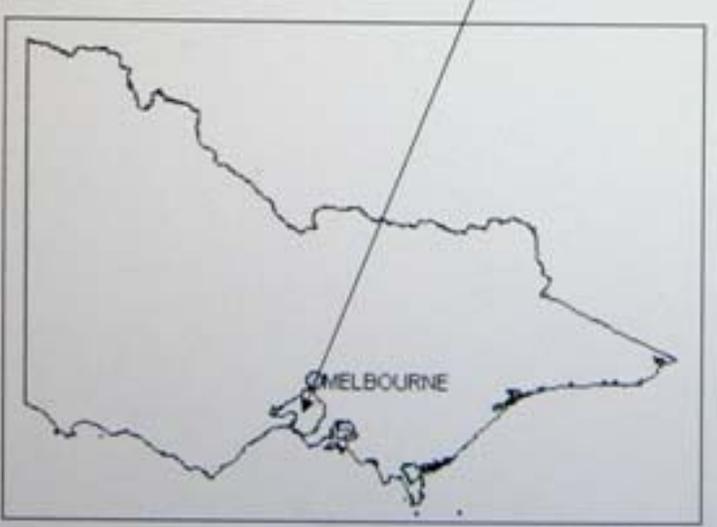


Angler-inspired shellfish reef restoration work in Australia

Ross Winstanley

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- Shellfish-base ecosystems – harvested to oblivion
- The spark – Albert Park Yachting & Angling Club
- Focus: improving bottom habitat and water quality
- Partners and publicity
- Global perspective – The Nature Conservancy
- Our progress
- Nation-wide shellfish reefs restoration movement



Port Phillip Bay, Victoria, Australia



Dredging oysters, eastern Victoria 1891



Shooting
the dredge



Sorting out the Oysters

As in Charles
Dickens'
London,
oyster
saloons
flourished in
Melbourne
from the
1850s

