



# NSW Research Angler Program

Issue 9 January 2016

Welcome to the NSW Research Angler Program newsletter – providing you, the research anglers and spearfishers of NSW, feedback on the data you are collecting by donating your frames to research.

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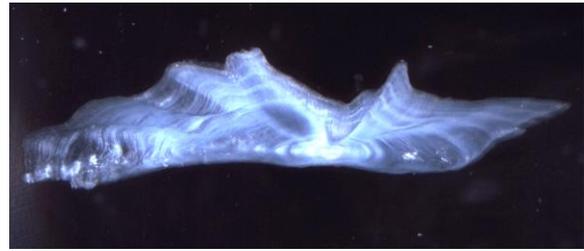
## New Species

While mulloway will always have a special place in the NSW Research Angler Program, we now have some new distractions in the form of rec fisher donations of frames from **Snapper**, **Yellowtail Kingfish**, **Dusky Flathead** and **Tailor**. We are starting to get some solid numbers of frames donated for all these species, and some solid individuals amongst them. All of these species are under considerable pressure from both commercial and recreational fisheries. We therefore need as much information on these species as we can get! Commercial data is easy to collect via the Sydney Fish Markets and regional co-ops, but getting data on recreationally-caught individuals is more difficult. This is where you guys come in! If we can do half the job with these new species as we have done for mulloway, then we will be well on the way to ensuring that we know as much about

these key recreational species as possible. So please, donate your frames today!

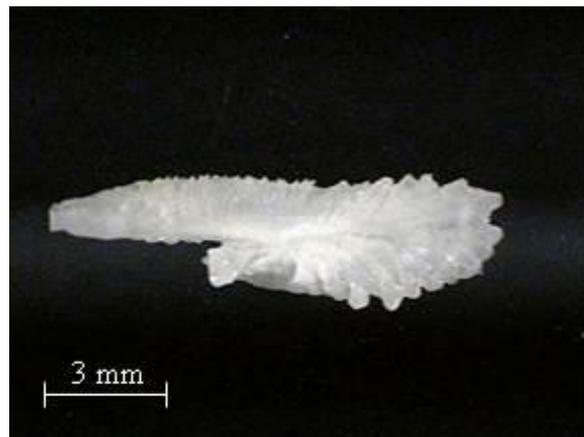


A great rec catch of snapper taken offshore from Coffs Harbour are processed in the lab.



They grow fast in the Basin! 86 cm of solid St Georges Basin tailor (left), estimated by counting growth rings in its otolith to be just 6 years old! (above)

Last issue, a monster tailor out of St Georges Basin caught by local gun Wal Balzan featured (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wbAitNCduhQ>). Donated to the NSW RAP, analysis of its otoliths revealed that Wal's 86 cm 6.1 kg 'greenback' was just 6 years old! The same species, *Pomatomus saltatrix*, also occurs on the Atlantic coast of the US where it is known as 'bluefish'. The species may be the same, but if Wal's tailor had been caught in the US, it would be around 11-12 years old! Whether Wal's fish is typical of tailor growth in eastern Australia will be something we will be able to answer with the donations of more frames by keen rec tailor anglers.



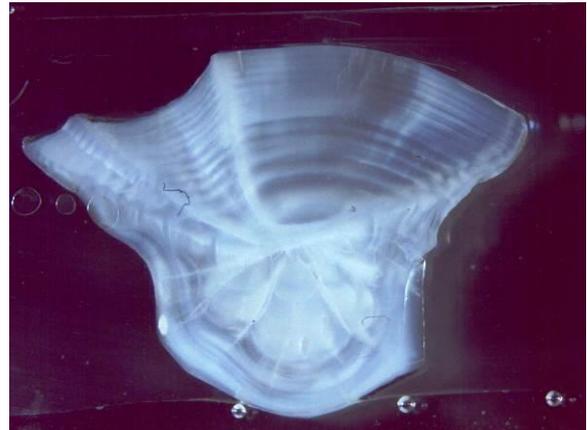
Big fish, small earbones: despite growing to pretty impressive sizes, yellowtail kingfish have tiny otoliths. The 10 mm otolith above came from a 90 cm kingfish! Despite their size, these otoliths still allow us to estimate the age of the fish, they're just hard to find inside that huge head! Photo courtesy NOAA.

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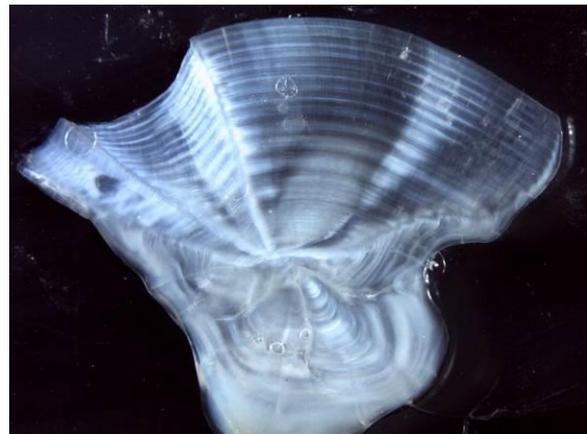
## Notable Donations from Spring 2015



Happy Hari! You'd be happy too if you'd just nailed jewies of the quality of these two North Coast fish both donated to the NSW RAP over spring. Photo courtesy Hari Corliss.



The otolith section from Hari Corliss' 132 cm 13 year old from South West Rocks (above) and (below) the otolith section from James Swilkes' 150 cm 14 year old from Sawtell.



The warming waters of spring often results in some hot fishing for many species and this was exactly the case for Port Macquarie jewy specialist Hari Corliss who donated 7 cracking mulloway to the Research Angler Program. Hari was not only the leading donor for spring 2015, but had three of the "Top Five" largest fish donated. Hari's largest fish, a 132 cm South West Rocks special, was estimated to be 13 years old. Almost 20 cm larger, but only one year older at 14 years was the largest fish donated over spring, James Swilkes' jumbo 150 cm leviathan from Sawtell. James' fish was also the second largest 14 year old mulloway recorded from NSW waters, beaten only to top spot by one of the largest mulloway Fisheries NSW have data for, a 167.6 cm fish collected back in 2002 from the same part of the coast!

