

# Freshwater Fisheries Management Update

## Statewide Recreational Fishing Roundtable

## Fish Habitat and Flows Roundtable

18 June 2021

### Murray Codference 2021 - another huge success!

- On 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2021 the fifth Murray Codference was held at Riverlinks Centre in Shepparton in the heart of the Goulburn Valley.
- A great line-up of speakers enthralled the 320 strong crowd (full house) and presented on a range of topics including:
  - Cod angling tips and techniques (Cameron McGregor – pictured right),
  - What Murray cod eat (Dr Katie Doyle – pictured below),
  - The benefits of cod/angling tourism to Victoria (Chris Rose),
  - The excitement and challenge of cod fishing (Yorick Piper),
  - Updates on native fisheries management (Taylor Hunt)
  - Introducing the new Arcadia hatchery (Anthony Forster),
  - Crown land access (Ben Scullin),
  - Fisheries Officer experiences (Greg Sharp) and
  - The latest and greatest in cod fishing gear (Steve 'Trelly' Threlfall).
- A Victorian lure maker mini expo was also well supported with plenty of lures being sold and discussed by the punters.



- Murray cod was even on the menu for lunch and the attendees were provided with a range of cod dishes to sample.
- To get 320 anglers to attend an all-day conference in these challenging COVID-19 times demonstrates the high interest of anglers in our native fisheries.
- The feedback from Codference attendees revealed an impressive overall score of 4.7 out of 5 for the event. The Codference is an important event for VFA and native fish anglers and we all look forward to the next one in 2022!





## Tiger Trout are roaring in the Crater Lakes

- 10,000 more Tiger trout have been stocked into the Crater Lakes, with 7,000 for Lake Purumbete and 3,000 for Lake Bullen Merri!
- Tiger trout are produced when a female brown trout is crossed with a male brook trout. The species cross has prominent striped markings indicative of a tiger and have the potential to grow large due to hybrid vigor.
- The tiger trout that have been released into Lake Purumbete over the last two years have performed well with specimens to 2.3kg caught by excited fishers who have reveled in their sportfishing qualities and as a table fish for the family too.
- The stocking trial at Lake Purumbete began in 2019 and has seen more than 1,200 tiger trout and 7,400 cheetah trout released to date. Cheetah trout are a cross between a rainbow trout and a brook trout, and feature markings along their back resembling the patterns of the African cat.
- Lake Purumbete and Bullen Merri are already stocked annually with Chinook salmon, brown and rainbow trout. Now the challenge is onto see who can catch the 'salmonid grand slam' of each species, plus a tiger or cheetah trout!



## Year-round Murray cod fishing in western Victorian lakes

- In February 2021, consultation was completed with recreational fishers and fisheries notice was introduced to remove the Murray cod closed season and create year-round Murray cod fishing in the Wimmera and Millicent basins, except the Wimmera River.
- The reason for the change includes:
  - The Wimmera and Millicent basins are outside the natural range for Murray cod
  - Murray cod are stocked annually into waters within these basins (two million Murray cod stocked since 2000), creating put-and-take Murray cod fisheries at places such as Taylors Lake, Lake Charlegrark, Rocklands Reservoir and Lake Bellfield
  - Natural recruitment of Murray cod in these waters is typically low, meaning the closed season has very little benefit to the Murray cod populations and fisheries
  - Lifting the closed season on these waters will provide year-round Murray cod fishing and a valuable boost to regional businesses in the Wimmera and Millicent basins that depend on tourism



- Lifting the closed season on these waters will shift fishing pressure from natural river systems where Murray cod do breed
- The proposal was well supported by recreational fishers, including organisations such as VRFish, Native Fish Australia, the Wimmera Anglers Association and the Mid-Northern Anglers Association.
- For more information about the change, please visit [www.vfa.vic.gov.au/bettercod](http://www.vfa.vic.gov.au/bettercod)

### Australian Trout Foundation kicking goals with habitat restoration

- The Australian Trout Foundation continues to lead the way with projects to restore fish habitat to improve fishing and river health. In May 2021, 'Trees For Trout' days were held with volunteers planting 3600 local indigenous trees across five sites along Nariel Creek and one site on the Cudgewa Creek in Victoria's North East.
- The Australian Trout Foundation members were joined by volunteers from Corryong Angling Club, Greenwells Fly Fishing Club, The Council of Victorian Fly Fishing Clubs and the Women in Recreational Fishing Network, as well as North East Catchment Management Authority – making it a huge team effort.
- It's fantastic to see the community working together on these projects which will improve fishing for all. Hats off to Terry George, Paul Stolz and the Australian Trout Foundation for providing true leadership with these projects!





## Recreational fishers supporting small bodied native fish

- The Freshwater Fisheries Management Team have prepared a new position statement on how we are supporting the sustaining and rebuilding of small bodied native fish populations:  
<https://vfa.vic.gov.au/operational-policy/small-fish-matter!>
- The webpage details VFA's commitment to small bodied native fish, as well as current and possible future contributions that build on the excellent work currently underway by Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs), Native Fish Australia (NFA), the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP).
- It's a space that's growing in Victoria with projects underway to breed and stock species such as Purple Spotted Gudgeon (pictured below) and Pygmy Perch (pictured above), and recreational fishers increasingly asking Government to contribute to supporting small bodied native fish species.
- Small bodied native fish play important roles in the ecosystem, which in turn support healthy recreational fisheries. Supporting small bodied native fish is also great for VFA and recreational fisher social licence - we care, we are contributing, and we are prepared to do more in partnership with other stakeholders who are passionate about Victoria's aquatic environments.



## World Recreational Fishing Conference bid for Melbourne 2024

- In May 2021 the VFA submitted a bid to host the World Recreational Fishing Conference (WRFC) in Melbourne in 2024.
- The WRFC is a global gathering of the recreational fishing community held every three years for researchers, recreational fishers, angling organisations, government worldwide to meet and exchange knowledge on hot topics in recreational fishing.
- The bid has been prepared over the last 18 months in partnership with recreational fishing organisations including VRFish and FutureFish Foundation, Women in Recreational Fishing Network and Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation.
- Past WRFC meetings have been held in Canada (Victoria), Brazil (Campinas), Germany (Berlin), USA (Fort Lauderdale), Norway (Trondheim), Australia (Darwin), Canada (Vancouver) and Ireland (Dublin).
- We look forward to hearing the outcome of the bid in early July - Hopefully the winner is MELBOURNE!



MELBOURNE'S BID TO HOST THE  
10<sup>TH</sup> WORLD RECREATIONAL  
FISHING CONFERENCE 2024



**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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