



NEWSCAST

an information bulletin for recreational fishers

May 2015

Apply now: New Advisory Council to represent NSW recreational fishers

NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Niall Blair, has confirmed that a new advisory body, Recreational Fishing NSW Advisory Council, will be established to provide advice to Government on key recreational fishing issues in NSW.

“The NSW Liberals and Nationals Government announced this new consultative approach in February, to ensure the advisory council is based around a modern representative model, ensuring the views of regional fishers from right across the State are communicated.”

“I am now calling on regional recreational fishers to nominate for appointment to the Council, to ensure that we have strong representation across the recreational fishing sector.”

The NSW Government has listened to the feedback from recreational fishing groups who have been requesting changes to consultation arrangements for recreational fishing in NSW,” Mr Blair said. Recreational Fishing NSW will replace the existing Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing, which has been in place for almost 20 years.

“The Recreational Fishing NSW Advisory Council will advise me on matters relating to recreational fishing in NSW, including high level priorities for expenditure from the Recreational Fishing Trust.”

The new Council will include eight regional members and two members with expertise in spearfishing and charter boat fishing. An independent chair will be appointed to head the new Advisory Council.

The Minister said the NSW Government is proud to support the recreational fishing industry, which generates about \$1.6 billion expenditure into the NSW economy each year and creates about 14,000 jobs.

[View the information package](#) or email fnsw.enquiries@dpi.nsw.gov.au or call (02) 9741 4722. Expressions of interest close 7 July 2015.

New crab gear rules for Port Stephens



A trial of changes to crab gear rules in Port Stephens **came into effect on 14 May 2015** to reduce the number of turtles being caught in recreational crab catching equipment following a community consultation process.

Recreational fishers in Port Stephens are now required to modify their witches hats so that the net lies flat on the seabed when set. This can be done by removing the small orange buoy on the net so in effect the modified witches hat operates as a lift net, similar to a dilly. Modified witches hats and lift nets will also only be permitted to be used between sunrise and sunset. There is also now a requirement for the maximum entrance width of crab traps to not exceed 32cm. This will mainly affect collapsible, rectangular traps as most other traps already have entrances less than 32cm.

These changes are necessary because monitoring data since 2011 has shown a high incidence of turtle drownings in recreational crab gear in Port Stephens compared to other areas. The new rules only apply to Port Stephens which is recognised as an important habitat area for turtles.

View a [factsheet on the new crab gear rules](#) for Port Stephens and how to easily modify your witches hats and wide mouthed crab traps.



Zero bag limit now in place - Australian bass and estuary perch

Fishers are reminded a closure on taking Australian bass and estuary perch from all rivers and estuaries in NSW is **now in place**, for a four month period.

The zero bag limit does not apply to Australian bass and estuary perch caught in freshwater impoundments and dams, as they do not breed in these areas.

The zero bag limit closure for rivers and estuaries does permit catch and release of these species during the spawning closure. Any Australian bass or estuary perch caught must be immediately returned to the water with the least possible injury. [More information...](#)



Annual trout spawning season in the Snowy Mountains

The annual trout spawning season fishing rules **now apply** to the Thredbo Eucumbene Rivers and their tributaries (upstream of the Lake Eucumbene dam wall and including Providence Portal).

A minimum size limit of 50cm, daily bag limit of one and possession limit of two trout apply to these rivers from 1 May to the end of the Queen's Birthday long weekend on Monday 8 June.

Anglers are permitted to use one attended rod and line with up to two hooks with artificial flies or lures, and up to three treble hooks attached to any lure, while any fishing gear

rigged for bait fishing is prohibited.

The fishing can be fantastic which can attract large numbers of anglers. Fishers should respect each other, fish safely and take any rubbish home. [More information on freshwater fishing rules.](#)



FADs season nearing completion

With the change of season and the East Australian Current subsiding, the retrieval of the DPI FADs has commenced. The Eden, Batemans Bay and Ulladulla FADs have now been retrieved for winter maintenance, with the progressive retrieval of FADs north along the coast by 30 June. The DPI [website](#) will be kept up to date as FADs are retrieved.

