



# NSW Research Angler Program

Issue 6 April 2015

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.

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## Notable donations from Summer 2014-15



Left: Nick Waltisbuhl cradles his absolute keg-of-a-mulloway! At 135 cm and a whopping 29.8 kg, you don't see too many mulloway in healthier shape than this.



Above: The jumbo jewels (or otoliths) from Nick's jumbo Hawkesbury mulloway (with \$1 coin for scale).

When you've been chasing mulloway for a while, you can tell within the first few seconds of a successful jewy hookup whether you have a good fish on your hands. Well this is exactly what happened to NSW Research Angler and past frame donor Nick Waltisbuhl fishing the lower Hawkesbury River on New Year's Day 2015. When Nick's rod buckled over, it was clear from the weight on the other end that this fish could be an "once-in-a-lifetime" catch. After a surprisingly brief fight, Nick was finally able to bring 29.8 kg of pure mulloway-muscle to the side of his boat. At 135 cm, this was a seriously chunky fish in absolutely superb condition. To go along with its impressive appearance was an equally impressive estimated age of 16 years, making this individual just the second 16 year-old mulloway so far recorded in NSW waters and the first 16 year-old to be collected by the NSW RAP. A unique fish for Nick and a unique fish for our knowledge of the mulloway stock in NSW.



**Above: The otolith section from Nick's 135 cm Hawkesbury mulloway with the growth rings used to estimate its 16 years of age clearly visible.**

**Left: Proud NSW Research Angler Nick Waltisbuhl and his personal best mulloway! At an estimated 16 years old, only the second mulloway of this age so far recorded in NSW.**

Dan Selby from [Sydney Sportfishing Adventures](http://www.sydney-sportfishing.com.au) has been a huge supporter of the NSW Research Angler Program since its inception in September 2013. In the intervening 18 months, Dan has not only made many-a-client's day by putting them onto their first mulloway on the Hawkesbury River or Sydney Harbour, but has also found time to encourage these same clients to become involved in the NSW RAP by donating 12 frames from mulloway they chose to keep or putting a DPI tag into those 70 fish they have released. This past summer has been 'business as usual' for Dan and his clients with a further 6 frames donated and a heap more fish tagged and released. Our sincerest thanks to Dan as well as all the other charter operators who make their living chasing the mighty mulloway for their enthusiastic involvement in the NSW RAP; the success of this program would be far less without your support.



Happy Sydney Sportfishing Adventures client Nick Penprase with a hard won 72 cm 3 year old Hawkesbury River mulloway donated to the RAP over summer.



Yet another meticulously wrapped and labelled summer mulloway frame donated by a Sydney Sportfishing Adventures client ready for processing in the lab.

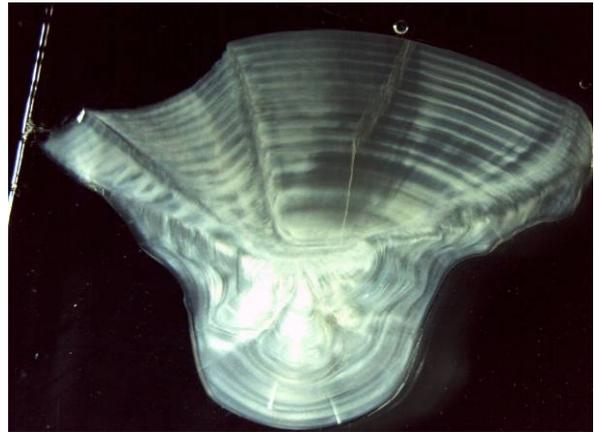
## A blast from the past!

Not exactly a recent catch, but an impressive one nonetheless, was an enormous 145 cm mulloway caught by Jeff Vassallo from the Hunter River breakwall way back in June 2005. As many mulloway hunters do, Jeff religiously removed the jewels from the fish and upon hearing about the NSW RAP, contacted us to see if we would like to analyse one of the jewels from his fish to estimate its age. Of course we would! The age of such a big recreationally-caught mulloway is of enormous interest to Fisheries NSW researchers, regardless when it was caught. Our data shows that a mulloway of this size can be anywhere from 8 years old all the way up to 26! So Jeff dutifully handed over one of his prized jewels to us for processing and the final verdict on the fish's age was just 13 years. This made Jeff's fish easily the largest 13 year old mulloway so far recorded in NSW at an outrageous growth rate of more than 11 cm per year! Many thanks to Jeff 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](mailto: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.



Left: Jeff Vassallo and his surprisingly youthful 13 year old 145 cm Hunter River mulloway from way back in 2005.