Even though the NSW RAP has “Angler” in its name, it is impossible to ignore the contributions of passionate spearfishers in collecting some extremely valuable biological data on NSW mulloway. A serial offending mulloway fanatic and regular RAP frame donor James Sakker nailed four quality mulloway over spring, the largest being a 143 cm model from the Coffs Harbour region. This corker fish was estimated to be 14 years old making it the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest 14 year old mulloway so far recorded in NSW waters!



**Above and top right: A couple of views of proud spearo James Sakker with his extremely impressive 143 cm Coffs Harbour mulloway. Photo courtesy James Sakker**



**Right: The otolith section from James' 143 cm fish showing the clear growth rings used to estimate its 14 years of age.**

## Project Progress – Spring 2015

Another 93 recreationally-caught mulloway were donated to the NSW RAP over spring 2015 bringing the total since the start of the program (in September 2013) to almost 850 fish! Spring's mulloway donations were the result of efforts of 32 anglers and spearos and bring the total number of donors so far to 270!

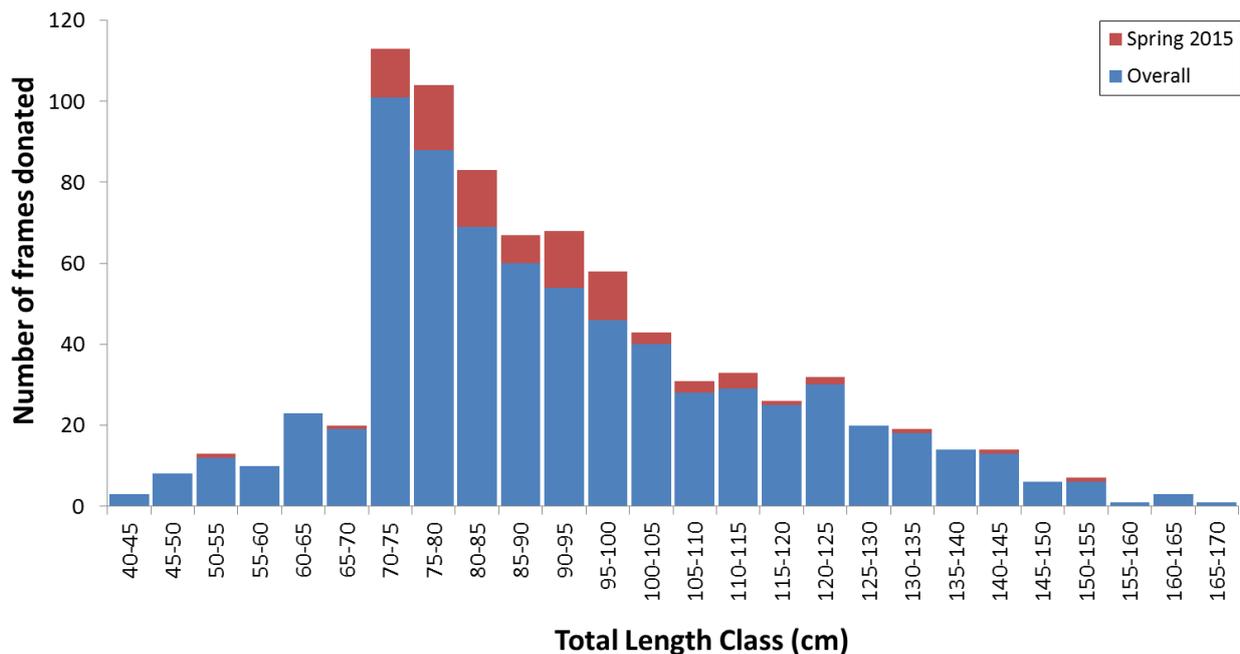
Again fish between 70 and 100 cm dominated spring mulloway frame donations, but a smattering of fish larger than the magic metre, as always, kept things interesting. The genuine trophy-sized jewies were again well-represented with 5 fish larger than 120 cm donated.

We also had several frames from the new RAP species donated over spring with 27 **snapper** (to 88 cm), 8 **yellowtail kingfish** (to 127 cm), 4 **tailor** (to 49 cm) and one lonely **dusky flathead** coming through the lab for a thorough "once over" by researchers! Stay tuned for information on these new species donations in upcoming newsletters.

**Right: A 78 cm snapper on the measuring mat about to give up its secrets! This spring-donated male fish was fast approaching spawning condition as can be seen by the well-developed testes (the paired cream-coloured organs).**

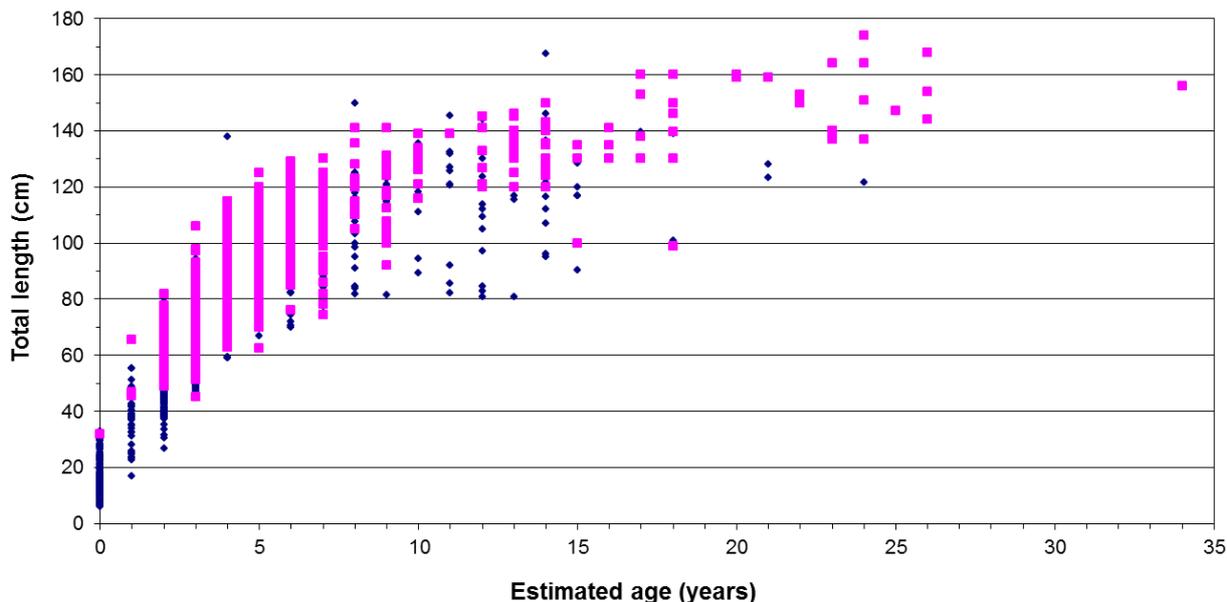


**Lengths of mulloway donated to the NSW Research Angler Program in spring 2015 and overall since its commencement in September 2013.**