During the 2014/15 FAD deployment season, DPI received numerous fishing reports from FAD users advising of a bumper FAD season, with great catches of dolphinfish. Feedback from fishers is greatly appreciated and helps demonstrate the popularity and effectiveness of the program. Please continue to keep sending in your FAD fishing experiences to fisheries.fads@dpi.nsw.gov.au as these reports assist in the ongoing development and expansion of the FADs program.

Stay up to date with your local FAD throughout the season by signing up to the [FADs email update service](#) and always remember to check the [latest marine weather forecasts](#) before venturing offshore.



St Georges Basin artificial reef expanded

In March, the St Georges Basin artificial reef expansion was completed with the final 210 Reef Balls added to this already extremely popular and productive artificial reef system. The total reef area added to the Basin since the project begun in 2007 is now close to 6 hectares!

With this new addition, we are sure the area will continue to fish well and provide enhanced recreational fishing opportunities in St Georges Basin for locals and tourists alike!

Please visit the website for the [co-ordinates of the artificial reefs](#) in St Georges Basin and other estuaries in NSW.



Improved fishing facilities in Port Stephens

Anglers in the Karuah area should check out the new and improved fishing facilities at the Karuah boat ramp. Port Stephens Council constructed a new shelter using funds from the Recreational Fishing Trust, after anglers identified the need for a shelter over the existing fish cleaning table.

Given the new shelter has stood up to the cyclonic strength winds that battered Port Stephens last month, it seems the Council has done a fine construction job. A new shelter has also been placed over the Soldiers Point boat ramp fish cleaning table. Council has two other projects it is working on this year which involve improving the fishing facilities at the Shoal Bay and Lemon Tree Passage boat ramps.

Anyone can [apply for funding](#) from the Recreational Fishing Trusts, including fishing clubs and organisations, universities, councils, community groups, individuals and so on. So if you have a project that would improve recreational fishing contact the [Recreational Fishing Trust executive officer](#).



Jervis Bay Banks black marlin

A black marlin tagged and released by Mooloolaba GFC vessel *Luna* on 26 December 2014 whilst fishing wide off Caloundra, was recently reported as recaptured by southern NSW boat, *Blood Vessel*. The fish was released on a very memorable day for *Luna* as it was one of 23 black marlin tagged on that day!

Anglers aboard *Blood Vessel* hooked the tagged marlin on the 15 February 2015 whilst fishing an afternoon bite off the Sir John Young Banks, Jervis Bay, NSW. The marlin was at liberty for 51 days before it was recaptured and re-released, traveling a straight line distance of approximately 509 nautical miles in a south westerly direction. It was approximately 25 kg on release and was probably around 30 kg on recapture.

Find out more information on the [NSW DPI Game Fish Tagging Program](#). Sign up to the DPI [Tag Times newsletter](#)



NSW Research Angler Program Summer 2014-15

70 mulloway frames were donated to the NSW Research Angler Program (RAP) over summer continuing to provide data for monitoring the health of the NSW mulloway stock.

These donations included 25 'metre-plus' mulloway and 6 larger than 130 cm! The oldest fish donated, a 135 cm Hawkesbury River fish, was estimated to be 16 years old (see the above image of an otolith, or inner ear bone cross section, which shows the age by counting growth rings). The two largest fish donated however, a 150 cm fish from Ballina and a 141 cm fish from Iluka, were estimated to be just 8 and 9 years old respectively!

Another 66 fish were tagged over summer as part of the NSW RAP - ANSA pilot **mulloway tagging project** bringing the overall total of tagged mulloway to 512! Seven mulloway were also recaptured over summer providing important information on the movements, growth rates and post-release survival of mulloway in NSW.

Mulloway frames, heads or a single jewel can be left at one of the [30 participating drop-off points](#) in NSW. Alternatively, contact the program co-ordinator to organise for a reply paid post pack to be sent to you so that you can donate your jewels by mail.

For more information contact: research.angler@dpi.nsw.gov.au, 02 9435 4671, or visit the [NSW RAP website](#).