Above: The otolith section from Jeff's fish – the largest 13 year old NSW mulloway recorded to date.

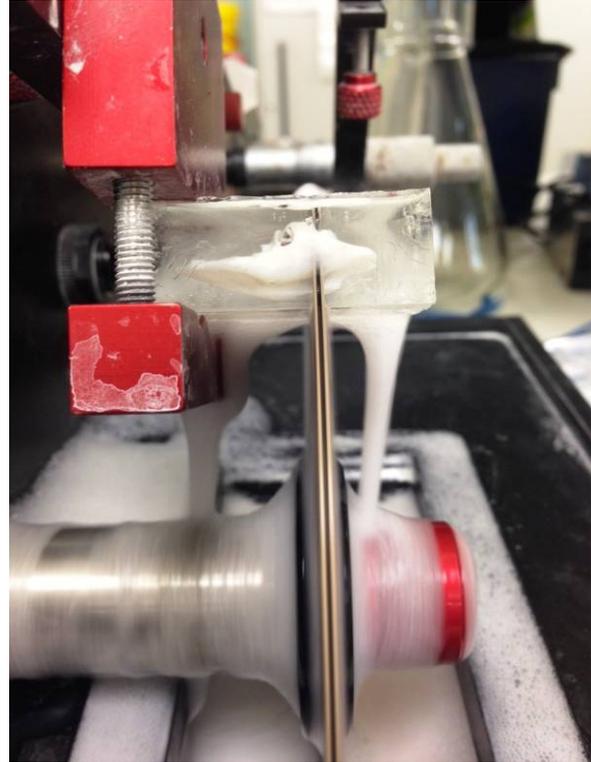
## Project Progress – Summer 2014-15

A total of 70 mulloway frames were donated to the program over summer by 30 dedicated research anglers and spearfishers. As for the same time last year, this was slightly down on the previous spring, but a top effort nonetheless!

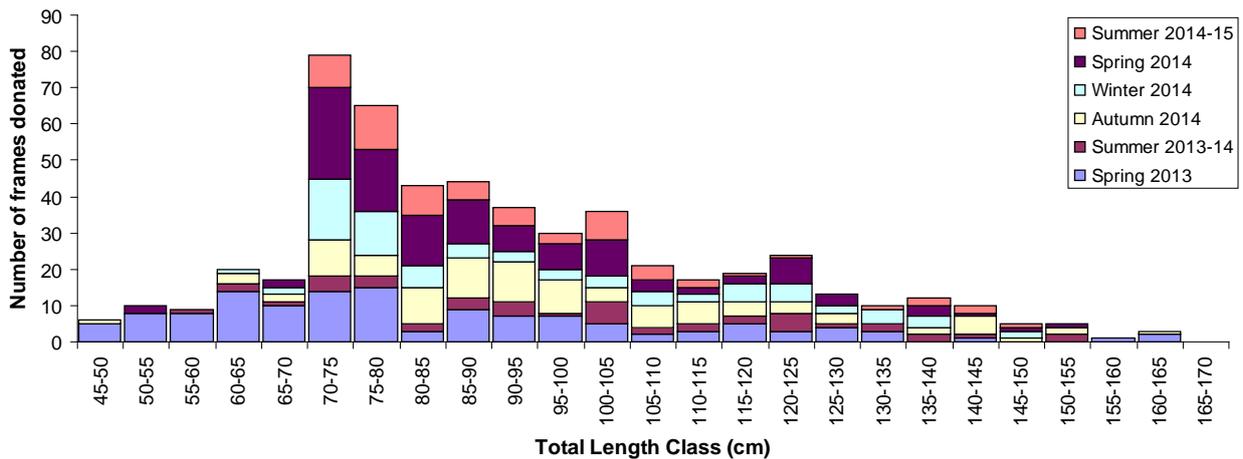
The majority (~65%) of fish donated to the NSW RAP over summer were between 70 and 100 cm in length. Mulloway are difficult enough to catch at any size, but at 70-100 cm, they provide great sport requiring plenty of stopping as well as being manageable if destined for the table. Most importantly for the health of the stock though, they are likely all mature at this size!

What was lacking in numbers was more than made up for with quality as more than one third of the frames or otoliths donated to the program over summer were from mulloway of more than the magic metre mark up to an enormous 150 cm fish from Ballina. Six of these metre-plus fish were larger than 1.3 m – these are the elusive once-in-a-lifetime giants of the estuaries and beaches of NSW that recreational fishers spend their lives chasing. Once again, via the generosity and involvement of the recreational fishing community in the NSW Research Angler Program, fisheries researchers now have access to data from such exceptional and important individuals.

