



## NSW DPI / Huon Yellowtail Kingfish Research Project - Stakeholder Update

### April 2018

The first sea pen stocked with Yellowtail Kingfish from Port Stephens Fisheries Institute in October 2016 has been harvested. Whole fish averaging 5kg have been marketed through the Sydney Fish Market with fish appearing on menus locally and in the Hunter wine region.

The Minister for Primary Industries Niall Blair announced this project milestone 28 April 2018 in a joint media release with Huon Aquaculture CEO Peter Bender. ABC Landline is doing a story on the joint DPI/Huon research project and Yellowtail Kingfish production in Australia to be aired 20th May.

At harvest, the fish are corralled to a small area in the sea pen from where they are lifted into a self-contained harvesting unit on the deck of the work vessel 'Bulldog'. The fish are quickly and humanely harvested and loaded into ice slurry in 1,000 litre insulated containers.

The harvest equipment will now be removed from 'Bulldog' to allow for the cleaning, repairing and replacement of ropes on the mooring grid.

### Operational update

Two sea pens remain on the Marine Aquaculture Research Lease following the removal of three pens to Newcastle Harbour to allow for maintenance.

The two remaining sea pens have had their inner culture nets cleaned by the cleaning robot that uses water jets to lift biofouling (mostly algae) from the netting. The outer predator net of sea pen 1601 has been replaced.

The intention is to ensure the Research Lease infrastructure is fully serviced before the next batch of fingerlings are stocked to a sea pen in July.

### Staff update

Mr Phillip Dayton has been appointed Huon's new Operations Manager. Phillip has 23 years' experience in the Tasmanian salmonid industry and worked on the Research Lease during deployment of the mooring grid in August/September 2016. Huon are seeking to recruit two additional farm staff. Contact [hrrecruitment@huonaqua.com.au](mailto:hrrecruitment@huonaqua.com.au)

### Managing marine debris

After the January storm, and again recently, Huon staff have checked Bennetts Beach at Hawks Nest to ensure there was no debris from the fish farm. Staff removed considerable amounts of rubbish from the beach that was not related to the sea pens.

During bad weather in mid-March a piece of high density polyethylene tubing used for harvest broke free of the lease and washed ashore at Bennetts Beach. Huon recovered the equipment and in future a revised securing procedure will be used. The equipment will also be fitted with a GIS tracking device.

### Regulation and compliance

Two Compliance Officers from the NSW Department of Planning and Environment visited the Research Lease 20 April to view the sea pens and check compliance with operational conditions of approval. This follows submission of an incident investigation report to that Department.

DPI and Huon are implementing the recommendations of the incident investigation report, in particular emergency response and structural integrity management plans to manage events in the future.

### Research and environmental monitoring

Two PhD students working at Port Stephens Fisheries Institute on Yellowtail Kingfish diets have been selected to present their work at a conference in Spain in June.

Marine fauna monitoring data is uploaded to the web regularly for sightings recorded while travelling to and from the Research Lease, and while working on the lease. See <https://www.huonaqua.com.au/wildlife-interactions/>

Results of the third round of water quality and sea bed testing conducted independently by the University of Newcastle have been analysed and will online shortly. The results show there has been no significant impact from fish farming activities on areas immediately below the sea pens, adjacent to, or at sites well away from the Research Lease.

DPI and Huon have agreed to do additional sampling with the University in May to continue to build the picture of fish farming and possible impacts. The sampling program is providing valuable work experience for students as well as ground breaking research into the seafloor animals of NSW.

DPI and Huon are planning to host community 'drop-in' information sessions at Hawks Nest and Nelson Bay in late June to update people on the Research Lease and activities underway.



Bulldog harvesting Yellowtail Kingfish



Weight check of fish in sea pen 1603



Yellowtail Kingfish ready for market



ABC Landline and Huon CEO Peter Bender

The emergency contact number for the Research Lease to be used for any incident involving the sea pens is **1300 920 987**.

<https://www.huonaqua.com.au/about/portstevens/>

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/aquaculture/starting-up/finfish-aquaculture-lease-modification-application> or contact [aquaculture.administration@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:aquaculture.administration@dpi.nsw.gov.au)

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