



NSW Research Angler Program

Issue 10 April 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.

In this issue

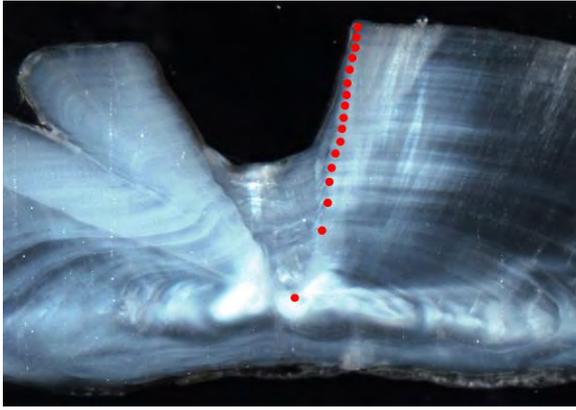
Notable Donations from Summer 2015-16.....	1
A blast from the past!.....	4
Project Progress – Summer 2015-16.....	5
Tailor research update.....	8
“Research Angler Diary” Component.....	9
Get on the mack attack!.....	11
NSW RAP – ANSA Tagging Project Update.....	12
Upcoming NSW RAP Presentations.....	17
The “Top Fives”!.....	18
Drop-off Locations.....	20
Monthly Prize Draw Winners!.....	21

Notable Donations from Summer 2015-16

As usual, the great weather eastern Australia receives over summer each year produced some extremely memorable catches and fortunately a few of them ended up making their way into the NSW Research Angler Program! A truly gigantic 94 cm Jervis Bay snapper caught off Point Perpendicular aboard [Jervis Bay Fishing Charters](#)' flagship 'Illusion" sits right up there with the best over summer. East coast snapper don't get too much bigger than this, and not surprisingly it had an impressive age to match its size at an estimated 16 years old!

Right: A lucky Jervis Bay Fishing Charters client with a thumping 94 cm 9 kg JB snapper generously donated to the NSW RAP. Photo courtesy [Jervis Bay Fishing Charters](#)



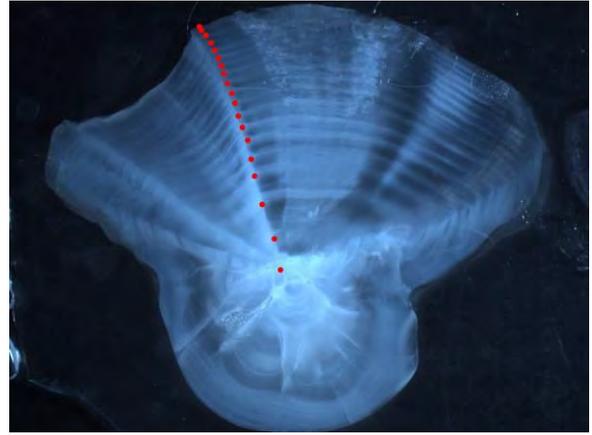


Left: Not quite as clear as mulloway otolith sections, but the otolith section from 94 cm of prime Jervis Bay snapper still allow us to estimate its age at an impressive 16 years old. This age puts this fish right at the top of the scale for snapper growth in NSW!

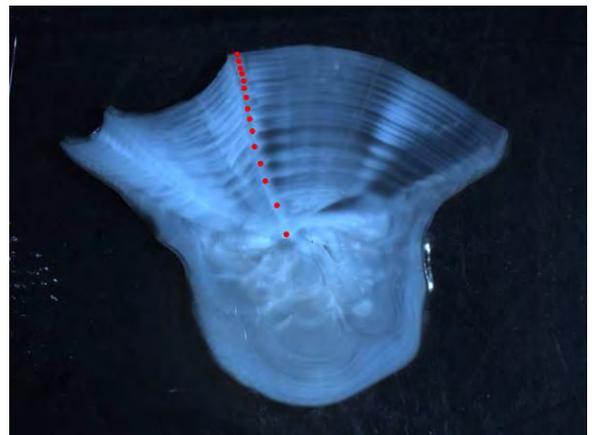
A guy who needs little introduction, in mulloway circles anyway, Scott Purnell has not only made it quite the hobby catching big mulloway off the rocks, beach, breakwall and just about everywhere else, but fortunately for researchers, generously donates many of his catches to the NSW Research Angler Program. This summer, Scott provided us with three very impressive fish to collect crucial biological data on. At 150, 143 and 142.5 cm in length respectively, these fish are what mulloway dreams are made of, not just for fishers, but researchers too, as Scott's three fish were estimated to be 20, 17 and 13 years of age, respectively. At 20 years old, Scott's 150 cm Harrington fish is just the fifth 20 year old mulloway so far recorded in NSW and his 143 cm Stockton fish just the ninth 17 year old!



Scott Purnell with 150 cm of Harrington mulloway caught off the stones during the day! A hefty fish with a hefty 20 years under its belt. Photo courtesy Scott Purnell. Inset: The 20 growth rings (or annuli) mean that this fish was estimated to be a grand 20 years of age!



Left: 143 cm of Stockton Beach jewfish estimated to be 17 years old. Just the ninth mulloway so far recorded in NSW waters based on the annuli counted in its otolith (above).

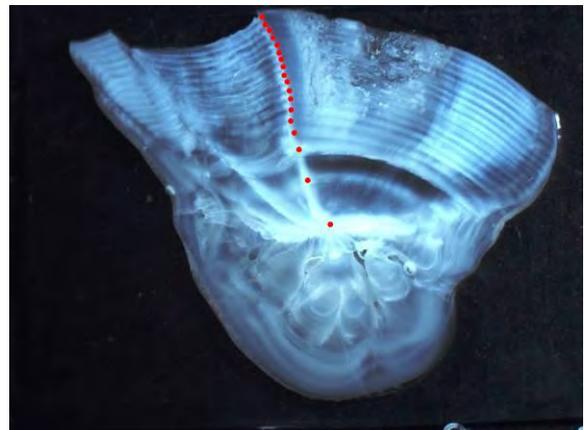


Slightly smaller, but still a massive fish was a second mulloway from Stockton Beach for Scott Purnell at 142.5 cm estimated to be 13 years old. Photo courtesy Scott Purnell

The otolith section from Scott Purnell's smallest summer-donated mulloway from Stockton Beach with its 13 nice growth rings clearly visible.