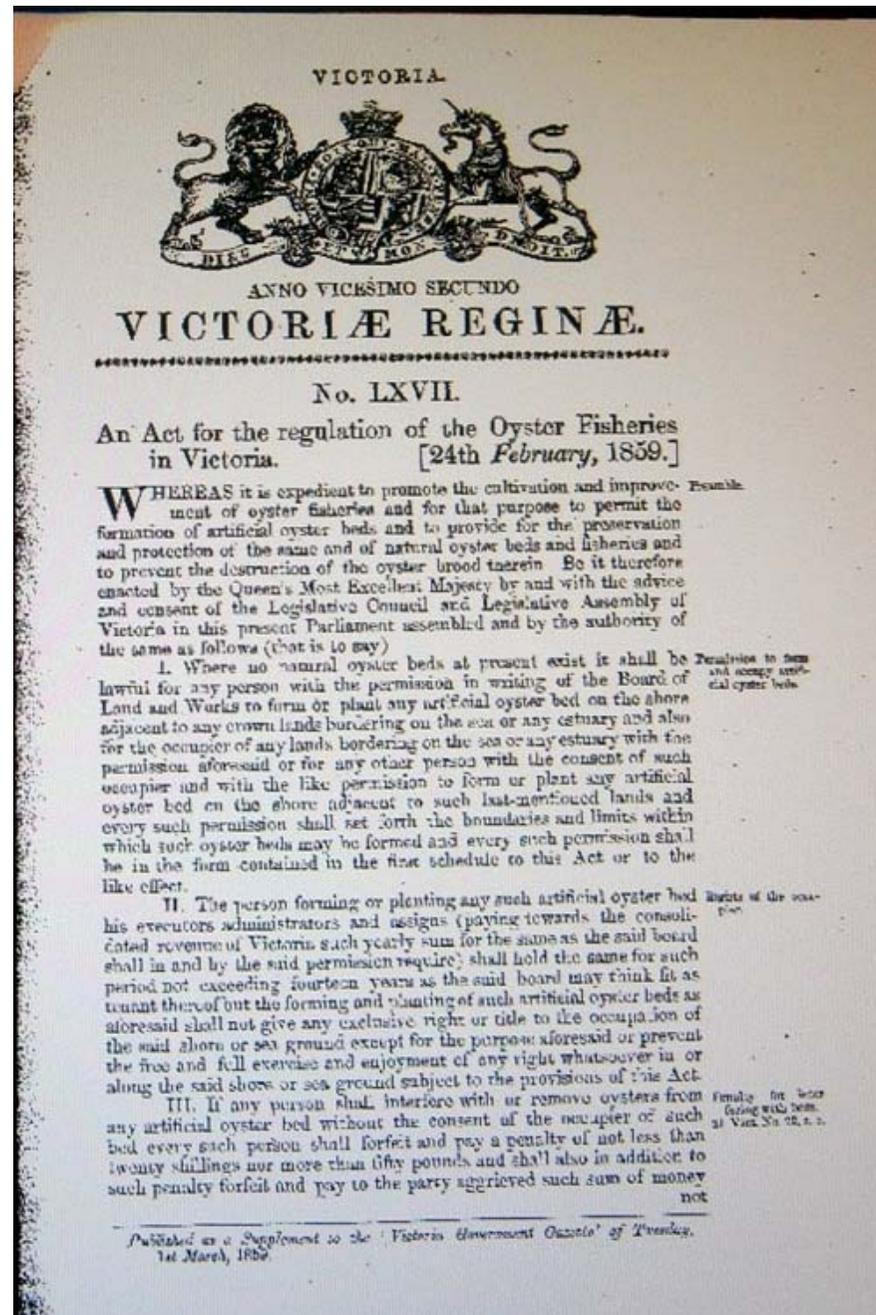


A CONSIDERATE PARTNER.

GENTLEMAN IN THE SHIRT SLEEVES.—Come Sir, look sharp—or I shall be getting quite a head of you with these 'ere hysters.

An Act for the regulation of the Oyster Fisheries in Victoria (1859)

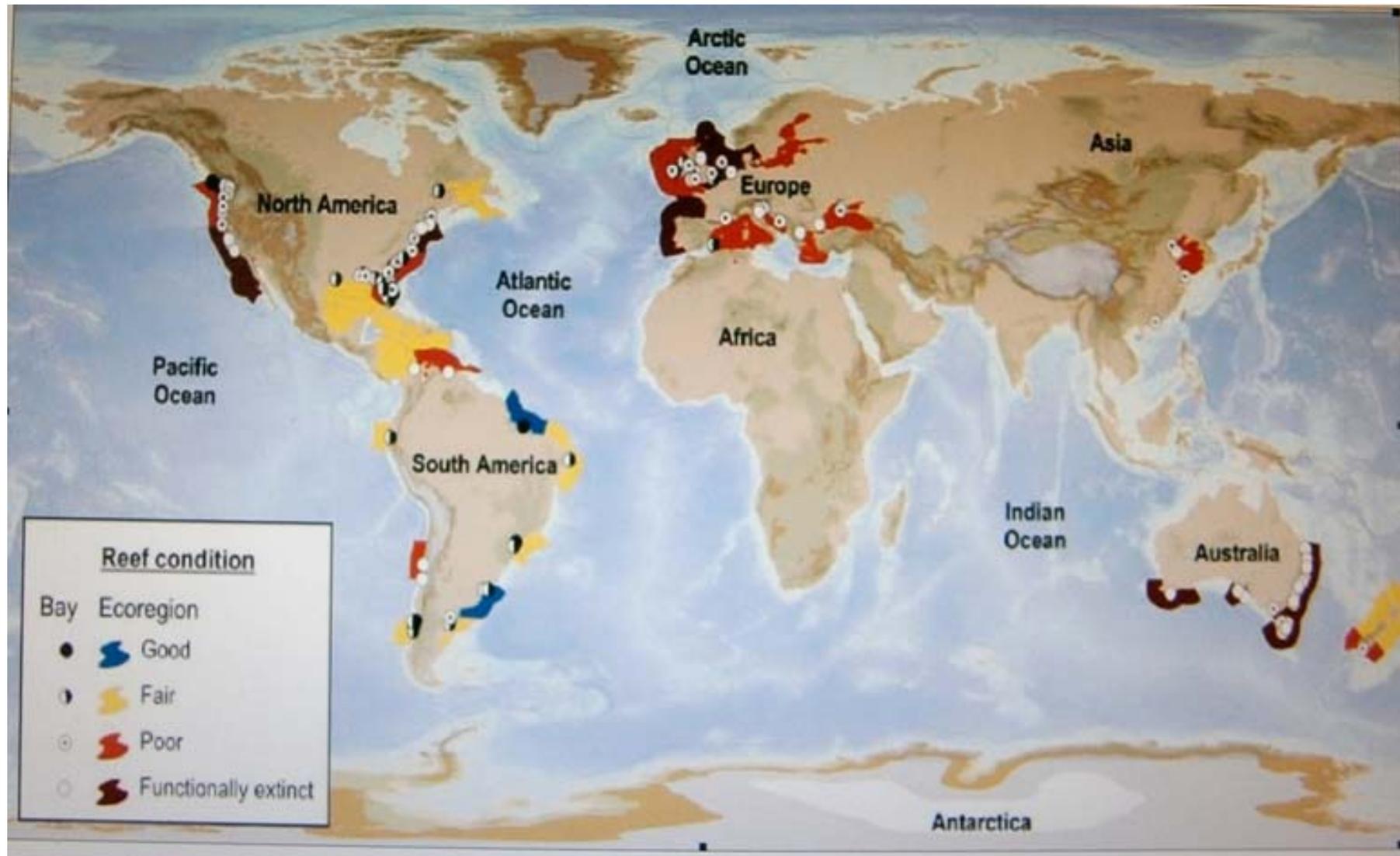
- the State's first fisheries legislation