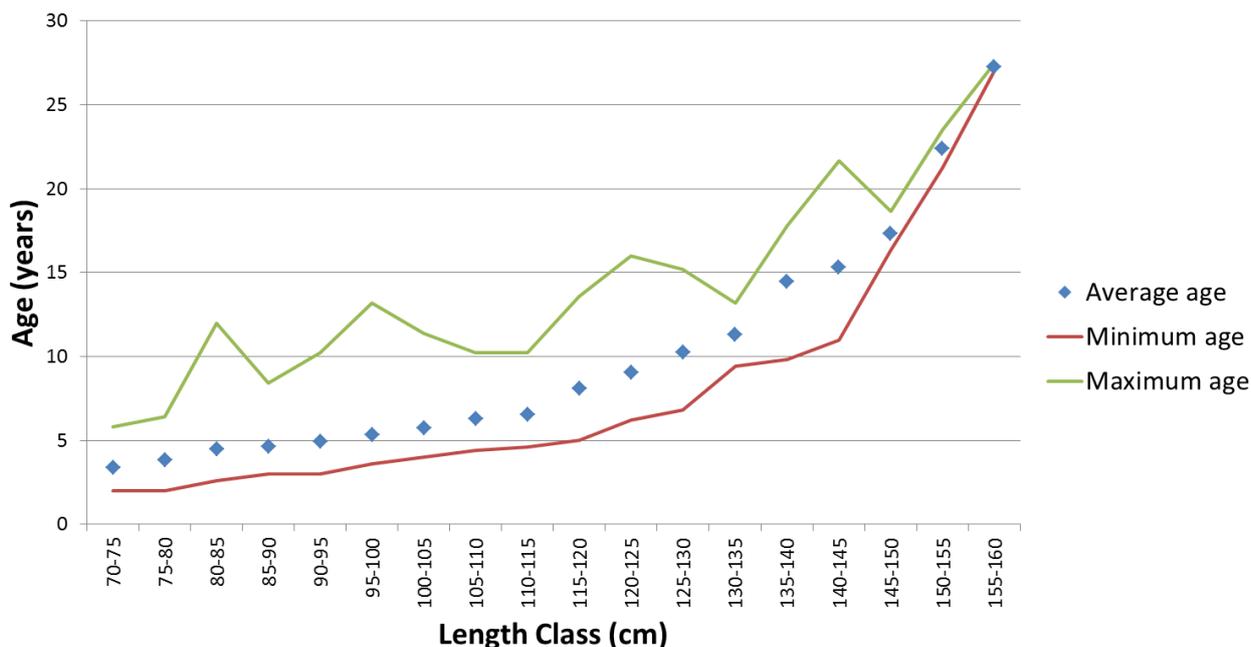
The below graph of the sizes and corresponding ages of mulloway in NSW shows how RAP-collected data has improved our understanding of mulloway growth. The spread of lengths of individual fish at each age gets progressively larger with increasing age depending on the variation in growth rate between individual mulloway. As well as establishing important patterns in growth like this, information from frames donated to the RAP have also successfully filled in the all-important far end of the graph with data from the largest and oldest mulloway in NSW.

Size-at-age data for mulloway in NSW: the blue points represent the data Fisheries NSW had for mulloway prior to the start of the program (mainly from commercial sources). The purple points represent data from recreationally-caught fish donated to the program since the commencement of the NSW RAP in September 2013.



The below graph shows the average age of a mulloway of each (5 cm) size class. Also shown is the minimum and maximum ages recorded for fish of each size class. Use the graph to estimate how old your mulloway may be by looking up the total length class of your fish and finding the corresponding average, minimum and maximum ages.

How old is my mulloway? Average, minimum and maximum age for NSW mulloway for fish of each 5 cm size class from 70 cm up to 160 cm.



We had donations of consistent numbers of mulloway from all zones over spring, including a few fish from the South Coast, which has been one of the more difficult parts of NSW to get regular samples from. We again took possession of otoliths from almost 30 recreationally-caught mulloway from southern Queensland donated to the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries' Keen Angler Program (<https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/fisheries/monitoring-our-fisheries/recreational-fisheries/get-involved-in-fisheries-monitoring/keen-angler-program>). This interstate cooperation will likely continue with future species, although the packaging of the samples left a little to be desired!

