

Australian Trout Foundation

Annual Report 2019-20



Contact details

Web: atf.com.au

Email:

[secretary@atf.com](mailto:secretary@atf.com.au)
.au



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FROM OUR PRESIDENT

On behalf of the Australian Trout Foundation Committee, I am proud to provide you with this Annual Report, which details some of our achievements that were mainly made possible by working together with groups of passionate trout fisher volunteers.

The ATF seeks to ensure that all Australians can enjoy trout fishing now and for future generations to come

Our Mission:

- (a) The ATF's mission is to protect, build and promote Australia's trout fishery, and
- (b) To protect, repair and regenerate inland waterways and riparian zones for the benefit of better stream water quality, thus providing better environmental outcomes for trout and native fish species.

Our Strategy:



To achieve our vision and mission, we have followed our **Strategic Plan 2018 – 2020**

which includes four key focus areas: Resources, Partnerships, Habitat and Communications/Education. These focus areas led us to initiating a Victorian Wild Trout Fishery Workshop in October 2019. Working together with the Victorian Fisheries Authority, **The Wild Trout Strategy 2020 – 2025** was developed with 30 wild trout fishers through a two-day workshop and a seven-person steering committee of representatives from ATF, VFA & VRFish.



Vision and
Mission



Strategy



Action

Working Together:



Victorian Trout Fishers win an RFL grant of \$110k to enhance our waterways and valuable fishery. The VFA gave trout fishers a huge vote of confidence when it

delegated responsibility to the Australian Trout Foundation Vic (ATF) to manage and administer the funds that will be required to continue the current Wild Trout Management Program, plus additional priority actions contained in Victorian Wild Trout Strategy. The considerable advice and assistance provided by VFA's Inland Fisheries Managers to the ATF in preparation of the grant submission was greatly appreciated.

The ATF is the recognized representative body for trout fishers and it will be calling on its group of passionate volunteers for assistance to carry out a number of important priority actions that will be funded by the grant monies. Some of these priority actions are described later in this report.

Environmental enhancement projects:



We have estimated that the ATF

Committee and our members and volunteers have contributed approx.

5,000 in-kind hours working on environmental habitat restoration and regeneration projects during the year. This figure would have been higher if we hadn't cancelled two large projects involving planting of 5,000 native trees in May & June because of COVID-19. We have a list of approx. 80 proposed habitat and access enhancement and access projects for consideration resulting from the regional habitat workshops held recently. It appears that 2021-22 is going to be an exceptionally busy time for our volunteers.



Partners and supporters:



Our most valuable asset in attaining our vision and mission, is the working relationships we have with our partners, members and supporters. We work together with:

- Anglers, Angling Clubs & Associations
- The Victorian Fisheries Authority
- Department of Environment, Land Water & Planning Catchment Management Authorities
- The Arthur Rylah Institute
- Landcare Groups
- Native Fish Australia Vic

We also have representation on the following forums:

- The Victorian Freshwater Fish Habitat & Flows Forum
- The Wild Trout Fishers Reference Group and
- The Victorian Statewide Fishing Roundtable Forum.

I would like to thank our passionate committee, members, supporters and partners for an outstanding year of achievements, and contributions to our common aim of enhancing the health of our waterways and fisheries.

Terry George



ATF Executive Members

TERRY GEORGE: PRESIDENT



Terry was born in Bright and lived 70m from the Ovens River, where his trout fisher grandpa owned 70 m of Ovens river frontage right in the town. He was destined to become a trout fisher and as soon as he could walk, tagged along behind his grandpa learning the fine art of trout fishing.

His early school years were spent at the Bright and Harrietville State Schools before being banished to boarding school at Kilmore. All spare time and school holidays were spent hunting and fishing because rabbits and trout formed a big part of the weekly family diet.

Terry worked in the financial industry for many years which included managing director of the company. He became a member of the ATF Committee in 2013 and President in 2015. Terry's passion for the health of our high-country streams and our valuable wild trout fishery was a powerful motivating factor.

Terry's theme is "teamwork makes the dreamwork". The ATF works closely with recreational trout fishers, members, clubs, supporters, the VFA, DELWP, CMA's, Landcare and other stakeholders. The main aim of all parties is to enhance the health of our precious and valuable trout fishery, and to restore the health of our waterways.