A blast from the past!

Rewind back to December 2002 when Thomas Aichroy and Gerard Billing were chasing mulloway off the rocks north of Coffs Harbour. Little did they realise that this was to be their lucky night when Thomas hooked a big sliver steam train! After a titanic struggle and some tense moments near the rocks, Gerard made sure of the gaff shot resulting in the landing of a mulloway measuring 146 cm and an estimated 33-35 kg. Our data shows that a mulloway of this size can be anywhere from 8 years old all the way up to 26, so we were itching to see just how old this big fella (or bella) was. And we weren't disappointed as analysis of one of the jewels provided to us by Thomas revealed the fish to be ripe old age of 16 years – making it the (equal) largest 16 year old mulloway so far recorded from NSW waters!



Above: The morning after! 193 cm tall Gerard Billing poses with Thomas Aichroy's 146 cm Coffs Harbour mulloway way back in December 2002. Right: The impressive jewels from Thomas' mulloway (above) and the otolith section with its 16 clear annuli (below)

Many thanks to Thomas for getting in touch with the NSW RAP – yesterday or yesteryear, any and all data we can collect on recreationally-caught mulloway will be gratefully accepted.

So if you have some old mulloway jewels lying around and you reliably know the lengths of the fish they came from as well as the date and location of capture, please feel free to contact the NSW RAP (T: 9435 4671, E: research.angler@dpi.nsw.gov.au) and we will send you out a reply-paid padded post pack for you to mail your "Blasts from the Past" in to us for analysis.

Project Progress – Summer 2015-16

Another 43 recreationally-caught mulloway were donated to the NSW RAP over summer 2015-16 bringing the total since the start of the program (in September 2013) to almost 900 fish!

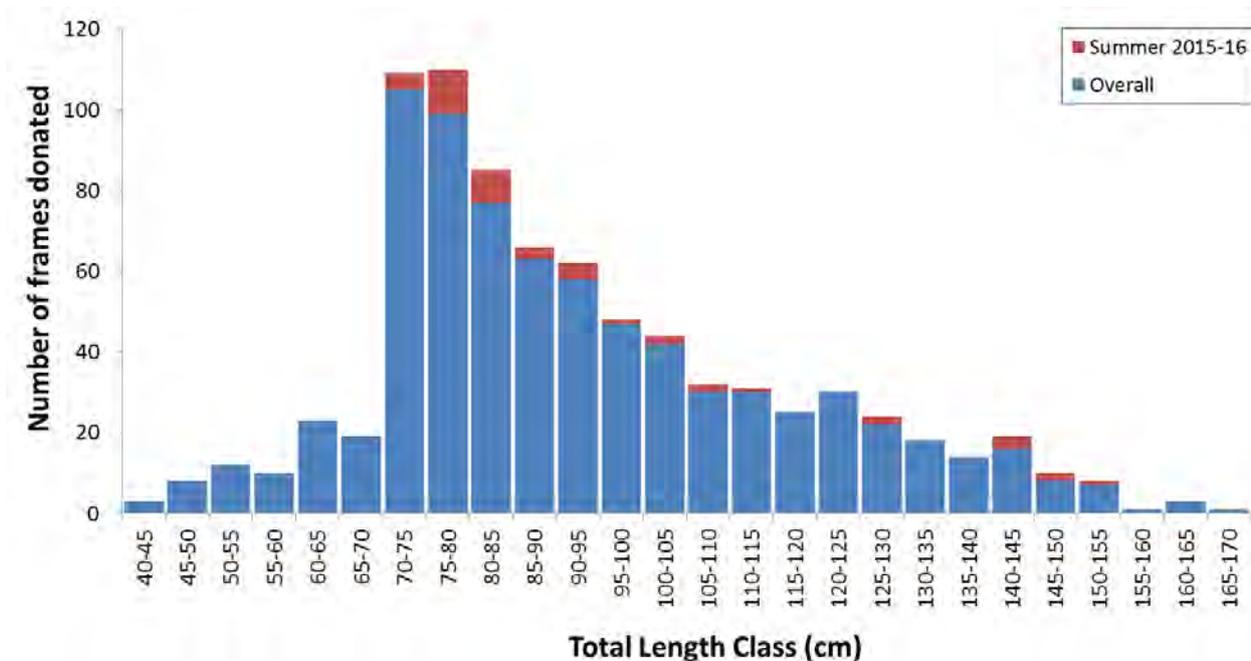
Again fish between 70 and 100 cm dominated summer mulloway frame donations from all zones on the NSW coast, but six fish larger than 140 cm provided yet more excellent data on the largest size class of mulloway in the NSW population.

Of the new species, a further 29 snapper between 32 and a massive 87 cm were also donated to the RAP over summer along with 7 yellowtail kingfish to 127 cm!

Right: New Research Angler Program Fisheries Technician Antony Gould processes the frame from an 85 cm mulloway in the laboratory, one of 79 frames from a variety of important recreational species to be donated to the NSW RAP over summer 2015-16.



Lengths of mulloway donated to the NSW Research Angler Program in summer 2015-16 and overall since its commencement in September 2013.



Just in case you wanted to know exactly what all this generously-donated data for mullet allows NSW DPI scientists to do, look no further than the recently released latest “[Status of fisheries resources in NSW](#)” report (page 219). Whilst the overall mullet stock is not surprisingly, still considered to be in an “overfished” state, the quality of the assessment improved significantly because of updated mortality estimates and biological reference points provided by the NSW Research Angler Program. This was purely due to the donations of fish by NSW’s dedicated research anglers and spearfishers! Excitingly, the next report will include rec fisher-collected data for **snapper, dusky flathead, yellowtail kingfish and tailor**.