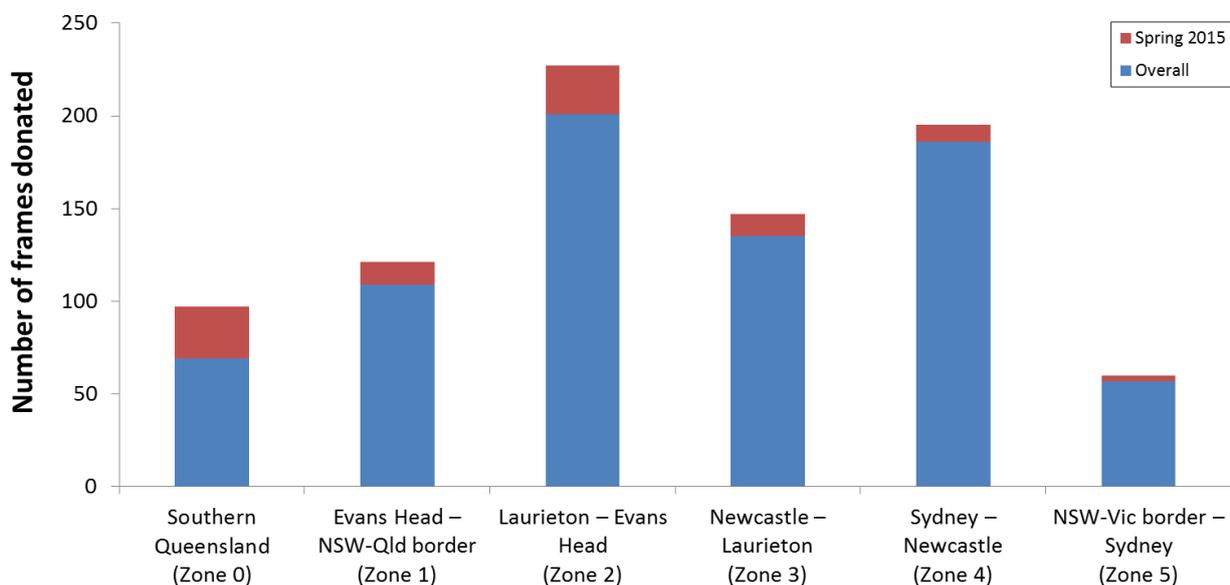


Even though NSW and Queensland share the same mulloway stock, apparently even mulloway from north of the Tweed identify themselves as "QUEENSLANDERS"!

Summer is a superb time of year for recreational fishers to get out there and do what they love. And now with five big recreational species "on the RAP books", there are even more opportunities for passionate and enthusiastic fishers to contribute to research. So regardless what species you target, get out there and enjoy the fantastic fishing summer has to offer – and if you do decide to keep a fish – please keep the NSW RAP in mind.

## Even if it is only one frame, one head, or a single jewel, we are willing to do (almost) anything to get it!

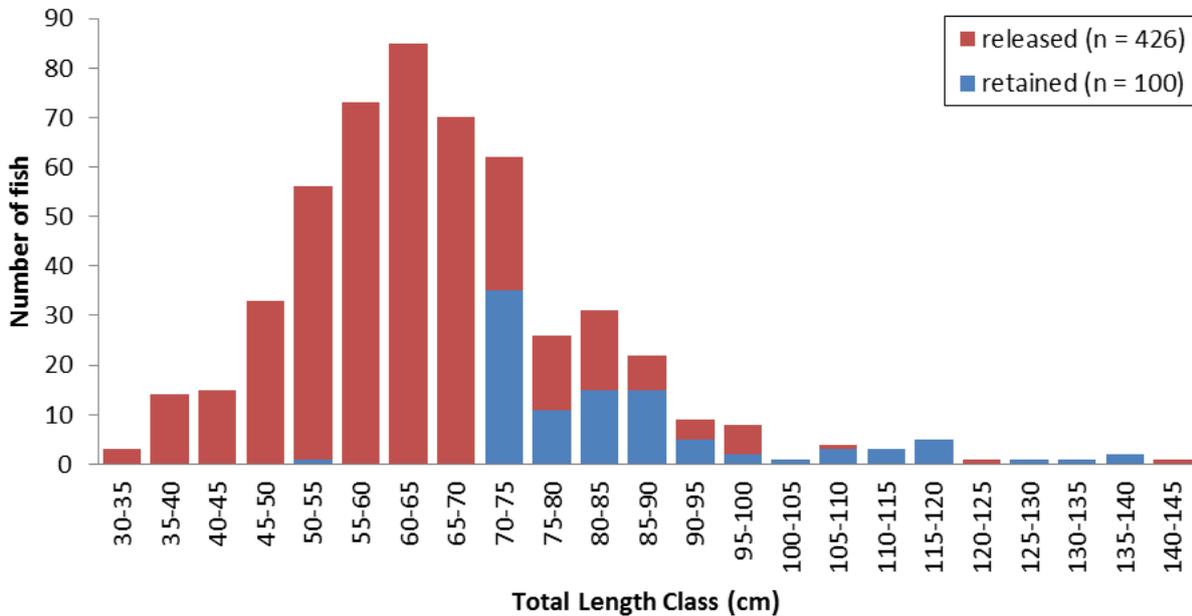
Number of mulloway frames donated by recreational fishers to the NSW Research Angler Program in spring 2015 and overall since the commencement of the program in September 2013.



## “Keen Angler Diary” Component

As promised in the last newsletter, we have some preliminary data collected by some of our earliest recruited “Keen Angler Diarists” to present. The data presented here has been collected by just 10 avid mulloway fishers, but it comprehensively demonstrates that, despite mulloway’s reputation as an elusive and mysterious creature, if you know what you’re doing, consistent catches are possible. Fish were caught from the length of the NSW coast using every conceivable technique, from spinning off the rocks to live baiting the rivers, worms off the beach to jigging offshore. The below figure summarises the lengths of mulloway retained, as well as those released, from a staggering 730 fishing trips! Of the 526 mulloway caught by our “experts”, most (66%) were undersize and therefore released, with the most commonly caught fish between 50 and 70 cm. Of the legal-sized fish caught, just 56% were kept, confirming that many passionate mulloway anglers chase this species for sport (and not just for their delicious flesh!). In fact, the largest fish recorded by our diarists, a 142 cm fish taken off the Coffs Harbour rocks was promptly released to fight another day. And quite a fight it would be!

Lengths of mulloway recorded by “Keen Angler Diarists” between April 2014 and November 2015.



We will be contacting the next group of Keen Angler Diarists in the New Year to get hold of what information you guys have collected. Once we receive the diary from a Keen Angler, we digitise it immediately so that it can be returned to the fisher for further data collection. If you have managed to misplace your reply-paid envelope, please contact us (T: 9435 4671, E: [research.angler@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:research.angler@dpi.nsw.gov.au)) and we will get a new one out to you ASAP!

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All “Keen Angler Diarists” are provided with a small 20 page waterproof diary to record information from 200 mulloway fishing trips along with a custom-made extra-long 160 cm NSW RAP fish measuring mat for you to accurately measure the lengths of the mulloway you catch (retained as well as released). If you regularly chase mulloway and would like to contribute some crucial data on the recreational mulloway fishery, please contact us (T: 9435 4671, E: [research.angler@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:research.angler@dpi.nsw.gov.au)), and we will send you out a Keen Angler Diary pack. This is an ongoing component of the NSW RAP so it’s never too late to get on board!



A lovely just-legal-Port Macquarie mulloway spun up off the beach on a metal slice by dedicated NSW Research Angler Mat McGuire; one of a host of mulloway caught by Mat and recorded in his Keen Angler Diary. Photo courtesy Mat McGuire.

