



AUSTRALIAN TROUT FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2016

WILD TROUT STREAMS & WILD TROUT FISHERY

The main messages from Talk Wild Trout 2016:

Stocking mature Hatchery trout into wild trout streams has a detrimental effect on current wild trout populations and appears not to work.

Habitat and Riparian restoration does work and we should encourage Angling Clubs to form partnerships with CMA's and other Landcare groups to complete restoration projects on our wild trout streams.

The news at the Talk Wild Trout Conference indicated: The surveys of the 12 priority rivers conducted between January and March 2016 revealed that trout populations in a number of the streams had improved. There was evidence of brown trout recruitment from 2015 spawning in 10 of the 12 priority rivers.

Brown trout recruitment (as indicated by small fish) was stronger in 2016 compared to 2015. For the second year in a row, no brown trout recruitment was recorded in the Jamieson River.

The Barkly, Goulburn, Howqua, Kiewa, King and Mitta Rivers all had at least one site with > 50 trout captured per 100m surveyed.

The Ovens River showed further signs of trout recovery following the 2013 fires and sediment impact, brown trout were collected from the Ovens River upstream of Harrierville (absent in 2015) indicating the population is showing signs of recovery.

Nariel Creek went from just over 3 trout per 100m in 2015 to 13 trout per 100m in 2016. Both brown and rainbow trout increased with, with all size ranges recorded.

The results of the above surveys provide important information integral to the Wild Trout Fisheries Management Program.

Not an ATF Member?

Come and join with the rest of us to protect, rebuild and promote Australia's trout fishing heritage.

Membership is open to any person or association with an interest in trout fishing, whether you fish with fly, lure or bait.

It only costs \$20.00 per year to be an individual member and you will be helping to ensure that trout fishing in Australia remains alive and well for future generations to come.

To apply for membership or refinance your subscription go to: <http://www.atfonline.com.au/home/page/membership>

Major ATF strategies in 2017

In 2017 the team at the ATF will focus on three prime areas that will enhance and protect our wild trout fishery.

STOCKING

Continue to work with fisheries to trial stocking wild trout using Jordan Scotty Incubators.

HABITAT & RIPARIAN RESTORATION

Initiate stream projects in all regions and form partnerships with Angling Clubs, CMA's and Landcare groups.

TROUT SIZE AND BAG LIMIT

Continue to pursue a change in bag and size limits based on Angler survey results.

Jordan scotty incubator trial update

The ATF is pleased to inform our members that Fisheries have agreed to carry our further trials of the Jordan Scotty Incubators, in partnership with the ATF, next spawning season.

It is important to note that these trials will be included in the Wild Trout Fisheries Management Program, and we are confident that the results will have a huge positive effect on the future of our wild trout fishery.

The extent of the trials will be decided at the next Wild Trout Reference Group meeting scheduled for 13 January 2017.

We will then be seeking Angling Clubs in various regions to volunteer to assist with the installation and monitoring of the incubators.



Jordan Scotty incubator being setup

Fisheries have also agreed to source WILD TROUT OVA for the incubators and it is extremely important for everyone to know that we will be stocking wild trout into existing wild trout populations.

Rubicon River Habitat

The ATF received a report from former ATF president Rod Barford, regarding a section of the Rubicon river bank that is badly in need of some urgent attention, before all the lovely native trees end up in the river.

ATF president Terry George immediately contacted Jim Castles from the Goulburn Broken catchment authority who advised they are aware of the site and had noticed it had eroded more after recent high flows.

Jim also advised that they were waiting on a funding application but have now decided to get onto resolving the issue sooner using existing funding.

Excellent work from all involved to help protect the native habitat so crucial to our wild trout.



Rubicon river bank erosion

HABITAT - HABITAT - HABITAT

By Terry George

Bygone Days - Streams denuded of Snags

I can recall about 50 years ago, a mate of mine was working for the Ovens River Trust. Most of his time was spent along the Ovens River, as part of a crew that was dragging out all of the trees and logs that had fallen in the river. At the time, most people (including the Trustees of the River Trust) thought they were doing a great job of cleaning out the river.

Just how WRONG we were!! Let us now have some thoughts about current policies on the most important habitat issue.

Habitat 2016

How things change! This day and age Habitat is preached as, and quite rightly so, the most important item in protecting and sustaining our fisheries; whether it be a freshwater, estuarine or saltwater fishery.

At the Fisheries Talk Wild Trout Conference in November 2015, the messages from the keynote speaker, Dr Dan Dauwaltwer, Fisheries Managers and Arthur Rylah Institute Scientists, evolved around the important issues of providing good in-stream habitat and appropriate riparian planting. Dr Dauwaltwer's clear principle was that if we "take care of the fish, the fishing will take care of itself".