RAY BUCKLAND: VICE PRESIDENT



Ray is a retired Primary School Teacher. He has been retired for some time from teaching, having reached the young age of 70. He was a teacher for 48 years. He has had Valerie as a partner and wife for 47 years and they have two children and three grandchildren. Ray coached athletics and football for 30 years and likes to write short stories and poetry, mostly about fly fishing. He has had a 'love affair' with fly fishing for the past 25 years.

TOM WHITE: TREASURER



Tom is 65 years old and still works full-time in the specialty timber industry. Tom has been fishing since he was 6 years old and has been fly-fishing for the past 20 years.

Tom is a financial member of the Yarra Valley Fly Fishers, Victorian Fly Fishers Association, Native Fish Australia and the Australian Trout Foundation (ATF).

Tom has spent the last 10 years as an executive committee member of the ATF, the first 6 as secretary and the past 4 as treasurer. He is passionate about having a healthy recreational inland fishery which he firmly believes starts with having healthy waterways.



Paul is a post-doctoral research consultant with Swinburne University. Previously he worked in the education and not-for-profit sectors for twenty years, specializing in bush-based therapeutic practice for at-risk young people. Paul has fished for most of his life, beginning with saltwater fishing in Queensland estuaries and off the beach with homemade bamboo rods and bakelite Alvey side-cast reels. He has been a fly-fisher for the past 18 years. Paul remains a passionate conservationist.



Volunteers setting Jordan Scotty incubators in place, Macalister River

ATF ACTIVITIES: SUMMARY

Over the past year the ATF has been pursuing its purpose of protecting, building and promoting Australia's trout fishery in many ways and with a number of key partnerships. The activities of the ATF over the last twelve months have included

- the development of a five-year Victorian wild trout strategy with the support of the Victorian Fishing Authority (VFA)
- The running of habitat workshops across the state to gather critical information regarding key locations for environmental repair
- Working with Catchment Management Authorities, volunteers and other stakeholders to initiate habitat restoration and riparian repair on numerous rivers
- Investigating legislation regarding landholder responsibility for waterfront stream protection
- Developing, running, analyzing and reporting on a survey conducted on the state of the Victorian wild trout fishery
- Together with the VFA, sourcing wild trout ova from Gadens Hatchery on the Thredbo River for a recovery stocking trial in the Nariel Valley after the 2019-20 bushfires
- Developing a large body of volunteers to initiate habitat restoration projects across Victoria
- Applying for and being successful with a large Recreational Fishing License grant to support many of the initiatives in the Wild Trout five-year strategy together with the VFA
- Developing of a new website and new communication materials for public education regarding the trout and the trout fishery
- Working with Native Fish Australia to ensure the continuation and sustainability of native fish such as Murray Cod, trout cod, Macquarie Perch and native galaxids
- Working with and supporting the Arthur Rylah Institute and Melbourne University in many activities including work to preserve the critically endangered spotted tree frog.
- Work in Western Australia to support and develop the, largely unrecognized, trout fishery in that state.



“ Our most valuable asset in attaining our vision and mission, is the working relationships we have with our partners, members and supporters. ”

All this work has been driven by a small and dedicated band of volunteers who comprise the ATF Committee. The ATF is committed to a partnership approach and works closely with the VFA, DELWP, CMA's, Arthur Rylah Institute, Victorian Freshwater Fish Habitat & Flows Forum, Native Fish Australia, Volunteers, Landcare and local angling clubs and individuals to achieve these significant outcomes. At all times the ATF maintains its commitment to protecting, building and promoting our precious trout fisheries. Greater details of some of the above activities are provided below.

HABITAT – RESTORING THE HEALTH OF OUR WATERWAYS AND RIPARIAN SURROUNDS



For some years now the ATF have been pursuing a policy of taking care of the environment that allows the fishery to better respond to some of the challenges it faces. This has been as response to research presented at the VFA Talk Wild Trout Conferences, particularly that of Dr. John Morrongiello from Melbourne University and Dr Jarod Lyon from ARI. This research has suggested that climate change has seen a warming of global temperatures with all indications this will continue for some time. Unshaded streams, lower rainfall and lower stream flows, denuded riparian zones (zones alongside rivers and streams), stock access and poor stock effluent management and removal of instream habitat all contribute to a degrading of the quality of the natural environment upon which all fish species depend.

