

Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome (POMS)

In mid November 2011, POMS was again detected in the Georges River in experimental, farmed and wild Pacific oysters. Industry are reminded to be vigilant with biosecurity controls (such as decontamination) when moving between estuaries and to immediately report unexplained Pacific oyster mortalities.

Contact: Aquatic Biosecurity 4982 1232, 1800 043 536 or your local Fisheries Office

A POMS Question and Answer Fact Sheet has been prepared by Oysters Australia. See *Q+A Flyer* or www.oysterstasmania.org

A report on the 2011 survey for POMS in NSW, Tasmania and South Australia has been released by the Aquatic Consultative Committee for Emergency Animal Diseases. A total of 4323 oyster samples from 23 growing regions across three states were tested. The results showed that there is no evidence of POMS outside the Georges River and Port Jackson. Testing of Sydney rock oysters taken during the survey also showed no evidence of POMS.

A national joint industry/government POMS working group met in November and will continue to meet to discuss management, research, industry capacity building and grant funding matters. A report on the international POMS workshop held in Cairns in July is available at: www.oysterstasmania.org

Bruce Zippel, Rob Moxham, James Calvert, Angus Cameron and Tom Lewis went on a POMS study tour to France, 1-10 November 2011. From Normandy to the Mediterranean they met with growers, processors, industry, researchers and government agencies. Rob Moxham attended the Peak Oyster Advisory Group meeting to provide an overview of this trip. Funding came from FRDC, NSW DPI and Broken Bay Oyster Association. See: www.oystertour.wordpress.com

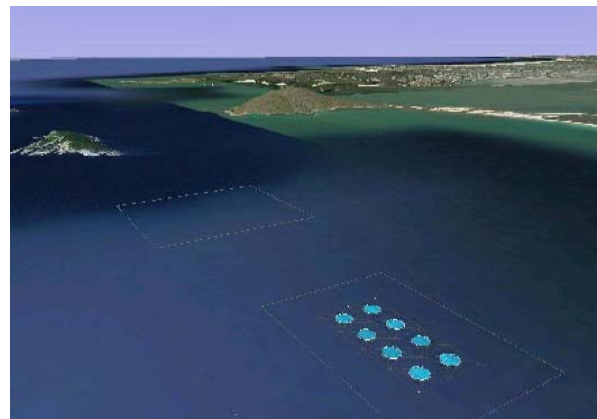
Studies are underway in the Georges and Hawkesbury Rivers to better understand POMS. Richard Whittington, Ika Paul-Pont and Navneet Dhand have a web blog detailing the results of the FRDC and Sydney University POMS Field Monitoring Project. See: www.oysterhealthsydney.org

Marine finfish research lease

NSW DPI has lodged an application to establish a 20 hectare lease located 3.5 kilometres offshore from Hawks Nest for a period of five years. The research lease would allow NSW DPI to extend its successful marine hatchery research on species such as mullet, yellowtail kingfish and Southern bluefin tuna. Key outcomes from the research would be to: prove species suitability; validate equipment and technology and undertake environmental monitoring.

It is hoped that this research can be linked to the Australian Seafood Cooperative Research Centre, which currently has a research partnership with NSW DPI and Clean Seas Tuna Limited to develop hatchery technology for Southern bluefin tuna at Port Stephens. The full application and environmental assessment is expected to be completed by early 2012. The application will then go on public exhibition. NSW DPI has begun talking to stakeholders to ensure that the local community is fully informed of the process.

Contact: Ian Lyall NSW DPI 4916 3856



Proposed aquaculture research lease off Port Stephens with existing fish farm lease in background

Bega Coast Oysters Incorporated

Supported by the Southern Rivers CMA, six oyster producing estuaries in the Bega Valley are uniting to form an incorporated body. Shane Buckley is the new Chairman and Sue McIntyre is the part-time Oyster Environmental Management Systems (EMS) Implementation Officer. The group will focus on: communication; industry sustainability; and address water quality and catchment improvement priorities.

Contact: Shane Buckley 0408 866 211

Aquaculture Production Report 2010-11

The Provisional Aquaculture Production Report has been released for permit holders information. There was a rise in production in a number of sectors including silver perch, rainbow trout and mulloway.

Contact: Raelene Trenaman NSW DPI 4916 3843

Individual and partnership lease responsibilities

Since 1 July 2010 NSW DPI has been refusing lease applications (renewals, transfers, new applications etc) where the applicant has outstanding clean up responsibilities for terminated leases. The decision to refuse applications applies to both individuals and business partnerships. See *Flyer* for details.

