

For fisheries purposes, an aquatic habitat is any area permanently or occasionally occupied by fish and consisting of physical structures such as woody debris or reef, plant and animal communities that provide shelter and food for fish, and natural processes such as water flow and nutrient cycling. Fisheries scientists worldwide agree that in many cases aquatic habitat health is the main factor influencing the production or survival of fish populations.

It follows that maintaining high-quality fish habitats can support healthy fishery resources and high-quality recreational fishing opportunities.

Over the past 150 years, Victoria's aquatic ecosystems and habitats have been increasingly affected by land and water use associated with urban, agricultural and industrial development.

Looming pressures include climate change and water scarcity. In order to ensure the health and sustainable use of our aquatic resources we need



to balance our desire for economic and social benefits from resource use with the needs of the environment.

The Recreational Fishing Grants Program (see page 12) provides funding for community-based projects that focus on recreational fisheries' sustainability and fish habitat improvement works.

FISHCARE

Fishcare is a program of fishing education activities for all ages.

Promoting responsible fishing practices and care for aquatic environments, the Fishcare program provides information and practical advice to recreational anglers.

Holiday fishing clinics, primary school programs, public displays, community forums and field trips give recreational anglers the chance to learn and try responsible fishing practices.

Fishcare participates in research, habitat works and marine pest collection, and has a great range of colourful brochures, posters and children's activity books.

Community-based Fishcare groups work in partnership with departments and agencies such as Fisheries Victoria, Coast Action / Coastcare, and Waterwatch to deliver programs across Victoria.



Become a Fishcare member today and enjoy sharing your fishing experience and passion.

Find out more about Fishcare at www.fishcare.org.au or call 03 5152 0456.