To answer these challengers the ATF has embarked on an extensive habitat and riparian restoration program. This program has been led by local anglers through habitat workshops conducted by a partnership of the ATF, VFA, DELWP, ARI & VFFH & F in three localities across the state. These include North East, Metro and East Gippsland. A fourth, to be conducted in Western Victoria will occur when COVID-19 restrictions are eased. Projects undertaken in the last few years include:



- Buckland River in-stream and riparian restoration with volunteers; project management by the ATF and NECMA and funded by an RFL grant to the ATF.
- Steavenson River riparian restoration with GBCMA & volunteers. ATF also provided 4 stiles to enhance angler access, compliments of VFA.
- Macalister River riparian restoration with WGCMA & volunteers.
- Nariel Creek riparian restoration with NECMA & volunteers.
- Rubicon River weed removal, rock revetment and riparian works with GBCMA. Funded by ATF via the VFA T1M Better Fishing Fund. ATF also provided 4 stiles to enhance angler access; compliments of VFA.
- Delatite River installation of in-stream woody habitat and boulder seeding with GBCMA. Funded by ATF via the VFA T1M Better Fishing Fund.
- Jamieson River boulder seeding with GBCMA. Contribution by ATF via the VFA T1M Better Fishing Fund.
- Goulburn River boulder seeding with GBCMA. ATF made a small contribution to the cost and provided 2 stiles to enhance angler access, compliments of the VFA T1M Better Fishing Fund.
- Ovens River, Porepunkah, installation of in-stream woody habitat and boulder seeding, plus riparian restoration with NECMA. Jointly funded by NECMA and the ATF via an RFL grant.



- Mitta Mitta River, Tallandoon, installation of lunkers and boulder seeding, plus riparian restoration with NECMA. Funded by ATF via the VFA T1M Better Fishing Fund.

WEB PAGE



The ATF believes while the current webpage has served us well in the past a new webpage should be developed. The intention is to provide anglers with up to date developments in the fishery and a greater active interface for members. Active data from the fishery as well as video reports and identification of fishery hotspots in need of attention are all part of this development. Educational input regarding the fishery and trout care are also included in the Five-year Wild Trout Strategy and the Recreational Fishing License grant obtained by the ATF in 2020. These are also to be included in the updated website.

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MEMBERSHIP



FROM THE BLOG



Victorian Wild Trout Strategy

We are pleased to provide the final edition of the Victorian Wild Trout Strategy 2020 - 2025 to...

[READ MORE](#)



Victorian trout fishers win an RFL grant of \$110k to enhance our valuable fishery

(This grant is funded by Recreational Fishers' Licence Fees) The Victorian Fishing Authority gave...



Report of the survey undertaken by the ATF to investigate the state of the Victorian wild trout fishery by anglers

Introduction In February of this year the ATF released a survey to as many trout

WILD TROUT STRATEGY



In 2019 the ATF, supported by the VFA, took a lead role in conducting a workshop at Box Hill Tafe in Lilydale to develop a five-year wild trout strategy. This strategy was developed with 30 experienced wild trout fishers through a two-day workshop, and a seven-person steering committee consisting of representatives from ATF (2), VFA (2), VRFish (1) and 2 unaffiliated wild trout fishers. This group laid the groundwork for what is now the approved Victorian Wild Trout Strategy 2020 - 2025.

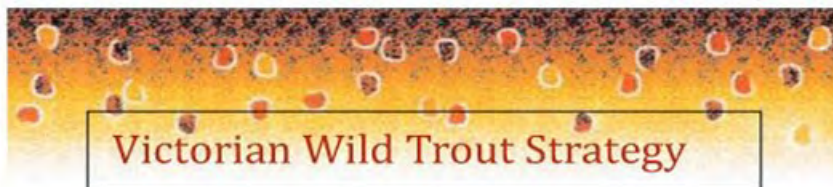


The strategy is comprised of five themes and fifteen priority actions. The five themes include:

- Communication and engagement
- River health and fish habitat
- Fishery interventions
- Angler access
- Partnerships and co-management



To access the full document including the priority actions, measurements and anticipated outcomes click here [https://atfonline.com.au/userfiles/files/WildTroutStrategy\(final\).pdf](https://atfonline.com.au/userfiles/files/WildTroutStrategy(final).pdf)

