



# Media Release

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FROM THE OFFICE OF VRFISH – VICTORIA’S RECREATIONAL FISHING PEAK BODY

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## **BE AWARE OF POSSIBLY DISEASED FISH**

VRFish encourages recreational fishers to be cautious in the handling of diseased fish in Port Phillip Bay.

The Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) and the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) are investigating reports of fish with lesions being caught in the area between Port Melbourne and Werribee South.

VRFish Chairman Geoff Cramer said that “the reported lesions are on a variety of fish species and appears quite wide spread, which makes it a major concern to recreational fishers”.

Water quality seems the most likely culprit rather than parasites, like lampreys, as has been suggested.

It has been reported that similar occurrences have happened in the past, and that a multitude of factors could cause the lesions in the fish, such as higher water temperature and the recent high freshwater flows.

The problem may also be related to contaminated sediment in the lower reaches of the Yarra River, so it would be a good reason to be extremely cautious in relocating this sediment to other parts of the Bay.

VRFish encourages EPA and DPI to carry out a full investigation into the cause of this problem.

If fishers come into contact with diseased fish, these should be retained, if possible, for examination by EPA specialists. However, caution must be taken while handling the fish to minimise health risks.

VRFish requests that recreational fishers report any “unhealthy” fish catches to EPA on 1800 444 044 or 9695 2777 or alternatively you can also contact DPI on 13 FISH (133 474).

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