

## **Interested in having a say in where your licence fees go?**

Expressions of interest are invited for committee membership on the Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust Expenditure Committee (RFSTEC). RFSTEC reviews applications for funding and oversees expenditure from the Recreational Fishing (Saltwater) Trust. Persons should have knowledge of saltwater recreational fishing issues, a willingness to assist in consultation on these issues and reside between Queensland Border to Evans Head (region 1), Sydney Metropolitan/Central coast (region 6) or between Wollongong to Narooma (region 7). Applications are also sought from nominees of coastal statewide groups with interests in recreational fishing and the fishing tackle industry. For further information visit the NSW DPI website [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au) or contact Mr Bryan van der Walt on (02) 9527 8522.

**Applications close 24 June 2005.**

## **Recreational fishing licence sees funds put back into the water**

A record amount will be spent on a range of projects to boost recreational fishing across NSW. All of these programs are funded directly from the sale of recreational fishing licences in NSW. This is fantastic news for the more than one million people in NSW who wet a line at least once a year. Funds from the recreational fishing licence are placed into two Recreational Fishing Trusts, overseen by expert angler committees – one for saltwater and one for freshwater. This means that the fishing community decides how every cent of the license funds is spent. Projects to be funded this year include:

- More than \$535,000 for fish re-stocking, including \$200,000 for the highly successful dollar-for-dollar native fish stocking program;
- \$446,000 for the fish aggregating devices (FAD) program over the next three years, with the aim of increasing the number of devices from 15 to 20;
- \$554,000 from the saltwater trust for a new research program which will help maximise the survival chances of fish caught and released;
- Almost \$90,000 on a rock fishing safety awareness campaign, which includes brochures in a number of different languages, advertising, and a DVD on rock fishing safety; and
- Nearly \$700,000 for fish habitat restoration projects, including \$200,000 for coastal fish habitats and another \$200,000 for inland water restorations.

## **Murray crayfish season opened 1 May**

The annual four-month Murray crayfish season opened on 1 May. 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.

### **Information Guide - Charter Fishing in NSW**

An information guide has been prepared to advise charter fishing boat operators and the general public about charter fishing activities in NSW. Copies of the information guide are available at all coastal NSW DPI Fisheries Offices, NSW Maritime offices, NSW Water Police coastal offices and by phoning the Department's Information and Advisory line on 1300 550 474.

### **Results from Wakool Freshwater Classic**

The 94 anglers fishing in the recent Wakool catch and release event held in April 2005 reported a total of 820 hours fished with 233 fish caught. Murray cod dominated the catch, comprising 52% of the fish caught with the largest cod being 66cm. The data supplied by the anglers to the Tournament Monitoring program, funded by recreational licence fees, is used to assess the status of important recreational fish stocks in the Murray River, its tributaries and impoundments.

### **Night Fishing Ban at Lake Macquarie and Tuggerah Lakes**

Recreational fishers are being reminded that there is a complete ban on night fishing around power station outlets at Lake Macquarie and Tuggerah Lakes between 6pm and 6am from 1 May to 31 August. The restrictions help protect juvenile fish, which gather around the power station outlet's warm water discharge area. The restrictions prohibit anglers from fishing, from boats and on the shore, in or near the power station outlets. Fisheries Officers will conduct regular night patrols and those who are caught fishing illegally within the closed areas could face a \$500 on the spot fine.

### **Wanted dead or alive: the Banded Grunter!**

Anglers in the Clarence River region are asked to be on the look out for the noxious fish - the banded grunter. The banded grunter is a small, predatory, perch-like fish with a distinctive pattern of five vertical black stripes on a silver-to-bronze background and grows to 25 cm in length but are more commonly around 8 to 12 cm. The banded grunter is a hardy and aggressive predator with the potential to prey on the eggs and juveniles of local native fish, including Australian bass. They also compete for habitat and food and introduce disease. Sightings of banded grunters and other pest species can be reported on NSW DPI Fisheries' 24-hour hotline, 02 4916 3877 or by email on [pests@fisheries.nsw.gov.au](mailto:pests@fisheries.nsw.gov.au). Anglers interested in providing fresh or frozen banded grunters for research can also call the Grafton Aquaculture Centre on (02) 6644 7633.

### **Two men face court after alleged theft of large numbers of abalone**

Two 30-year-old men from Sanctuary Point are to face court on the NSW south coast for illegal fishing of abalone, following the seizure by NSW DPI Fisheries Officers of 460 freshly shucked abalone, 313 prohibited size abalone shells, a tray back vehicle and assorted dive gear. Abalone theft is a serious offence, and offenders face hefty fines or even jail terms. One of the largest problems facing the NSW abalone fishery is illegal theft. Last year, DPI Fisheries Officers on the South Coast seized more than 11 800 abalone, 78 sets of dive gear and five motor vehicles. The illegal harvesting and sale of seafood threatens fish stocks, undermines the legitimate commercial fishing industry and endangers the health of seafood consumers.