

# Project to boost pink snapper numbers, Western Australians urged to get involved

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2 Comments



WESTERN Australians are being urged to support the largest seagrass restoration project in Australia and play a direct role in supporting the number of pink snapper in the state's waters.

OzFish has been leading the restoration of seagrass meadows in Cockburn Sound since 2018. Unlike other restoration approaches, the organisation's 'Seeds for Snapper' program mobilises community support to restore the seagrass meadows.

Seagrass meadows are a vital habitat for pink snapper – a native species popular with anglers in Western Australia. This project will play a major role in helping to restore snapper numbers, with new rule changes currently proposed due to declining numbers.



Since its "Seeds for Snapper" project started in 2018, OzFish's community of volunteers has dispersed more than one million seagrass seeds.

Now, OzFish is calling upon recreational anglers, divers, businesses, and residents to get involved and make 2022 the biggest year yet. The aim is to collect and disperse more than one million seagrass seeds in Cockburn Sound this November.

Seeds for Snapper is a collaborative project with the University of Western Australia and RecFishWest, and is made possible by the WA Government's Recreational Fishing Initiative Fund, Water Corporation and BCF – Boating, Camping, Fishing.

"When the weather warms up, that is when the seagrass fruits and that's when we need volunteers to get involved," said Steve Pursell, OzFish Program Manager for Western Australia.

"It is estimated that a single hectare of restored seagrass can produce an average of 207 kilograms of fish per year more than an equivalent area without seagrass and store 35 times more carbon than a hectare of rainforest.

"Cockburn Sound is Western Australia's second largest pink snapper spawning ground. By getting involved, local people will be helping to support local snapper populations which are under pressure.

"Unfortunately, more than 85 per cent of seagrass meadows have been lost from Cockburn Sound during the last century.

"We had more than 350 volunteers register last year and we're confident local people will come out in force again to make this our biggest season ever," Steve said.

Volunteers can get involved through a variety of roles, including as boat netters, qualified scuba and free divers, shore crew, boat masters, and seagrass seed dispersal crew.

The innovative restoration technique developed in collaboration with the University of Western Australia sees volunteers prepare the fruits onshore for replanting in areas primed for restoration.

The seagrass fruit harvesting and seed dispersal season takes place from November. Collection and dispersal days and times can be subject to weather and tides.

Volunteers are encouraged to register online now to take part:

[ozfish.org.au/projects/seeds-for-snapper/](https://ozfish.org.au/projects/seeds-for-snapper/)