

Expressions of Interest invited for ACoRF and MERCMAC

Expressions of Interest are invited from persons with expertise in recreational fishing to be appointed to fill a number of upcoming vacancies on the Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing (ACoRF), and the Indigenous representative position on the Marine and Estuarine Recreational Charter Management Advisory Committee (MERCMAC). Potential ACoRF applicants will need to possess specific expertise in one or more of the following areas: estuary fishing, offshore fishing, sale of fishing tackle, Indigenous fishing issues/traditional fishing practices, the media (reporting on fishing), as well as knowledge of issues relating to recreational fishing and factors affecting recreational fish stocks.

Representatives on this Council and Committee provide advice to the Minister for Primary Industries on recreational and charter fishing issues and related matters. The Council and Committee meet up to three times each year, generally in Sydney. Members are paid a sitting fee, travel and accommodation expenses and are appointed for terms of up to three years. Applications are encouraged from women, persons from non-English speaking backgrounds and Indigenous Australians. Expressions of Interest should include a resume detailing experience, knowledge and any affiliations relevant to the position sought, and sent to:

Recreational Fishing Committees - Confidential
NSW DPI - Fisheries
PO Box 21
CRONULLA NSW 2230

Please indicate the Council/Committee position you are applying for. Closing date for applications: **Friday 24 April 2009**. For further information visit the NSW DPI website: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au or contact Belinda Lucas on (02) 9527 8523; email – belinda.lucas@dpi.nsw.gov.au.

Fishers for Fish Habitat

Recreational anglers spend many hours standing or sitting on river banks, on beaches and rock platforms, wading in the shallows, sitting in boats or kayaks and generally taking in the aquatic environment. As such, they are the eyes and ears of our river systems – if something isn't quite right they are regularly the first to realise it. Fishers for Fish Habitat is a new project which recognises the involvement of recreational anglers in habitat improvement initiatives and aims to inspire anglers to do what they can to protect and enhance these vital areas that our native fish need to survive and thrive. The project is culminating in the first ever Fishers for Fish Habitat forum in Ballina June 18-19. The forum is free for recreational fishers and registration is now open. Join other like minded fishers and guest speaker Steve "Starlo" Starling at the forum and find out how you can be involved. To register go to www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/habitat or ring Charlotte Jenkins on 02 66261107.

Boggabri Inaugural Carp Muster

Boggabri will host its first Carp muster event on the 25th and 26th April 2009. The weekend offers a fantastic opportunity for the community to learn more about the impact of carp on native fish and how planting trees, removing willows and re-snagging the water could benefit native fish. The Carp Muster forms an integral part of the Namoi Aquatic Habitat Initiative, a joint project between Namoi CMA and NSW DPI, which aims to bring back native fish to the Namoi by improving aquatic and riparian habitat. Registration for the Boggabri Carp Muster will be at Jubilee Oval, starting from 8am - 5pm on Saturday 25th April, and again from 8am - 12 noon on Sunday 26th April 2009. It only costs \$2 for children and pensioners and \$5 for adults. NSW fishing rules and regulations apply. For more information about the competition call Tony Townsend on (02) 6763 1440 or Milly Hobson on (02) 67631206.

Improving the assessment and sustainability of estuarine fisheries resources in NSW

NSW DPI is currently monitoring and assessing the fisheries resources of 7 estuaries in NSW (Richmond and Clarence Rives, Wallis, Macquarie, Tuggerah, Wallaga Lakes and St Georges Basin) using a 'fishery-independent' sampling programme. This programme commenced in January 2008 after nearly four years of research into developing standardised, cost-effective and reliable sampling tools. All sampling is done by DPI staff using DPI research vessels.

The scientific sampling tools developed in this project include multi-mesh gill nets and a beam trawl. The configurations of these sampling tools (e.g. the sizes of mesh, lengths of net etc), and how and when they are used, are based on the results of scientific experiments. They have been designed to minimise the number of fish that are caught – while still providing a representative picture of fish populations and assemblages (including sizes and species of fish that are not captured or retained by commercial or recreational fishers). The gill nets use short panels (20m) of different sizes of mesh and short soak times (1 hour). A single tow of the beam trawl is only 5 minutes long. Fish are removed from the sampling gears immediately after retrieval. The majority of fish are released in good condition.

For key commercial and recreational species (e.g. bream, flathead, whiting, luderick, sea mullet), we need to keep some fish and remove their otoliths (ear bones) for estimates of age and growth; and examine their reproductive organs. However, we only keep the minimum number of fish required to provide reliable scientific results (i.e. 150-200 individuals of each species over an entire year in an estuary).

Using standardised sampling gears across a number of estuaries allows us to make comparisons of fish populations and assemblages among estuaries with different management regimes; and monitor changes through time. Preliminary analyses of data from 2008 provide some evidence of larger sizes and older individuals of some species of fish in recreational fishing havens. Current sampling in 2009 will test whether the observed patterns are consistent from year to year.

It is important to understand that all types of data (whether from commercial fisheries, recreational fisheries or fishery-independent sampling) have limitations in the assessment and management of fisheries resources. Modern management strategies demand consideration of broader ecosystems and biodiversity, not just species that are important in commercial and recreational fisheries. Our current and future research will involve figuring out which combinations of the different sources of data are needed in reducing uncertainty in decision making and improving the sustainability of fisheries resources and biodiversity in estuaries of NSW.

Further information on this DPI research, including scientific publications, can be found at <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/research/areas/systems-research/wild-fisheries>

General information 1300 550 474

Agent enquiries or for changing contact details: 02 9527 8589, Fax 02 9527 8409

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/recreational