

Paddling in Victoria

Victoria has some great whitewater paddling for canoeists, kayakers and rafters. The majority of rivers are in the east and north east of the state. Victoria particularly has rivers for beginners and intermediate paddlers. There are sections for advanced paddlers but these tend to be technical narrow steep rivers and creeks. The Yarra and Thomson rivers are close to Melbourne and provide easy paddling for beginners, while the Mitta Mitta and Mitchell rivers are enjoyable for more experienced paddlers. Some rivers have short sections for a quick paddle or some sections can be combined to make a day of it, e.g. the Buckland and Ovens rivers. Other rivers are day trips or multi-day trips, such as the Mitchell and Snowy rivers. The terrain can vary with rivers like the Delatite flowing through farmland while other rivers, like the Thomson and Mitta Mitta, flow through remote wilderness. Enjoy the variety of wild water experiences Victorian rivers have to offer.

How to use the river maps

These maps have been designed for use on river trips. The maps include information on how to get to the river, features on the river, where to get out and emergency information. We recommend you photocopy the map for the river you intend to paddle. Fold the photocopy in half to make an A4 sheet. Laminate the map and take it with you on the river. You can update the maps with your own information.

River levels

The river levels shown on the maps include the following:-

- Min:** The minimum level required to get your boat down, expect lots of scraping over rocks.
- Good:** The minimum level required for a decent trip - the best paddling is above good and below high, depending on your skill level.
- High:** The level at which the river gets fast and pushy.
- Flood:** The level at which the river overflows the normal banks.

Canoe clubs

Paddling with a club is one of the best ways for beginners to learn to paddle rivers safely. There are a number of white water touring clubs in Victoria. Contact information for touring/recreational canoes, can be obtained from the Canoeing Victoria web site www.canoevic.org.au or phone 9459 4251.

Acknowledgements

The creation of these river maps have been a long-term project of the Whitehorse Canoe Club. Many club members have assisted in gathering information and preparing the maps. In 2002, students studying Cartography & Multimedia Cartography at RMIT University produced an atlas of river maps as a final year project. The maps were prepared from base data supplied from VicMap digital data with the assistance of Whitehorse Canoe Club and Canoeing Victoria. Several of these maps formed the basis for this atlas. Many other people assisted in preparing the atlas for publication and Canoeing Victoria supported the project with advice and sponsorship. We gratefully acknowledge all the people who assisted with this project along the way.

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River grading and hazards

A river is assessed by its gradient, the grade of the rapids, the width of the river and the volume of the water flowing down it. The volume of the water determines the intensity of most river features. River grades have been included on the maps. However be aware that grades are subjective and very broad categories. The grade of a river may also change with the volume of water. The International River Grading system is:

- Grade 1:** *Easy* - Fast moving water with ripples and small waves. Few obstructions, all obvious and easily missed with little training. Risk to swimmers is slight and self-rescue is easy.
- Grade 2:** *Novice* - Straightforward rapids with wide, clear channels which are evident without scouting. Occasional manoeuvring may be required around rocks and trained paddlers can easily avoid medium sized waves.
- Grade 3:** *Intermediate* - Rapids with moderate irregular waves that may be difficult to avoid and can swamp an open canoe. Complex manoeuvres in fast current and good boat control in tight passages or around ledges are often required, large waves or strainers may be present but are easily avoided. Strong eddies and powerful current effects can be found, particularly on high volume rivers. Scouting is advisable for inexperienced parties.
- Grade 4:** *Advanced* - Intense, powerful but predictable rapids requiring precise boat handling in turbulent water. Depending on the character of the river, there may be large unavoidable waves and holes or constricted passages demanding fast manoeuvres. Rapids may require 'must' moves above dangerous hazards. Scouting is necessary the first time down. Risk of injury to swimmers is moderate to high and water conditions may make self-rescue difficult. A strong Eskimo roll is highly recommended.
- Grade 5:** *Expert* - Extremely long, obstructed or very violent rapids that expose a paddler to above average endangerment. Drops may contain large, unavoidable waves and holes or steep congested chutes with complex, demanding routes. Rapids may continue for long distances between pools demanding a high level of fitness. Any eddies that exist may be small, turbulent or difficult to reach. Scouting is mandatory but often difficult. Swims are dangerous and rescue is difficult even for experts. A reliable Eskimo roll, proper equipment, extensive experience and practiced rescue skills are essential for survival.
- Grade 6:** *Extreme* - These runs are difficult, unpredictable and dangerous. The consequences of errors are severe and rescue may be impossible.

Whitewater rivers contain many hazards and including:

- Stoppers:** Also known as holes or hydraulics, these are formed as water flows over submerged objects such as boulders and ledges. Some holes can hold boats and people for long periods of time.
- Weirs:** Weirs often form a uniform stopper that can create escape-proof traps. Many people have drowned in weirs. Treat all weirs with respect.
- Strainers** Obstacles that allows water to flow through but not a boat or person. They are often formed by fallen trees, debris accumulation or rocks. Strainers are dangerous and are particularly prevalent in flood conditions.

Any other hazards such as pinning, entrapments, cold water, poor water quality must be considered and prepared for by paddlers. Paddlers must possess the necessary skills and equipment for the section of river they are intending to paddle. They should also 'let someone know before you go'.

Feedback and map updates

These river maps include information gained over years of paddling. Over time rivers and access roads can change. If you have updated information on a river, contact Whitehorse Canoe Club via our web site www.whitehorsecanoeclub.com



Big River	3
Buckland River	13
Delatite River	5
King River	7
Mitchell River	9
Mitta Mitta River	11
Ovens River	13
Snowy Creek	15
Snowy River	17,19
Thomson River	21,23
Yarra River	25,27

North
True North (T.N.) and Magnetic North (M.N) are shown for each map. Magnetic Declination and rate of change is also provided. The north direction and Magnetic Declination/rate of change, vary from map to map - please check information supplied on each map.

Map scale
Three scales are used for the maps in this publication 1:25 000, 1:50 000 and 1:100 000 as indicated on each map. A scale bar is also provided. Caution: Copying these maps may alter the scale - when using copied maps, it is recommended that the scale bar is used for scale readings.

Symbols

- Foot Track
- Road with bridge
- Road unsealed with gate - includes 4WD Tracks
- Weir or dam
- Flying fox cable
- Main road
- Tunnel
- Tributary
- Contours 40m intervals - with Height Above Sea Level
- Locality name
- Buildings