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## Parasites in Mulloway

A feature of the worldwide fish family Sciaenidae (known as drums or croakers), of which mulloway are the largest member, are their noticeable internal parasites, mainly worms found in the flesh, gut cavity and gonads. Not surprisingly, these parasitic organisms are regularly found by fishers when dissecting mulloway for their delicious fillets!



**“Spaghetti worm” in the flesh of a red drum (*Sciaenops ocellatus*), a close relative of mulloway from the Atlantic Coast of the US, showing the enlarged “head” of the worm. Photo courtesy 2coolfishing.com.**



**A “spaghetti worm” decapitated by the filleting process in the flesh of a fresh-caught mulloway. They don’t look that nice, but do not affect the taste of the flesh and are not dangerous for human consumption.**

Found commonly in the flesh of mulloway are Trypanorhynch cestodes, commonly referred to as “spaghetti worms”. Spaghetti worms may be between 2 and 8 cm in length and have an enlarged “head” end. All cestodes (or “tapeworms”) are parasitic and their life histories vary, but typically they live in the digestive tracts of vertebrates as adults, and often in the bodies of other species of animals as juveniles. The cestodes present in mulloway are likely parasitic tapeworms of sharks, which use the fish as an intermediate host. Whilst these parasites are unappealing to the eye, they certainly do not affect the eating qualities of the flesh. Since they are large enough to easily identified, they are reasonably simple to remove during the filleting process. Not surprisingly, cooking kills the worm, but even without cooking they do not represent a human health problem. For more information on cestode parasites in sciaenids, please visit <http://www.seagrantfish.lsu.edu/resources/factsheets/spaghettiworms.htm>.

Found in the gut cavity and gonads are a different group of parasitic worms, nematodes (or “roundworms”). Parasitic nematodes occur in most plants and animals, including humans. Whilst there have been no published research on nematode parasites in mulloway, studies on similar sciaenid species from elsewhere suggest that those found in the gonads and gut cavities likely belong to the nematode families Philometridae and Cucullanidae. These worms require two hosts to complete their lifecycle of which the mulloway is the primary host.



Nematode parasites in the ovaries of a “ripe” female mulloway from south-east Queensland.



Parasitic nematode worms from the gut cavity of a mulloway donated to the NSW RAP.

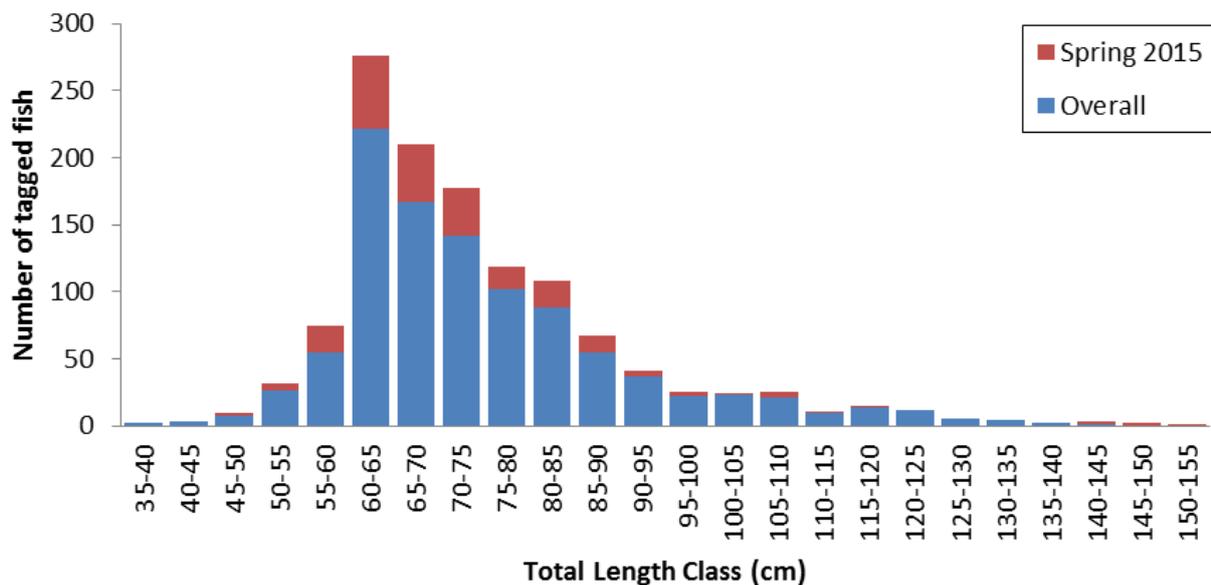
Parasite loads in fish vary depending on many factors including the size and age of the fish, water temperature, season, water quality, and density of animals; in natural conditions these parasites rarely affect the health of the fish. In fact, a “healthy” parasite load has been suggested by some marine ecologists to reflect a healthy marine environment.

## NSW RAP – ANSA Tagging Project Update

What a season it was for the NSW RAP-ANSA pilot mulloway tagging project with a ridiculous 220 mulloway tagged over spring 2015 bringing the grand total to an awesome 1,257 mulloway tagged since March last year! More than half of these tagged mulloway were of legal size at the time of tagging as well as more than 100 metre-plus fish! Another interesting statistic is that 90% of these tagged fish have been taken on lures, with far fewer taken the old-fashioned way, on bait.

You can also now stay up-to-date with all the comings and goings of this component of the NSW RAP by visiting the project Facebook page ([Newtag – NSW Tagging Program – Mulloway](#)).

Length frequency of mulloway tagged as part of the NSW RAP-ANSA tagging project in spring 2015 and overall since its commencement March 2014.



Over 200 mulloway tagged in the past 3 months means someone must have been doing a fair bit of fishing...and it will come as no surprise that the main culprit was...you guessed it, Chris Cleaver! Chris (who appears to be part-mulloway) managed to tag 86 fish up to 93 cm from the entire length of the Georges River. A fantastic effort again from Chris who has now tagged over 400 fish as part of this component of the NSW RAP! Also amongst a glut of mulloway over spring was stalwart Yamba Research Angler Mark Pirie who tagged 25 fish in the Clarence River alone! Kyle Worley and mates have thrown themselves headlong into tagging mulloway in Lake Macquarie and have really managed to turn it into a slick operation with 15 tagged fish up to 97 cm, including 10 over 80 cm. Down south gun mulloway angler Brad Gibson put some solid hours in off the beaches around Wollongong and was rewarded with 15 fish to 85 cm, providing a big boost to the number of tagged mulloway south of Sydney.