The jewel from a 150 cm mulloway being cut in the laboratory: using a slow speed diamond saw, researchers take a series of fine slices through the otolith before growth rings are counted under high magnification using a microscope.

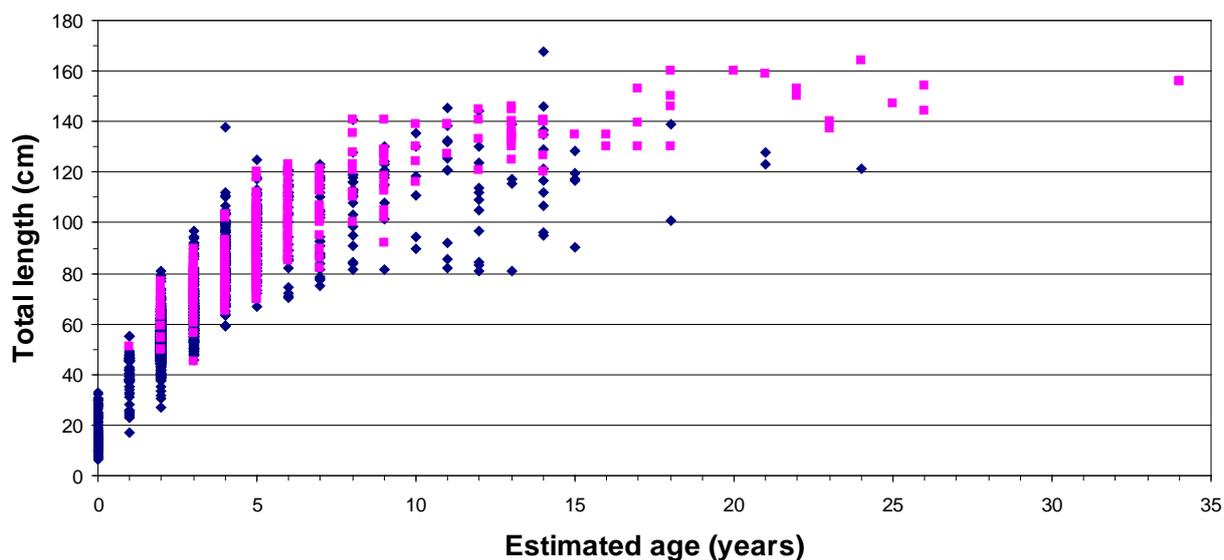


Length frequency of mulloway donated to the NSW Research Angler Program since the commencement of the program in September 2013.



As can be seen from the below graph, since the start of the program in September 2013, the size and age information we have for mulloway in NSW is now far more complete; with plenty of data on the oldest and largest individuals in the population. This situation has arisen purely as a result of the participation of enthusiastic anglers and spearfishers with a passion for mulloway via the NSW RAP.

**Size-at-age data for mulloway in NSW:** the blue points represent the data Fisheries NSW had for mulloway prior to the start of the program (mainly from commercial sources). The purple points represent data from recreationally-caught fish donated to the program since the commencement of the NSW RAP in September 2013.



The below table outlining some of the key features of biological data collected for mulloway in NSW nicely summarise this dramatic improvement in our knowledge: prior to the commencement of the NSW RAP in September 2013, Fisheries NSW had collected data from just ten mulloway estimated to be 15 years of age or older, only three older than 20 with a maximum age of just 24 years. By comparison, the NSW RAP has collected data from 26 mulloway older than 15 years, including 12 greater than 20 years of age with an oldest fish of 34 years old! A similar situation can be seen with the lengths of mulloway we now have access to, including 24 fish of 140 cm and larger, compared with just 5 individuals collected prior to September 2013.