Science on the reef

The Sydney offshore artificial reef is proving to be great at providing far more than just excellent fishing! The reef is fast becoming one of the best studied artificial habitats in Australia.

In association with the University of NSW, DPI is gaining a better understanding on a variety of topics such as changing fish communities, use of the reef by recreational fishers and their catch, modelling of nutrient flows and fish movement around the reef using the latest acoustic tagging technology.

ABC Radio National *Off Track* program joined a team of fish scientists in the reef's early days who were trying to figure out which fish call the Sydney artificial fishing reef home. Take a [listen to the story online here](#)

The unique design of the Sydney reef is also holding up! Along with the cyclone force winds and flooding rain last month, massive seas directly battered the Sydney area and elsewhere. Just offshore from the reef, the largest recorded wave occurred on 21 April at an unbelievable 15 metres in height, with waves in excess of 6 metres persisting over consecutive 30 hours. This is the longest duration of such high waves since 1987. Inspections by DPI in early May confirmed the reef withstood the effects of the 'superstorm'.



Get Hooked Update

It's that time of year again and the "Get Hooked...it's fun to fish" program is calling for NSW primary schools to join our fun and interactive schools program for 2015. Registration is free and easy. If you are a teacher, all you have to do is email gethooked.fisheries@dpi.nsw.gov.au.

This year we have some great new Get Hooked items that we have been working on to give away to our budding young fishers at the free end-of-year fishing workshops. These include a new activity book, bookmarks and great new drawstring bag that students can reuse when they go fishing!

For more information about the "Get Hooked...it's fun to fish" program and to register visit www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/recreational/info/get-hooked.



Caught then court

Two young fishers who illegally took lobsters from Batemans Marine Park have learnt a hard lesson by having to collectively pay nearly \$30,000 in fines and court costs. The men faced court earlier this year after being found in illegal possession of eastern rock lobsters and threatening fisheries officers.

The two men, aged 20 and 23 years, attempted to escape officers by reversing their vehicle 200 metres up a busy street, nearly hitting a fisheries officer before being stopped. One man fled the scene with a catch bag of 11 lobsters, five of which were undersize.

Fisheries officers recovered and seized the lobsters, as well as the motor vehicle and dive gear. The two men faced Moruya Local Court, pled guilty and were convicted of a number of offences including: possess more than the possession limit of lobsters, possess prohibited size lobsters, obstructing a fisheries officer in the exercise of functions and assaulting a fisheries officer.

The 20 year old man was required to pay over \$12,000 in fines and courts costs, and the 23 year old man must pay \$8,400 in fines. The Local Court Magistrate also ordered forfeiture of the seized motor vehicle, at a cost of \$2,000 to the 23 year old, as this provided the strongest deterrent against this activity happening again.

The 20 year old Broulee man was also convicted for an earlier offence relating to possessing a spear gun in a sanctuary zone, spearing a groper and obstructing fisheries officers, receiving a further \$5,200 in fines and court costs.



Anglers dob in illegal fishers

Five Sydney men have been convicted and charged with possessing prohibited size fish, having more than the possession limit of fish and master of the boat failing to prevent a serious fisheries offence.

The men were issued fines totalling \$9,000 and now have criminal records.

Fisheries officers found the men in possession of 28 prohibited size yellowtail kingfish (pictured) at Tunks Park boat ramp in Cammeray, Sydney (the legal length for yellowtail kingfish is 65cm, with a bag limit of 5).

Anglers on the water reported the illegal fishers via the Fishers Watch Phonenumber. Already known to fisheries officers, the men were found and the illegally caught fish and boat was seized.

DPI encourages anyone who suspects illegal fishing to report in via the **Fishers Watch Phonenumber on 1800 043 536**. The line is staffed during business hours, where reports are sent directly to the relevant fisheries officer.

Outside of business hours, each call is directed according to geographical area to the appropriate Fisheries officers.

Fisheries officers spend many hours on patrol, detecting and preventing illegal fishing, but still need your help. Report suspected illegal fishing via 1800 043 536, [online](#) or to your [nearest Fisheries Office](#).