Contact: Janine Sakker NSW DPI 4916 3847

NSW Land Based Aquaculture Consultative Group

Following an Expression of Interest process the NSW Land Based Aquaculture Consultative Group (LBACG) now comprises Helen Jenkins (Australian Prawn Farmers Association), Sue Carson (Aquasonic), Rob McCormack (NSW Aquaculture Association), Noel Penfold (Silver Perch Growers Association) and new member Malcolm Shelley (Ozsea).

On the 30 November 2011 the LBACG held a teleconference to discuss the action items from the 1 July 2011 meeting including: Minor Use Permits for aquaculture chemicals; batch testing for imported fish and mutual recognition of the Fish Health Certification Program; the Hatchery Quality Assurance Scheme; broodstock collection; fish stocking program and development of a hatchery database. **Contact: Graeme Bowley NSW DPI 4916 3845**, see: <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/aquaculture/committees/land-based>

Aquaculture Research Advisory Committee (ARAC)

On 23 November 2011, ARAC held a special meeting to conduct a major review of the ARAC RD&E Strategic Plan for the next five years (2012-2017). This will assist industry and funding agencies to understand the issues that constrain profitability and industry growth. It helps identify what projects are needed to address those constraints. The Committee wrote to all aquaculture permit holders, aquaculture associations and relevant committees (LBACG & POAG) seeking input into the Strategic Plan that will benefit you and your industry. Many thanks to industry for the 38 submissions received. It is hoped the new plan will be completed by mid February 2012. See: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/aquaculture/committees

Contact: Jo Pickles NSW DPI 4916 3901

OceanWatch oyster newsletter

For an informative update see: www.oceanwatch.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/2011_11_oyster_newsletter2.pdf

Sydney rock oyster breeding update

The NSW DPI Sydney rock oyster (SRO) breeding program has been running for over 20 years and has used mass selection to improve growth performance and disease resistance. To enhance this program, SRO families were produced in 2007 from single pairs of parents (single-pair families) to investigate QX disease resistance. More information can be obtained from single-pair families than from mass selected lines and families allow us to calculate potential gains that can be made through breeding.

Recent research measured condition and reproductive cycles in mass selected fast growth and wild SROs and found that selectively bred oysters had a different conditioning cycle to wild SROs. Consequently, in January 2010 a collaborative project supported by the Australian Seafood Cooperative Research Centre, Australian Seafood Industries, Select Oyster Company, CSIRO and NSW DPI started to investigate if changes in condition in Pacific oysters and SROs could be exploited by breeding programs. This project has:

- Developed rapid low cost methods for chemical analysis of oyster meat using Near Infra-red Spectroscopy to assess changes in condition;
- Assessed all mass selected SRO breeding lines at three sites in NSW; and
- Created an additional 59 SRO families.

The Georges River POMS disease outbreak that occurred last year has created challenges for breeding as this estuary was an important focus for research. Strategies are in place to protect key broodstock to ensure that industry can continue to access SROs from the breeding program, but changes to the research program in response to POMS will be required.

Contact: Mike Dove NSW DPI 4916 3807 or Wayne O'Connor NSW DPI 4916 3906

Australasian Aquaculture 1 May 2012



See: www.australian-aquacultureportal.com

Memorandum of Understanding - Council/Industry

In a first for NSW Hornsby Shire Council has signed an MOU with Broken Bay Oyster Association aimed at protecting oyster harvest water quality.

Contact: John Stubbs BBOA 0404 833 194

Sydney Fish Market Seafood Excellence Awards

Congratulations to Broken Bay Oyster Association for winning the 2011 Environmental Excellence Award.

Oysters at the Ivy

NSW Farmers Association Oyster Section held the fifth "Oysters" promotional event at the Ivy on George Street on 10 November 2011. Primary Industries Minister Katrina Hodgkinson opened the event at a special government and industry session noteworthy for the number of Members of Parliament that attended and supported the industry. Visitors attended a 30 minute "Taste and Rate" session with MC, Simon Marnie (ABC radio). Lynne and Joyce Hall's Sydney rock oysters were selected as the best on the night and for Pacific oysters Broken Bay Oyster Association were chosen. Afterwards guests visited the Regional Showcase that highlighted the links the oyster industry has with regional food and wine.

The Minister also presented an 'Outstanding Achievement Award for Services to the NSW Oyster Industry' to Mark Bulley recognising his long standing industry leadership role. Congratulations Mark!



Minister Katrina Hodgkinson presenting the Outstanding Service Award to Mark Bulley

Legislation amendments

The *Fisheries Management (Aquaculture) Regulation 2007* is due for repeal in 2012. Re-making the regulation with minor amendments is underway. A regulatory impact statement will be prepared and exhibited early in 2012.

