

**PAEC June 2019
Questions on Notice**

FISHING AND BOATING

Written Questions on Notice provided by Sam Hibbins MP

Question: How are the environmental impacts of the increase in recreational fishing being measured?

Answer:

Fish stocks have never been in better shape in Victoria and a large part of this is due to the increase in recreational fishing, which in turn is leading to increased expenditure of recreational fishing licence (RFL) proceeds.

In marine systems our comprehensive monitoring programs including boat ramp surveys, scientific surveys of juvenile abundance and citizen science diary angler programs have shown record high recruitment of King George Whiting and snapper numbers.

In 2017/18 over \$8.5 million was disbursed from the RFL trust account and this funding contributed to building fish stocks through a variety of measures including stocking over 5.9 million native fish per year, installing vital fish habitat, enforcing fishing regulations and monitoring fish stocks.

As a result, our freshwater fish population monitoring has shown a booming recovery in native fish abundance in lakes and rivers throughout Victoria for species including Murray cod, golden perch, silver perch, trout cod and catfish.

RFL funding contributes to the deployment of thirteen Fisheries Officers to enforce fishing regulations state-wide. Fisheries Officers enforce our strict bag and size limits, closed seasons and gear restrictions to protect stocks and allow them to breed.

Recreational fishers are also volunteering their own time and resources to restore fish habitat, such as through planting native vegetation along multiple streams in north east-Victoria and through constructing shellfish reefs in Port Phillip Bay.

Ultimately, recreational fishers are doing more to build and recover fish populations than ever before, and the Victorian Fisheries Authority's comprehensive monitoring programs demonstrate these benefits to the environment.

Thank you for your interest in this matter.