The Australian Trout Foundation (ATF) Executive Committee is in full agreement with the findings of the Talk Wild Trout Conference, in that habitat restoration, together with riparian zone and riverbank management, is the best course of action to restore, enhance and sustain our recreational trout fishery.

The ATF's mission is to protect, build and promote Australia's trout fishery to ensure that all Australians can enjoy trout fishing now, and for future generations to come.

Relevant Goals are to ensure the sustainability of Australia's trout fishery; and to identify and undertake specific environmental projects to enhance or repair recreational trout fisheries; in particular habitat and riparian zone projects.

Ovens River Example

The bushfire of Jan/Feb 2013 burnt large areas of forest from downstream of Harrietville up to and across the Great Divide and into the Gippsland catchments. This was followed in Feb/Mar 2013 by a series of extreme rain events centred particularly over the East branch of the Ovens over a landscape almost denuded of vegetation by the fires.

This resulted in flooding in Harrietville as whole hillsides (trees, rocks, silt, ash and rubble) were washed down the river. The silt and ash loads were far higher than any locals had seen before and resulted in loss of all trout in the area immediately above and below Harrietville.

An electro survey commissioned by Fisheries Victoria and carried out by ARI Officers, around October 2013, found no trout in the main stream above Bright.

The ATF, together with their local ATF delegate, Brian Eddy, got to work and prepared and submitted a detailed proposal for a recovery stocking of the Upper Ovens. The proposal was well supported by angling associations, local Council, tourism and business organisations and Members of Parliament. The application was lodged at the Fisheries 2014 stocking meeting and ultimately resulted in the release of 2,500 advanced yearling brown trout between Porepunkah and Harrietville in Spring 2014.

Brian Eddy, aware that habitat had been destroyed in the floods, felt that we needed to improve conditions in the hope that the released trout could spawn over future seasons. At the same time the North East Catchment Management Authority (NECMA) and a local community group were completing an extensive streamside riparian revegetation project below Harrietville at "Frosty Corner".

So he took the opportunity to initiate an in-stream habitat restoration project which would complement the riparian work already in progress at that site.



Releasing trout into the Ovens river

Brian secured involvement with the Harrietville Community Forum and met with the NECMA Catchment Project Manager, Andrew Briggs to discuss the proposed project and together they plotted how it could be done and costings were calculated. Funding was sought via the Recreational Fishing Grants Program (see Fisheries web site) and this was ultimately approved and a contractor was engaged to carry out the work.

I am delighted to tell you that the project was duly completed and it has made a significant difference to an approx. 1.5k stretch of the river.



Ovens river before rehabilitation



Placing habitat into river



Large boulders being delivered



Boulder placement



Ovens river after rehabilitation works

The Australian Trout Foundation has a facebook page with current news, announcements and updates.

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Representing the ATF as an invited speaker, I attended the opening of this Ovens River Fish Habitat Restoration Project on 10th September and upon asking the many attendees, I was pleased to hear that since the bushfire and flood, platypus and native water rats and blackfish, as well as trout, have been sighted in the river.

This project is a shining example of what can be achieved by members of the community and congratulations are due to Brian and Harrietteville Community Forum and Andrew Briggs of NECMA, for initiating and completing the successful project, and to Fisheries Victoria, Harrietteville Anglers Club, the Upper Ovens Land Care Group and the Australian Trout Foundation for giving their support.

There are many other similar projects completed, currently underway or on the drawing board, involving Angling Clubs, Catchment Management Authorities, Arthur Rylah Institute (ARI), Fisheries Victoria, VRFish, Native Fish Australia (NFA), ATF, and local Land Care Groups.

Some examples being:

Kiewa River Habitat and Riparian projects, involving NECMA, Kiewa Valley Angling Club and the local Green Army made up of just about every club in the region.

Ovens River Native Fish Section – multiple river rehabilitation actions – 305 'snags' and 25 'fish hotels' installed, willow control (18km), fencing (5.5km), fishway reconstruction, 200 carp removed, extensive community engagement. ARI, NECMA, MDBA & Wangaratta Sustainability Network.

Little Snowy River Habitat and Riparian projects, involving NECMA and Greenwells Fly Fishing Club.

Mitta Mitta River, similar projects involving NECMA and local Anglers.

Broken Creek and Lower Goulburn River – Native Fish habitat. Introduction of Large Woody Debris (snags) and Fish Motels planned for December 2016 by Goulburn Broken CMA.

Hughes Creek – Native Fish Habitat. Introduction of Large Woody Debris to complete in 2015/2016. More Riparian and In-stream projects planned over the next 4 years. Macquarie Perch Habitat. GBCMA and Native Fish Australia (NFA).

Delatite River – Habitat enhancement, riparian fencing and revegetation (around 1,140 trees, shrubs and grasses along 870m of stream) GBCMA with assistance from Mansfield & District Flyfishers Club and the ATF in June 2016.

