

Freshwater Fisheries Management Update

Statewide Recreational Fishing Roundtable

9 December 2022

The rise and rise of Toolondo Reservoir

- Toolondo Reservoir is in the process of receiving a water allocation from Rocklands Reservoir!
- To date, around half of the 28,000 megalitre allocation has been transferred from Rocklands Reservoir. In addition, a few weeks ago, a huge storm downpour over Toolondo Catchment contributed a further 5,000 megs.
- At present, Toolondo has a maximum depth of 3.5 metres and all three water bodies are starting to join up into a single lake.
- The western boat ramp concrete extension has been completed and can already be used to launch boats.
- In addition to 70 tonne of carp harvested last year, Keith Bell has harvested another 42 tonne of carp from Toolondo in just the last few months. Carp harvesting has been given a boost as carp concentrated around the inflowing water where they were easily electro-fished. Carp harvesting rates in Toolondo are starting drop off as were making a big dint in the population.
- We have a plan to stock Toolondo when water conditions and temperature are suitable for trout. We expect this to occur in April unless we see a strong thermocline develop in which case stocking may be bought forward. We are checking water depth and temp on a regular basis.



Blackwater fish salvages

- Recent heavy rains in October have caused significant blackwater impacts across catchments in the central and north west Victoria.
- The VFA worked with DELWP, CMAs, VEWH, Traditional Owners, Ozfish Unlimited and private contractors to help rescue over 2,000 valuable native fish and crayfish from these low dissolved oxygen waterways.
- About 500 Murray cod, trout cod, golden and silver perch were rescued from the Gunbower and Pyramid Creek system to healthier waterways like the Campaspe River.
- Additionally, over 120 Murray cod, golden perch, catfish, crayfish and purple spotted gudgeon were transported to the Arcadia and Snobs Creek fish hatcheries – some of these individuals will be used for the sites breeding and restocking programs, whilst the remainder will be returned when conditions improve.



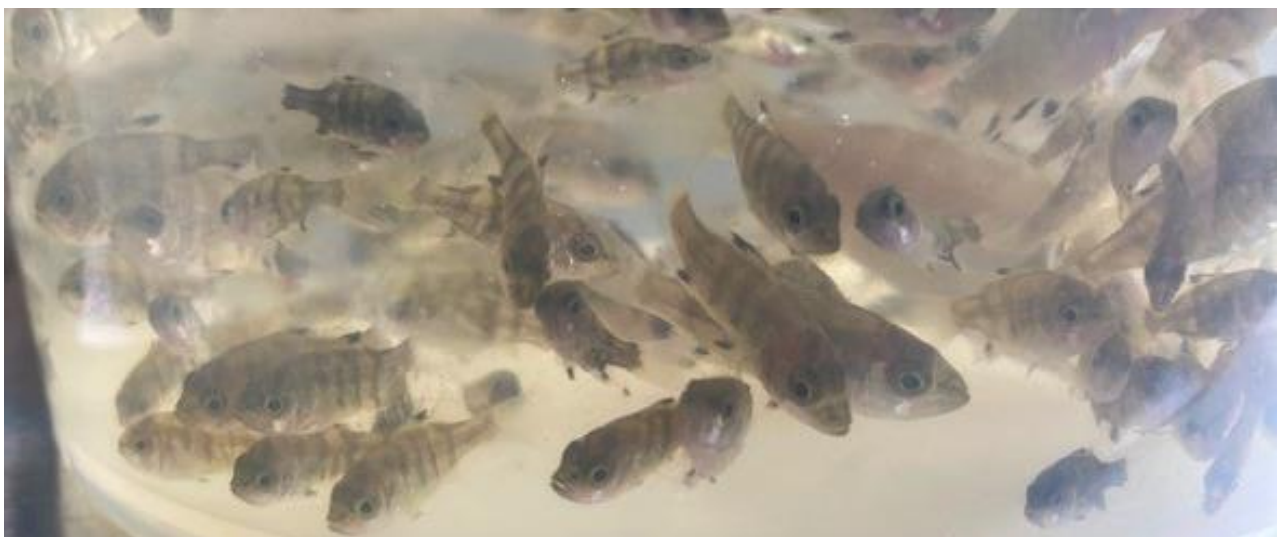
Two more years of Native Fish Report Cards