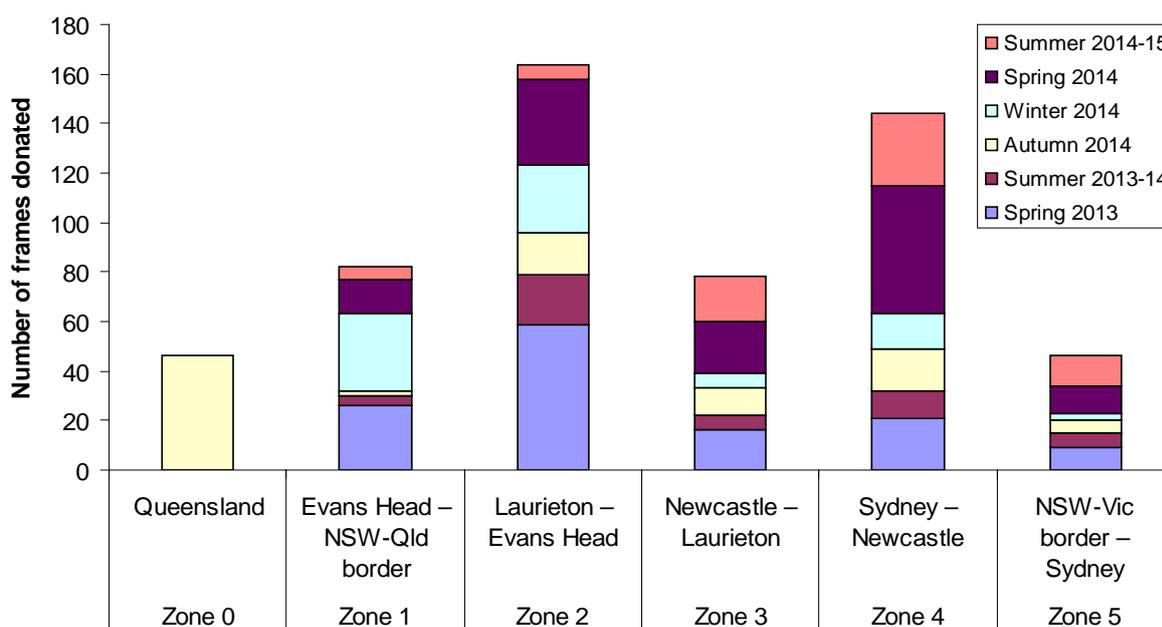
**Comparison of some key features of biological data collected for mulloway by NSW Fisheries prior to the implementation of the NSW RAP, and data collected by the NSW RAP since September 2013.**

Feature	Prior to NSW RAP	NSW RAP
10 years or older (number of fish)	52	63
15 years or older (number of fish)	10	26
20 years or older (number of fish)	3	12
Oldest fish	24 years (121.5 cm)	34 years (156.0 cm)
120 cm or larger (number of fish)	38	82
130 cm or larger (number of fish)	17	46
140 cm or larger (number of fish)	5	24
Largest fish	167.6 cm (14 years)	164.0 cm (23 years)

The graph below shows the number of mulloway frames donated to the program by recreational fishers to the end of February 2015. As occurred last season, the metro and Central Coast mulloway hunters of Zone 4 (Sydney – Newcastle) again accounted for the highest donations to the program with another 29 frames coming through our lab. On the back of a productive spring, we also picked up another 18 frames from Zone 3 (Newcastle – Laurieton) and excitingly for the program; we had our best ever season of frame donations from Zone 5 (Sydney south). Please keep it up!

Autumn last year was a cracking season for frame donations with plenty of jewy fishers cashing in on the excellent fishing conditions that prevail this time of year. Here's hoping this autumn lives up to last year's benchmark! So if you're out there chasing mulloway this autumn and decide to keep a fish, please keep the program in mind – remember, even if it is only one frame, one head, or a single jewel, we want it!

**Number of mulloway frames donated by recreational fishers to the NSW Research Angler Program since the commencement of the program in September 2013.**



And don't forget that you can now post the jewels from your mulloway 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](mailto: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 mulloway 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 mulloway stock and still keep a special reminder of a special fish.



## “Keen Angler Diary” Component

The response from anglers to our request for voluntary Keen Angler Diarists has continued to be excellent and at last count we have “cracked the century” with more than 100 expert mulloway anglers measuring their catches and diligently recording data on their mulloway fishing activities in one of our Keen Angler Diaries.

Fisheries NSW have just completed this year’s annual assessment of the state’s fisheries resources. One of the most important requirements identified as part of this process for the mighty mulloway, was the need for better estimates of the sizes and numbers of recreationally-caught (and released) fish. Our Keen Angler Diarists represent the small number of dedicated, highly-specialised mulloway fishers who probably make a large proportion of the recreational catch making this component of the NSW RAP absolutely critical for researchers to make a better informed estimate of what the recreational mulloway catch might look like. Every mulloway fishing trip, whether it be a successful one or a “blank”, counts towards this understanding of the recreational mulloway fishery so please continue to be diligent in filling out your diaries!



NSW Research Angler Program



**Research Angler Diary** IN STRICT CONFIDENCE

Species: Mulloway

Angler name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please record the following details each time you fish for mulloway, even if you don't catch any.