Gellibrand River In-stream Woody Habitat installation, successfully completed by Arthur Rylah Institute (ARI) assisted by Corangamite CMA, Purrumbete & Colac Angling Clubs, Princeton Landcare, Estuary Watch & Waterwatch, Land and Water Resources, Otway Catchment Landcare, VRFish and the ATF.

Tarwin River – Habitat enhancement and relocation of Blackfish; ARI and West Gippsland CMA.

Port Phillip Bay – Restoration of degraded (or lost) Shelf Fish Reefs – initiated by Albert Park Yachting & Angling Club (APYAC) co-operatively with Fisheries Victoria Marine Scientists and supported by the University of Melbourne. I'm a proud member of APYAC, a club that has shown such initiative, although I have not contributed in any way to the project. Funding of \$120k provided by the Victorian Government, with a further \$150k provided by international group "The Nature Conservancy". Congratulations and thank you to all involved parties in this first of its type project in Australia.

I have mentioned these examples to show that there are a number of groups actively doing some great habitat and riparian zone restoration projects throughout Victoria, for which we pass on our gratitude and encouragement to keep up the good work.

Dr Amber Clarke (DELWP) announced at the Talk Wild Trout Conference 2016, that the Victorian Government will be providing \$1million over four years for the "Angler Riparian Partnerships Program". The funding will be used for partnerships between the Catchment Management Authorities (CMA's) and recreational angling groups to deliver riparian improvement works in areas of local priority for anglers.

This will give local angling groups the ability to work directly with CMA's on riparian areas that are important to them and improve fishing in their favourite fishing streams.

That is good news, however, habitat restoration is of equal importance and the ATF will be encouraging Angling Clubs to also liaise with CMA's and form similar partnerships to initiate habitat restoration projects where appropriate.

[Checkout our Website](#)

For all the latest news, articles and more go to

<http://www.atfonline.com.au/home>

In summary, there are many organisations and good people doing marvelous work to enhance the health of our waterways and fisheries, and I have only had space to mention but a few in this article.

Notwithstanding the above, a number of our once sparkling and healthy streams are in dire need of similar projects in order to restore them to their former glory

and to provide shelter, food and spawning grounds for both trout and native fish and our other water creatures.

Accordingly, our plea to Angling Clubs and Fishers is to please check your local streams for in-stream habitat conditions and riparian zone plants; where you believe that improvements are warranted, contact the manager of your local CMA or Terry George at Australian Trout Foundation, or Tim Curmi at Native Fish Australia.

There is project funding available via the Recreational Fisheries Grants Program and the ATF and NFA are available to assist in any way, including inspection of proposed habitat and/or riparian project sites and preparation of grant applications.

Terry George
 President Australian Trout Foundation
 Member Native Fish Australia

www.atfonline.com.au www.nativefish.asn.au

RECENT FISHING TRIP TO NZ

Six ATF Members went to NZ from 1st-8th December and stayed at TroutBeck Fishing Lodge at Turangi. ATF President "TG" Terry George, "Georgie" Mark George, "Boom Boom" Terry Preston, "TB" Tony Borrack, Gerald Heaslip and Peter Stanley.

Our Host & Guide, Jason Bethune, took TG, Georgie & Boom Boom to a back country river, the Whakapapa, first day and what a day of action we had; huge rainbows and couple of big brownies.



The other 3 Fishers had a crack at the Hinemaiaia with little success.

The next couple of days were spent successfully nymphing and dry fly fishing in the Tongariro. Best action in this famous stream was on the dry approaching evening.

Jason then unveiled a secret Lake, which we'll call "Lake O" and his very special secret snail pattern nymph, so away we went in his little boat and the pictures tell the story. The biggest was 10lb. which Jason happened to hook when I asked him to take my rod whilst I was taking a phone call from Peter Stanley!! The next best was Gerald's 9 pounder and we had quite a few more @ 8lb, 7lb, 6lb and below.



Other Guides and Fishers follow Jason around on the lake, but they don't have details of his secret nymph and catch very few fish! We have been placed under a cone of silence.

Next year, we plan to do a helicopter trip to a special back country river for 3 days; can't wait!!

TroutBeck Lodge is the place to be. Jason is without doubt the best Guide we've ever had and he and his lovely wife Tracy are sensational hosts all day long and especially après fishing at cocktail hour and mealtime. Tracy's gourmet meals are to die for and the local wines are most enjoyable.

Check them out at www.troutbeckfishinglodge.co.nz

Well that's it for 2016; we look forward to working closely with Angling Clubs and Anglers in 2017 on the strategies of (a) Habitat & Riparian Restoration projects; and (b) Stocking trials with Jordan Scotty incubators.

We wish all Anglers a peaceful and safe Christmas and some exciting wild trout fishing in 2017 and beyond.

The Committee, Australian Trout Foundation.