**“Tagger 48”** with 147 cm of record-breaking solo-caught Hawkesbury mulloway just prior to tag and release. One of FIVE fish larger than 140 cm tagged by him last spring. Photo courtesy “Tagger 48”



One month later there goes the record again! **“Tagger 48”** struggles to pose for a selfie with another huge Hawkesbury mulloway – this time a 152 cm fish! Photo courtesy “Tagger 48”

The story of spring 2015 mulloway tagging however belongs to a fisher who may have just experienced the best mulloway fishing of his life! **“Tagger 48”** who, like all good superheroes, wishes to remain anonymous, not only managed to tag 16 fish from the Hawkesbury River, but in doing so rewrote the NSW RAP-ANSA mulloway tagging record books by catching (and tagging) 5 truly trophy-sized mulloway! The previous largest mulloway at 144 cm was tagged by Dan Selby and client Nathan Bradley in winter last year (also in the Hawkesbury River). **“Tagger 48”**’s hot streak began with a 142 cm fish caught at the end of October and was followed by a 147 cm fish the very next day! Just to show that the previous two fish were no fluke, he then caught a 145 cm fish in early November, followed again, just days later, by a truly gigantic 152 cm monster! And just to round things off and make the rest of us thoroughly jealous was a fifth trophy Hawkesbury mulloway tagged at 143 cm at the end of spring. **“Tagger 48”** now owns the prestige of having 5 of the largest 6 mulloway tagged as part of this program! What a run of amazing fishing for a top mulloway fisher and what a fantastic result for the program.



Six of the Clarence River’s finest bright silver mulloway ready for return to the river after tagging by Mark Pirie; just six of the 25 mulloway tagged by Mark over a very productive spring 2015. Photo courtesy Mark Pirie.



Where would a tagging update be without this fella! Dan Selby from Sydney Sportfishing Adventures with a prime Hawkesbury River mulloway extracted from some skinny water. Photo courtesy Sydney Sportfishing Adventures.



Mulloway #A595664 when tagged by Kyle Worley in Lake Macquarie on June 23<sup>rd</sup> at 85 cm. Photo courtesy Kyle Worley



Mulloway #A595664 when recaptured by Nathan Debono in Lake Macquarie on October 17<sup>th</sup> at 88 cm. Photo courtesy Nathan Debono.

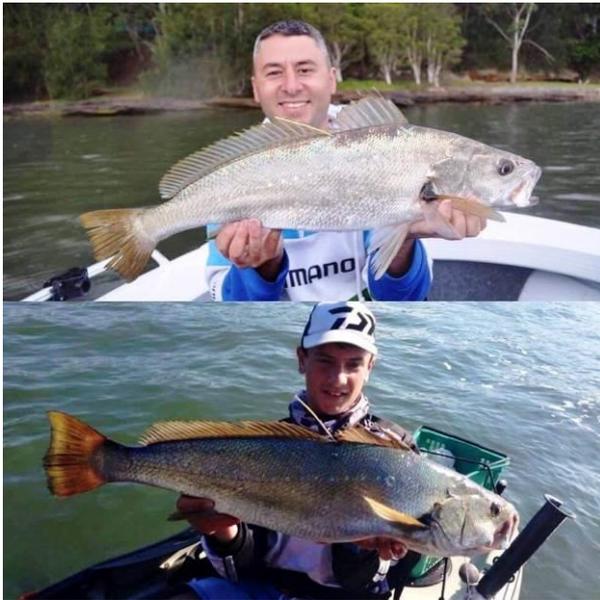


A justifiably pumped and suitably attired Jack Freestone with 106 cm of prime lure-crunching Brisbane Water mulloway on July 17<sup>th</sup>. Photo courtesy Luke Reilly.



Creatures of habit! Three months later on October 13<sup>th</sup>, the same fish, now 106.5 cm, again ate Jack Freestone's lure in the same Brisbane Water mulloway hole. Photo courtesy Luke Reilly.

Not only was spring 2015 our best in terms of mulloway tagged, but it also saw the recapture of a record number of tagged fish. We had 11 tagged mulloway recaptured over spring bringing the total number of recaptures to 46 since the start of the project. This recapture rate of around 4% is common for external tag-recapture studies and ensures that the longer the project goes for, the more quality information on the growth and movements of mulloway continues to trickle in. Spring started off with the recapture of a 66 cm tagged mulloway at Chipping Norton on the Georges River by Peter Phung. This fish has been tagged by Jamie Gauci in late March some 35 km downstream in Botany Bay when just 62 cm in length. This is the second fish recorded as part of this project to undertake the substantial journey from Botany Bay up the Georges River to Chipping Norton and prime example of the small pieces of fascinating information this program has collected!



A nice Parramatta River mulloway becomes even nicer! Tagged by Charlie Mizzi way back on October 24<sup>th</sup> 2014 when 68 cm (above), recaptured by Gianni Lo Giudice almost a year later on September 13<sup>th</sup> 2015 when 80 cm (below). Photo courtesy Newtag.



Fillin' 'em out and sendin' 'em in! Five completed NSW DPI tag cards from five tagged mulloway ready for return to ANSA, hopefully to be re-examined when one of the fish is recaptured. Photo courtesy Kyle Worley.

Another solid swim for a spring recaptured mulloway was undertaken by a 90 cm fish caught by Steve Tolevski in Port Hacking. This fish had previously been tagged when just 75 cm in length some 140 days earlier one system to the north in Botany Bay. Jack Freestone's recapture of the same fish in the same place in Brisbane Water three months apart demonstrates the clear habitat preferences of mulloway in estuary systems – keep that spot on the books Jack! We had a couple of fish recaptured close to a year after being tagged, but we are still yet to crack the year mark!