- Date**
- Location** – can be approximate (e.g. Hawkesbury River, Sydney Northern Beaches, Yamba)
- Zone** – was the fish caught in an estuary, from shore (beach/rocks/breakwall) or offshore? – if fishing sessions spans more than one zone, please use a new row
- Total lengths** of all mulloway caught (to the nearest cm) – if you catch more than 5 fish in a session, just use more rows
- Record whether the fish caught were **kept** or **released** by writing 'Yes' or 'No' in the 'Kept' column
- Please retain the **fringe, head or otoliths** (jaws) from any mulloway kept, along with label detailing date and location information

When & Where	Zone	Lengths (cm)	Kept?	Notes
<i>Example</i>	Estuary	1. 50 2. 80	No Yes	All caught as 1kg, 200g, 100g
12 June 2014 Location: Port Stephens	Beach/Rocks Offshore	3. 120 4. 55 5.	Yes No	Release of 120g in good condition
Date:	Estuary	1. 2. 3.		
Location:	Beach/Rocks Offshore	4. 5. 6.		
Date:	Estuary	1. 2. 3.		
Location:	Beach/Rocks Offshore	4. 5. 6.		
Date:	Estuary	1. 2. 3.		
Location:	Beach/Rocks Offshore	4. 5. 6.		
Date:	Estuary	1. 2. 3.		
Location:	Beach/Rocks Offshore	4. 5. 6.		

All “Keen Angler Diarists” are provided with a small 20 page waterproof diary to record information from 200 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. We are still seeking interest from recreational mulloway anglers in participating in this program so 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](mailto:research.angler@dpi.nsw.gov.au)) and we will send you out a Keen Angler Diary pack.

**And don't forget, there's a \$50 MO Tackle voucher up for grabs for the first 5 guys to complete their diaries (that's 200 trips!).**

## The things mullo way eat...

The most common prey items in the diet of mullo way are widely reported to be fish and squid. Not surprisingly, these are the most commonly used baits when targeting mullo way in NSW, however the opportunistic feeding behaviour of mullo way are occasionally borne out by very interesting things found in mullo way stomachs. Whilst gut content analysis isn't specifically a part of the NSW RAP, plenty of mullo way frames with the stomachs intact come through our labs to be processed. The following photos are some of the weird and wonderful things our researchers as well as some of our participating research anglers have found in mullo way stomachs:



A barely-digested whiting (*Sillago* sp.) from the stomach of a Hawkesbury mullo way.



No surprises here! Mullo way love eating mullet...all mullet, any mullet (family Mugilidae).



Two-spot sand crab (*Ovalipes australiensis*) found, not surprisingly, in the stomach of a mullo way caught off the beach.



Multiple mantis shrimp (order Stomatopoda) taken from a single mullo way stomach. Photo: Ahmad Saraya.



A well-digested unidentified juvenile shark (possibly a blindshark or catshark) from the stomach of a North Coast mulloway.



Close up of the head of the unidentified juvenile shark at left showing the remains of the pectoral fins and denticles characteristic of shark skin.



A broad squid (*Uroteuthis etheridgei*) from the stomach of a Hawkesbury mulloway, possibly the bait that led to the undoing of the fish!



Assorted fish remains, a beach worm (family Onuphidae) and a worm-eel (*Muraenichthys* sp.?) (top) from an offshore North Coast mulloway.

If you have any images of weird and wonderful things you've discovered in mulloway stomachs, please send them in to the [NSW RAP](#) and we will do our best to identify what your mulloway has been feasting on! Stay tuned for future editions of **"The things mulloway eat..."** in upcoming NSW RAP Newsletters.

