



EAST GIPPSLAND CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Media Release

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Fish habitats get \$100,000 boost

The East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (EGCMA) improving in-stream fish habitat program has been conducted on the Mitchell, Nicholson, Tambo and Snowy Rivers since 2003. This year, the EGCMA has been funded another \$100,000 from the State Government to continue the program.

The habitats are created from tethering one or two logs to a pile driven into the riverbank. The piles and logs are installed from a barge on the river to minimise disturbance and damage to the riverbanks.

In the past, trees and branches were removed from rivers because they were thought to reduce river capacity and increase erosion. It is now known that woody debris in rivers has minimal impact on the river channel capacity and can help to slow the water down at peak flows and reduce erosion.

Studies the EGCMA has commissioned during the program have shown that although these fish habitats are unlikely to be used as breeding areas themselves, they are important fish transit points along the rivers and provide refuge from predators.

The studies found that the habitats show increased use by black bream, luderick, flathead and mulloway, which have all been observed in and around the structures. Local angling groups have reported that the fish were also benefitting from the structures providing a host for food sources.

During the program EGCMA has conducted boat tours and placed signage to explain the works to community members and angling groups.

This year's project is one of 17 new initiatives, worth more than \$1.1m, which will contribute to the State Government's Target One Million plan that aims to get more people involved in recreational fishing.

Ends

Captions: Pics/media available:

Fish surrounding one of the underwater structures in the Mitchell River



Barge installation of the log fish habitats



Wooden log fish habitats, tethered to a single pile near riverbanks



Also available: 30-sec (edited clip from) video of some of the fish around in-stream structures (for social media)

Media information

Contact:

Peter Quilligan

Corporate Services Manager

East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority

t: 03 5150-3564

e: pquilligan@egcma.com.au

w: www.egcma.com.au