



# Newscast



An information bulletin for recreational fishers

**Edition 29, May 2004**

## **Murray crayfish season opens**

The annual four-month Murray crayfish season opened on Saturday May 1. The species is found mainly in the Murray, Murrumbidgee and Edward Rivers and needs to be protected from over-fishing because of its slow growth rate. A bag limit of five applies to Murray crayfish. They must be at least 9 cm in length, but only one greater than 12 cm may be kept. Murray crayfish can only be taken during the months of May, June, July and August. A ban applies on taking Murray crayfish in trout waters. Any female crayfish taken that are carrying eggs must be returned to the water immediately. Removing claws and tails in, on or adjacent to water is also banned.

## **Eastern cod research**

The Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust is providing \$4,700 in funding through the Small Grants Program to collect vital biological and ecological information from eastern cod populations in remote areas of the upper Clarence River catchment. These remote populations are likely to be very significant in ensuring the of genetic diversity of the species and for overall species persistence. Improved knowledge of the genetics of the species will help hasten the recovery of eastern cod. While eastern cod cannot currently be considered a recreational species due to its endangered status, it is expected that a concerted effort towards recovery actions may eventually see the species removed from the threatened species listings and some level of recreational angling introduced.

## **Botany Bay anglers set to benefit from more mulloway stocking**

NSW Fisheries and University of NSW staff have released another 17,000 mulloway into Botany Bay, funded with \$24,000 from the Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust. This is the second round of mulloway fingerlings released into Botany Bay as part of a major three-year study researching the environmental impacts of stocking these fish into estuaries. Since 2003, NSW Fisheries has stocked 60,000 mulloway fingerlings into Smiths Lake, near Foster-Tuncurry, and 80,000 (including this stocking) into Botany Bay as part of a \$170,000 project. So far, the results have proved promising. The research has also shown that, on average, the first round of fish released in May 2003, have doubled in length (from 6.5 cm to 30 cm), and quadrupled in weight (from 7 g to 250 g). The stocked fish will be legal for anglers to catch, once they reach 45cm in length – which will hopefully mean a boost for anglers in spring this year.

## **How much is recreational fishing worth to coastal towns?**

The Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust is funding a major new study into the economic value of recreational fishing to coastal towns. The \$89,000 study is measuring anglers' expenditure and fishing activities in Port Macquarie and Narooma/Bermagui to determine the economic importance of recreational fishing to coastal communities, and help ensure anglers get the best services and facilities to suit their needs. Recreational injects millions of dollars into rural and regional communities and generates thousands of jobs. The study involves more than 500 face-to-face interviews and 400 telephone interviews with anglers in Port Macquarie and Narooma/Bermagui. A final report on the study is due to be issued later this year. The coastal study will be combined with the results from earlier research into spending by Sydney anglers around the State, also funded by the recreational fishing licence.

### **New educational signs for Gosford boat ramps**

New signs will be installed at seven high profile boat ramps in the Gosford region, funded with \$5000 from the NSW recreational fishing licence. The signs will educate recreational fishers and boat users about bag and size limits, other fishing regulations and safety issues. Gosford City Council successfully applied for funding through the Recreational Fishing Trusts small grants program. Under the program, community groups are invited to apply for grants of up to \$5,000 on a matching dollar-for-dollar basis. An application form and information guide can be obtained from the NSW Fisheries website at [www.fisheries.nsw.gov.au](http://www.fisheries.nsw.gov.au).

### **Show us your catch! We want your photos for the Recreational Fishing Photo Gallery**

NSW Fisheries invites you to send in your fishing images for the recreational fishing photogallery. For more information visit [www.fisheries.nsw.gov.au/rec!/rec-home.html](http://www.fisheries.nsw.gov.au/rec!/rec-home.html) or contact NSW Fisheries on 9527 8505.

### **Exciting fish recaptures**

A Black Marlin was recaptured after almost eight years at liberty. The Black Marlin was first tagged on 18 September 1996 at Townsville, QLD. On 15 April 2004, seven years and seven months later, the fish was recaptured at Lindenhafen (South of New Britain) in Papua New Guinea. The total distance between the tagged site and recapture site was 721 nautical miles in a northeasterly direction. The Gamefish Tagging Program is funded through the recreational fishing licence and provides valuable information on the growth and migration of gamefish.

### **Fishing awareness at Narromine High School**

The Inland Fishing Tackle and Bait organisation has received \$1,200 for a fishing education program to be held at Narromine High School. The 10-week course covers fishing rules, regulations, freshwater species, fishing ethics and conservation, tackle selection, knots, rigging, rod building and practical fishing sessions. The project will be conducted in conjunction with NSW Fisheries, the Department of Education and Training, Narromine Fishing Club and Narromine Shire Council. Funding has been provided through the Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust's Small Grants Program.

### **Campaign to reduce rock fishing deaths**

The NSW Government has recently launched a campaign to reduce the number of deaths associated with one of the State's most dangerous pastimes – rock fishing. A team of NSW Fisheries-trained Fishcare volunteers has been surveying rock fishers along the coast on safety and attitudes. The survey will help the Government get a better understanding of how many people go rock fishing in Sydney, how often they fish and how they view this type of fishing. So far, research commissioned by the Government's NSW Water Safety Taskforce has found that: most rock fishing deaths are male; most who died did not use any form of protection; almost half of those who died were from Asian backgrounds. A new rock fishing safety brochure has also been developed and is available free from metropolitan NSW Fisheries offices or can be viewed at [www.safewaters.nsw.gov.au](http://www.safewaters.nsw.gov.au). The brochure is also available in Vietnamese, Chinese and Korean.