



MONTHLY REPORT FROM THE
VRFISH OFFICE
DECEMBER 2007

Welcome to the Monthly Report from the VRFish Office.

This newsletter should be sent on to all clubs and members of associations that you represent. Anyone wishing to receive this newsletter directly can e-mail Alison at alison@vrfish.com.au or phone (03) 9686 7077 to be added to the distribution list. If you have any difficulty reading or receiving this Report, this month's edition is also now on our website at http://www.vrfish.com.au/news_index.htm

- **River Red Gum Investigation Update** – The Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) has received over 6,000 submissions to the River Red Gum Forests Investigation – draft proposals paper. A summary of feedback provided by VEAC on the comments received, outline similar points raised by VRFish in their submission. For example, the need for VEAC to provide more detail on proposed camping management changes and reservations regarding access for recreation activities such as camping and fishing. VEAC have reported that the Final Report will be presented to the Minister for Environment and Climate Change by May 2008. To view other points raised, go to www.veac.vic.gov.au
- **New FADs and it's not just a new trend!** – VRFish Board Member, John Hotchin, has succeeded in achieving funding for Fish Aggregation Devices (FAD). These have been installed at Portland and Barwon Heads through a new one-year trial being conducted by the Association of Geelong & District Angling Clubs and Southern Freedivers. The FAD's have been installed with the aim of increasing the availability of pelagic sportfish, such as Mahi Mahi, Tuna and Yellowtail Kingfish. If the trial is successful, it is planned to expand the program across the State. If you require further information on the FAD's including GPS coordinates please contact John Hotchin, 03 5248 6817 or email fad@netspace.net.au
- **Lake Mokoan Translocation Update** – In the November 2007 edition of the VRFish Report it was advised that a joint project between Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Department of Primary Industries is relocating fish from Lake Mokoan to waters across Northern Victoria, including the Goulburn River. This project has been postponed due to high water levels. Goulburn Murray Water has predicted that water levels will be at a satisfactory level during January; however temperatures and water levels will be continued to be monitored to resume translocation.
- **MDBC Tender** – You may have seen recent reports regarding Murray Darling Basin Commission (MDBC) requesting tenders for a project to provide initial data on the impacts of controlling alien fish species on native fish. Although the emphasis to date



has been on the control of carp within with Basin, the Commission will consider application related to any of the currently established alien fishes, but priority species are redfin perch, eastern gambusia, carp and oriental weatherloach. The impact of salmonids on species other than galaxids is also a priority. http://www.mdbc.gov.au/data/page/1920/Final_RFT_Native_Fish_Response_to_alien_fish_removal.pdf. Whilst VRFish have participated in the 'Aliens in the Basin' Workshop – VRFish is not satisfied that the outcomes of this tender reflect the views of the Workshop or of that of Victorian government agencies. Specifically in November 2006, the Victorian Government released its 'Recreational Fishing and Boating Policy' stating that the Government would classify rivers and streams throughout the State and that they would work with anglers to develop a classification for Victorian rivers and streams, highlighting their continued commitment to both trout and native fisheries. As many of you know, fishing for trout is a very popular activity amongst recreational fishers and contributes a great deal of revenue to regional communities. Likewise, Redfin are also a very popular target species for recreational fishers. Despite this, MDBC are still going forth with this tender and have stated that the final report will be completed by 2011. This report is to establish the environmental, social and economic benefits of control measures. The final decision will be left to the Governments. Let's hope common sense prevails and that Governments will continue to acknowledge trout and redfin as a key recreational species. VRFish has discussed the tender with Fisheries Victoria who have advised that the Victorian Government, through Fisheries Victoria supports recreational angling for both Trout and native species and will actively manage Victoria's inland fisheries to reflect this commitment. Fisheries Victoria have also written to the MDBC notifying that any research conducted in Victoria will require permits to be issued by Fisheries Victoria under the *Fisheries Act 1995*.

- **Werribee Cliffs Off Limits** – The access route along side the Werribee Park Golf Club to the Werribee River is currently off limits, until the Department of Sustainability and Environment have surveyed the stability of the K Road Cliffs. Signage has been erected by the Wyndham City Council warning of the unstable cliffs. The surveying is expected to be undertaken during January. Access to the Werribee River is still possible from behind the Werribee Mansion. VRFish encourages recreational fishers to enter via the alternate route until further notice.



- **Drought Contingency Plan Released** – The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) have released its Policy Statement for 'Responding to the impacts of drought and its consequences on inland recreational fisheries'. This Policy Statement provides guidance for the DPI in responding to the impacts of prolonged periods of drought such as significantly reduced water quantity, quality and flow. And since Victoria is presently experiencing the lowest stream flows in recorded history – it is appropriate that DPI should have a Policy Statement such as this. To view the Policy Statement, go to www.dpi.vic.gov.au/fishing and follow the links through Recreational Fishing / Recreational Fishing Policy.
- **Bluwedges Court Action** – Bluwedges Coalition attended Federal Court on Thursday 10 January 2008 stating their case that the Channel Deepening Project, approved by Minister Garrett in 2007, is not the same project submitted by the Port of Melbourne Corporation in 2002. Counsel for Minister Garrett argued that the amendments made to the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act in 2006 allowed the Project to change in scale, location and activities but is still the same project. However, Federal Court Judge Peter Heerey dismissed the Bluwedges Coalition application on 15 January to overturn the approval. Dredging is to commence on 1 February.

- **Upcoming events** -

- 6/2 - North East CONS meeting @ Benalla DPI Offices
- 29/2 - Recreational Fishing Licence Grant Program closes www.dpi.vic.gov.au/fishing

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