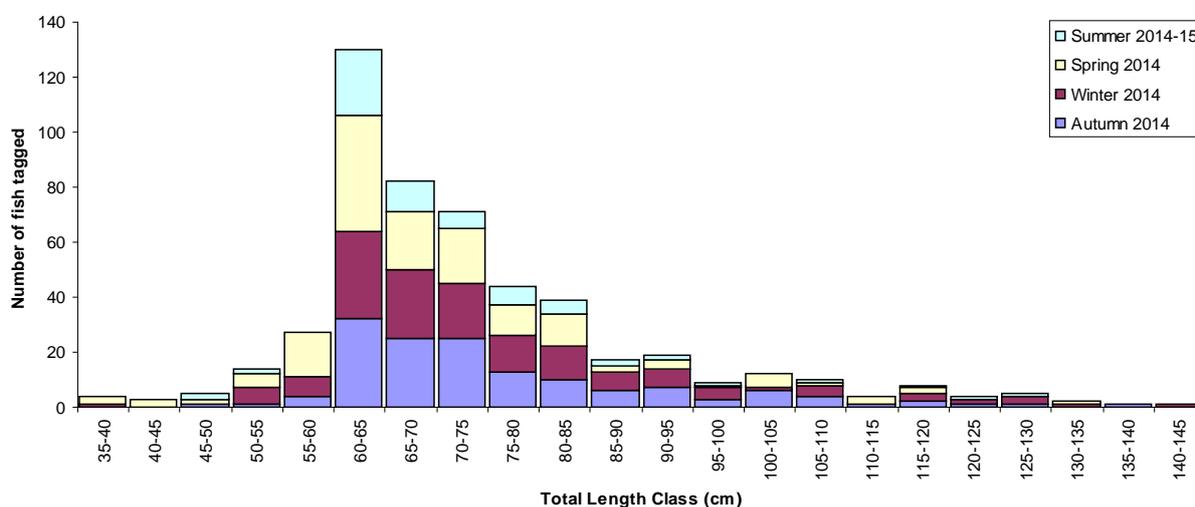
## NSW RAP – ANSA pilot tagging project update

As of the end of February, a truly staggering total of 512 mulloway have been tagged by NSW RAP-ANSA pilot mulloway project participants. A further 66 fish were tagged over summer and the tagging cards continue to roll in to the ANSA NSW Branch and the NSW DPI Gamefish Tagging Program! Interestingly, for the first time since the start of the tagging component of the NSW RAP, more fish were caught over summer using bait (34) than on lures (32), even though 84% of tagged fish have been taken on lures overall.

The Metro Sydney mulloway tagging brigade was out in force again over summer tagging a total of 37 fish from all the local systems; led by the Atlihan brothers, Murat and Abdullah, with 17 fish between 60 and 82 cm from Sydney Harbour and Botany Bay. We couldn't have a tagging update without Chris Cleaver's name coming up; Chris managed another 13 fish tagged over summer including his largest taken on a hardbody at 133 cm from the Georges River. This gives Chris the quite amazing overall tally of 116 mulloway tagged since the start of the program in less than twelve months! A further 29 summer mulloway were also tagged north from Sydney. Joel Edwards' 8 fish from the

Hunter region included an amazing January trifecta of Newcastle Harbour lure-caught mulloway coming in at 116, 124 and 126 cm! This takes Joel to an impressive 25 fish tagged overall from locations as far afield as Sydney Harbour, Lake Macquarie, the Karuah River, Newcastle Harbour and the Hunter River. Daniel Hughes (Laurieton) and Shannon Malone (Lake Macquarie) each tagged five fish, including a fish each around the magic metre mark. Paul Blade added another 7 fish to his already impressive record to take him to an overall tally of 50 mulloway tagged from Coffs Harbour and surrounds.

**Length frequency of mulloway tagged as part of the NSW RAP-ANSA tagging project since its commencement March 2014.**



More than half the fish tagged over summer were again in the just sub-legal 60-70 cm bracket, but another five fish of over a metre in length brings the total number of 'metre-plus' fish tagged since the start of the project to exactly 50!



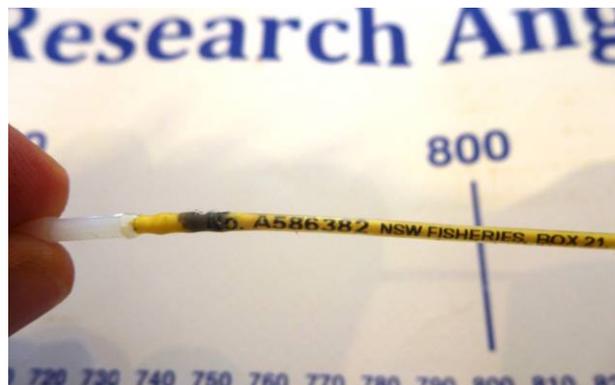
**Strike One!** Joel Edwards with 124 cm of bright silver Newcastle Harbour mulloway tagged and ready for release.



**Strike Two!** Two nights later and Joel prepares to release another tagged Newcastle mulloway, this time a 126 cm model.



**Strike Three!** One week later and this time 116 cm of tagged lure-caught mulloway goes back into Newcastle Harbour. All photos courtesy Joel Edwards.



**Tag # A586382:** removed from a 73 cm Georges River mulloway tagged in March 2014 and recaptured 289 days later in Botany Bay growing 4 cm in the process.