### Tagged mulloway recaptures for spring 2015 (as of 30 November 2015):

Tagging angler	Total length (cm)	Tagging location	Recapture angler	Recapture location	Total length (cm)	Days at liberty
Jamie Gauci	62	Botany Bay	Peter Phung	Georges River	66	163
Charlie Mizzi	68	Parramatta River	Gianni Lo Giudice	Parramatta River	80	324
TBC	75	Georges River	Steve Tolevski	Port Hacking	90	140
TBC			Matthew Grech	Hawkesbury River	71	
Jack Freestone	106	Brisbane Water	Jack Freestone	Brisbane Water	106.5	88
Kyle Worley	85	Lake Macquarie	Nathan Debono	Lake Macquarie	88	116
Scott Purnell	81		Damien Book	Old Bar	80	127
TBC			Mat Underhill	Hawkesbury River	72	
Steve Watson	65	Iluka Bluff	Vince Collins	Iluka Breakwall	71	356
Mark Pirie	75	Clarence River	Mick Leavey	Yamba	77	23
Dan Selby		Hawkesbury River	Anthony Bechara	Hawkesbury River	108	

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Gianni Lo Giudice recaptured an 80 cm fish in the Parramatta River tagged 324 days earlier by Charlie Mizzi growing by 12 cm in the process. A fish tagged by Steve Watson at Iluka Bluff in November last year was recaptured by old fishing mate Vince Collins slightly to the south at the Iluka Breakwall 356 days later. The capture of a fish by Mick Leavey just 23 days after being tagged by Mark Pirie sits at the other end of the 'days at liberty' scale. Lake Macquarie saw its first mulloway recapture over spring with a Kyle Worley tagged fish recaptured by Nathan Debono 128 days later (and 3 cm larger).

**Tag #A586528 – the mulloway with this tag was recaptured by Peter Phung at Chipping Norton on the Georges River 163 days after it was tagged by Jamie Gauci 35 km downstream in Botany Bay. Capture technique: 100 mm silver fox Squidgy fish! Photo courtesy Peter Phung.**



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### Top Five taggers for spring 2015 (as of 30 November 2015):

Tagger	No. fish tagged	Region
Chris Cleaver	86	Sydney
Mark Pirie	25	Yamba
"Tagger 48"	16	Sydney
Kyle Worley	15	Lake Macquarie
Brad Gibson	15	Wollongong

### Top Five taggers overall (as of 30 November 2015):

Tagger	No. fish tagged	Region
Chris Cleaver	422	Everywhere!
Dan Selby	121	Sydney
Paul Blade	52	Coffs Harbour
Mark Pirie	51	Yamba
Ivan Maric	47	Sydney

### Top Five largest fish tagged for spring 2015 (as of 30 November 2015):

Tagger	Total length (cm)	System
"Tagger 48"	152	Hawkesbury River
"Tagger 48"	147	Hawkesbury River
"Tagger 48"	145	Hawkesbury River
"Tagger 48"	143	Hawkesbury River
"Tagger 48"	142	Hawkesbury River

### Top Five largest fish tagged overall (as of 30 November 2015):

Tagger	Total length (cm)	System	Season
"Tagger 48"	152	Hawkesbury River	Spring 2015
"Tagger 48"	147	Hawkesbury River	Spring 2015
"Tagger 48"	145	Hawkesbury River	Spring 2015
Dan Selby	144	Hawkesbury River	Winter 2014
"Tagger 48"	143	Hawkesbury River	Spring 2015

Next time you're out chasing mulloway, keep an eye out for one of our yellow NSW DPI tags. Remember that the tag may be heavily fouled with algae, like this one from Jack Freestone's twice-caught Brisbane Water mulloway!



If you are fortunate enough to catch a tagged mulloway, please record the tag number, measure the length of the fish, and contact either the NSW DPI Gamefish Tagging Program (T: 4424 7411, E: [gamefish.tagging@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:gamefish.tagging@dpi.nsw.gov.au)) or the NSW Research Angler Program (T: 9435 4671, E: [research.angler@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:research.angler@dpi.nsw.gov.au)). The tag will be yellow, approximately 12 cm long and located just beneath the dorsal spines.

The crucial data collected by this project will help us to learn more about the movements, growth and post-release survival of this iconic fish. Stay tuned for future updates in the Summer 2015-16 NSW RAP Newsletter!

Once again, an enormous thank you must go to the [ANSA NSW Branch](#), and in particular Stan Konstantaras and Chris Anagnostou, for managing this important and fascinating component of the NSW Research Angler Program.

## NSW RAP Presentations

**NSW Research Angler Program**

- Collect biological data from recreationally-caught individuals for use in stock assessments
- Little data from largest (& potentially oldest) animals in population
- RFT funded (licence fees)
- Opportunity for recreational fishers to get involved in research
- 1 million rec fishers in NSW – an untapped resource

If you are a member of a fishing club (spearfishing or angling) or a tackle shop hosting regular fishing-related presentations and are interested in having someone from the NSW RAP give a talk on the program (and we now have four more species to talk about!), please don't hesitate to get in contact with us (E: [research.angler@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:research.angler@dpi.nsw.gov.au), T: 9435 4671) and we will send someone out to get you and your audience 'revved-up' about the program!

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## The “Top Fives”!

Our sincerest thanks to the following dedicated mulloway Research Anglers and spearfishers who have made it into our “Top Five” lists of frame donors overall and those for spring 2015.

It’s been hard to get away from the exploits of Hari Corliss this newsletter, but credit where it’s due! Hari not only donated the most fish over spring, but the quality of Hari’s fish means that he is also prominent in both the “Top Five” largest and oldest lists of mulloway donated. Great work Hari – we look forward to seeing what your summer’s jewy fishing brings!

Damian Cliffe was in the thick of the mulloway action around Yamba donating five fish to 112 cm and Mat McGuire did a similar job donating five mulloway from the very fishy beaches around Port Macquarie. Taigan Heath not only managed to donate four mulloway spun up off the North Coast rocks, but showed his versatility with some of our first snapper frame donations.