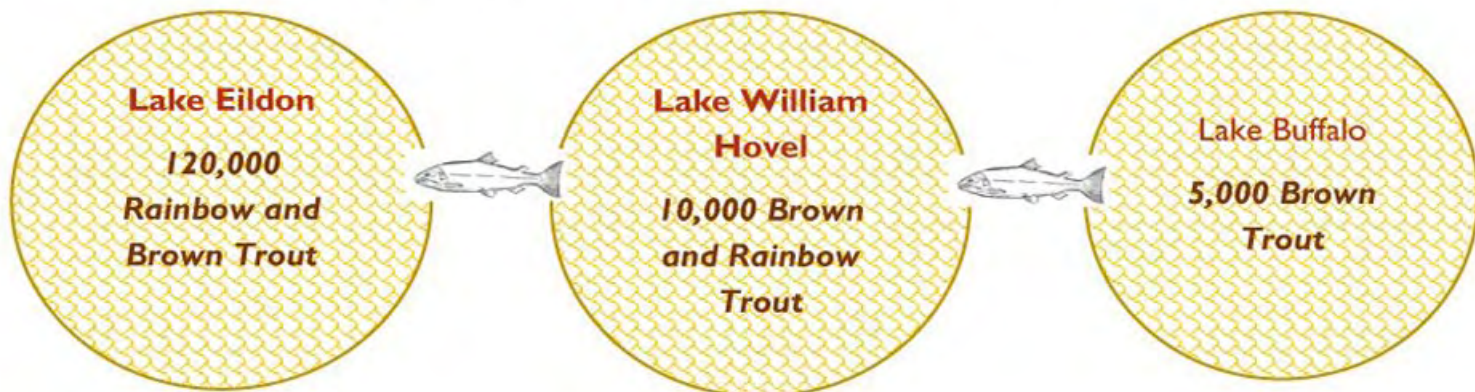


2020 - 2025

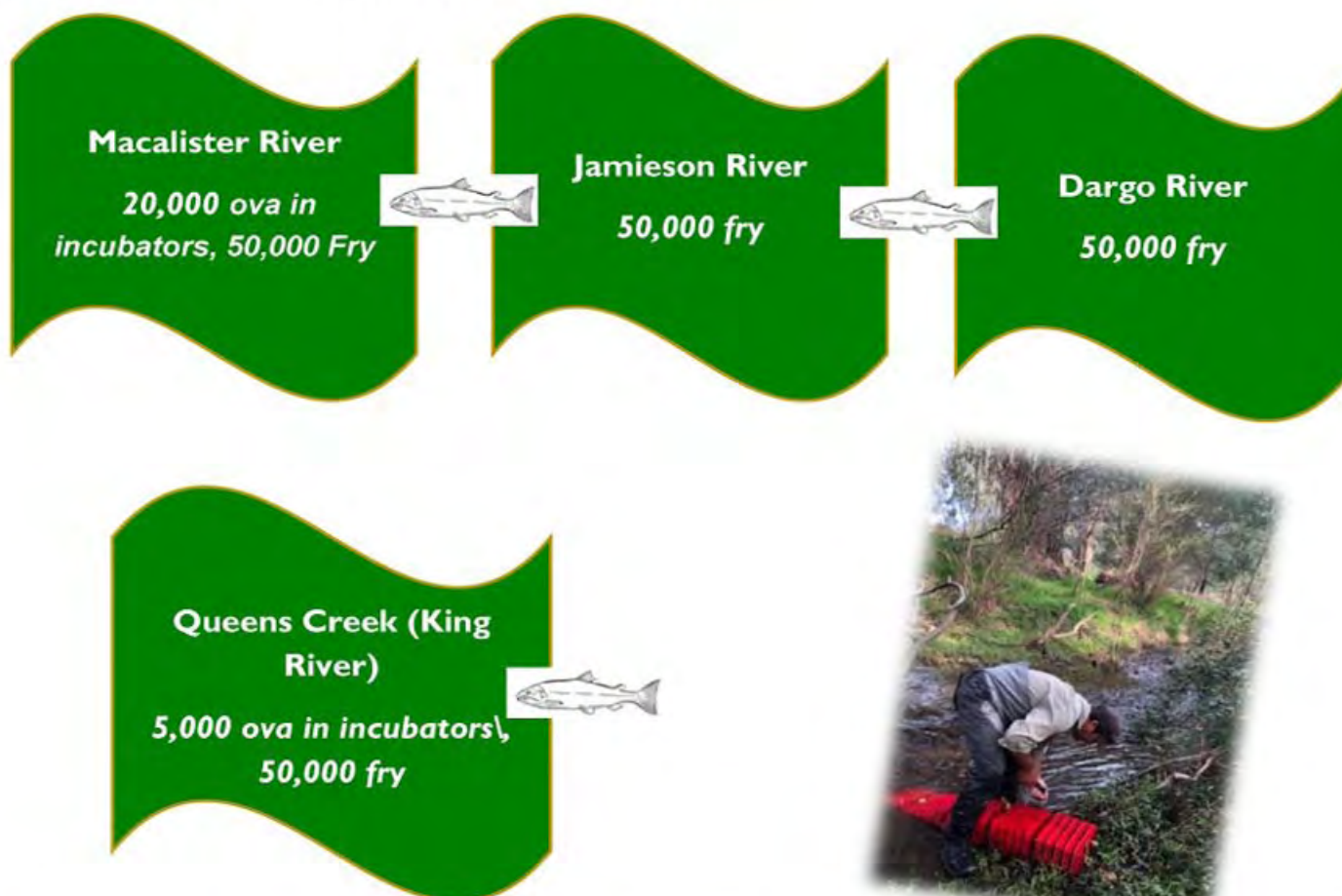
STOCKING PROGRAM



The ATF have been involved in 17 stocking trips since Feb 2020. Apart from assisting in the stocking of native fish in a number of major lakes and streams, we have also assisted in significant stockings of trout. Major trout stockings of impoundments include:



Major river stocking trials in wild trout streams include:



The ATF also played a major role with the VFA in sourcing, acquiring and translocation of 25,000 wild brown trout ova sourced from NSW Fisheries for a trial recovery stocking of the wild trout population in Nariel Creek following the 2019-20 bushfires.

RECREATIONAL FISHING LICENSE LARGE GRANT



Working together with the VFA to ensure the enactment of the Wild Trout Strategy, and the continuation of the Wild Trout Management Program, the ATF lodged a large grant submission to the Recreational Fishing License (RFL) Grants Committee in early 2020.

The submission was successful for one year of funding with hope for more grant success in the following years to ensure the Wild Trout Strategy can be fully implemented. Many of the activities in the RFL grant complement the Wild Trout Strategy and will ensure activities required to implement the actions can occur.



VICTORIAN TROUT FISHERY SURVEY



As part of the context provided by the Wild Trout Strategy the ATF undertook an online survey to ascertain angler opinion regarding many aspects of the wild trout fishery in Victoria. A report on the data provided by this survey was completed by the ATF in June 2020. The report provides some interesting data regarding the wild trout fishery in Victoria and will serve as a baseline in analyzing the condition of the fishery in future years. To view a copy of this report go to the ATF website

DGR STATUS



