



NewsCast



An information bulletin for recreational fishers

Edition 46, March 2006

Sydney Harbour recreational fishing and dioxin contamination

Recent test results have revealed elevated levels of dioxin (harmful chlorinated chemicals) in prawns and bream across the harbour, including Parramatta River and other connected tidal waterways. A ban has been placed on commercial fishing as a precautionary measure. Recreational fishing in the Harbour has not been banned, but fishers are urged to follow dietary advice on the consumption of seafood from the Harbour. An expert panel has recommended recreational fishers eat no more than 150 grams of fish per month or no more than 300 grams of prawns per month. These quantities of prawns and fish should not be eaten in the same month. Fishers can also continue to practice catch and release. More tests are being carried out on other popular fish species and more advice will be provided when the results are assessed. More information is available at www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au or phone 1300 552 406.

Big dollars available to improve recreational fishing

Local recreational fishing groups, individual anglers and councils can now apply for funding from the Recreational Fishing Trusts to improve their community fishing facilities. All funds raised from the recreational fishing licence fee are placed into two trusts - one for saltwater and the other for fresh water - and must be spent on projects to improve recreational fishing. Applications for 2006/07 funding close on 16 March. Applications must benefit recreational fishing. Contributing funding and in-kind support, such as voluntary labour, is encouraged. For more information and assistance with applications contact NSW DPI on 02 9527 8411 or visit our website.

Record numbers of stocked Murray cod and more trout for NSW

The State Government's fish stocking program has reached new heights, with a record 669 000 Murray cod released into freshwater dams across NSW this year. This year's stocking beats the previous record set in 2004/2005 by 126 000 fish. It is great news for inland anglers who can look forward to catching the highly prized Murray cod when they reach legal length of 50cm in about two to three years.

Fish stocks in the south west and central slopes have also received a boost this January with the release of thousands of fingerling trout. Approximately 10 000 rainbow trout and 5000 brown trout have been released into Jounama Pondage near Talbingo and a total of 30 000 rainbow and brown trout into Blowering Dam near Tumut. Additionally, 10 000 rainbow trout fingerlings and 10 000 brown trout fingerlings have been released into Lake Lyell near Lithgow.

NSW DPI has provided more than \$1 million for its stocking program this year with fish stocking heavily supported by the Recreational Fishing Trusts which have contributed \$335 000 to this year's program.



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Dollar for dollar fish stocking

NSW DPI invites applications from the community to stock native fish into approved public waters in NSW on a dollar-for-dollar basis. For the next stocking season (October 2006 - May 2007), dollar-for-dollar funding has been set aside from the Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust to stock Australian bass in eastern drainage waters and Murray cod and/or golden perch in western drainage waters. For each application, offers of between \$1000 and \$5000 dollars will be considered for matching funding.

Artificial Reef Program update

Artificial reefs made out of concrete 'Reef Balls' are a new approach being undertaken by NSW DPI to improve the environment for fish in barren areas of three Recreational Fishing Havens; Lake Macquarie, Botany Bay and St Georges Basin. It is hoped that the new reefs, funded by the Recreational Fishing Trust, will provide improved recreational fishing opportunities, while scientific assessment of the structures will assess their use as a fisheries enhancement tool.

Reef Balls are purpose built artificial structures developed in the United States that have been used worldwide for a variety of applications including reef establishment and/or restoration. The Reef Ball reefs mimic natural reef, providing structure and shelter for juvenile fish settlement. Evidence to date suggests that Reef Balls can reach 80% or more of the natural species diversity and population densities of nearby natural reef systems within just a few years. 180 Reef Balls, forming 6 reefs, have already been successfully deployed in Lake Macquarie. Installation of Reef Balls into Botany Bay and St Georges Basin are planned for later this year.

Hunter and Clarence River tagged prawns worth \$5 each

Hunter and Clarence River prawners might find a bonus in their catch after the release of 500 tagged school prawns in January. NSW DPI Research Officers have tagged the prawns as part of a three-year study to learn about their growth and mortality. The prawns are tagged by using a needle to pass a thin streamer of plastic through the tail and each tag has the words 'NSW DPI' and a unique number on it. If you catch a prawn with a tag, pop it in the freezer rather than eat it and NSW DPI will pay you \$5 for your trouble. People who catch the tagged prawns can return them to the nearest Fisheries office, fishermen's cooperative, or contact the staff at the Cronulla Fisheries Research Centre of Excellence on 1300 726 488. They should include details on the date the prawn was caught or found, the place of capture and the name and address of the person who caught it.

For more information on these and other news items, check out "News and Events" on the NSW DPI website at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au or click on the link to the Recreational Fishing Homepage.