- In November we were informed that the Native Fish Report Card program was approved for an RFL Large Grant funding contribution enabling two more years of native fish monitoring!
- The funding contributes to the 6-year collaborative program between recreational anglers, VFA and DELWP to produce health report cards for nine of our most popular and valued native fish species across 10 priority Victorian rivers.
- Report cards are produced for populations of Murray cod, trout cod, Macquarie perch, silver perch, golden perch, southern blackfish, freshwater catfish (pictured), Australian bass and estuary perch.
- The Program provides unprecedented information to monitor native fish population health, track fisheries performance and assess the effectiveness of fisheries management interventions, such as fish stocking, regulations and habitat restoration.
- The Report Cards are presented annually at the Murray Codference and published in a VFA report to engage anglers in native fishery improvements and assist in their fishing success.
- The RFL application was strongly supported by stakeholder groups including the Goulburn Valley Association of Angling Clubs, Central Victoria Lure Caster Super Series, Murray Cod Fishing Facebook Page (representing 30,000 native fishers), Ebbside Tackle and North Central CMA.
- As the \$85,000 RFL funding contribution leverages another \$343,000 from other sources - it's great value for angler's money to monitor and improve recreational fishing for these native fish species.



Rocklands Reservoir native fishery comes of age

- Since August, Rocklands Reservoir has gone from 70,000 to 210,000 megalitres - this is flooding margins and boosting productivity for the emerging golden perch and Murray cod fishery.
- We are receiving terrific reports of quality golden perch and Murray cod being caught on lures and bait in Rocklands Reservoir.
- So far, we have stocked about 3.5 million native fish in Rocklands Reservoir – 2.1 million Murray cod and 1.4 million Golden perch.
- This week, 28,000 estuary perch joined the impressive native fish population and developing fishery!



Cracking the code on Macquarie perch proposal

- The VFA has formed a collaborative research team to 'crack the code' on captive breeding of Macquarie perch, save the species from extinction and recover Macquarie perch across their former range.
- The collaboration comprises of partners from the VFA, NSW Fisheries, Victorian and NSW recreational fishers, Deakin University, DELWP, University of Melbourne, University of the Sunshine Coast, North East and Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authorities and the Norwegian Institute of Aquaculture Research.
- A project proposal has been developed detailing four key elements of dedicated research including:
 1. Nutrition and breeding optimisation
 2. Hormone optimisation
 3. Produce a Macquarie Perch captive breeding hatchery manual
 4. Broodstock collection, genetics, monitoring and evaluation
- The collaboration brings over \$3 million of co-investment and is now seeking the final contribution to commence the work in early 2023.
- To support these efforts, or find out how you can contribute, contact Taylor Hunt, Victorian Fisheries Authority, taylor.hunt@vfa.vic.gov.au



Wild trout genetics uncovered

- A recent Australian Trout Foundation wild trout project and Recreational Fishing Grants Program report has shared results on several pieces of work regarding trout genetics in Victoria.
- This report gives anglers confidence that:
 - The genetic structure of both wild populations and hatchery brown trout stocks are genetically healthy.
 - Current hatchery practices are achieving in supplying genetically diverse stock.
 - Wild brown trout stream populations are resilient and recover by natural recruitment in good environmental conditions.
 - Citizen science and volunteer anglers are highly valuable due to making significant contribution to wild trout fisheries management projects such as this.
- Well done to the Australian Trout Foundation on being a strong and active partner in improving recreational fishing in Victoria!