Decades of dredging for scallops and mussels (1963 – 1996) finished off the Port Phillip bay shellfish beds



Worldwide depletion of oyster reefs



Bob Pearce –
Albert Park YAC.

Life-long angler,
former chairman
of Victorian
recreational fishers’
peak body, VRFish.

Vision – “Living reefs”
Partnerships
Volunteers

Port Phillip Leader
Tuesday, June 7, 2016 | portphillipeader.com.au

23
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TO LOCAL
REAL ESTATE

Life returns at new reef

Bob Pearce is excited to see reef restoration project bringing oysters and mussels back to the water off St Kilda
Picture: RICHARD SERONI

'OASIS IN THE DESERT' OFF ST KILDA

Therese Allaut

BOB Pearce often looks back on the time, decades ago, when fresh oysters and mussels would wash up on the shore for him to collect.

But with most local reef structures eroded, or eradicated in some cases, Mr Pearce says there's no where left for the mini molluscs to grow.

Now, the Albert Park Yachting and Angling Club is working with Fisheries Victoria and The Nature Conservancy to rebuild the reefs off St Kilda. They hope to regrow the native mussel and flat oyster population, and attract fish – including snapper – to the area. The project is the first of its kind in Australia.

"These reefs were once so abundant that when a storm occurred millions of mussels and oysters would be broken off the reefs and washed ashore from Port Melbourne, right down to Ricketts Point," Mr Pearce said. "It was then an easy task to get a

free feed of fresh mussels and oysters while having a shallow water paddle.

"The oysters and mussels would easily grow back, but they've got to have something to attach to, and when the dredges went through in the 1960s and 1960s, all it left was sand."

The group has put three tonnes of live mussels off the St Kilda shore, and about 8000 baby oysters. But those thinking they might want to fish the area will struggle to find where they're growing, with the location kept top secret.

They have also helped put some limestone rubble at the bottom of the bay so the oysters have something to grow on.

"Once they grow, and they're growing very well, they'll start to spawn naturally, and they'll have something to attach to, so we'll have natural reef," he said. "In the space of 12 months, we've taken it from basically desert, to an oasis in the middle of the desert."