The ATF has embarked on an application to achieve DGR status. DGR stands for Deductible Gift Recipient. Ability to achieve this status with the Australian Tax Office means that any donations provided to the Australian Trout Foundation Environmental Trust would be tax deductible. The ATF believes this DGR status provides it with greater funding possibilities for environmental restorative works across the state and Australia. Donations from philanthropic trusts, businesses and individuals could be requested offering this DGR Status. The approval from the Minister of Environment requires patience so stayed tuned for the result in the next 12-18 months.



2019-20 IN PICTURES

A tribute to our Volunteer Army

Buckland River in-stream and riparian restoration. Part of the ATF Volunteer Army



Macalister River “Tree for Trout” riparian restoration and stocking. Great fun had by all.



Nariel River "Trees for Trout" riparian repair. A great family day for a great cause!



Steavenson River Planting Day 2019. Too many volunteers to count!



Ribicon River – Christies Lane riparian renewal



These are just some of the projects achieved with great support from the ATF Volunteer Army! Stay tuned when the restrictions ease for many more projects to assist in creating healthy waterways for healthy fish

AWARDS

The ATF were privileged to receive a number of awards and nominations over 2019-20 for conservation activities in our streams and waterways. Our President, Terry George, in 2019, on behalf of our committee and passionate volunteers, accepted an award from Minister Jaala Pulford for what was described as a remarkable contribution to fishing and conservation. At the same time, Terry accepted from the Victorian Fisheries Authority, a Certificate of Appreciation for outstanding service to recreational fishing in Victoria.

During the year it was also pleasing to note that the ATF was nominated by our peers for Environmental Awards to the Victorian Landcare and the River Basin Management Authorities.

Terry George, President of the ATF receives a conservation award from Minister Pulford



Landcare recognition of nomination certificate presented to the ATF

Landcare Awards Ceremony