Murray cod angler survey

- Keen to improve Murray cod populations and the fishery overall? Well, here's your chance!
- We're asking Victorian cod fishers to complete a survey that focuses on how anglers catch-and-release cod and how we can improve the Care for Cod Campaign.
- It's a partnership project with VRFish, the Women in Recreational Fishing (WIRF) network and world class fisheries experts from Keep Fish Wet.
- Complete the survey and you can enter a random prize draw to win a \$250 tackle voucher every week the survey's conducted. It's open until 31 January so [click here and have your say.](#)
- We'll come back to you all in March 2023 to share the results.



Estuary perch stocking

- In December, 244,000 estuary perch fingerlings were stocked into nine waters across the state:
 - Gippsland Lakes 85,000
 - Melton Reservoir 35,000
 - Upper Stony Creek Reservoir 30,000
 - Lake Tyers 28,000
 - Rocklands Reservoir 26,000
 - Lakers Cutting, Point Lonsdale 15,000
 - Little River 10,000
 - Painkalac Reservoir 10,000
 - Bemm River 5,000
- It's an amazing effort by the team led by Rhiannon Atkinson to transport these precious babies over 12 hours and 800km from the hatchery in Narooma to all of nine waters within two days!
- Thanks to all recreational fishers who assisted with the releases including Adam, Peri, Chris, Bec, Darryl, David, John, Mike, Andy, Michael, Xavier and the Dangerfields.
- We've now stocked over 25 waters across the state to rebuild estuary perch populations and create amazing fisheries for recreational anglers and the community to enjoy. Awesome work team!



World Recreational Fishing Conference 10

- Planning for the World Recreational Fishing Conference 10 (WRFC10) continues with several key announcements on our web site <https://wrfc10.com>
- We have received over 200 fantastic abstracts as well as 9 submissions for special sessions and can announce 4 additional Keynote speakers in Sascha Clark Danylchuk from the Keep Fish Wet program (pictured below), Craig Copeland from OZFish Unlimited, Prof. Matt Taylor from NSW DPI and Ingrid Van Putten from CSIRO
- Their bios can be found here <https://wrfc10.com/program/keynote-speakers/>
- We have obtained additional sponsorship from OZFish Unlimited and the QLD Government.
- We are working up the draft program and are engaging in comms to attract delegates. An email campaign has commenced, with instalments planned every 2-3 weeks.
- The newsletter distribution list includes past WRFC delegates, mailing list subscribers (through the website: <https://wrfc10.com/join-the-mailing-list/>) and key partners and stakeholders.



Ultimate Fishing Expo (formerly known as the Rec Fish Fest) – it's going to be HUGE!

- To connect the World Recreational Fishing Conference with grassroots recreational anglers, the VFA are hosting a free two-day recreational fishing conference on the weekend of 18th and 19th February 2023.
- The 'Ultimate Fishing Expo' is a celebration of recreational fishing in Victoria, Australia and worldwide and will feature the brightest talent in recreational fishing here and abroad!
- Speakers will include:
 - Recreational fishing identifies (such as Patrick Dangerfield, Kate Norman or Lubin Pfeiffer) sharing their amazing fishing experiences,
 - Recreational fishing science and management experts sharing the latest developments in Victoria and worldwide,
 - The Women in Recreational Fishing Network on how women are shaking up the fishing scene,
 - Gun recreational fishers sharing their tips for all freshwater and saltwater species in Victoria including Murray cod, Southern Bluefin Tuna, kingfish, snapper, high-country brown trout, King George Whiting, swordfish and a whole lot more!
- The Ultimate Fishing Expo will bring together recreational fishers to hear all the latest news and hot topics in fishing, improve their skills and inspire all of us to get out there and enjoy our sensational fishing opportunities.



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

Anthony Forster – 0419 871 096 Taylor Hunt – 0418 478 028 John Douglas – 0447 545 139

Hui King Ho – 0407 987 003 Cam Westaway – 0428 946 126