Excerpts from the recently released “[Status of fisheries resources in NSW](#)” report concerning the NSW mullet stock. The graph on the right showing size-at-age data for mullet in NSW is so well populated by large, old fish thanks mainly to frame donations by fishers involved in the NSW Research Angler Program!

NSW DPI STATUS OF FISHERIES RESOURCES IN NSW 2013-14

Mullet

(*Argyrosomus japonicus*)

Author Julian Hughes

EXPLOITATION STATUS OVERFISHED

Age composition is indicative of an Overfished stock, the spawning potential ratio is below the recommended threshold, fishing mortality is much greater than natural mortality, and length and age distributions are excessively affected by recruitment.

SCIENTIFIC NAME	STANDARD NAME	COMMENT
<i>Argyrosomus japonicus</i>	Mullet	Also known as 'jewfish'. Previously called <i>Argyrosomus hololepidotus</i> .



Background

Mullet (*Argyrosomus japonicus*) is a coastal species found from the upper reaches of estuaries to depths up to 100-150 m offshore. In Australia, Mullet are distributed from the Burnett River in Queensland around southern Australia to North West Cape in WA. Mullet also occur in the north-western Pacific and through the Indian Ocean as far west as southern Africa.

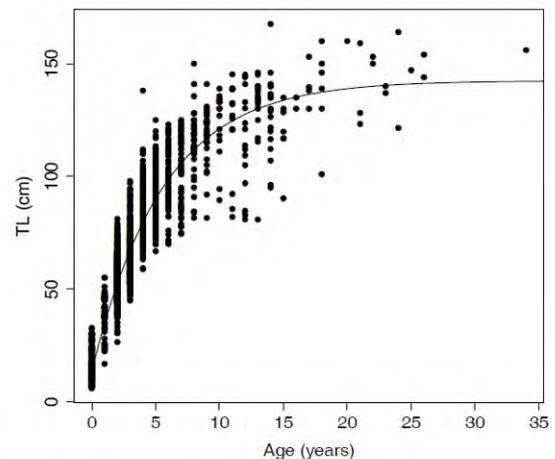
Results from recent genetic analyses using microsatellite markers suggest Mullet in southern Australia to be divisible into four populations: a west coast population, an east coast population, and western and eastern populations in the Great Australian Bight. Mullet are

neater to seawater. Large individuals are caught around the mouths of estuaries, in surf zones and around rocky reefs in offshore waters.

Crustaceans account for between 14%-81% of the reported diet of juveniles. The importance of crustaceans in the diet of Mullet appears to decrease with increasing fish size, with fish and squid being of greater relative importance in the diet of larger Mullet.

Mullet grow to a large size and are relatively long lived. In South Africa, the species is reported to reach 181 cm TL, 75 kg and a maximum age of 42 years. In NSW, the largest Mullet so far recorded was 168 cm TL and the maximum age is currently 34 years. In NSW, size at 50% maturity for males is

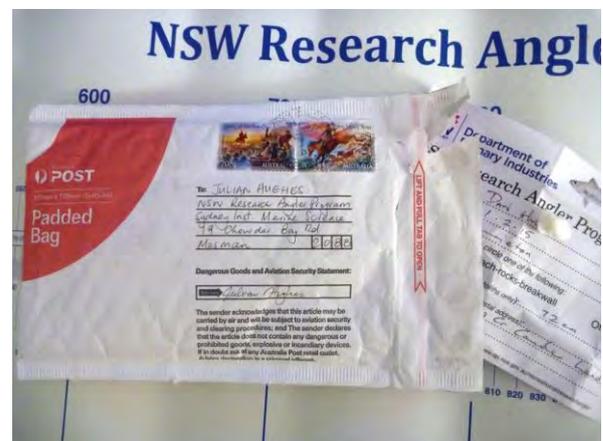
Growth Curve of Mullet



Age-length data with fitted growth curve for Mullet (Data from Silberschneider and Gray (2009) and the NSW Research Angler Program). Lengths are presented as total length (TL).

And don't forget that you can now post the jewels from your mullet catches to us making donating to the program even easier! All you need to do is contact us at the NSW RAP (T: 9435 4671, E: research.angler@dpi.nsw.gov.au) and we will send you out a reply-paid padded post pack and data label. Then it's simply a matter of filling out the data label and placing it, along with a single jewel from your fish into the post pack (right), seal it, stick it in the nearest Australia Post box and let the postman do the rest! Even if you are an avid collector of jewie jewels as mementos of past mullet conquests, the good news is we only need a single otolith from each fish – so you can now contribute vital information on the

health of the mullet stock and still keep a special reminder of a special fish.





Donated frame from a Sydney yellowtail kingfish frame caught on a charter with [Fishabout Tours](#).



Donated frame from a Sydney mulloway caught on a charter with [Sydney Sportfishing Adventures](#).

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

Tailor research update

The Recreational Fishing Trust-funded research project into the biology and fishery for tailor in NSW continues to build strong momentum as well as throwing up a few interesting surprises. Thanks to some passionate volunteer recreational tailor addicts, some excellent data on this extremely important recreational fish species is being collected. Initial biological samples collected over summer from Northern NSW suggest that, as suspected, some spawning does occur in this region. This is corroborated by the discovery of larval tailor in an eddy 150 km off Forster by University of NSW researchers aboard the CSIRO Flagship, the RV "Investigator" in June 2015. Stay tuned for further updates on the progress of fascinating project in future Research Angler Program newsletters.



Frames from mature tailor approaching spawning condition collected from the area around Ballina by tailor tragic and keen Research Angler, Ben Van der Woude over summer. Photo courtesy Ben Van der Woude.



