

June 2025

Recreational Fisheries Management Update

**Catfish are
Coming Back!**

**The Secret Life of
Murray Cod**

**Kingfish Tagging
Continues**

**Shellfish Reefs
Exploding with Life**



OFFICIAL

52/07

Cover photo: Connor Jackson with an estuary perch from the Maribyrnong River.

Through the Maribyrnong River Native Fish Revival Project, the Maribyrnong River has been improved through a combination of habitat restoration, stocking of 328,000 native estuary perch, and deeper connection with the community.





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Catfish are Coming Back Across Northern Victoria!

Endangered native freshwater catfish (*Tandanus tandanus*) populations have expanded through the release of over 10,000 catfish into 19 locations across northern Victoria.

The initiative was a collaboration between recreational fishers, Traditional Owner groups and fisheries and catchment management authorities (CMA's) to help recover catfish by re-establishing more populations of the species.

In late March, thousands of catfish were salvaged from Lake Lascelles near Hopetoun, Cronomby Tanks at Woomelang and private dam near Lancefield where they had incredible breeding events.

Geneticist Dr Peter Unmack assessed the genetics of the catfish, showing that they originated from the Wimmera, Mallee, Gunbower strain and were suitable for release – perfect!

Catfish were released into:

- Ovens River (4 sites) – 2,686
- Campaspe River – 1035
- Loddon River – 895
- Broken Creek Upper – 895
- Lake Sambell (Beechworth) - 834
- Goulburn River – 828
- Broken Creek Lower – 784
- Loch Garry – 544
- Horseshoe Lagoon (Gunbower) - 544
- Lake Victoria (Maryborough) – 504
- Gunbower Creek – 480
- Winton Wetlands – 315
- Wooroonook Lake – 305
- Arcadia Pondage - 273
- Walkers Lake (St Arnaud) – 284
- Arcadia Pondage - 273
- Foletti Lake (Donald) – 206
- Watchem Lake – 200
- Turner/Phyland Lagoon – 181
- Duniak Moira - 171
- Harcourt Park Dam - 165
- Sandilong Creek - 18

To re-establish 22 populations of an endangered native fish is a huge step towards recovery and downlisting of the species. Well done and thank you to all involved.





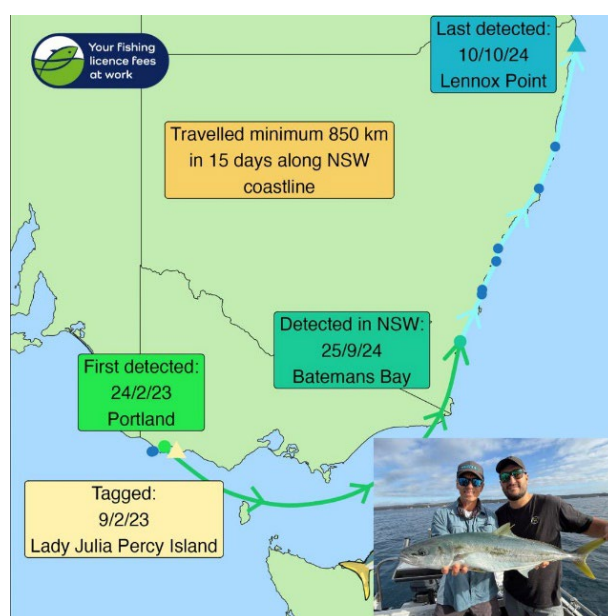
Victoria's Kingfish Tagging Continues

Deakin University in collaboration with the VFA and Project Kingfish has continued to tag Victoria's prized yellowtail kingfish in Victorian waters over the warmer months. A total of 21 satellite tags and 45 acoustic tags from various sized fish have contributed to unlocking the secrets of fish caught in Victoria throughout their distribution across SE Australia.

This year the presence of yellowtail kingfish has persisted right up to mid-Spring. This created opportunities to tag fish right to end of the Victorian kingfish season. With fish either collecting data location / depth and temperature data (satellite tags) or providing an indication of where they are (acoustic tags), understanding where kingfish caught in Victorian waters in all seasons will hopefully shed some more insights of the population connectivity characteristics.

