

What scientific assessment will be conducted during the three year trial?

The Port Phillip Bay Recreational Fishing Reefs initiative is designed as an experimental trial with monitoring occurring at the three new reef sites, three nearby non-reef sandy areas, and three natural reef control sites, both before and after the reefs are deployed to assess their impacts on the following key areas:

- fish communities
- invertebrate and algal communities (including introduced species)
- recreational fishing catch rates and angler satisfaction
- damage and disturbance of the reef structures
- broader environmental factors.

The trial will provide new information about the benefits of the new reefs to anglers, their environmental and ecological impact and their resilience over time.

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Are all fishers permitted to fish on the three reefs?

The three reefs are located in areas of Port Phillip Bay in which the least amount of commercial fishing catch and effort has been recorded over the last four years.

On 16 April 2009, the Fisheries Notice (Artificial Reef Trial Exclusion Zone) was gazetted, to introduce commercial exclusion zones (1 km²) around the three new reefs to enable accurate monitoring of recreational use of the reefs and maximise opportunities for recreational fishers to catch fish at these sites. The Fisheries Notice No. 5/2009 is available at www.gazette.vic.gov.au

The Fisheries Notice No. 5/2009 introduces commercial exclusion zones by prohibiting:

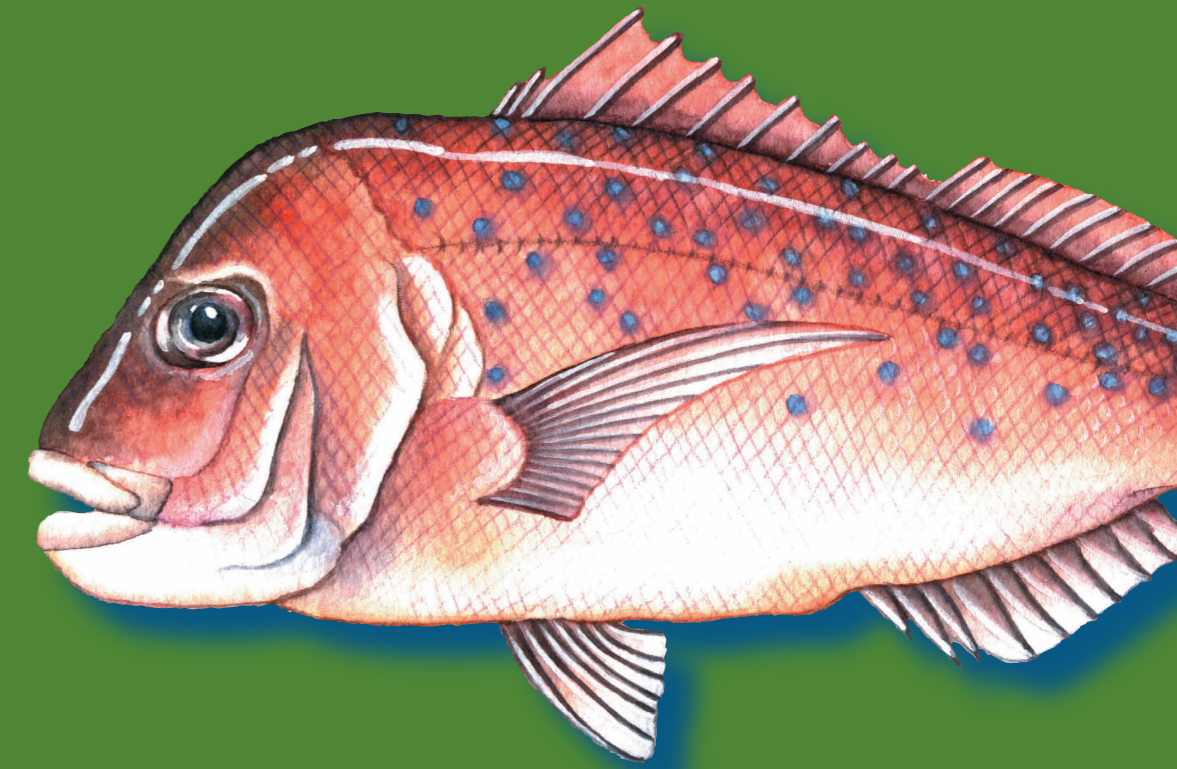
- The taking of any fish in an artificial reef exclusion zone by any person acting under an access licence or general permit (including the holder) (for the purposes of section 67 of the Act); and
- The use of commercial fishing equipment in an artificial reef exclusion zone (for the purposes of section 114 of the Act).

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Port Phillip Bay Recreational Fishing Reefs

The Port Phillip Bay Recreational Fishing Reefs are one of a range of initiatives that the Victorian Government is undertaking to enhance recreational fishing opportunities and facilities under the Enhanced Recreational Fishing Program.

This initiative involves trialling the deployment of three new reefs in Port Phillip Bay. Scientific studies will be undertaken over the next three years to assess the potential of these reefs to provide new opportunities for recreational fishers, consistent with protecting the local marine environment.