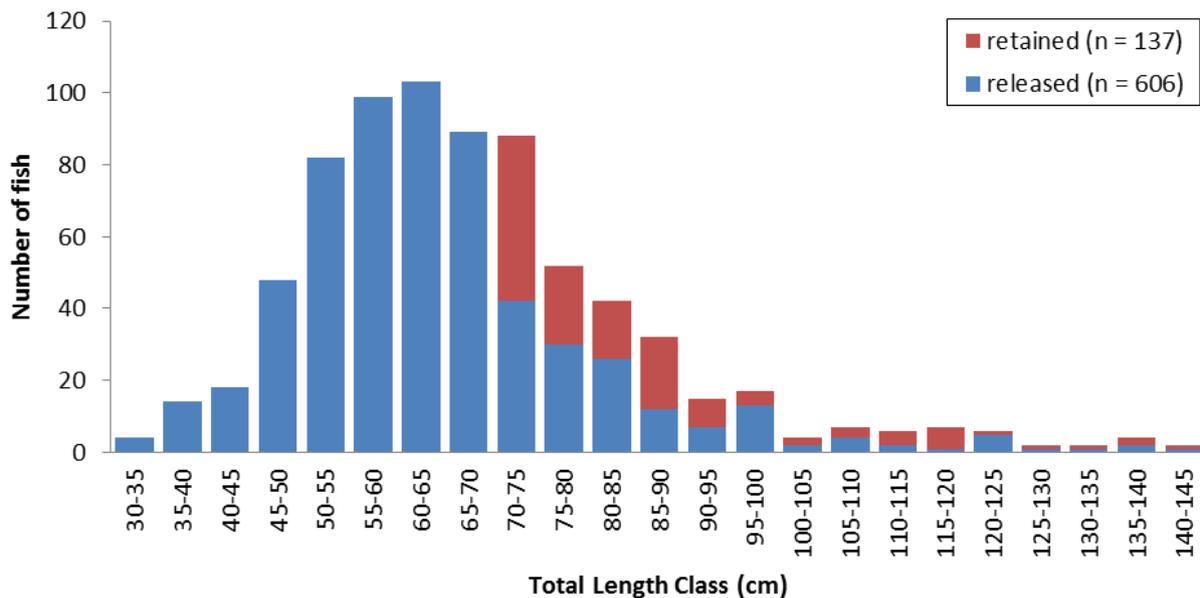
Larval tailor collected 150 km off Forster in June 2015 by UNSW researchers aboard the RV Investigator suggests that Fraser Island isn't the "be all and end all" for spawning tailor in eastern Australia. Photo courtesy Tony Miskiewicz

And don't forget, tailor are one of our newest RAP frame donation target species, so if you pick up a few choppers, or even an elbow-slapping "greenback" over autumn, please drop the frame into one of our participating drop-off locations (or contact research.angler@dpi.nsw.gov.au, (02) 9435 4671) to contribute to this essential research being carried out by Fisheries NSW and University of NSW scientists.

“Research Angler Diary” Component

Another group of diligent Research Angler Diarists dutifully sent in their diaries for analysis over summer 2015-16, bringing the number of mulloway measured as part of this component to a staggering 750 fish. The data presented here again shows that for the ‘experts’, catching mulloway isn’t that hard at all! The below figure summarises the lengths of mulloway retained, as well as those released, from almost 1,000 jewy fishing trips! Of the fish caught, most (62%) were smaller than the minimum legal length of 70 cm and therefore released, with most commonly caught fish between 50 and 70 cm. Of the legal-sized fish caught, just 48% were kept, confirming that mulloway are valued for the challenge they present to catch as much as for their quality on the plate!

Lengths of mulloway recorded by “Research Angler Diarists” between April 2014 and March 2016.



Once we receive the diary from a Research Angler Diarist, we digitise it immediately so that it can be returned to the fisher for further data collection. As you can see above, the data collected provides researchers and managers with the crucial estimate of the sizes of mulloway caught by recreational fishers so please keep filling out your Research Angler Diaries! If you have managed to misplace your reply-paid envelope, please contact us (T: 9435 4671, E: research.angler@dpi.nsw.gov.au) and we will get a new one out to you ASAP.

All Research Angler Diarists are provided with a small 20 page waterproof diary to record information from over 100 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), and we will send you out a Research Angler Diary pack. This is an ongoing component of the NSW RAP so it’s never too late to get on board!

And don’t forget that the first five Research Angler Diarists to complete their diary will receive a \$50 **MO Tackle** voucher for instore and online purchases. Two of these have already been claimed, which leaves three still up for grabs!



Just less than 1 m of nocturnal chrome Wollongong beach mulloway caught, measured and released by Research Angler Diarist Brad Gibson. This fish was one of almost 50 mulloway recorded by Brad in his Research Angler Diary in just over 50 trips! Photo courtesy Brad Gibson.

Get on the mack attack!

One of the more desirable and glamorous species seasonally available to NSW anglers and spearos are the tropical mackerels of the genus *Scomberomorus*. Each summer and autumn, the warm waters of the East Australian Current bring with them hordes of ravenous Spanish mackerel (*Scomberomorus commerson*) and the smaller spotted mackerel (*S. munroi*) which may range as far south as Sydney. These species, with their lightning fast runs when hooked and delicious flesh, make them a highly sought-after target species with recreational fishers at this time of year.



Spanish mackerel (*Scomberomorus commerson*). The most recent estimate of the recreational harvest of Spanish mackerel in NSW was approximately 5,000 fish during 2013/14.



Spotted mackerel (*Scomberomorus munroi*). The most recent estimate of the recreational harvest of spotted mackerel in NSW was approximately 13,000 fish during 2013/14.