Contact: Tim Gippel NSW DPI 4916 3823

Triploid Pacific oyster trials

NSW DPI has approved an application by four oyster farmers from Lake Wapengo to culture triploid Pacific oysters for a five year trial period. The Crookhaven Shoalhaven trial ceases on 31 January 2012. The consortium of growers involved in this trial is considering applying for on-going approval. NSW DPI also approved an application by a group of north coast oyster farmers to conduct a "survivability" trial culturing a total of 20,000 triploid Pacific oysters on leases in the Tweed, Richmond, Kalang and Manning Rivers. The trial will be conducted between November 2011 and November 2012. It is a condition of the trial that all oysters are removed from the water by 1 November 2012. Contact: Tim Gippel NSW DPI 4916 3823

OceanWatch oyster industry EMS project

Seven new estuary-wide EMS are currently under development in NSW covering the Nambucca River, Manning River, Port Stephens (Tilligerry Creek), Brisbane Water, Shoalhaven River, Tuross Lake and Wagonga Inlet (the final three funded through Southern Rivers CMA). Two existing EMS are also being reviewed for Broken Bay Pearls and the oyster farmers of the Clyde River. These EMS are evolving well, although progress has slowed recently due to the processing of applications tied to the Environmental Improvement Grants.

The recent oyster industry grants were over-subscribed with over \$1m requested. With only \$374k to distribute, this inevitably meant that many worthwhile projects were not funded. All applications were scored on their individual merit against pre-determined criteria, with projects providing significant public environmental benefits and representing good value for money most likely to be funded. The scoring criteria were pre-determined by an assessment panel consisting of oyster industry representatives. A list of funded projects will soon be placed on the OceanWatch website: www.oceanwatch.org.au

Contact: Andy Myers OceanWatch 9660 2262

Parliamentary Orica spill inquiry

A Parliamentary Inquiry was announced following a hexavalent chromium release from the Orica plant at Newcastle. NSW DPI (including the NSW Food Authority) made a submission promoting early notification of events, water quality and food safety protection and compensation considerations.

Metals and oysters

Newcastle University have dedicated a PhD student to monitor and investigate the impacts of metals on Sydney rock oysters. Studies will establish baseline levels of metals concentration in wild oysters at sites in

the Hunter and Karuah Rivers. The impacts of different metals on physiological activity will be determined. Sampling commenced in October 2011.

Contact: Wayne O'Connor NSW DPI 4916 3909

Parliamentary domestic waste water inquiry

The NSW Legislative Council Committee on the Environment and Regulation is undertaking an "Inquiry into the Management of Domestic Wastewater" in NSW. The terms of reference specifically mention the adequacy of safeguards to ensure food safety and to protect against the risk of localised contamination in food production areas. NSW DPI (including the NSW Food Authority) made a detailed submission to highlight the importance of water quality to the NSW aquaculture industry.

Marine pests advisory booklet and poster

A poster and an advisory booklet have been developed as part of an ongoing advisory and education program on marine pest risks to NSW. The advisory material targets boat owners, recreational fishers and the marine service industry to help raise awareness, detection and reporting of marine pests. It provides information on how best to maintain vessels and gear to help minimise the spread of marine pests. The booklet was developed in collaboration with Southern Rivers CMA and local councils. Copies of the advisory material are available from Aquatic Biosecurity or see: <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/pests-diseases/marine-pests>

Contact: Brigid Krug NSW DPI 4916 3978

Catchment Action Plan reviews

CMAs in NSW are upgrading their Catchment Action Plans. This is in response to new priority settings, stakeholder input and emerging issues such as climate change. CMAs will be seeking input from stakeholders by way of workshops and written submission. The consultation process is set for late 2011 and 2012. The oyster industry is encouraged to assist the review. See: <http://www.nrc.nsw.gov.au/Workwedo/CatchmentActionPlanReviews.aspx>

Nutrients in aquaculture pond waters

Research work to investigate nutrients in aquaculture waters has been completed. The low levels of nutrients detected corrects recent misconceptions held by regulatory authorities and will speed up the approvals process for new farms. Many thanks to those farmers who supported this initiative and to ARAC for funding. The final report can be viewed at: <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/aquaculture/publications/water-quality-management>

Contact: Graeme Bowley NSW DPI 4916 3845

Hatchery Quality Assurance Scheme (HQAS)

HQAS audits of three accredited hatcheries and another hatchery wishing to obtain accreditation were undertaken in November 2011. The audits showed a high level of compliance with two hatcheries, however, one hatchery was suspended from the Scheme for failure to meet mandatory standards. During 2010/11 755,800 native fish fingerlings were stocked from industry accredited HQAS hatcheries to support the NSW Fish Stocking Program.