A sensational result for the tagging component of the NSW RAP over summer 2014-15 with seven tagged mulloway recaptured. Theo Papaharalambous kicked off summer mulloway fishing in style when he landed an 87 cm fish on December 2 at Chipping Norton on the Georges River. This fish had been tagged some 151 days earlier on July 4 by Moey Elddine in the upper Georges River and even though it hadn't moved far, it had grown by an impressive 5 cm! Another fish tagged in the Georges River was first caught (and tagged) by Chris Bahjat on March 23 when it was 73 cm in length. This fish had also grown an impressive 4 cm 289 days later when it was recaptured 6 km away in Botany Bay by Murat Atlihan on January 6. As well as recapturing others' mulloway, Murat also managed to recapture one of his own fish from Sydney Harbour a couple of kilometres away only 11 days after being tagged!

**Tagged mulloway recaptures for summer 2014-15 (as of 28 February 2015):**

Tagging angler	Total length (cm)	Tagging location	Recapture angler	Recapture location	Total length (cm)	Days at liberty
Moey Eddine	82	Upper Georges River	Theo Papaharalambous	Upper Georges River	87	151
Chris Cleaver	72	Lower Georges River	Rob Cartwright	Lower Georges River	72	16
Chris Bahjat	73	Lower Georges River	Murat Atlihan	Botany Bay	77	289
Chris Cleaver	70	Lower Georges River	Chris Nicopoulos	Lower Georges River	71	16
Dan Selby	82	Hawkesbury River	Laurie Saler	Broken Bay	85	190
Murat Atlihan	61	Sydney Harbour	Murat Atlihan	Sydney Harbour	62	11
Paul Blade	65	Coffs Harbour	Wayne Ferguson	Coffs Harbour	68	92

Laurie Saler fishing in Broken Bay on January 31 caught a fine 6.2 kg 85 cm mulloway only to discover one of our tags sticking out of its shoulder. Tag #A586436 had been inserted into this fish by the Hawkesbury River's number one mulloway harasser, Dan Selby some 191 days earlier 20 km up the Hawkesbury River when just 82 cm in length. Away from Sydney, a 68 cm fish caught by NSW Research Angler Wayne Ferguson at Coffs Harbour on February 4 was tagged 92 days earlier by Paul Blade 2 km further north when it was just 65 cm in length.

He's done it again! Part man, part mulloway Chris Cleaver with his 133 cm PB mulloway on hardbody caught from the Georges River, tagged and released in late February. Photo courtesy Chris Cleaver.



**Top Five taggers for summer 2014-15 (as of 28 February 2015):**

Tagger	No. fish tagged	Region
Murat Atlihan	15	Sydney
Chris Cleaver	13	Sydney
Joel Edwards	8	Hunter
Paul Blade	7	Coffs Harbour
Daniel Hughes	5	Laurieton
Shannon Malone	5	Lake Macquarie

**Top Five taggers overall (as of 28 February 2015):**

Tagger	No. fish tagged	Region
Chris Cleaver	116	Sydney
Dan Selby	70	Sydney
Paul Blade	50	Coffs Harbour
George Armao	28	Sydney
Joel Edwards	25	Everywhere!

**Top Five largest fish tagged for summer 2014-15 (as of 28 February 2015):**

Tagger	Total length (cm)	System
Chris Cleaver	133	Georges River
Joel Edwards	126	Newcastle Harbour
Joel Edwards	124	Newcastle Harbour
Joel Edwards	116	Newcastle Harbour
Daniel Hughes	106	Camden Haven River

**Top Five largest fish tagged overall (as of 28 February 2015):**

Tagger	Total length (cm)	System	Season
Dan Selby	144	Hawkesbury River	Winter 2014
Mark Pirie	138	Clarence River	Autumn 2014
Joel Edwards	134	Newcastle Harbour	Spring 2014
Chris Cleaver	133	Georges River	Summer 2014-15
Dan Selby	132	Hawkesbury River	Winter 2014

Next time you're out chasing mulloway, keep an eye out for one of our yellow NSW DPI tags. Keep in mind that the tag may be discoloured or fouled by algae.



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](mailto:gamefish.tagging@dpi.nsw.gov.au)) or the NSW Research Angler Program (T: 9435 4671, E: [research.angler@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto: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 2015 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.

## 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

The slide also features two scatter plots: 'Recreational catch (mm)' vs 'Completed age (years)' and 'Commercial catch (mm)' vs 'Age (years)'. Both plots show a positive correlation between age and length.

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, please don't hesitate to get in contact with us (E: [research.angler@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:research.angler@dpi.nsw.gov.au), T: 9435 4671) and we will send someone out to get you and your audience about the program.