The interstate cooperation that exists between the [Queensland Department of Agriculture & Fisheries](#) and Fisheries NSW has been highly successful when assessing the stocks of widespread East Coast species like sea mullet, mulloway and tailor and has now been extended to include Spanish and spotted mackerel. So, if you chase these tropical speedsters with rod or spear, we are seeking donations of rec-caught mackerel from NSW waters. As with our other species, the frames (or heads) can be donated to the NSW RAP at any of our participating [drop-off points](#).



Freight train-sized Spanish mackerel like this one are seasonally available in NSW waters and along with spotted mackerel, are the latest recreational fish species to be added to the frame donation component NSW RAP. Photo courtesy Peter Zeroni.



Don't forget the spearos! And we don't at the RAP, especially when it comes to Spanish and spotted mackerel. Here, novice spearfisher Heath Folpp shows off a quality NSW Spaniard from Coffs Harbour. Photo courtesy Heath Folpp.

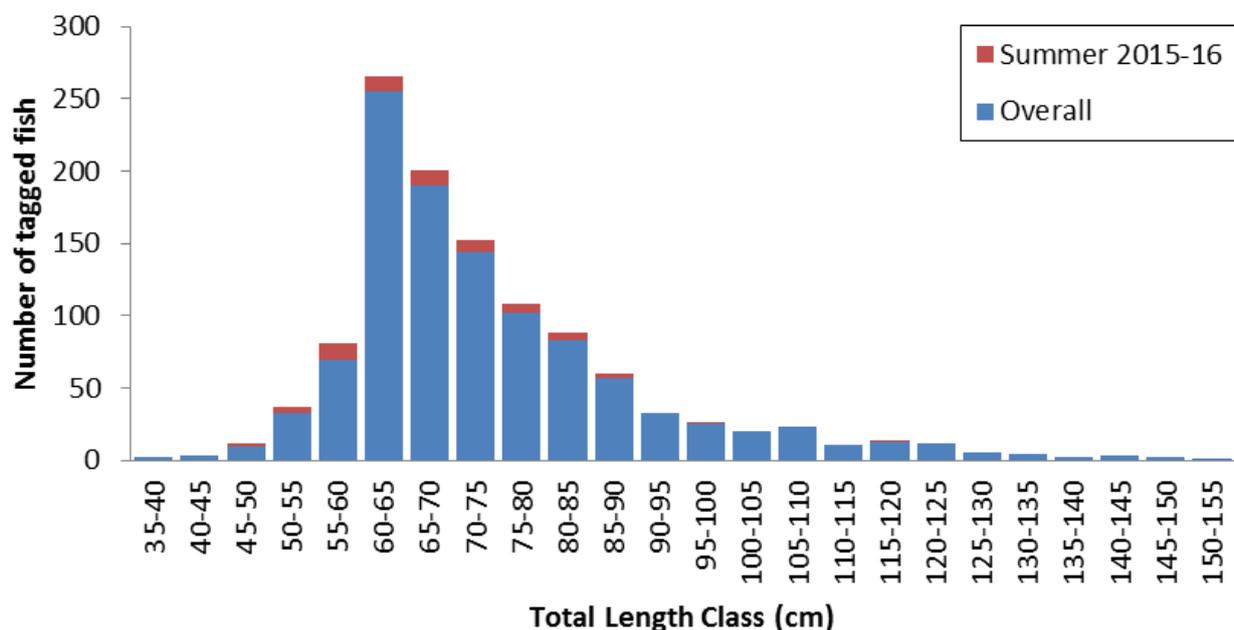
All data collected will contribute to the joint assessment of the East Coast stocks of these two awesome fish species, so tie on some wire leader and get out there on the mack attack!

NSW RAP – ANSA Tagging Project Update

Another great season for the NSW RAP-ANSA pilot mulloway tagging project with a further 65 mulloway to 117.5 cm in length tagged over summer 2015-16 bringing the grand total to an awesome 1,175 mulloway tagged since March 2014! Just under half of these tagged mulloway were of legal size as well as almost 100 metre-plus fish! Amazingly, 60% of these fish have come from some of the most heavily fished waters in the state in and around Sydney with a further 30% coming from north of Sydney and just 6% from south of Sydney. The number of fish taken on lures continues to remain extremely high at 86%.

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 summer 2015-16 and overall since its commencement March 2014.



A busy summer saw Abdullah Atlihan continue to successfully target, capture and tag a further 13 fish up to 95 cm from metro Sydney and in doing so, putting him onto the “Top Five” taggers overall with 48 fish! The number of fish tagged south of Sydney received a much needed boost over summer with Brad Gibson also tagging 13 fish to 95 cm from the beaches and harbours around Wollongong. Impressively, Brad’s 30 tagged fish overall represent more than 40% of the mulloway south of Sydney in total. Also keeping the Sydney Harbour and Parramatta River jewies on their toes over summer was Gianni Lo Guidice with 10 fish, whilst further north in Lake Macquarie, mad keen NSW Research Angler Kyle Worley also accounted for 10 fish between 71 and 82 cm. As usual, Mark Pirie managed to tag a lazy half dozen in the Yamba area taking his overall tally to 70!



A 70 cm recaptured mulloway with tag #A599658 grew 8.5 cm in 72 days between tag and recapture at the astonishing rate of 1.2 mm per day. Photo courtesy Matt Kellet.



Sydney Sportfishing Adventures' head guide Dan Selby with 132 cm of big bronze Hawkesbury River mulloway just prior to tagging. Photo courtesy **Sydney Sportfishing Adventures**

A new record of 14 tagged mulloway were recaptured over summer 2015-16 bringing the overall number of recaptures to 62! The priceless little pieces of data we get from each recapture is gold in terms of information on movements and growth rates of individual fish and this seasons recaptures were definitely in that league. We have been waiting almost 2 years since the commencement of mulloway tagging for a fish to spend more than a year between tagging and recapture. Well, this summer, we finally broke through the one year barrier with not one, not two, but three recaptured mulloway that had been at liberty for more than 365 days! Things started off with a bang when Stephen Grezl landed a tagged 113 cm mulloway at Merewether Beach, Newcastle on December 11. This fish had previously been caught (and tagged) by Ivan Maric in Botany Bay when 113 cm waaaay back on September 8 2014. Not only had this fish been at liberty for a whopping 459 days, but in that time it had swum some 140 km north and grown 5 cm in the process!



