



MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES
MINISTER FOR ENERGY
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES
MINISTER FOR STATE DEVELOPMENT

MEDIA RELEASE

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False floor in boat used to conceal illegal fishing haul

Three men face a range of fines of up to \$11,000 and three months imprisonment after they were apprehended during a surveillance operation on the South Coast, Minister for Primary Industries, Ian Macdonald said today.

Fisheries officers from the Department of Primary Industries seized 46 prohibited size Yellow Tail Kingfish, a boat, an outboard motor and a trailer as a result of alleged fisheries offences detected at Shellharbour last week.

“This particular incident was unique because the alleged offenders went to great lengths to conceal their illegal catch by hiding the undersized Yellow Tail Kingfish under a false floor in the bow of the boat,” Minister Macdonald said.

“Despite their efforts to avoid detection, the illegal stash was discovered following a thorough search by fisheries officers.

“This is a significant breakthrough in stamping out fisheries crime in NSW.”

It is alleged that the fish were all significantly under the legal length of 65 centimetres for Yellow Tail Kingfish. Sizes of the 46 fish varied from 47cm – 60cm.

The daily bag limit for Yellow Tail Kingfish is five.

A 56-year-old Shell Cove man, a 43-year-old Castlereagh man and a 31-year-old Eugowra man now face charges including exceeding the bag limit of fish and possession of prohibited size fish.

Each offence carries a maximum penalty of \$11,000 or three months imprisonment or both. Minister Macdonald said size and possession limits were in place to encourage responsible fishing among recreational fishers.

“The rules are in place for a good reason - to protect this valuable community resource for future generations and also protect the livelihoods of those fishers that are abiding by the rules,” he said.

The minimum size for Yellow Tail Kingfish was increased to 65cm in September 2007, following extensive consultation and support from recreational fishers to ensure the future sustainability of Kingfish stocks.

Minister Macdonald said that while the summer holiday period was a great time for anglers to throw in a line, the rules still apply.

“Fisheries officers will be busy during this peak period inspecting fishers’ catches and specifically targeting high risk offenders,” he said.

Any information relating to illegal fishing should be reported immediately to the nearest NSW DPI Fisheries Office or to the Fishers’ Watch Phone Line on 1800 043 536.

More information about fishing rules and regulations can be found on the NSW Department of Primary Industries website www.dpi.nsw.gov.au

**Media note: Pictures of the seized fish and the boat are available
email rebecca.bowman@dpi.nsw.gov.au.**