



MONTHLY REPORT FROM THE
VRFISH OFFICE
MAY 2008

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

- **New Fish Ladder for Loddon Weir** – North Central Catchment Management Authority (NCCMA) and Goulburn-Murray Water are fixing the Loddon Weir to include a fishway or fish ladder to allow native fish to access an additional 40km of the Loddon. Construction commenced in April. VRFish welcomes this news, it's great to see these types of initiatives by the Catchment Management Authorities, especially after last month's edition reporting that the NCCMA was going to remove woody habitat from the Avoca River. Well done NCCMA!
- **Great Ocean Road and Otways Plan** – The series of three open houses run by Parks Victoria (PV) have now been completed and recreational fishers have had an opportunity to meet face to face with PV staff and discuss the three draft management plans for the Great Otway National Park and Otway Forest Park. The draft Recreation and Tourism Action Plan clearly states that a number of coastal recreational fishing access points traditionally in use will be reviewed as to their suitability for fishing. This has caused a great deal of concern amongst fishers as it is their belief that this will result in these areas being closed to recreational fishing. At the open house meetings and in subsequent conversations with VRFish, PV staff has stated that this is not their intent and as the managing authority, they are only concerned with issues of safety and minimisation of public risk. VRFish is seeking a further meeting with PV to discuss strategies where the interests of PV and recreational fishers can be maintained which will form the basis of our submission. For further details on the proposed plans go to www.parkweb.vic.gov.au and follow the link through 'Have Your Say'. Comments on the draft plans are due 2 June 2008.
- **Stream Classification Model on Tour** – As reported in the last edition of the Monthly Office Report, the Stream Classification Model will be out for public consultation, firstly through four consultation meetings at Bright, Wodonga, Corryong and Melbourne. For full details go to www.vrfish.com.au. Following the consultation meetings the draft model will undergo a 90-day consultation period, to view the draft model click here



www.dpi.vic.gov.au/fishing

- **Office of the Environmental Monitor** – VRFish met with the Office of the Environmental Monitor (OEM) during April to discuss their role and what information they will be providing about the Channel Deepening Project. Regular updates are now received by VRFish from the OEM; however VRFish was reminded to provide important phone numbers to the recreational fishing community. If you come across any dead or sick fish, please phone 136 186 or if you notice any oil spills or pollution please phone 03 9695 2777. For more information regarding the OEM go to www.oem.vic.gov.au. Also don't forget if you are going out on the Bay make sure you check out the dredging schedule www.channelproject.com
- **New Grants Program** – Community Coastcare Grants. Caring for our Country Community Coastcare will support coastal communities to participate in coastal protection and restoration activities. Two scales of competitive grants will be available (small grants up to \$50,000 and larger-scale targeted grants up to \$250,000). Applications are scheduled to open on 19 May and close on 25 July 2008. For full details go to www.nrm.gov.au
- **Green Paper** – The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) have released the Land and biodiversity at a time of climate change, Green Paper. The Green Paper aims to promote discussion on how the government can best respond to the decline of Victoria's land and aquatic ecosystems and biodiversity. Feedback on the suggested approaches outlined in the Green Paper will inform the development of the White Paper, due for release in mid 2009. Public submissions on the Green Paper are due by 30 June 2008, www.dse.vic.gov.au follow the link 'Land and biodiversity at a time of climate change'.
- **Lake Mokoan Fish on the move again** – The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) have advised that Lake Mokoan is at 4.3% of full supply and that the fish translocation was recommencing in late April and continue for a few weeks, depending on fish capture, survivability and access to the Lake. Release sites will be determined by Fisheries Victoria and will be at various sites on the Goulburn River, downstream of Molesworth. Fish released into the Goulburn system will be tagged by Fisheries Victoria. The latest report from DSE advised that they have translocated 1157 Golden Perch and 25 Murray Cod, the largest being 21kg.
- **Request for comment on 'an overview of the impacts of translocated native fish species in Australia'** – A draft report "An overview of the impacts of translocated native fish species in Australia" has been released by the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts for public comment. The Department is seeking comments from interested parties on the draft report. The report has been prepared for the Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts. It reviews current literature relating to the movement, intentional and unintentional, of native freshwater fish species both within and outside their natural ranges. The translocation of native species can have impacts upon indigenous populations of native fish, the general ecosystem into which translocations occur, as well as subsequent social and economic impacts over time. The Department is particularly interested in receiving submissions



that provide additional scientifically robust data or information which would improve the current report. The report can be found at <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/index.html>. Comments must be received by close of business Friday 23 May 2008, and sent to Email: invasive_species@environment.gov.au

- **Issues on the other side of the world** – You may be interested to note that catch and release fishing will be banned in Switzerland from next year. Anglers in the country will have to demonstrate their expertise by taking a course on humane methods of catching fish, under new legislation outlined by the Swiss Federal Parliament. The new legislation states that a fish caught should be killed immediately following their capture, with a sharp blow to the head from a blunt instrument. Also the use of livebait and barbed hooks is also prohibited, except in certain situations. The laws come into effect in 2009. Food for thought – this is the second country now in Europe to adopt these types of regulations!
- **Longline Agreement** – Last year Graham Williams, President Game Fishing Association of Australia (GFAA) reported an arrangement in place for Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery Resource Sharing and the then Minister for Fisheries released a Press Release in November confirming the arrangement which was to commence 1 January 2008. Unfortunately it has hit a problem with the new Labor Federal Government, so the Resource Sharing agreement has stalled. Graham Williams is continuing to push the issue with the new Minister, the Hon. Tony Burke MP and Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry department head, Robert Murphy. Both are supportive, however, the new Treasury Department has locked up all the funds. Graham Williams will keep all informed if the situation changes, in the meantime the longline fleet have no restrictions where they catch their fish. For those concerned anglers, Graham Williams suggest you voice your displeasure by writing letters to the new Minister, the Hon. Tony Burke, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600.
- **Upcoming events** -
 - 17/5 - Eildon Pondage Family Fishing Festival www.dpi.vic.gov.au/gofishing
 - 21/5 – Stream Classification Consultation Meeting @ Corryong
 - 22/5 – Corner Inlet Stock Assessment Workshop
 - 29/5 – Stream Classification Consultation Meeting @ Melbourne

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