

Native fish management plan for Victorian coastal rivers

Multi-Regional Projects in Victoria

Fact Sheet # 1

Project Background

The coastal rivers and wetlands of Victoria harbour a unique community of freshwater fish. Some species may be more familiar than others. For example, Bass (*Macquaria novemaculeata*) and Shortfinned eels (*Anguilla australis*) are well known to anglers. However, smaller species such as Tupong (*Psuedaphritis urvili*) and Yarra pygmy perch (*Nannoperca obscura*) are equally important in maintaining the ecological integrity of our rivers. Unfortunately, many populations of freshwater fish are in trouble and several species are listed as being of national conservation concern (e.g. Australian Grayling, *Prototroctes maraena*, listed as Vulnerable under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999).

Many factors have contributed to the deterioration of fish habitat and native fish populations. These include significant changes to water flow, reduced water quality, loss of riparian vegetation, and the introduction of alien fish species. To ensure healthy freshwater fish populations are maintained into the future, a regionally coordinated management approach will be essential.



Australian Grayling Gary Backhouse

Component. It is hoped that the plan will become a blueprint for restoring our freshwater fish populations and represents an exciting opportunity to achieve long-term outcomes for river health across coastal Victoria.



Queensborough River

Tarmo Raadik

Project Aims

The status and needs of freshwater fish in coastal rivers are currently poorly understood. This project aims to improve the management of aquatic ecosystems with specific target setting for on-ground actions and monitoring in each natural resource management region.

Implementation of a Native Fish Management Plan across the coastal catchments of Victoria will have a high probability of achieving long-term outcomes as it will directly feed into the framework and needs of the existing regional planning framework – the Victorian River Health Strategy and the Regional Catchment Investment Process.

The Native Fish Management Plan for Victorian Coastal Rivers is a new project funded by the Natural Heritage Trust's Regional Competitive

A blueprint for restoring native fish

Key Elements of Approach

The development of the Native Fish Management Plan will be achieved through various means including:

- The collection, collation, and analysis of native fish and best management practice information from each NRM region;
- The development of an over-arching Native Fish Strategy that prioritises multi-regional issues and threats for the coordinated management of freshwater fish populations;
- Development of region-specific native fish management plans that link to River Health and Regional Catchment Investment Strategies;
- Extensive community consultation to ensure community involvement, support and ownership of the native fish management plans;
- Workshops to coordinate project partnerships and input from other government agencies and groups;
- Ensuring that native fish issues are understood and addressed by other regional programs; and
- The development and delivery of community information products.

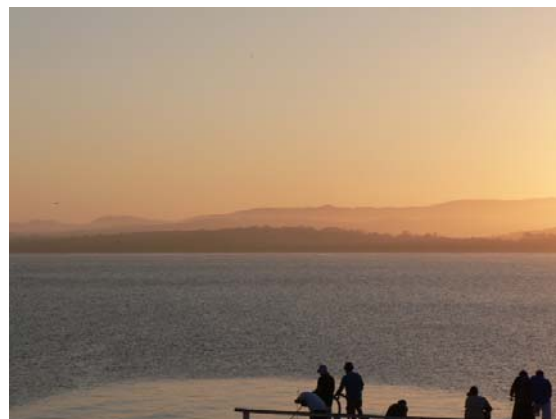


Tupong

Jason Higham

Project Timeline

- April 2006 Project commences
- Dec 2006 Over-arching Native Fish Management Plan completed
- Jan 2008 Priority sub-catchment management plans for each NRM region completed
- Apr 2008 Publication and promotion



Estuary fishing at sunset Janet Pritchard

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