Paul Ekes with 104 cm of tagged mulloway out of Botany Bay, tagged by Chris Cleaver in the Georges River 178 days earlier when just 93 cm in length. Photo courtesy Paul Ekes.



Tag #A595675 looking considerably cleaner than when it first came aboard Paul Ekes' boat on February 21 sticking out of a metro Sydney mulloway. Photo courtesy Paul Ekes.

Almost incredibly, we had another recaptured mulloway over summer that had been out for even longer than this. Tagged by Dan Selby and [Sydney Sportfishing Adventures](#) clientele in the Hawkesbury River on June 5 2014 at 122.5 cm, this mulloway was recaptured at 128 cm by Wasseem Barakat on January 29 2016 in Broken Bay, an astounding 603 days later!

Both these recaptures revealed long term growth rates of ~0.1 mm per day for fish of over a metre in length, but we also had several recaptures demonstrating that at smaller sizes, growth can be much faster. Paul Blade's 62 cm fish was recaptured by Jane Sloan after 386 days growing a massive 20 cm at the rate of 0.5 mm per day in the warm waters of Coffs Harbour. A similar growth rate of 0.6 mm per day was also recorded for a 93 cm fish tagged by Chris Cleaver in the Georges River recaptured by Paul Ekes when 104 cm in Botany Bay. At liberty for just 72 days before being recaptured by Matt Kellet at 70 cm was another fish tagged by Dan Selby which had grown at an astounding 1.2 mm per day from its tagged size of 61.5 cm in the Hawkesbury River!

And just to demonstrate that not all mulloway grow this fast (or at all at times!) was a 76 cm Botany Bay fish tagged by Jamie Gauci on May 26 2015 that was recaptured 220 days later by Andrew Krncevic also in Botany Bay on New Year's Day 2016 at, you guessed it, 76 cm!



A 51 cm Hunter River mulloway was tagged with tag #A586640 by Kieran Hill on July 18 2015 and recaptured 204 days at 58 cm! Photo courtesy [Swansea Fishos & History](#).

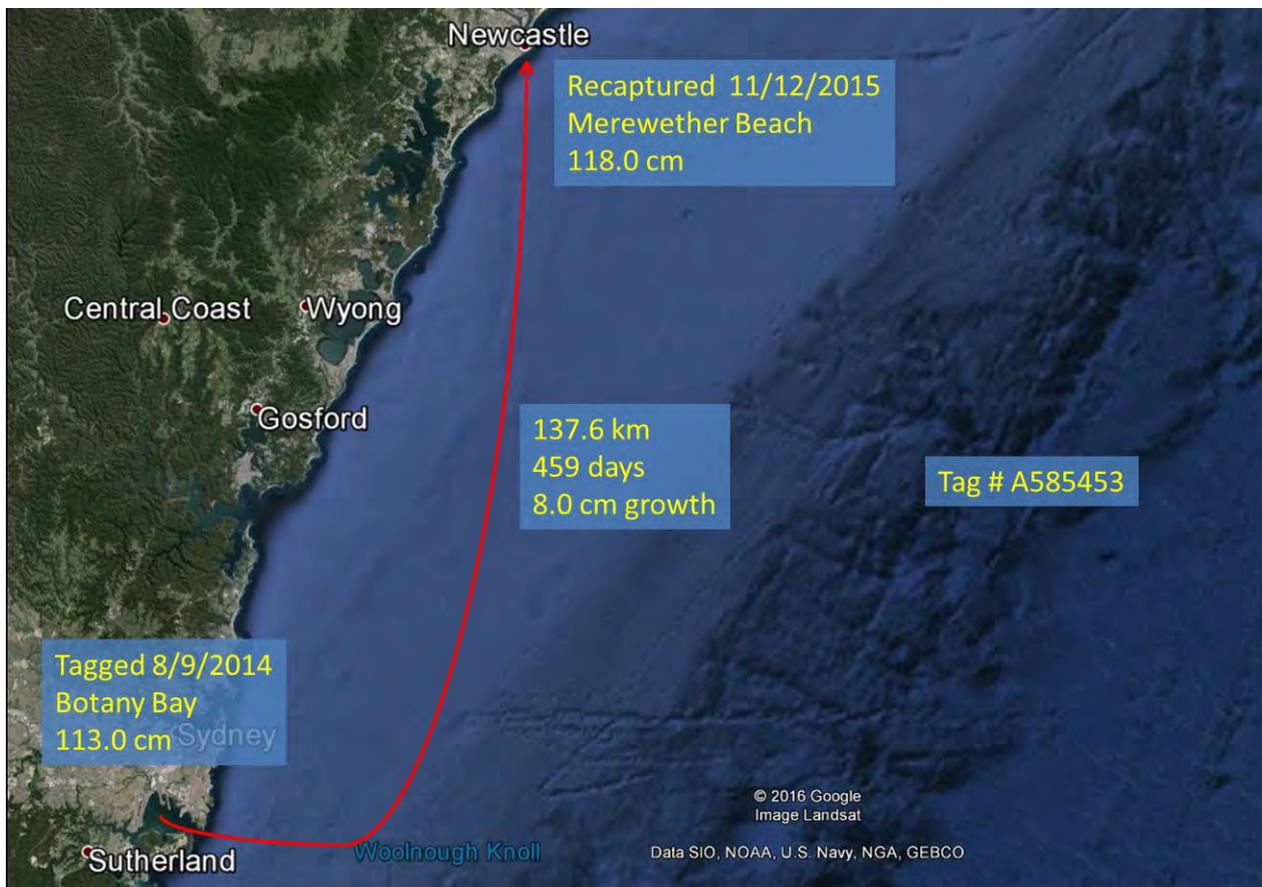


Ten completed tag cards from a very successful summer 2015-16 mulloway tagging on Lake Macquarie for Kyle Worley. Photo courtesy Kyle Worley.