Some notable movement patterns include a 113cm kingfish tagged off Julia Percy Island that travelled to the NSW / QLD border in 609 days.

Funded by recreational fishing licence money, this three-year project has partnered with other jurisdictions that ultimately aims to inform fisheries management of the species and enhance this valuable resource.



Kayaker's Reef Performing Better Than Expected

Kayaker's Reef is a small-scale shellfish reef that was installed around 800m south-west of Kerferd Road Pier, Albert Park, in November/December of 2024 and was funded by Recreational Fishing Licence funds that the Albert Park Yachting and Angling Club.

In 5.4m of water, 90 'Oyster Triangles' and 45 'Fish Towers' were arranged on the bottom, across an area of about 200m². The triangles were seeded with native oysters at the Victorian Shellfish Hatchery in Queenscliff, to help restore lost shellfish reefs in Port Phillip. Similarly, the newly installed reef was hoped to attract species such as snapper and provide a convenient, near-shore reef for the growing number of kayak and small boat anglers who enjoy the Port Phillip fishery.

In May 2025, VFA's science team surveyed the newly established reef to investigate the progress since its establishment. The team was very impressed by the rapid growth and coverage of seeded native oysters (*Ostrea angasi*) on the Oyster Triangles. Many oysters had also settled on and are growing well on the unseeded Fish Towers.

The establishment of this reef completes Phase One. Thanks to funding from the Victorian Government's Fish Habitat Improvement Fund, Phase Two included an additional 48 Fish Towers deployed during May 2025; with Phase Three deployment of another 45 Fish Towers to commence within the next year.

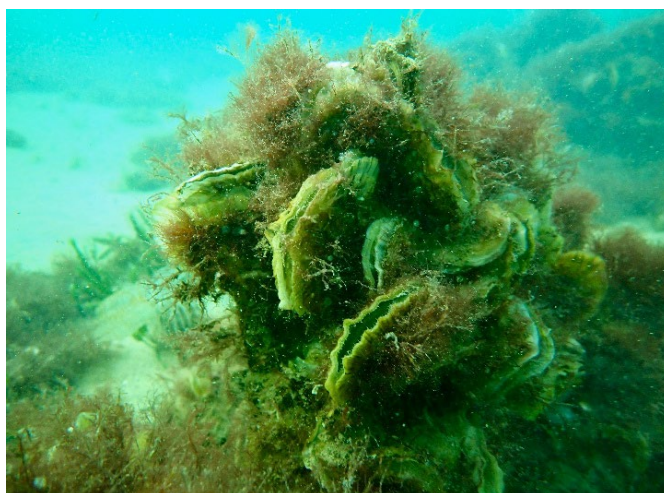
Given such early success of rapid flora and oyster growth the expansion reef structure is sure to have many positives for fishing and the environment alike.

Hobsons Bay, Port Phillip

800m SSW off Kerferd Road Peir

37° 51.370' South, 144° 56.810' East

We'd like to thank all our partners and collaborators on this project, including Albert Park Yachting and Angling Club, Cardium Marine, MACS Diving Services, Sustainable Oceans International, Victorian Shellfish Hatchery, Reef Design Lab, Uni of Melbourne and Kina Diving Services.



2024-25 Stocking Program Updates

The 2024-25 native fish stocking season finished up on 9 May and many of Victoria's colder waters have received their first allocations of trout for 2025 during May kicking off the salmonid stocking season.

Despite challenges caused by dry conditions limiting the availability of suitable salmonid waters, **185,000** trout have already been stocked across 20 Victorian waters as of mid-May contributing to the VFA's target of stocking 10 million fish in 2024-25.