The following information is helpful to Fisheries officers:

- Type of activity
- Time, date and location of activity
- Number of people and any descriptions
- Registration numbers of cars and boats

If you report illegal activity involving the take of abalone, rock lobster or the harming of marine vegetation you may be entitled to a [monetary reward](#).

Frequently Asked Questions: What happens to items

seized by fisheries officers?

Seized fishing gear that a person may lawfully use or have in possession will normally be returned to the owner (subject to conditions e.g. the seriousness of the offence, if the person has a previously good record and didn't threaten or abuse our staff etc) after any legal actions are completed.

Fishing gear that is seized and illegal for use in NSW is usually destroyed.

If DPI end up with seized gear for disposal, after a matter has been concluded, and it is of relatively low value but legal (items such as fishing rods and reels, yabby traps, hoop nets etc with legal dimensions), the preferred option is to donate the items to charitable organisations for sale through their outlets.

For high value legal seized gear (items such as hookah, air tanks etc) as well as forfeited boats or motor vehicles, these are sold using the Grays Online auction system or sold by tender according to the department's tendering procedures.

Live fish seized will be normally returned to the water from which they were taken. If the fish are dead, in small quantities and do not need to be retained as evidence they may also be returned to the water.

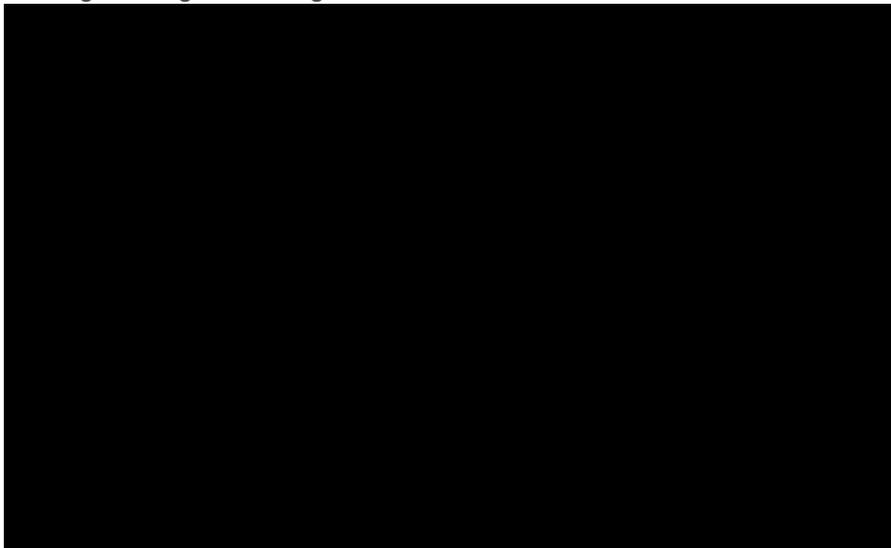
Dead fish seized in large quantities and which cannot be lawfully sold (e.g. prohibited size fish) may be donated to a hospital or charitable institution. Dead fish seized in large quantities and which can be lawfully sold may be sold on behalf of the state. In both instances the fish must have been handled in accordance with NSW Food Authority requirements.

Dead fish seized in connection with serious offences may be stored at a fisheries office until all proceedings have completed upon which they will be disposed.

During any seizure process fish can be counted, measured, weighed and photographed for evidentiary and record keeping purposes.

Kevin Clark nature's gentleman

This short video tells the story of Kevin Clark who grew up on the Richmond River. Over his lifetime he has seen the long term effect of in-stream barriers (including weirs) on our fish. He has quietly chipped away in the background with DPI, Councils and his fishing club to help out by installing a fish ladder on his local waterway. Kevin and friends are now seeing some great changes to their local fish stocks.





Indigenous Ranger Program builds new fish hotels

Construction has started on new homes for native fish in the Lower Darling River. The Barkindji Maraura Elders Environment Team (BMEET) received a Recreational Fishing Trust Habitat Action Grant to restore structural woody habitat or “fish hotels” in the Pomona Priority Habitat Reach of the Lower Darling to enhance habitat for native fish.