Tagged mullet recaptures for summer 2015-16 (as of 29 February 2016):

Tagging angler	Total length (cm)	Tagging location	Recapture angler	Recapture location	Total length (cm)	Days at liberty
Dan Selby	61.5	Hawkesbury River	Matt Kellet	Hawkesbury River	70	72
Ivan Maric	113	Botany Bay	Stephen Grezl	Merewether Beach	118	459
Andrew Talbot		Port Hacking	Andrew Findlay	Port Hacking	58	209
Paul Blade	62	Coffs Harbour	Jane Sloan	Coffs Harbour	82	386
Damien Sherry	60	Lane Cove River	Ben Wilson	Lane Cove River	61	270
Jamie Gauci	76	Botany Bay	Andrew Krncevic	Botany Bay	76	220
Mark McEwan	80	Lake Macquarie	Kieran Hill	Lake Macquarie	84	142
Dan Selby	122.5	Hawkesbury River	Wasseem Barakat	Broken Bay	128	603
Kieran Hill		Hunter River	Luke Wheatley	Hunter River	78	
Cameron Cronin	84	Hat Head	Campbell Ross	Crescent Head	86	65
Chris Cleaver	93	Georges River	Paul Ekes	Botany Bay	104	178
Kieran Hill	51	Hunter River		Hunter River	58	204
Luke Reilly			Steve Koina	Newcastle Harbour	110	
Chris Cleaver	70	Georges River	Ari Boo	Botany Bay	75	141

Tag #A585453 – the mullet with this tag was recaptured by Stephen Grezl at Merewether Beach 459 days after it was tagged by Ivan Maric 140 km south in Botany Bay growing some 8 cm in the process!



Top Five taggers for summer 2015-16 (as of 29 February 2016):

Tagger	No. fish tagged	Region
Abdullah Atlihan	13	Sydney
Brad Gibson	13	Wollongong
Gianni Lo Guidice	10	Sydney
Kyle Worley	10	Lake Macquarie
Mark Pirie	6	Yamba

Top Five taggers overall (as of 29 February 2016):

Tagger	No. fish tagged	Region
Chris Cleaver	204	Everywhere!
Dan Selby	111	Sydney
Mark Pirie	70	Yamba
Paul Blade	52	Coffs Harbour
Abdullah Atlihan	48	Sydney

Top Five largest fish tagged for summer 2015-16 (as of 29 February 2016):

Tagger	Total length (cm)	System
Damien Sherry	117.5	Parramatta River
Brad Gibson	95	Port Kembla
Abdullah Atlihan	95	Botany Bay
Ivan Maric	88.5	Botany Bay
Brad Gibson	85	Wollongong
Mark Pirie	85	Yamba

Top Five largest fish tagged overall (as of 29 February 2016):

Tagger	Total length (cm)	System	Season
"Tagger 86"	152	Hawkesbury River	Spring 2015
"Tagger 86"	147	Hawkesbury River	Spring 2015
"Tagger 86"	145	Hawkesbury River	Spring 2015
Dan Selby	144	Hawkesbury River	Winter 2014
"Tagger 86"	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 fouled with algae, like this one in a fish recaptured by Matt Kellet in the Hawkesbury River this past summer.



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) or the NSW Research Angler Program (T: 9435 4671, E: research.angler@dpi.nsw.gov.au). The tag will be yellow, approximately 12 cm long and located just beneath the dorsal spines.

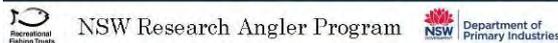
The crucial data collected by this project will help us to learn more about the movements, growth and post-release survival of this iconic fish. Stay tuned for future updates in the Autumn 2016 NSW RAP Newsletter!

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.

Upcoming 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 a bunch more species to talk about!), please don't hesitate to get in contact with us (E: 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!

Upcoming Presentations

- Tuross Head Flathead & Bream Tournament – **March 11**
- BCF West Gosford – **March 30**
- Galston-Glenorie Amateur Fishing Club – **May 4**

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 summer 2015-16.

A sensational effort from our number one mulloway frame donor for summer 2015-16 Taigan Heath, who not only donated 7 mulloway to 89 cm, but also found time to catch (and donate) 24 snapper to 71 cm! Daniel Brown’s five frames included a thumping 140 cm fish estimated to be 14 years old from the famous Stockton Beach. It’s been hard to get away from the exploits of Scott Purnell this newsletter who not only donated three of the “Top Five” largest fish, but also two of the “Top Five” oldest! Regular frame donors David Birt and Murat Atlihan continued their fine mulloway form around Sydney and Newcastle with three fish each.

“Top Five” donors summer 2015-16 (as of 29 February 2016):

Donor	No. frames donated	Region
Taigan Heath	7	North Coast
Daniel Brown	5	Lake Macquarie – Stockton Beach
David Birt	3	Newcastle
Scott Purnell	3	Harrington – Stockton Beach
Murat Atlihan	3	Sydney

“Top Five” donors overall (as of 29 February 2016):

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 summer 2015-16 (as of 29 February 2016):

Donor	Total length (cm)	Estimated age (years)	Region
Scott Purnell	150	20	Harrington
Thomas Aichroy	146	16	Coffs Harbour
Scott Purnell	143	17	Newcastle
Scott Purnell	142.5	13	Newcastle
Daniel Brown	140	14	Newcastle
Brendan Stocks	128	9	Hawkesbury River

“Top Five” largest mulloway donated and associated ages overall (as of 29 February 2016):

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

Flying the flag for the spearos over summer was Evan Leeson with a 127 cm South West Rocks mulloway estimated to be 15 years old – the third largest 15 year old mulloway so far collected from NSW waters! Evan was just pipped at the post into our “Top Five” largest fish for summer by Brendan Stocks who donated a cracking 128 cm fish from the Hawkesbury River estimated to be a surprisingly youthful 9 years old.