Highlights of the 2024-25 native stocking season include:

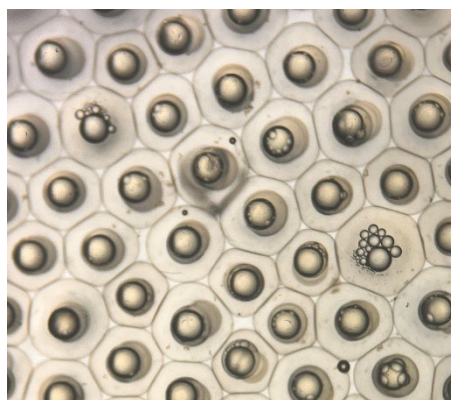
- **Back-to-back records:** Last year's record Murray cod stocking was beaten this season with over 4 million cod stocked across 105 Victorian waters in 2024-25 – an improvement of 400,000!
- **Double Dusksies:** Gippsland Lakes received two stockings of dusky flathead this season, resulting in over 62,000 dusksies stocked in 2024-25 and more than 212,000 over the last four years.
- **New Introductions:** In February, we welcomed two new additions to the Snobs Creek stocking team – Thyson and Imogen. Both are passionate fishers and outdoor enthusiasts, bringing great attitudes and valuable skill sets to the crew.

SEASON SUMMARY

Type	Species	FY25
Native	Australian bass	137,500
	Dusky Flathead	62,340
	Estuary perch	133,500
	Golden perch	3,148,440
	Macquarie perch	99,890
	Murray cod	4,014,820
	Silver perch	720,837
	Trout cod	140,970
Salmonid	Brown trout	537,507
	Chinook salmon	85,830
	Rainbow trout	445,597
	Tiger trout	10,000
Native		8,458,297
Salmonid		1,078,934
Total		9,537,231

*Table figures accurate as of 13/05/2025





Arcadia Hatchery Update

This season has been a record-breaking year for Murray cod production. A total of 59 spawnings occurred this season, matching the 23-24 season, but with larger batches of eggs. We produced a total of 1.08 million Murray cod - our largest yield yet - surpassing our target of 800,000 by 200,000!

The golden and silver perch season showed promising results despite some challenges. Warm, stable conditions led to early spawning on 18 December. Our perch maturation system performed well in its second year, successfully conditioning and spawning over 180 perch—exceeding typical needs due to water quality and fertilisation issues. While fertilisation was inconsistent, larvae developed steadily, and pond conditions remained optimal for growth and survival. We'll continue refining our golden perch breeding to improve reliability and production.

Arcadia open day was on 6 April. Over 3000 people attended and were given an all-access and behind-the-scenes tour of our hatchery, pond system and witnessed the earth works currently underway for the expansion. Visitors were taken through the reproduction process of Murray cod and golden perch as well as the pond preparation for growing the larvae fish and harvesting. The visitors centre was a huge hit again with cooking demo, competitions and kids fishing clinics.

Arcadia Hatchery Expansion:

The Arcadia fish hatchery expansion includes increasing production ponds from 30 to over 125, constructing a new office/admin building, and tripling the capacity of fish processing and hatchery facilities. Water re-use storages are being developed to manage excess water, with major civil works set for completion by 31 July 2025. Broodstock collection has started, with Murray cod, golden perch, and catfish acclimatising in temporary holding ponds.

Snobs Creek Hatchery Update

The team at Snobs Creek have wrapped up the 2025 chinook salmon breeding season. The first batch of eggs has hatched, with the remaining eggs currently held in incubators following close behind.

While the chinook season has come to an end, planning for the rainbow and brown trout season is well underway. The breeding season typically runs from the end of May through to June.

The native species season has concluded, and we have been out collecting trout cod broodfish from waterways across Victoria. We have even sourced trout cod broodfish all the way from the Murrumbidgee River in NSW. Collecting broodfish from different locations ensures we have a good mix of genetic diversity.

Recently, we hosted the Snobs Creek Open Day on 4 May. The gates of the facility were opened, welcoming the public for an all-access, behind-the-scenes tour of our three production hatcheries. Visitors toured our Conservation Hatchery to learn about conservation efforts including the 10inTen program, explored our native fish facility (with display tanks proving a crowd favourite). And finished in the salmonid hatchery where staff showcased the process behind raising chinook salmon, brown trout, and rainbow trout.

Snobs Creek Hatchery Expansion:

The Snobs Creek fish hatchery expansion will introduce a dedicated Macquarie Perch Recovery Centre, additional ponds, tanks, and supporting infrastructure. Once completed, the breeding centre will produce up to 500,000 Macquarie perch and 500,000 trout cod annually. Construction of the new facility will begin soon, with completion expected by Spring/Summer 2025, just in time for the native fish breeding season.