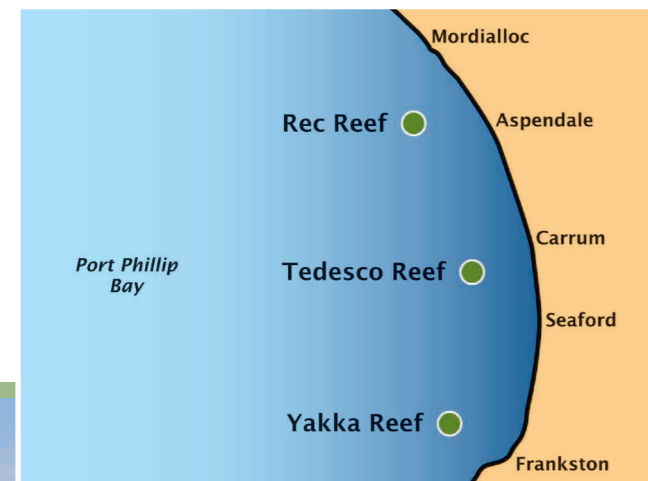
The trials will be conducted in consultation with the Department of Sustainability and Environment and other relevant Government agencies. Monitoring of the effects of the new reefs on local fish populations and a range of other marine species will be a key focus of these trials.

Where are the new reefs?

The location of the trial reefs was selected, based on social, economic and environmental factors. The three new reefs are in a water depth of approximately 11 metres and 2 kilometres offshore from Aspendale, Frankston and Seaford.

GPS coordinates for the centre of the three new reefs in Port Phillip Bay are:

Aspendale	Frankston	Seaford
E 145°04.616'	E 145°05.479'	E 145°05.953'
S 38°02.168'	S 38°08.483'	S 38°05.245'



When were the new reefs installed?

Installation of the reefs occurred in April – May 2009.

What are the names of the reefs?

The reef at Aspendale is named Rec Reef to highlight the use of these reefs to improve recreational fishing.

The reef at Frankston is named Yakka Reef after the growing number of people using kayaks in the bay as an environmentally-friendly way to go fishing.

The reef at Seaford is named Tedesco Reef to pay tribute to Neil Tedesco who passed away on 16 April 2009 at age 31. Neil was a devoted fisher and diver and a true ambassador for these sports.

When can anglers start to fish these new reefs?

The reefs are expected to be rapidly colonised by marine life, but are likely to take several years to reach their full angling potential. Anglers can expect the reefs to provide new fishing opportunities from September 2009, when the snapper season commences.

The ecological and recreational fishing monitoring program will assess how various fish species respond to the reefs so the benefit to anglers can be determined.

What fish species can anglers expect to catch at these reef sites in years to come?

Snapper are likely to be the main species to take up residence on the reefs.

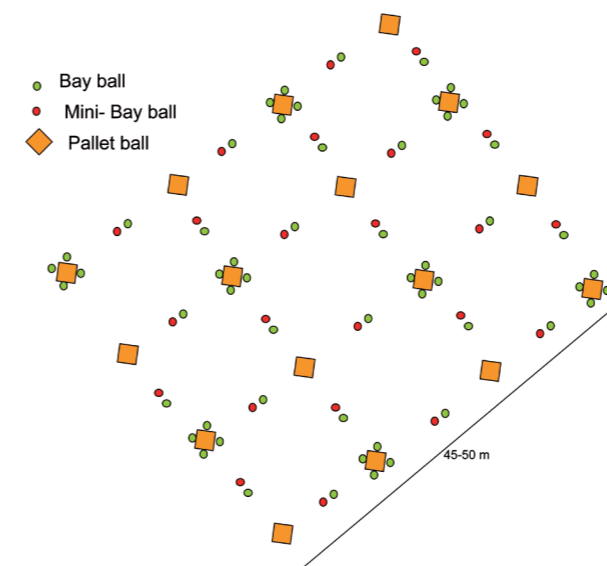
Other species include leatherjackets, wrasse, longfin pike, flathead, King George whiting, yellowtail scad, silver trevally and possibly yellowtail kingfish.

What do the reefs look like?

Each reef consists of 96 reef balls of different sizes (16 pallet balls, 56 bay balls and 24 mini-bay balls) placed in a specific geometric pattern over an area of 50 square metres.

The reef balls are dome-shaped concrete structures with a rough stony surface and a number of holes in them to attract marine life. The concrete mix is environmentally-friendly so there is no leaching of toxins and these structures have a life span of at least 300 years in the marine environment.

They are not permanently fixed to the seabed allowing them to be repositioned or removed if deemed necessary.



Design for the three new reefs in Port Phillip Bay

What are the specifications of the reef balls?

Ball type	Pallet ball	Bay ball	Mini-Bay ball
Base width	1.22 m	0.91 m	0.76 m
Height	0.88 m	0.61 m	0.53 m
Weight	700-731 kg	354-369 kg	172-184 kg
No. of holes	17-24	11-16	8-12

Have these types of reefs been successful in other states? Is this project a first for Victoria?

Similar reef projects have occurred in New South Wales where reef balls have been deployed in a number of estuaries. A variety of reef structures were deployed in Port Phillip Bay in the 1960s and 70s, including concrete pipes and old barges. These structures were never monitored and their current benefits to anglers or impacts on the local marine environment remain unknown.

DPI does not condone the dumping of any material to create illegal reefs in Port Phillip Bay or any other Victorian waters. Please contact the EPA if you spot illegal dumping.

If these reefs are shown to be successful, are we likely to see more in Port Phillip Bay and other fisheries around Victoria?

The results of this trial will be valuable in informing future policy on new recreational fishing reefs in Victoria. Positive outcomes in relation to benefits to anglers and impacts on stocks of key species and their environment will guide future projects aimed at using new reefs to enhance fishing opportunities.

The information from the monitoring program will be assessed at its conclusion in 2011 by DPI in consultation with anglers and relevant agencies.