As well as those mentioned above, thanks to all the fishers who donated their summer mulloway, kingfish, dusky flathead, snapper and tailor to the NSW RAP, here’s hoping for a quality autumn of fishing for all our species!

“Top Five” oldest fish donated and associated lengths summer 2015-16 (as of 29 February 2016):

Donor	Estimated age (years)	Total length (cm)	Region
Scott Purnell	20	150	Harrington
Scott Purnell	17	143	Newcastle
Thomas Aichroy	16	146	Coffs Harbour
Evan Leeson	15	127	South West Rocks
Daniel Brown	14	140	Newcastle

“Top Five” oldest fish donated and associated lengths overall (as of 29 February 2016):

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



NSW Research Angler Marcus Miller with 58 cm of beautiful South Coast snapper donated to the NSW RAP over summer and estimated to be 4 years old. Photo courtesy Marcus Miller.



NSW Fisheries Scientist John Stewart and young NSW Research Anglers, Jacob and Samuel, with 75 cm of prime summer Port Hacking dusky flathead donated to the NSW RAP.

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. Our most recent addition to our list of participating tackleshops is **Drummoyne Best Bait & Tackle (104 Lyons Rd, Drummoyne, T: (02) 9719 8886)**. As the name suggests, some of the best bait in Sydney comes from this small, but well-appointed tackle shop. So drop in and see owner Sal for bait, tackle and advice to put you one step closer to metro kingfish and mulloway success.



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>

Monthly Prize Draw Winners!

The lucky monthly NSW Research Angler Program prize winners for summer 2015-16 were decided by randomly drawing one frame donor from each month.

Congratulations to the following Research Anglers:

December	Josh Anderson	(Yamba)
January	Taigan Heath	(Grafton)
February	Christopher Webb	(Coffs Harbour)



Each winner will receive either:

- a \$50 gift voucher generously donated by [MO Tackle Coffs Harbour](#) (for use in-store or online),
- or a mullocky-ready lure pack worth \$50 containing a selection of proven hardbody, soft plastic and blade-style mullocky-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 (**Mullocky, Snapper, Dusky Flathead, Yellowtail Kingfish, Tailor, Spotted or Spanish Mackerel**) 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!

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

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.

The NSW Resource Assessment & Monitoring Unit team at the Sydney Institute of Marine Science:

Dr John Stewart –

John.Stewart@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Dr Julian Hughes –

Julian.Hughes@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Dr Faith Doyle –

Faith.Doyle@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Anne-Marie Hegarty –

Anne-Marie.Hegarty@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Caitlin Young –

Caitlin.Young@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Anton Gould –

Antony.Gould@dpi.nsw.gov.au

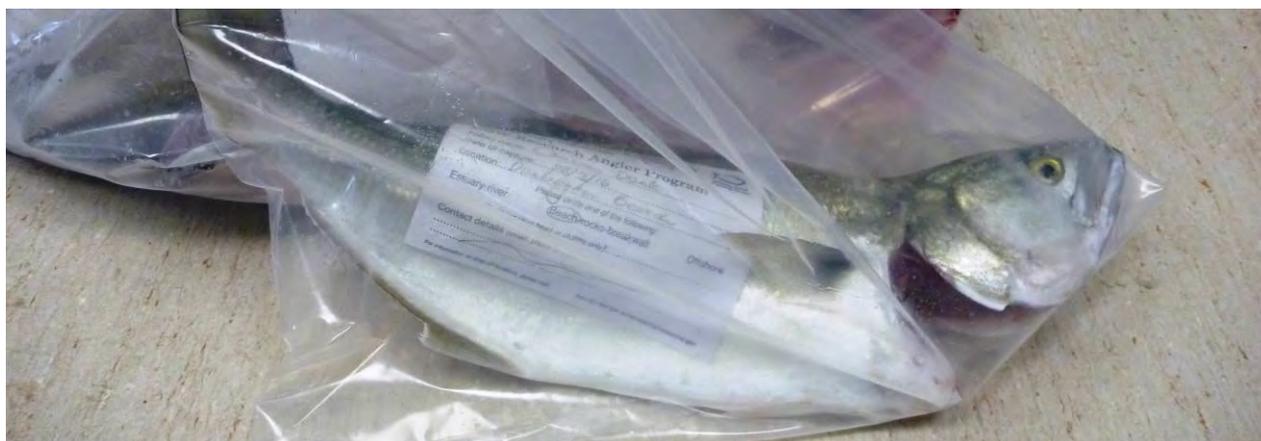
Dr Ash Fowler –

Ashley.Fowler@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Jim Craig –

Jim.Craig@dpi.nsw.gov.au

- Mail: NSW Research Angler Program, Fisheries NSW, Sydney Institute of Marine Science, 19 Chowder Bay Rd, Mosman NSW 2088
- Phone: +61 (02) 9435 4671 Fax: +61 (02) 9969 8664
- Website: <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/recreational/researchangler>
- Email: research.angler@dpi.nsw.gov.au



© State of New South Wales through the Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services, 2016. You may copy, distribute and otherwise freely deal with this publication for any purpose, provided that you attribute the NSW Department of Primary Industries as the owner.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (April 2016). 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 the Department of Primary Industries or the user's independent adviser.

Your email address will be collected NSW Department Primary Industries and recorded for the purpose of providing an email newsletter service for you. This information will not be distributed to any other parties. The supply of your email address is voluntary. However, the email newsletter service cannot be effected without storage of this information on our databases. You may update or unsubscribe from these services at any time by sending an email to the editor shown above.

Published by the Department of Primary Industries.