

MEDIA RELEASE



Native Fish Australia gathers support for proposal to re-establish Bluenose cod recreational fisheries...

“...Great opportunity to enhance “family fishing” in Victoria”

Native Fish Australia (NFA) is pleased to acknowledge the unanimous support of delegates from nine Victorian recreational fishing organisations at the NFA Trout Cod Workshop for its proposal to re-establish recreational fisheries for the Bluenose cod (also known as trout cod).

NFA proposes the re-establishment of the recreational fisheries for bluenose cod in Lake Kerford and/or Lake Sambell as well as a limited number of rivers and streams including the Ovens River upstream of Wangaratta.

“The Ovens River is today home for a large and increasing population of bluenose, due to extensive stocking by DSE Victoria.” said NFA representative Nick Thorne, “Anglers are already encountering these fish in significant numbers and in some areas they are the most abundant fish present. Current regulations prevent anglers from deliberately targeting the species and this has led to some angler frustration. It makes sense that properly regulated access to this population for anglers can assist in efforts to restore the fish by engaging anglers in the restoration effort. **Further, the fish is known to be a species with exciting angling potential and the re-creation of a recreational fishery for the bluenose is a great opportunity to enhance “Family fishing” in Victoria.**”

“The National Trout cod Recovery Plan makes allowance for recreational angling access to the species and a direct precedent for such access exists with the Mary River cod in Queensland which is also an endangered species and which has had angler access alongside the conservation/recovery work from the start of the recovery plan for that species.” Thorne continued, “The Mary River cod exercise has been an excellent example of how conservation goals and recreational fishing can co-exist and even enhance each other. NFA strongly believes that now is time to follow the Queensland example and allow anglers access to what may well prove to be one of the premier sportfish in the State.”

Thorne said “There are no legislative impediments to the proposal, in Victoria - all that is required are a change to the fishing regulations and a Governor in Council order to allow access similar to that which currently applies for Murray cod.”

“NFA sees this proposal as fitting in neatly with the Victorian Government’s stated objectives in its fishing policy released prior to the recent State Election. NFA encourages new minister responsible for fishing, Mr Joe Helper, to embrace this initiative and to start the ball rolling to allow access to this exciting fish. We note proposals to stock Lake Kerford have already been made by Fisheries and we support that as a first step along the way, but access to stream and river populations are important as well.”

“It was very pleasing to receive the unanimous support of those organisations present at the Trout Cod Workshop.” Thorne stated, “Everyone recognised that this is an historic opportunity to gain something for all concerned. A ‘new’ and exciting angling species has obvious appeal for anglers and because of the angling qualities of the species it is ideally suited for family fishing. **Conservation of the species would be enhanced by increased stocking of the fish for recreational angling** across a larger area, including some of the foothill and upland areas that the fish originally inhabited. By careful selection of target stream the NFA proposal avoids major negative impact on the important recreational trout fishery. It’s a win-win for all concerned.”

NFA looks forward to working with DPI Ministers Joe Helper and DSE Minister John Thwaites to give this proposal the go ahead and ensuring that the implementation is begun without delay.

Nick Thorne can be contacted by mobile phone: 0418 533 901 or by e-mail at nick@nativefish.asn.au

The proposal is available for download on the NFA web site at <http://www.nativefish.asn.au>