access to the feeder streams of Tullaroop Reservoir. Two new stiles were installed at both Fawcett's Crossing and Six Mile Bridge, allowing safe and responsible access to around 6 kilometres of Tullaroop Creek.



The project brought together members from BDAA, Clunes Anglers Club, Ballarat Fly Fishers, and the Ballarat Acclimatisation Society, strengthening community partnerships and cooperation.

Further sites are now being explored, highlighting the strong collaborative approach to improving recreational fishing access across the region.

Families Enjoy a Day of Fishing and Connection at Lake Colac

Lake Colac came alive on National Gone Fishing Day as families gathered for the Family Carp Fishing Day, organised by the Victoria Chinese Angling Association Inc. (VCAAI) in partnership with the Shanghai Chinese Overseas Friendship Association (Australia) Inc.

The event welcomed 55 participants, primarily families with children, for a day of outdoor recreation, friendly competition, and community connection. Set against the beautiful backdrop of Lake Colac Holiday Park, participants enjoyed learning new fishing skills, sharing experiences, and celebrating time together in nature.

The initiative aimed to encourage participation in recreational fishing, particularly among women and children, while strengthening community bonds and promoting the social and environmental benefits of outdoor activities. The event's success highlighted how fishing can bring people together and foster appreciation for Victoria's natural waterways.



LARGE GRANTS

New Jetty Brings Fresh Energy to Rainbow Lake



The Hindmarsh Shire Council are proud to announce the completion of a new steel jetty with composite decking at Rainbow Lake, creating a welcoming and accessible space for all anglers. The jetty features handrails, rod holders, fish cleaning tables, and an accessible ramp, while solar lighting now brightens early morning and evening fishing.

The Rainbow Lake Committee also enhanced the area with a concrete footpath connecting the jetty to the parking area. Since opening, the community and visitors alike have shared glowing feedback, celebrating this fantastic new addition to Rainbow Lake.

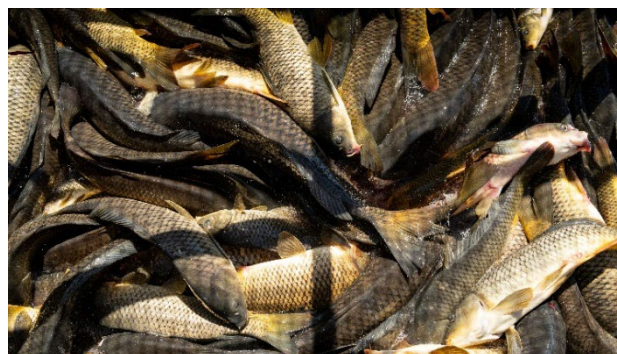
Round 2 of the Stronger Fishing Clubs Grants Announced!

On October 6th, the Minister for Outdoor Recreation, the Hon. Steve Dimopoulos, announced Round 2 of the Stronger Fishing Clubs Grants to support local fishing and angling clubs across Victoria.

These grants can support a wide range of improvements and could apply for up to \$10,000 to upgrade facilities, such as improving kitchens, replacing roofing or wall cladding, and enhancing accessibility and comfort in all weather conditions. Applications closed on November 30th, and we look forward to seeing how this funding strengthens clubs, attracts new members, and supports vibrant fishing communities throughout Victoria.

The War on Carp

It's been more than fifty years since carp exploded into our waterways following widespread flooding across the Murray Darling Basin in the 1970's. With each subsequent flood, they push further upstream, take more territory, increase turbidity, destroy aquatic vegetation, erode riverbanks, displace native fish, and ruin our fishing and camping experience. Despite half a century of trying to control them using netting, exclusion devices, baiting, electrofishing, commercial and recreational fishing, these options provide only short-term and local controls.



The Federal Government has researched the use of a carp herpes virus as a biological control agent for almost two decades culminating in the publication of the National Carp Control Plan in 2022. In 2024, the Federal government announced a further \$3 million dollars in research funding. Timelines to complete this research and to make a final decision on the use of the carp virus remain unclear. To address some of the key information gaps, the VFA engaged leading researchers to prepare a plan for a field-based bio secure carp virus trial – to date this proposal has not been supported by the Federal Government.



The VFA prepared a detailed submission to the Federal Government to list carp as a key threatening process under the EPBC Act alongside other invasive species like rabbits, goats, pigs, foxes, and others. Listed invasive species enable the development of a national threat abatement plan which drive a coordinated investment – to date, our proposal to list carp has not been supported by the Federal Government. The VFA has also nominated carp for listing as a potentially threatening process under Victoria's Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988. The nominations provide a foundation for building a coordinated

approach to improve the health of our freshwater native fisheries and aquatic ecosystems by managing carp - we are awaiting feedback on this proposal.

Over the last few years, on the back of another flood and record numbers of carp, the VFA has engaged recreational and commercial fishers, landowners, farmers, NRM agencies and local and federal government to raise awareness about the impacts of carp, the extent of the problem, the need for an integrated approach to Australia's carp problem. We're building a broad-based coalition of support for more action on carp by hosting a national carp summit in northern Victoria in the new year.

As fishery managers we can't stand by and watch our rivers fall to the compounding impacts of carp year on end. We need recreational fishers to advocate for more action on carp, to protect our waterways and our wonderful recreational fisheries. For more information, go to: [Australia's Carp Problem - VFA](#)



Better Boating Victoria (BBV) Updates

- The BBV team is delivering Victoria's largest ever boat ramp construction program, funded through the Recreational Boating Strategy 2021–2030 and the Better Boating Fund. To date, more than 70 projects have been completed, with 30 more underway!
- Construction is set to begin in early 2026 for Lake Eildon's newest boat ramp. A dual-lane concrete ramp near Howqua complete with a turn-around area and 18 car-trailer parks will allow more boaters access to the water from full capacity down to 78%.
- Works continue at the Lang Lang boat ramp with the new (and existing) ramp expected to be completed ahead of Christmas 2025 and throughout the busy January boating period with full project completion occurring in early February 2026. Finalisation of the jetty will require managed minor closure of the new ramp for project completion.
- The Boating Industry Association of Victoria hosted the 63rd annual Melbourne Boat Show this October. The event was sponsored by the VFA and saw over 39,000 active and aspiring boaters attend.
- Thanks to BBV's 2024/25 Grants Program, close to \$1m will be provided to boat ramp asset managers to undertake structural maintenance and dredging works across the State.
- The 2024/25 Structural Maintenance Grants Program is funding 13 projects statewide, including \$75,000 to fund the repair of a damaged ramp at Lake Eppalock's Kirrang Point boat ramp.
- Additionally, the 2024/25 Dredging and Access Grants Program is funding six projects to improve access to waterways across the State, from Mallacoota to Point Richards.
- The East Gippsland Shire Council has utilised a Dredging and Access Grant from 2023-24 to complete dredging at Baston Point boat ramp ahead of the long weekend in November. An additional dredge is planned for mid-December to improve access at Mallacoota.



Baston Point Dredging



Melbourne Boat Show

