

Media Release

The Hon Melissa Horne MP

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation

Minister for Ports and Freight

Minister for Fishing and Boating



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A HELPING HAND FOR MACQUARIE PERCH IN THE NORTHEAST

Macquarie perch populations in northeast Victoria are getting a helping hand with the release of 55,000 fingerlings into four waterways.

Macquarie perch are a threatened species and stocking is an important way to accelerate their recovery in the wild.

The stocking is funded by recreational fishing licence fees and the Victorian Government's Target One Million plan that has been successful in getting more Victorians out on the water to fish.

The Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) is working with project partners to bring back Macquarie perch, which were once abundant in our rivers and valued for food and sport.

The stocked fingerlings were shared between the Ovens River below Wangaratta (32,000), Buffalo River (12,000), Goulburn River near Trawool (6,000) and Lake Dartmouth (5,000).

Since 1990, the VFA has released approximately 500,000 Macquarie perch, most of which were grown at their freshwater fish hatchery at Snobs Creek, near Eildon. Encouragingly, there is evidence these stockings have contributed to re-establishing some populations, particularly in the Ovens River.

The VFA team at Snobs Creek and DELWP's Arthur Rylah Institute have done the hard-yards this breeding season, stepping up efforts to produce Macquarie perch fingerlings by increasing the collection of running-ripe males and females ready to spawn, trialling different methods for egg and larval husbandry, and collaborating with NSW Fisheries.

DNA samples are taken from every adult fish to ensure genetic diversity of parents is known. Most adults are returned to the wild following their time at the Snobs Creek hatchery and all are tagged so Fisheries staff can confirm their identity if recaptured in future years.

The VFA is aiming to have a captive breeding program for the species that will not rely on sourcing wild fish every year and is hosting an investment workshop in 2021 to progress state-wide actions in the Macquarie perch recovery plan.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Fishing and Boating Melissa Horne

"It's great to see a threatened species like Macquarie perch making a comeback in our rivers thanks to the strong partnership between agencies and volunteers."

"Reliably breeding Macquarie perch is one of the great challenges in Australian aquaculture, so the team have done well growing 55,000 fingerlings for stocking this season and the work continues for more to come in the future."