### “Top Five” donors spring 2015 (as of 30 November 2015):

Donor	No. frames donated	Region
Hari Corliss	7	Port Macquarie
Damian Cliffe	5	Yamba
Mat McGuire	5	Port Macquarie
James Sakker	4	Coffs Harbour
Taigan Heath	4	North Coast

### “Top Five” donors overall (as of 30 November 2015):

Donor	No. frames donated	Region
Paul Blade	55	Coffs Harbour
James Sakker	34	Coffs Harbour
Daniel Hughes	22	Laurieton
Mark Pirie	18	Yamba
Chris Webb	17	Coffs Harbour

### “Top Five” largest fish donated and associated ages spring 2015 (as of 30 November 2015):

Donor	Total length (cm)	Estimated age (years)	Region
James Swilkes	150	14	Coffs Harbour
James Sakker	143	14	Coffs Harbour
Hari Corliss	132	13	South West Rocks
Hari Corliss	123	7	South West Rocks
Hari Corliss	120	7	South West Rocks

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**“Top Five” largest fish donated and associated ages overall (as of 30 November 2015):**

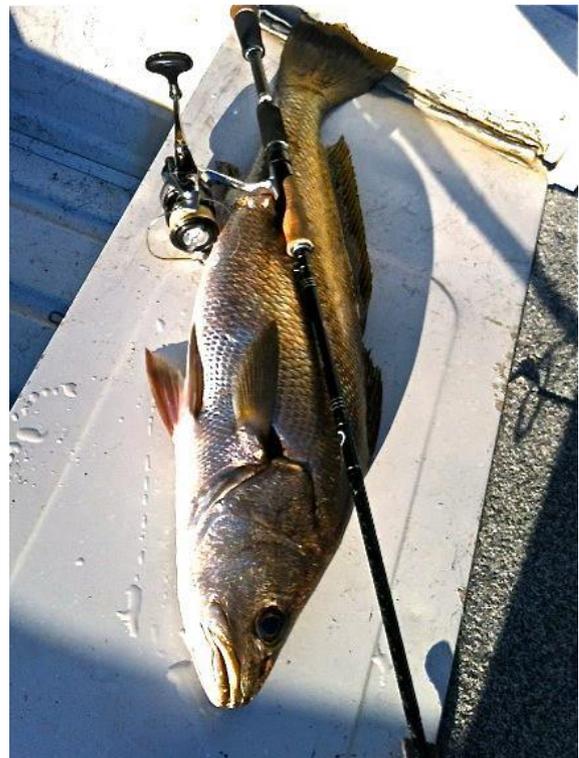
Donor	Total length (cm)	Estimated age (years)	Region	Season
Nathan Debono	168	26	Newcastle	Winter 2015
Adam Price	164	24	Sydney	Spring 2013
Keith Kneebone	160	20	Sydney	Autumn 2014
Mark McCabe	159	21	Sydney	Spring 2013
Vaughan Little	156	34	Nowra	Spring 2013

The largest mulloway donated to the program over spring, James Swilkes’ 150 cm fish from Sawtell was also the oldest at 14 years. The largest of James Sakker’s four donated fish was also estimated to be 14 years old, but was slightly shorter at 143 cm. Hari Corliss’ swag of fish from South West Rocks filled out the rest of the oldest and largest fish donated, with Harry Elliott’s 7 year old 110 cm fish from Sydney Harbour rounding out the “Top Fives” for spring 2015.

As well as those mentioned above, thanks to all the fishers who donated their spring-caught mulloway to the NSW RAP, here’s hoping for a quality summer of fishing for all our species!



Sydney Sportfishing Adventures’ Dan Selby with a beautiful Sydney Harbour kingfish donated to the NSW RAP this spring (minus the fillets!). Photo courtesy Sydney Sportfishing Adventures.



A prime Hawkesbury River mulloway caught by Harry Elliott, one of 3 metro Sydney fish donated by Harry to the NSW RAP over spring. Photo courtesy Harry Elliott.

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**“Top Five” oldest fish donated and associated lengths spring 2015 (as of 30 November 2015):**

Donor	Estimated age (years)	Total length (cm)	Region
James Swilkes	14	150	Coffs Harbour
James Sakker	14	143	Coffs Harbour
Hari Corliss	13	132	South West Rocks
Hari Corliss	9	118	South West Rocks
Hari Corliss	7	120	South West Rocks
Hari Corliss	7	123	South West Rocks
Harry Elliott	7	110	Sydney Harbour

**“Top Five” oldest fish donated and associated lengths overall (as of 31 August 2015):**

Donor	Estimated age (years)	Total length (cm)	Region	Season
Vaughan Little	34	156	Nowra	Spring 2013
Scott Robson	26	154	Newcastle	Summer 2013-14
Evan Leeson	26	144	Port Macquarie	Autumn 2014
Nathan Debono	26	168	Newcastle	Winter 2015
Marwan Nasr	25	147	Sydney	Spring 2014
Adam Price	24	164	Sydney	Spring 2013
Hari Corliss	24	151	Port Macquarie	Winter 2015
Robert Thorpe	23	137	Newcastle	Autumn 2014
Mark Pirie	23	140	Yamba	Autumn 2014

## Drop-off Locations

Many thanks must once again go to all participating drop-off locations for their enthusiastic involvement in the program. This program would simply not be possible without your continued support. The list of drop-off locations for donated frames is changing regularly as more tackle retailers become involved in the program.

For the full and up-to-date list of places where you can drop-off your frames, heads or jewels, please visit:

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/recreational/researchangler/drop-off-locations>

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## Monthly Prize Draw Winners!

The lucky monthly NSW Research Angler Program prize winners for spring 2015 were decided by randomly drawing one frame donor from each month.

Congratulations to the following Research Anglers:

September	<b>David Birt</b>	(Newcastle)
October	<b>Hari Corliss</b>	(Port Macquarie)
November	<b>Jamie Nicolson</b>	(Yamba)



Each winner will receive either:

- a \$50 gift voucher generously donated by MO Tackle Coffs Harbour (for use in-store or online),
- or a mullo-way-ready lure pack worth \$50 containing a selection of proven hardbody, soft plastic and blade-style mullo-way-catchers from Storm, Killalure, Berkley and Rupes.

Future winners will be published in upcoming newsletters and on our website. Don't forget to include your contact details (phone number, postal or email address) on the label accompanying your donated frame to ensure your chance of winning!

**Remember, if you're going to catch and keep any of our species (Mullo-way, Snapper, Dusky Flathead, Yellowtail Kingfish or Tailor) for a feed, please fillet your fish and donate the frame, head or a single otolith to research –**

**WE NEED THE DATA FROM YOUR FISH!**

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT.  
KIND REGARDS, HAPPY FISHING AND MERRY CHRISTMAS!**

The NSW Research Angler Program is part of the Resource Assessment & Monitoring Unit of the Fisheries NSW Research Branch and is generously funded by the NSW Saltwater Recreational Fishing Trust and the NSW Department of Primary Industries.

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