



Newscast



An information bulletin for recreational fishers

Edition 24, December 2003

NSW Fisheries is happy to announce the return of Newscast. In this edition, read about two key reviews, new rules for yabby traps, news from the courts and updates on major programs funded through your licence fees.

Order your fishing licence books now

A reminder to all licence agents: don't forget to order your licence books now for the Christmas holiday period. You can do so by calling NSW Fisheries on 9527 8589.

Fresh new Fishing Guides for 2003-2004 out now!

Back by popular demand, updated recreational fishing guides have been produced for the 2003-04 fishing season and are now available to anglers, free of charge. These great booklets are funded through your licence fees.

Fish Stocking Fisheries Management Strategy released

NSW Fisheries is seeking the community's views on the draft management strategy for the future of freshwater fishing stocking in NSW. The draft strategy outlines the vision for a productive and sustainable fish stocking program in the future, and covers issues such as fish hatchery standards, scientific research, socio-economic factors, threatened species and the genetics of natural populations. You can view the draft strategy and environmental impact statement at www.fisheries.nsw.gov.au. Submissions must be made by *19 December 2003* and marked Environmental Impact Statement Submission, Fish Stocking. Send your submission to: PO Box 21, Cronulla NSW 2230.

Management of NSW recreational fishing: we need you!

NSW Fisheries will soon be seeking the community's views on the future management of recreational fishing in NSW. We encourage all licence agents to get involved by giving us your feedback, and helping to distribute flyers introducing this process to your customers. Keep an eye out for a bundle of these brochures in the mail before Christmas. This initiative is co-funded by the recreational fishing trusts and NSW Fisheries.

New rules for yabby traps help protect our wildlife

New rules for yabby traps now apply. The new rules are in response to research and consultation by NSW Fisheries and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, which has shown that yabby traps can catch and drown animals such as platypus and turtles. There is now a ban on the use of yabby traps in waters where platypus are found, including public waters east of the Newell Highway (excludes private farm dams), and in three stretches of river west of the highway: the Edward River upstream of Stevens Weir, the Murray River upstream of the Echuca/Moama road bridge and the Murrumbidgee River upstream of Darlington Point road bridge. There is an allowance for yabby traps in all other waters, providing they are fitted with a 9 cm fixed ring insert at the entrance funnels, and a requirement to check traps at least every 24 hours. Modifying the opera-house style traps is a quick three-step process, outlined in a new brochure available from local tackle shops and NSW Fisheries offices and the NSW Fisheries website.

Murray cod season opens

The Murray cod fishing season opened on Monday, December 1, 2003. Murray cod are a prized catch of freshwater anglers and are found mainly in the Murray Darling River system. Every year a three-month ban on fishing – from September to November – protects this native species during its breeding season. Murray cod is one of Australia's largest freshwater fish – it grows up to 1.8 m and can weigh up to 50 kg. The daily bag limit for Murray cod is two per person for either rivers or dams. The minimum length of Murray cod is 50 cm, with only one fish over 100 cm in length allowed.

Fishcare Volunteers on the move

Over 350 community Fishcare Volunteers now operate in 29 regions in NSW. This flagship Recreational Fishing Trust program is entirely funded through licence fees and provides face-to-face communication with recreational fishers and the wider community. A big thank you to the volunteers in blue who are out at fishing spots, schools and events spreading the message of responsible fishing!

Fish Attracting Devices

The latest Fish Attracting Device (FAD) has recently been installed south of Port Macquarie, off Diamond Head, near Laurieton with the assistance of the Laurieton United Services Fishing Club. The Diamond Head FAD is the first of five new FADs to be anchored along the NSW coast as part of a \$139,000 commitment from the Recreational Fishing Trusts to NSW Fisheries' FADs program for 2003/04. The buoys create new fishing areas for recreational sport and game anglers, by attracting pelagic species such as kingfish, tuna, marlin and dolphin fish from surrounding waters. The FADs have been popular with anglers, who have reported increased catches of dolphin fish and black marlin. Check out our web site for the coordinates of the fish attraction buoys, and to find out how they work.

Promising results from Botany Bay fish stocking

Promising research results could lead to more saltwater fish stocking in NSW. Initial results from a trial release of 54,000 mulloway fingerlings into Botany Bay, suggest a high proportion have survived and grown. The trial is part of a three-year, \$170,000 project, funded by the NSW recreational fishing licence. The study is looking at the impact of releasing mulloway in controlled numbers into estuaries - focusing for now on Botany Bay and Smiths Lake, near Forster-Tuncurry. The research has shown that, on average, the fish have doubled in length (from 6.5 cm to 14 cm), and quadrupled in weight (from 7 g to 30 g). NSW Fisheries has set up the Mulloway Hotline, to record details of legal-sized, wild mulloway caught in Botany Bay, Georges River and Smiths Lake. Anglers can call the Mulloway Hotline, on (02) 9385 3792.

From the courts

NSW Fisheries officers have, during routine patrols:

- apprehended two men with four unmarked crab traps on the Hastings River. A Wauchope man, 43, and a Sancrox man, 23, will be summonsed to appear in court on a number of illegal fishing charges.
- seized more than 650 abalone and six sets of diving gear as part of the operations that apprehended seven people for illegal abalone fishing at Eden, Mossy Point, Broulee Island.
- apprehended an Ulmurra man with an illegal catch of bream, flathead, trevally, mullet and mud crabs in his vehicle at Maclean. The fish were undersize and exceeded the bag limits.