



The Hon Sonya Kilkenny MP
Minister for Planning
Minister for Outdoor Recreation



Australian Government
The Hon Murray Watt MP
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Minister for Emergency Management

MEDIA RELEASE

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FISHERIES COLLABORATION TO CRACK CODE ON ENDANGERED FISH

A collaborative new research project will bring together fisheries experts from across Australia and abroad to work jointly on re-establishing wild populations of the endangered native Macquarie Perch.

Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Murray Watt today officially announced the \$3.7 million project at SEA LIFE Melbourne Aquarium, which will drive collaboration of governments, university researchers and recreational fishers.

The three-year project will conduct dedicated research to 'crack the code' on captive breeding of the species, meaning fisheries experts will be able to produce and release Macquarie Perch using hatchery broodstock, rather than capturing wild adult fish every season.

The project, led by the Federal and Victorian Governments, features 12 partners across government, universities and community, including Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA), Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC), NSW Fisheries and the North East and Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authorities.

This important work will also be driven by research partners including Deakin University, University of the Sunshine Coast, Monash University, Arthur Rylah Institute and the Norwegian Institute of Aquaculture Research, as well as the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority.

Macquarie Perch were once abundant in south-eastern Australia but a range of factors, including barriers to fish migration and loss of habitat, have restricted populations to just a handful of locations. Breeding currently relies on annual collection of broodfish from the wild, with experts having been unable to replicate environmental conditions for broodstock to thrive in hatcheries over several breeding seasons.

This dedicated research project will examine nutrition, hormones, the timing of breeding and other factors to understand how to consistently produce fingerlings for stocking – boosting the ongoing work to save the Macquarie Perch from extinction.

Since 2022, the VFA's Snobs Creek hatchery has produced more than 185,000 Macquarie Perch – including 40,000 released in Victoria's north-east earlier this year.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Outdoor Recreation Sonya Kilkenny

"A reliable supply of hatchery bred Macquarie Perch will accelerate their recovery in the wild and ensure future generations can appreciate this iconic native species in places it was once abundant."

"This is a part of the Andrews Labor Government's record investment in outdoor recreation, totaling more than \$96 million over the next four years to improve boating, fishing and aquaculture."

Quotes attributable to Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Murray Watt

“Having the capability to reliably breed Macquarie Perch in large numbers without sourcing broodstock from the wild every season would be a major advance in the recovery of this species across its natural range in south-eastern Australia.

“This is just one of the hundreds of research projects, worth more than \$166 million, the FRDC is investing in to benefit Indigenous, commercial and recreational fishers as well as the aquaculture industry.”