



## Research & Education

# Mid-season stocking improves Lake Wendouree rainbow trout fishery.

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Wendouree series

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*While Lake Wendouree is acknowledged to be a great place to fish, a recent study funded by Fisheries Victoria has found mid-season stocking would further improve this fishery.*

Lake Wendouree, a shallow (max. depth of 2 m) artificial lake at Ballarat, was one of the first waters to be stocked with trout in Australia. The stocking continues today. Each year, Lake Wendouree is usually stocked with 8,000 yearling rainbow trout and 6,000 yearling brown trout.

As part of an investigation commissioned by Fisheries Victoria into the performance of Lake Wendouree's fishery, fisheries scientists from PIRVic investigated the contribution a mid-season stocking of yearling rainbow trout would make to the late summer/early autumn rainbow trout fishery.

Between August and October 2001, eight thousand yearling rainbow trout were released into Lake Wendouree. A further 2,500 yearling rainbow trout were released in December 2001 as a 'mid-season' stocking. Each batch of yearlings was clipped uniquely to allow researchers to track their movements through the fishery.

PIRVic fisheries scientists interviewed anglers fishing in Lake Wendouree between December 2001 and November 2002, and gathered information about their catch including:

- the number and the species of fish each interviewed angler returned to the lake, and
- the number, size and species of fish that they kept.

When rainbow trout were encountered they also identified the release batch to which each fish belonged, by way of the clip location.

Over the year, a total of 617 fish were measured, 430 of which were rainbow trout. Based on this and other information provided by anglers, project leader John Douglas estimated anglers fishing in Lake Wendouree caught 0.39 rainbow trout per hour of angling time. In

other words, it took just over 2.5 hours to catch one rainbow trout on average.

The creel survey also showed that some yearlings released in December 2001 were caught immediately, while the majority entered the fishery in the months after release. Angler catches of December 2001 stocked rainbow trout peaked in February 2002. These fish remained in the fishery to April 2002 and a very few were seen in September 2002, the opening of the 2002-2003 season.

The rainbow trout stocked in December 2001 made up 40% of Lake Wendouree's salmonid fishery in months after release. They also made up over half of Lake Wendouree's total rainbow trout catch in February, March and April 2002. The contribution peaked in February 2002, when about 70% of the total rainbow trout catch consisted of fish released in December.

"Clearly, the December stocking of rainbow trout made a considerable contribution to the late summer / early autumn fishery in Lake Wendouree," John says.

Manager Inland Recreational Fisheries, Marc Ainsworth, was enthusiastic about the results saying "late in the season rainbow trout stocking, in addition to those released during the 'closed season' has clearly improved the Wendouree fishery and provided for an extended period of higher catch rates".

"Consultation with regional stakeholders has indicated that they would like to continue the December rainbow trout releases."

For more information about this project, please contact Mr John Douglas at, PIRVic Snobs Creek on (03) 5770 8025.

Fisheries Research and Education Notes are available on the web at the following address: [www.dpi.vic.gov.au](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au)... Follow the prompts to Fishing and Aquaculture and then to Publications and Fisheries Notes. The notes are listed under the heading Research and Education.



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