Conservation Hatchery Update

The Conservation Hatchery has welcomed new broodfish from critically endangered species like the Yalmy galaxias, West Gippsland galaxias, and flat-headed galaxias. These fish are now undergoing trials using different temperature and light cycles to simulate 12 and 6-month cycles to explore the possibility of breeding twice per year.

In a major milestone, we successfully bred and released River Blackfish for the first time in a hatchery setting using hormone inducement. This project, in partnership with Wimmera CMA, Barngi Gadjin Land Council, ARI, and VFA, saw broodfish collected from the Wimmera catchment. After a successful breeding event, fry were reared and released into the McKenzie River. River Blackfish hold strong cultural significance and remain a key species for the Conservation Hatchery. This season, we're expanding trials to include both hormone and natural breeding techniques.

Emergency recovery efforts also took place after the Grampians bushfires. To protect the vulnerable River Blackfish, DEECA coordinated the rescue of 100 individuals. Some were relocated to safe waterways, while a small group is now being cared for at the hatchery until their native habitat recovers.

Stocking for the season is nearly complete, with 150 southern pygmy perch heading to a surrogacy site in Benalla. If conditions are right, Moroka and McDowall's galaxias may also be released. Winter activity continues, with purple spotted gudgeons, olive perchlet, and pygmy perch being brought into season.

We're also trialling Glenelg mussel breeding techniques, testing new substrates and host fish for glochidia development under various seasonal cycles.



Olive Perchlet – Coming Back from Extinction

Once declared extinct in Victoria in 1968, the olive perchlet—a small, pearlescent wetland fish known as the “glass fish” is making a remarkable comeback. This 4–6 cm native species plays a vital role in aquatic ecosystems, preying on invertebrates and serving as food for larger fish and waterbirds.

The recovery journey began through a partnership of government and private organisations committed to reviving Victoria’s small-bodied threatened fish. The Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA), with support from the NSW Department of Primary Industries, sourced genetically suitable broodstock. These fish were distributed among aquaculture facilities across the state to trial captive breeding.

A key part of the effort is the purpose-built conservation hatchery at Snobs Creek, which operates under the VFA’s 10inTen plan—an ambitious initiative aiming to recover 10 critically endangered freshwater species in a decade. The facility provides highly controlled environments that mimic natural conditions to support breeding and survival.

Once enough fish are bred, they are introduced into carefully selected surrogacy sites—wetlands, dams, or lagoons assessed for water quality, habitat, and absence of pest species. Rewilding starts with small foundation populations of around 50 individuals, released in spring or autumn to reduce stress and maximise survival.

In 2025, the first wild stocking took place at Cameron’s Creek near Torrumbarry, with 230 fish released in collaboration with North Central CMA.

With over 1,000 fish now stocked across Victoria and promising natural reproduction, the olive perchlet is steadily returning. While there’s a long road ahead before the species can be fully reclassified, the success so far marks an exciting milestone for native fish recovery.



Year-round Trout Fishing

A friendly reminder to fishers that while the trout season closes in most rivers and streams from Tuesday 10 June until Friday 5 September inclusive, Victoria's southwest rivers – Merri, Hopkins, Moyne and Mt Emu Creek are open to year-round fishing and produce trophy sized brown trout for anglers.

Previous research has found that trout do not effectively spawn in these rivers, therefore the close season was removed in September 2017. In the last 10 years, these rivers have been stocked with over 620,000 brown trout by our fantastic Snobs Creek team.

A big shout out to the Australian Trout Foundation, Victorian Fly Fishers Association, Council of Victorian Fly-Fishing Clubs and all angling clubs who support great fishing like this across the state.