Contact: Graeme Bowley NSW DPI 4916 3845

Aquaculture Compliance

Alan Genders is the new Strategy Leader for Aquaculture Compliance. Many thanks to John Timmins for his efforts in this role previously. Between 1 July and 15 November 2011, 564 oyster leases were inspected with a number identified as non-compliant in relation to neat and tidy provisions, signage or corner posts. Operation Trident is ongoing targeting oyster theft. Farmers are encouraged to report losses on 1800 333 000. Significant fines of \$275,000 and/or imprisonment apply for offenders. Work is underway to republish Operation Trident posters. Work has progressed well with the telephone reporting system for shellfish movements to replace the current logbook system. Contact: Alan Genders NSW DPI 4916 3973



2012 Summer Fine Food Show - Aquaculture

The Sydney Royal Fine Food Show showcases Australia's finest produce, rewarding the best of the best with a coveted Sydney Royal Medal. Judging will be held on 29 February 2012 for aquaculture. Sydney rock oysters, cooked prawns, smoked salmon and trout and processed products will be judged. See: www.sydneyroyal.com.au/finefood

Contact: Steve McOrrie NSW DPI 4916 3921

Peak Oyster Advisory Group (POAG)

POAG met on 9 December 2011 and discussed a number of key oyster industry issues including: recent changes to legislation and policy affecting the industry; the forthcoming review of the NSW Oyster Industry Sustainable Aquaculture Strategy; the NSW Parliamentary Review into Domestic Waste Water Management; as well as oyster industry compliance and biosecurity issues. Maritime and EPA also attended the meeting to discuss water quality protection initiatives and diffuse source water pollution. For a summary of the POAG meeting see: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/aquaculture/committees

Contact: Steve McOrrie NSW DPI 4916 3921

Species Impact Statements

Public exhibition of Species Impact Statements to authorise the continuation of recreational fishing, commercial fishing and broodstock collection activities in the Lachlan and Darling River endangered ecological communities closed on the 10 November 2011. Part of the above process required NSW DPI to develop a broodstock collection policy to enable the continued collection of broodstock for aquaculture. See www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/405876/Aquaculture-Broodstock-Collection.pdf

2011 Oyster Industry Field Days

The Oyster Industry Field Days held in October at Port Macquarie and Batemans Bay saw a good roll up of oyster farmers and other key stakeholders. Congratulations to Emily Kearns of NSW Farmers Association for doing such a good job organising this year's Field Days.

Presentations at the Field Days included: progress in the development of Oyster Industry Environmental Management Systems; results from the Oyster Industry Benchmarking Project; and updates on SOCo, QX, Winter Mortality, POMS and Algal Bloom research.

This year an award for the "Best Commercial Innovator" was won by Steve Siminis for his "Siminis Oyster Splitting System", which is of interest to anybody opening large volumes of oysters.

The winners of the "Most Beautiful Oyster Contest" at this years Field Days were:

Port Macquarie: Holiday Coast Oysters *Port Macquarie* (Sydney rock) and Reg Richards *Hawkesbury River* (Pacific).

Batemans Bay: Jack & Peter Cole *Merimbula* (Sydney rock), John & Greg Dawson *Pambula Lake* (Flat) and John & Annette Collison *Crookhaven River* (Pacific).

Contact: Steve McOrrie NSW DPI 4916 3921



Steve Siminis demonstrating his award winning oyster opening system

Oyster Industry Sustainable Aquaculture Strategy
OISAS has a 5 year review trigger and is now due for review. See 'OISAS Review Flyer'.

Note: The amnesty on lease surrender fees established for 5 years from the date of OISAS gazettal has now ceased. Please refer to the Aquaculture Fee Schedule for all aquaculture related fees and charges at: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/aquaculture/forms

Raft construction guidelines on the web

"Best Practice Guidelines for Oyster Raft Construction" is now available on the NSW DPI website. These guidelines were developed in cooperation with POAG. The Guidelines seek to address concerns raised by industry following the north coast floods with the standard of raft construction and raft mooring. Key components of the Guidelines will be considered for inclusion in OISAS. Farmers are reminded that approval is required from NSW DPI prior to establishing drum or pontoon rafts on an oyster lease. If you currently have drum or pontoon rafts on one or more of your lease areas, please check your lease documentation to ensure that the lease area is approved for "Raft Cultivation". See:

http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/421275/INT11-83575-Best-Practice-Guidelines-Oyster-Raft-Construction.pdf

Contact: Aquaculture Administration 4982 1232

SEPP 62 referrals

NSW DPI has received more than 30 referrals this year for proposed developments that had the potential to impact on oyster aquaculture. The relevant local NSW Shellfish Program Coordinators have also been notified about each development by NSW DPI to ensure that local oyster farmers can also make comment.