Albert Park Yachting & Angling Club



Melbourne - Australia's major shipping port - here's APY&AC



Remnant oyster reefs, Port Phillip Bay



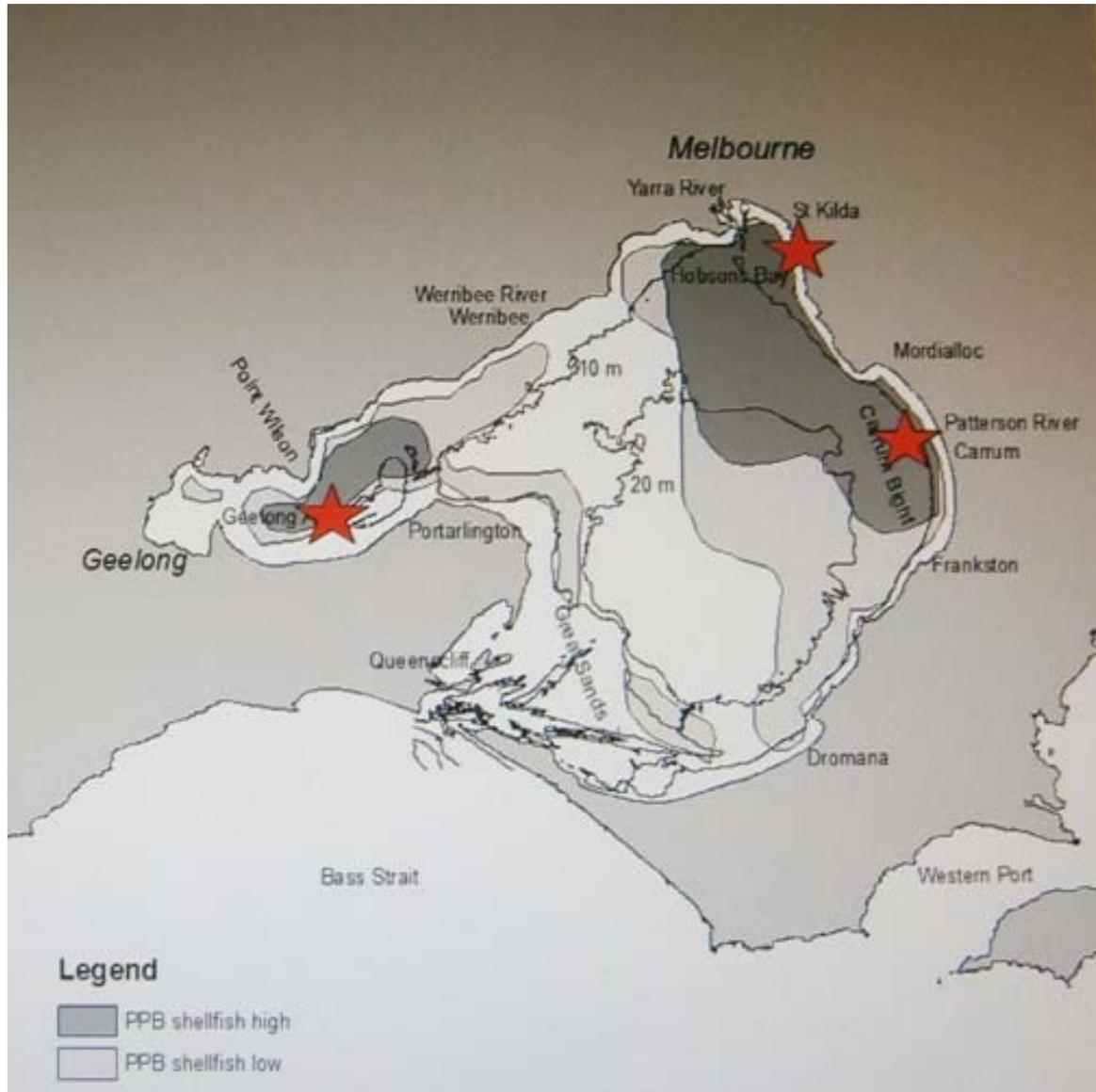
Solitary rock with remnant oysters



Port Phillip Bay mussel bed



Historic major areas of blue mussel and native flat oyster reefs in Port Phillip Bay – and current trial sites ★



Hatchery-produced oyster spat attach to cleaned recycled scallop shells



Anglers do a lot of the tedious and dirty work



Commercial growers excess mussels placed on trial reef site



Shellfish reef substrate - 180 tonnes of limestone in each of two 300m² trial shellfish reef sites in April 2017



Volunteers clean, measure and count oyster spat



State-by-State round-up



State-by-state round-up of shellfish reef recovery projects

- Western Australia: 400m² rock rubble reef created in Oyster Harbour, Albany, seeded with hatchery-produced oysters (TNC, Rfw, UWA, WA Museum, South Coast NRM Authority)
- South Australia: in Gulf St Vincent a 20 ha shellfish reef of 20,000 tonnes of limestone, 7 million oysters (Recfish SA, TNC, SARDI, UA, tourism, environment & natural resources agencies).
- Queensland: similar programs in Pumicestone Passage (angler funding & volunteers) and Noosa – see Ben Diggles at 4.20 pm today.
- New South Wales: in Sydney Harbour and Georges River using some of the 3000 tonnes of oyster shells dumped each year (OceanWatch Australia, UNSW, MacQU, schools, Landcare, community, councils
- Tasmania: abundant natural reefs in healthy condition.
- National coordination by the Shellfish Reef Restoration Network (Contact chris.gillies@tnc.org)

Acknowledgements – it's all about partnerships

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University of Melbourne – John Ford, Ben Cleveland

Port Phillip Bay project volunteers

Anglers, divers, conservation groups, universities,
Fishcare volunteers, local government and corporates

Industry

Port Phillip Bay mussel growers & Q'cliff hatchery

Geelong seafood processors and restaurants

GDP Industries – assisted employment service