For more details on trout fishing regulations, visit: <https://vfa.vic.gov.au/recreational-fishing/recreational-fishing-guide/trout-and-salmon-regulations>



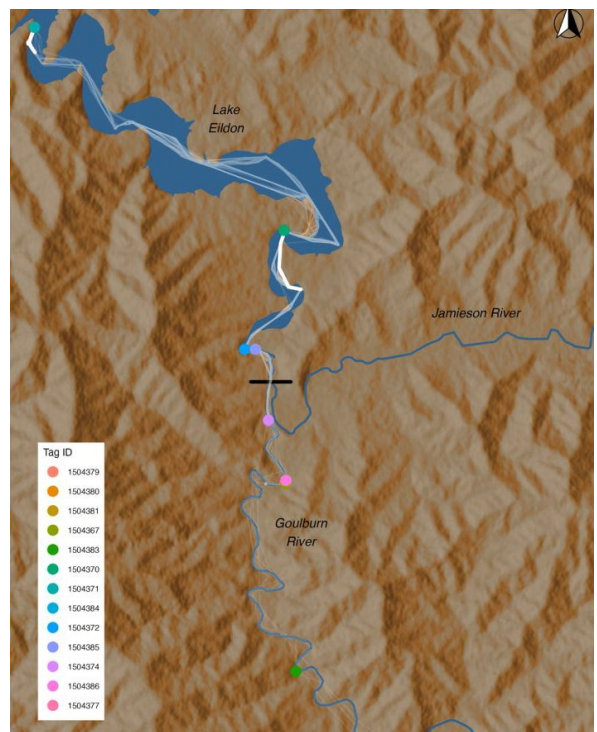


The Secret Life of Murray Cod

Lake Eildon is renowned for its Murray cod fishery, bolstered by over 5.5 million fingerlings stocked since the 1990s. Recent research by the Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) has provided new insights into cod movement and habitat preferences in the Upper Goulburn River and Lake Eildon.

In 2022–2023, 19 Murray cod averaging 93 cm were tagged and released in the Jamieson arm and Upper Goulburn River. Sixteen acoustic receivers along 32 km of waterway tracked their movements, revealing:

- Cod exhibit diverse movement patterns; some migrate extensively, while others remain within a defined home range.
- Seasonal distribution shifts occur, with higher concentrations in the upper lake arms between September and February.
- Cod are most active and likely to feed during warmer months (around 20°C) from dusk until dawn, with peak activity at 6 am.
- In cooler months, cod prefer deeper waters during daylight hours (10 am – 3 pm), moving to shallower areas at night in summer.
- The first significant rain event, increasing flow from the Upper Goulburn River into Lake Eildon, triggers cod to move into tributary arms.
- One cod, relocated from the Upper Goulburn River to the Jamieson boat ramp, returned to its original location several months later.



More detailed information including movement animations can be found on our website:

<https://vfa.vic.gov.au/recreational-fishing/fisheries-management/murray-cod-movement-lake-eildon>

RFL Grants Update

The 2024–25 round of the RFL Large Grant Program closed on 28 February 2025. The RFL Advisory Committee met on 7 April to assess the 26 applications received. The committee is currently finalising its decisions on which projects will deliver the strongest outcomes for recreational fishing and receive funding. In the meantime, the Intermediate and Small Grant programs remain open year-round. To date, over 33 applications have been successfully funded during this financial year.

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

Goulburn Valley Congolese Association: Promoting responsible fishing practices

The Goulburn Valley Congolese Association received a small grant to help run a family fishing event aimed at promoting responsible recreational fishing practices within the Congolese community in the Goulburn Valley.

The event began with a workshop at the African House led by Fisheries Officer Tash Wills. The session focused primarily on freshwater fishing education, providing detailed information on how, where and when to fish responsibly.

In the afternoon, participants were transported to Lake Victoria for some hands-on fishing. For many of the 42 attendees, this was their first fishing experience! Participants learned practical skills in a fun and inclusive environment.

The event not only introduced many community members to recreational fishing, but also encouraged connection, confidence, and stewardship of local waterways. It was a fantastic day of learning, laughter, and community spirit – and we're thrilled to see so many new faces getting hooked on fishing!



Kyabram Anglers Club – Come Try Fishing Day

The Kyabram Angling Club recently hosted a successful “Come Try Fishing Day” thanks to funding from a Small Grant, with an impressive 78 children under the age of 16 registering to take part.

