

All about the bass in East Gippsland

It's been about the bass on the rivers of East Gippsland recently – the Australian bass that is.

Last week saw the release of 10,000 bass fingerlings into the Nicholson River at Deptford as part of a project undertaken by the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (EGCMA), the Victorian Environmental Water Holder, Bairnsdale RSL Angling Club and Victorian Fisheries Authority.

The release compliments the stocking of 454,000 bass across 19 rivers and Lakes throughout Victoria, including 95,000 bass into the Snowy River in recent weeks.

"We'll always put our hand up to look after the health of our fishery," Russell White, president of Bairnsdale RSL Angling Club, said.

"Bass have been a scarce fish to target in the past. We want to be able to help in some small way, and if down the track that means our kids can catch a fish then even better."

Australian bass rely on spring floods to trigger spawning and migration. The Nicholson Dam (below Deptford) creates a barrier that the bass cannot cross.

This project, and previous stocking of bass in the river by Victorian Fisheries Authority, is keeping a good population of bass in the river while consideration is given on how to address the dam barrier impacts.

"Angling clubs are passionate about fishing and the environment and are actively involved in looking after fish stocks," Travis Dowling, chief executive officer of the Victorian Fisheries Authority, said.

"It's great that we can work with the EGCMA and the angling club to look after our environment and our fishery as one."

EGCMA chief executive officer, Graeme Dear, said the Water Plan for Victoria recognises the value of rivers and waterways to the community's wellbeing.

"Partnering with others such as our local angling clubs and the Victorian Fisheries Authority is exactly what the Water Plan is about," he said.

"This project compliments the State Government's commitment to delivering its \$46 million Target One Million plan for recreational fishing, which aims to grow participation to one million anglers by 2020."



Russell White, of Bairnsdale RSL Angling Club, joined East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority's Graeme Dear to release 10,000 Australian bass fingerlings into the Nicholson River last week. (PS)