



NEW SOUTH WALES

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 8 May 2009

Ian Macdonald

Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Energy,
Minister for Mineral Resources, Minister for State Development

HABITUAL ABALONE OFFENDER SENT TO JAIL

A repeat abalone offender has been sentenced to two months imprisonment and fined \$2000 for illegal abalone fishing.

The man, aged 39 from Sydney was arrested by NSW Department of Primary Industries fisheries officers during a surveillance operation at Moon Bay, near Tathra, on the Far South Coast in May, 2008.

“This man is arguably one of Australia’s most prolific abalone offenders,” Minister for Primary Industries Ian Macdonald said today.

“He has an extensive history of abalone offences across the southern Australian States.

“He has only recently been released from nine months in prison in Victoria for abalone trafficking and is still under a five year good behaviour bond in NSW for matters involving abalone crime.

“The key message in this case is that NSW DPI fisheries officers target repeat offenders and if they continue to offend, they will be caught, again and again.”

Minister Macdonald said the man was caught with a valuable load.

“When fisheries officers stopped the man, he was found to have 202 shucked blacklip abalone, valued at approximately \$3000 on the legitimate market,” he said.

“He was charged with having shucked abalone adjacent to waters, and exceeding the bag limit for abalone. The vehicle and a quantity of dive gear were also seized from the man.

“The possession limit in waters open to the taking of abalone in NSW is two per person.

“This result is a great example of the hard work our fisheries officers put into catching illegal fishers.

“For those people who think fisheries offences aren’t serious crimes – think again. Illegal fishing seriously threatens the sustainability of the state’s fisheries resources.

“The message is simple - if you are caught doing the wrong thing, there is a chance you will go to jail.”

Information on illegal diving or fishing should be reported immediately to the Abalone Compliance Group on 02 6499 8000, your local DPI fisheries office or the Fishers' Watch Phone Line on 1800 043 536.