The enthusiastic team of BMEET Paaka River Rangers who are part of a national Working on Country - Indigenous Ranger Program, has started building the new fish habitat at their works depot just outside Dareton. The hotels will be inserted in the river at priority sites where structural habitat density is currently low as identified through field surveys undertaken by project partner Murray Darling Freshwater Research Centre.

To keep up with the progress of this and other Habitat Action Grant projects, [subscribe to the Newstreams newsletter](#).

Did you know? 80% of Murray cod are found within 1m of a snag.

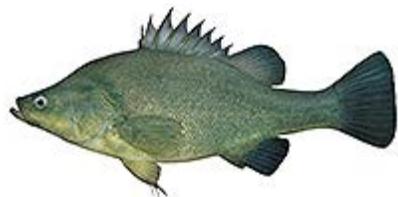


Aquatic habitat mapping project

DPI has been busy mapping fish habitat at several locations around NSW including the Horton, Severn, Barwon-Darling and Macleay Rivers in northern NSW and Buckinbah and Hanover Creeks in the central west.

This mapping aims to identify riverbank and instream river condition, producing baseline information that will guide future rehabilitation activities, and against which future changes can be benchmarked. Features recorded include the location and extent of native and introduced vegetation, presence of refuge holes, riffles, snags, erosion, fish passage barriers and pumpsites, and whether stock were accessing the riverbank.

For more information contact Sam Davis (02 6881 1284; sam.davis@dpi.nsw.gov.au) or Simon Walsh (02 6626 1256; simon.walsh@dpi.nsw.gov.au).



Fish of the month: Golden perch (*Macquaria ambigua*)

Golden perch also known as yellow belly or callop, are a prized freshwater angling species and the staple of inland fishing in Australia.

Golden perch generally have a brown to olive-green back with a yellow or cream belly. Commonly measuring between 40-50cm in length and 5kg in weight, larger fish may have a distinctive hump on their back. Most individuals generally live for about 10 – 12 years, with the oldest golden perch on record being 26 years old.

Golden perch prefer deep, slow flowing rivers that have good cover provided by vegetation or snags. Outside the breeding season they occupy a home range of about

100m, but during breeding migrations they have been recorded migrating 2,000km upstream.

A good fighting fish, golden perch will readily take bait, spinners and lures. Adults are predatory, feeding on shrimp, crayfish, small fish and aquatic insect larvae found in and around aquatic vegetation, snags and under-cut banks.

Barriers to migration (e.g. weirs), loss of snags and changes to river flows have reduced their numbers in recent years. Minimum legal length for golden perch is 30cm. A bag limit of 5 fish per person, per day and possession limit of 10 fish applies.



App Review - PaddleSafe Waterways Guide

Discover the beauty of our Australian waterways, many accessible only by canoe or kayak.

The Paddle NSW Waterways Guide is maintained by the paddling community to help you explore the many lakes, rivers, bays and coastlines of New South Wales and beyond.

All major waterways are described, with trip suggestions and handy maps showing public access points, nearby accommodation and great camping spots.

The whitewater rivers have detailed notes on rapids and the grade for each river section. The flatwater and coastal waterways have suggested itineraries and points of interest to see.

Plan safe and enjoyable trips by viewing current river levels (updated hourly), and see local weather forecasts, marine forecasts and sea conditions for your chosen destination.

Organise your trips by creating "Float Plans" to mark your intended route and let someone know before you go. Once on the water you can record waypoints to update someone with your progress (updates sent when mobile reception available).

Whether you are a whitewater adrenalin junkie, a kayak fisher, an ocean paddler, or just want to explore an idyllic waterway with your canoe, the PaddleSafe Waterways Guide is your guide to having fun on the water!

[Download the app at the itunes store](#) or for a web version [visit their website](#)

Have you changed address?

If you have changed address since you last purchased your fishing licence, you can update your contact details by phoning 02 4424 7499 or email recfish.licensing@dpi.nsw.gov.au You need to provide your licence number, name plus your new contact details. You can also update your contact details when you renew your licence online.

Your fishing licence at work





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