For many of the young participants, this was their first time holding a fishing rod—let alone casting a line. Judging by the smiles, laughter, and wide-eyed excitement, it's safe to say plenty of them are now well and truly hooked!

Volunteers from the club played a key role on the day, helping kids set up their gear, bait hooks, and even land their very first fish. It wasn't just about fishing—it was a chance for older members to pass on their knowledge, stories, and passion to a new generation.

In total, around 200 people came along to enjoy the event, making it a fantastic community day filled with learning, connection, and fun by the water. It's events like this that show how fishing can bring people together—and inspire lifelong memories along the way.



LARGE GRANTS PROGRESS UPDATE

Greater Bendigo City Council - Increasing fish habitat and access at Kennington Reservoir

Thanks to your fishing licence fees, the City of Greater Bendigo received a grant to enhance fish habitat and improve access to Kennington Reservoir for fishing and non-powered watercraft.

The initial earthworks are now complete, reshaping the reservoir edge with channels, pools, and terracing to support healthy aquatic vegetation. Habitat improvements are also finished and include fish hotels, strategically placed logs and root masses, and new shelters for waterbirds and turtles—creating a thriving environment both above and below the waterline.

Still to come: the planting of more aquatic vegetation, a purpose-built canoe ramp to improve water access, and new interpretive signage to help keep the space safe and enjoyable for everyone.

Stay tuned—we'll keep you updated as this exciting project continues to take shape!



Got an idea for a new fishing project?

The RFL Intermediate and Small Grant programs are open year-round, and we always welcome applications from angling clubs and associations.

Details on both programs, including conditions and guidelines and a link to the online application form can be found on the [RFL website](#). If you have any questions about applying for a grant under these programs, or would like to discuss a potential application, please contact Richard Rogala, Senior Fisheries Project Officer, on 0417 038 775 or richard.rogala@vfa.vic.gov.au

Tackling the Carp Crisis

Over the past nine months, the VFA has been working hard to raise awareness about the severity of European carp infesting Australian rivers and the need for urgent action to control this pest. It's a well-known fact that millions of carp are plaguing our waterways, damaging native fisheries and sensitive aquatic ecosystems.

During this time, we have reached over two million people through social media posts, webpages, and social events such as, the recently held Lake Colac Catch a Carp Festival. We are also highlighting the world class research completed over the last twenty years, which shows that the carp herpes virus would provide a safe and effective way to reduce the carp population.

The VFA's latest action is the production of the *Carpe Diem: Seize the Day* video, which is coming soon on the VFA's YouTube channel. The trailer for the video is available [here](#) or by scanning the QR code. The video highlights the massive carp invasion and highlights the need for an Australian Government decision on the potential release of the carp herpes virus.

Victoria stands ready alongside New South Wales and other jurisdictions to play our part to control carp.

Carpe Diem



Seize the Day



BBV Updates

- The Horseshoe Bend boat ramp at Red Cliffs, Mildura has been upgraded, with works to replace the old ramp completed in May.
- Works to upgrade the rock groyne at the Mallacoota Bastion Point boat ramp have been completed.
- The St Leonards Stage 1 upgrade is now 100% complete and open.
- The Echuca, Victoria Park boat ramp was recently upgraded with universal access improvements, including a floating pontoon and Hansa Crane.
- Construction works at the Tankerton boat ramp on French Island are currently underway and will be completed in June 2025.
- The final touches to extend the Hynes Road boat ramp at Rocklands Reservoir will be completed in June 2025.
- Lang Lang boat ramp upgrade is commencing in June and is projected to be completed by October 2025.
- The Lake Wallace boat ramp is being extended by an additional 20 metres to improve access at a greater range of water levels, with works expected to be complete in June 2025.
- Better Boating Victoria (BBV) is currently attending angling and boating club meetings throughout 2025. If you would like BBV to attend one of your club meetings, simply email bbv.communications@vfa.vic.gov.au.
- Alternatively, if you are unable to attend a meeting with your local angling club, keep an eye on BBV socials for the upcoming online boaters forum occurring late June 2025.



Victoria Park Before



Victoria Park After



Horseshoe Bend Before



Horseshoe Bend After