Contact Tim Gippel NSW DPI 4916 3823

NSW Pacific Oyster Survey 2010 Report

NSW DPI tabled the report at POAG on 9 December 2011. It was also provided to the Biosecurity Industry Consultation Group members. The survey report data includes Pacific oyster abundance for both cultivation and non-cultivation habitat types in 30 oyster cultivation estuaries in NSW. This comprehensive data set will be used to inform a review of the existing Section 8 Pacific oyster control closure, and the development of risk-based closure options.

Contact: Melissa Walker NSW DPI 4982 1232

NSW DPI Australian bass stocking 2011

Broodstock fish were collected from the Myall River (NSW Central Zone) and were successfully spawned for fingerling production at the Port Stephens Fisheries

Institute. A total of 116,500 juvenile bass were stocked into 7 freshwater impoundments including: Glenbawn Dam, Lake Wallace, Lake Lyell, Tallowa Dam, Jerrara Dam, Lake St Claire and at Wollombi.

Contact: Stewart Fielder NSW DPI 4916 3902

Derelict oyster lease clean up

A number of derelict oyster leases in Brisbane Water are targeted for clean up over the next few months as a result of a \$40,000 Partnerships Program grant from the Hunter-Central Rivers CMA. The grant not only aims to remove derelict oyster lease material but also aims to increase awareness within the local oyster industry of the skills and expertise they can contribute to the health and visual amenity of the estuary. The clean up project will be undertaken in cooperation with OceanWatch who are working with the local industry to prepare an EMS. Six other leases in Brisbane Water which were identified as having a significant impact on foreshore residential areas have also been cleaned up. Oyster Lease Security Bond money will cover the cost of this work. NSW DPI is continuing to take action against individual leaseholders and will refuse applications where the leaseholder/applicant has outstanding clean up responsibilities. In the period 1 November 2010 to 31 October 2011, 66 leases (70 ha) were cleaned up.

Contact: Katie Sachs NSW DPI 4916 3913

Emergency response – truck in Nambucca River

Credit to the SES for their prompt response to avert a potential diesel fuel spill close to oyster leases when a truck missed the Macksville Bridge and ended up in the Nambucca River. Oyster leases close to the spill were boomed and the SES worked closely with local oyster growers.



Macksville accident

Training for young aquaculture leaders

Congratulations to Ika Paul-Pont and Martin Jackson on their attendance at the "Breaking Down the

Boundaries" Leadership Course associated with the 4th International Oyster Symposium. Also well done to Ewan McAsh for winning a Nuffield Scholarship.

Invitations are open for the 2012 FRDC National Seafood Industry Leadership Program.

Contact: Jill Briggs 0409 455 710

NSW Native fish stocking program.

Industry and government HQAS accredited hatcheries are marking Murray cod and golden perch fingerlings with the fluorescent dye calcein to assess fish stocking success. This allows NSW DPI researchers to discriminate between hatchery-reared and wild fish. This important research will assist determine the effectiveness of stocking native freshwater fish in NSW. Narrandera Fisheries Centre staff have been working on calcein marking techniques in tank and pond trials. Marking will be applied to fish stockings for Copeton Dam, Burrinjuck Dam and several rivers in the south of the state. NSW DPI will continue to coordinate calcein marking with commercial hatcheries involved in the program.

Contact: Lee Baumgartner NSW DPI 6958 8215

Season Greetings to Permit Holders from all at NSW DPI



Aquaculture News is a newsletter for the aquaculture industry in NSW.
Editor: Joyce Paterson OUT11/23648
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www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/aquaculture/publications/aquaculture-newsletter
ISSN 1835-2618 (print)
ISSN 1835-2626 (online)

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (December 2011). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of NSW Department Primary Industries or the user's independent adviser.

Shed Wall Numbers

Operation Trident - Crime Stoppers 1800 333 000

Oyster/Fish Mortalities Aquatic Biosecurity 4982 1232,
1800 043 536 or your local Fisheries Office

Shellfish Program NSW Food Authority 1300 552 406

Port Stephens Fisheries Institute 4982 1232
(Management, Administration, Research, Compliance)