

Media Release

Steve Dimopoulos MP

Minister for Environment

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events

Minister for Outdoor Recreation



Tuesday, 11 March 2025

EXTINCT FISH RELEASED BACK INTO VICTORIAN WATERWAYS

A native fish once thought to be extinct is thriving after being released back in Victorian waterways thanks to a successful breeding program backed by the Allan Labor Government.

The small-bodied olive perchlet was declared extinct in 1988 and apart from one sighting of a single fish in 2022 near Mildura, the species was last recorded in the wild in Victoria in 1929.

A conservation effort to bring olive perchlet back from extinction has seen 200 healthy adults released back into the wild to help repopulation efforts.

Olive perchlets reared at the Victorian Fisheries Authority's Snob's Creek Conservation Hatchery were released into Cameron's Creek in the Gunbower National Park last month, the first ever wild release of the species in Victoria.

The success of this program is contributed to the Labor Government's Nature Fund program which invested \$315,000 into the \$1 million project. The Nature Fund supports conservation projects to threatened species and their habitats.

The release is part of a long-term plan to re-populate the species into restored floodplain habitats throughout the Murray corridor.

The olive perchlet is a small fish that grows up to 5-6 centimetres long and plays an important role in maintaining waterway health by preying on tiny aquatic species, such as water insects, beetles and larvae.

The North Central CMA has also been breeding surrogate populations of olive perchlet in private dams around Bendigo, with more wild releases planned for the future.

The olive perchlet release follows the release of previously extinct southern purple spotted gudgeon into northern Victorian waterways in 2020, as well as releases and habitat restoration of threatened southern pygmy perch, flat-headed galaxias, and Murray hardyhead.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Environment Steve Dimopoulos

"The release of the olive perchlet is yet another success of the Allan Labor Government's Nature Fund, which aims to stop the decline of native plants and animals and improve Victoria's natural resources."

"We're supporting Victoria's treasured native species by making sure they are protected and helping them to repopulate their native habitat."

Quotes attributable to Member for Northern Victoria Jaclyn Symes

"We are supporting our natural environment so future generations can enjoy seeing our unique native plants and wildlife while experiencing our great outdoors."

Media contact: Liam Miles 0492 504 682 | liam.miles@minstaff.vic.gov.au