




MONTHLY REPORT FROM THE  
VRFISH OFFICE  
MARCH 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](mailto: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](http://www.vrfish.com.au/news_index.htm)

- **VRFish Officially Opened** – Joe Helper, Minister for Agriculture, opened VRFish's Offices on Monday 19 March 2007. VRFish was extremely proud to mark this occasion, as the move to South Melbourne provides an improved location and infrastructure for VRFish. We look forward to a close working relationship with the Boating Industry Association of Victoria as a result of this move into Marine House.
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- **Channel Deepening Project** – In case you haven't noticed, the Port of Melbourne Corporation (PoMC) has released the Supplementary Environmental Effects Statement. This 1400 page document is open for public consultation until 7 May 2007, for a copy please see - <http://www.channelproject.com/supplementary/index.asp>. VRFish met with PoMC on 29 March 2007 to discuss some of VRFish's concerns over the Project. Issues discussed were impacts to fish stocks, such as Snapper, King George whiting and Black Bream, dumping of toxic spoil, limitation to access during dredging, location of dumping sites, safety records of Boskalis Shipping and economic impacts. VRFish will need to develop a considered response to this issue, and it won't be easy considering the short timeframe allowed.
  - **Replacement of Pile Markers** – The navigation aids at Drysdale Cluster and the Stream Boat Pile will be replaced during the next financial year. The Pile Markers were removed approximately two years ago by Parks Victoria as the Markers were rotting and becoming dangerous to shipping. VRFish Member, John Hotchin, with the assistance of other local community groups has successfully applied to Parks Victoria to have them replaced. This will be a great benefit to recreational fishers and other boat users. It is anticipated that the works should be completed before Christmas 2007.

- **Devilbend Update** – Tom Camp, VRFish participant on the Steering Committee, provides a report on the progress of Devilbend Natural Features Reserve. Parks Victoria has extended an open invitation to community members and representatives to express interest in participating on the Devilbend Reserve Management Plan Advisory Group, VRFish will be involved in this process.



Reinforcing our commitment to developing this great Mornington Peninsula Fishery. VRFish will keep you informed on the development of Devilbend Reserve through its newsletter.

- **Looking for some funding for a recreational fishing project?** – The Australian Government's Recreational Fishing Community Grants Programme has just opened Round 5. Projects must be lodged by 25 May 2007, for full Programme details check out <http://www.daffa.gov.au/fisheries/recreational/recfishinggrants>. Victorian Fishing Monthly just ran an excellent article by Ross Winstanley encouraging Victorian recreational fishers to take up this opportunity while it still lasts! One catch with this programme is that you must come up with 50% of the funding – well there is a solution to this. Victorian Recreational Fishing Licence funds can be sourced to fund the required 50%. Contact Robert Krix, FRAC Executive Officer (03) 9658 4369 or email [robert.krix@dpi.vic.gov.au](mailto:robert.krix@dpi.vic.gov.au). You will need to submit your Australian Government application to the FRAC first by 23 April 2007 to seek their support. A helpful tip outlined in Ross' article was to seek advice from the Programme Secretariat, phone 1800 665 105 or enlist the assistance of your local council economic development, recreational or environmental services officers in preparing the necessary paperwork.

- **Protect Australia from Didymo** – Christopher Collins, VRFish Executive Officer, held recent talks with the AQIS National Operations Manager, David Franks, regarding the range of measures that AQIS is implementing at international airports to detect Didymo 'rock snot'. AQIS is progressing a number of strategies to communicate to key stakeholder groups and international passengers the risk of Didymo on entry to Australia. VRFish has extended an offer to AQIS to assist in the distribution of information through its networks. Didymo grows extensively over the rocks in a river, excluding all other benign algal species, which provide food for invertebrates on which fish feed. It makes fishing and other riverine activities more difficult and less pleasant.

- **Trout Cod Workshop** – VRFish attended a workshop hosted by Native Fish Australia (NFA) on the development of a Trout cod fishery in Victoria. The Workshop attended by fellow participants from Australian Trout Foundation (ATF), Council of Victorian Fly Fishing Clubs (CVFFC) and other fishing associations showed their support for the proposal. The draft National Trout



Cod Recovery Plan makes allowance for recreational angling access to this species. The NFA proposal identifies the re-establishment of the recreational fisheries for Trout cod in Lake Kerford and/or Lake Sambell as well as a limited number of rivers and streams including the

Ovens River upstream of Wangaratta. VRFish along with NFA, ATF and CVFFC are looking forward to working with Minister Helper and Minister Thwaites to give this proposal the go ahead and ensuring that the implementation is begun without delay.

- **Martha Cove** – A new 233 berth marina in the eastern section of Martha Cove which is situated in the southern section of Port Phillip Bay near Safety Beach will open to the public early this month. The new facility will provide overnight accommodation for visiting boats consistent with that available at the soon to be completed Marina YE Queenscliff. Source Shipmate News April 2007 - [www.shipmate.com.au](http://www.shipmate.com.au)

- **Frankston Safe Harbour** – VRFish answered the call from Councillor Vicki McClelland, along with fellow concerned fishers and boaters, to show their support for the Frankston Safe Harbour. The meeting at Frankston City Council on Monday 2 April 2007 saw heated discussions between Councillors on proposed delays to the development of the Safe Harbour. Cr McClelland was pleased with the show of support, Cr McClelland has advised that there will be a briefing on Tuesday 10 April, with a final decision to be made in May before going out to tender.



- **Fisheries Regulation Review Progress Report** – Fisheries Victoria have finally commenced their review of the Fisheries Regulations 1998. The first phase will be preliminary stakeholder consultation, of which the VRFish Membership will be participating in. The feedback from the preliminary stakeholder consultation will be considered in the development of a Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS). The Bag and Size Limit Review conducted by VRFish earlier this year will form part of this process. The RIS is scheduled for release for public comment in August 2007 – this is when you get your opportunity to feed into the process. VRFish will ensure to notify you when the RIS is released. The formal public consultation period will run for 60 days.

- **Abalone Virus Continued Restrictions** – Fisheries Victoria have made the decision again to extend the Abalone Virus Fisheries Notice on taking of abalone, all other shellfish and sea urchins along a stretch of coastline near Port Fairy until 30 September 2007. This Fisheries Notice is to protect stocks from fishing pressure whilst they recover from the impact of the virus. Fisheries Victoria has hinted that a similar area near Warrnambool may need to be introduced. For a full copy of the Fisheries Notice, check out - [http://www.vrfish.com.au/Angler\\_Info.htm](http://www.vrfish.com.au/Angler_Info.htm)

- **I don't mean to brag!** – On a recent fishing trip out in Western Port Bay with Bob Pearce – VRFish Chairman and Christopher Collins – VRFish Executive Officer. Alison successfully out fished both of boys, catching the biggest and the most fish for the day!



- **Upcoming events** -
  - 21/4 – Alison and Antony are getting married!