NSW Research Angler Program



Department of Primary Industries

## 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 2014-15.

Another excellent effort from a first time donor over summer saw Mike Hollis top our “Top Five” list with an outstanding tally of 14 mulloway between 76.9 and 106.3 cm from the very fishy waters of the Hawkesbury River. Another 6 metro mulloway up to 102.2 cm were donated by Murat Atlihan from Sydney Harbour and Georges River-Botany Bay. Further afield, Daniel Hughes continued his fine form in the estuaries and off the rocks around Laurieton donating a further 4 fish to take his overall tally to 17. David Birt also accounted for 4 fine jewies fishing the Hunter River and Newcastle Harbour including a cracking 139 cm fish! Down south, David Johnstone generously donated some of his incidental catch whilst chasing dusky flathead from the estuaries around Jervis Bay with his 4 mulloway going 80, 100, 105 and 110 cm – not bad bycatch!

Despite an uncharacteristically lean summer, Paul Blade remains well clear on top of the “Top Five” donors list with 44 fish and James Sakker continues to fly the flag for NSW mulloway spearos with 23 fish. Here’s hoping for some great mulloway hunting weather ahead for Autumn 2015 and plenty more frames donated to the NSW RAP.

### “Top Five” donors summer 2014-15 (as of 28 February 2015):

Donor	No. frames donated	Region
Mike Hollis	14	Sydney
Murat Atlihan	6	Sydney
Daniel Hughes	4	Laurieton
David Birt	4	Newcastle
David Johnstone	4	Jervis Bay

### “Top Five” donors overall (as of 28 February 2015):

Donor	No. frames donated	Region
Paul Blade	44	Coffs Harbour
James Sakker	23	Coffs Harbour
Daniel Hughes	17	Laurieton
John St Vincent Welch	16	Evans Head
Kyle Worley	15	Lake Macquarie

Our two largest mulloway donated over summer came to us via Steve Monckton from Ballina and Steve Watson from Iluka. As well as sharing a first name and a talent for catching large jewies, the other thing these two fishers had in common was two amazingly fast growing mulloway – Steve M's 150 cm fish was easily the largest 8 year old (by 9 cm) and Steve W's 141 cm fish was similarly by far the largest 9 year old (also by 9 cm) fish so far recorded in NSW waters. This gives these two fish the freakish average growth rates of 19 and 16 cm per year respectively at close to the average maximum length for mulloway in NSW!

Nick Waltisbuhl's 135 cm beer keg Hawkesbury River mulloway mentioned earlier in the newsletter topped the list of oldest summer-donated fish at a hefty 16 years of age. Nick's fish was followed by a suite of 10 year olds – David Birt's 139 cm fish from Newcastle along with two thumping Forster fish (130.2 & 124.1 cm) from a generous anonymous donor. Only slightly younger was Murat Atlihan's 9 year old 102.2 cm Sydney Harbour fish and David Johnstone's 8 year old 110 cm flathead bycatch from the South Coast.

### **“Top Five” largest fish donated and associated ages summer 2014-15 (as of 28 February 2015):**

Donor	Total length (cm)	Estimated age (years)	Region
Steve Monckton	150	8	Ballina
Steve Watson	141	9	Iluka
David Birt	139	10	Newcastle
Nick Waltisbuhl	135	16	Sydney
<i>Anonymous</i>	130.2	10	Forster

### **“Top Five” largest fish donated and associated ages overall (as of 28 February 2015):**

Donor	Total length (cm)	Estimated age (years)	Region	Season
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	Shoalhaven	Spring 2013
Scott Robson	154	26	Newcastle	Summer 2013-14

### “Top Five” oldest fish donated and associated lengths summer 2014-15 (as of 28 February 2015):

Donor	Estimated age (years)	Total length (cm)	Region
Nick Waltisbuhl	16	135	Sydney
David Birt	10	139	Newcastle
<i>Anonymous</i>	10	130.2	Forster
<i>Anonymous</i>	10	124.1	Forster
Steve Watson	9	141	Iluka
Murat Atlihan	9	102.2	Sydney
Steve Monckton	8	150	Ballina
David Johnstone	8	110	Jervis Bay

### “Top Five” oldest fish donated and associated lengths overall (as of 28 February 2015):

Donor	Estimated age (years)	Total length (cm)	Region
Vaughan Little	34	156	Shoalhaven
Scott Robson	26	154	Newcastle
Evan Leeson	26	144	Port Macquarie
Marwan Nasr	25	147	Sydney
Adam Price	24	164	Sydney
Robert Thorpe	23	137	Newcastle
Mark Pirie	23	140	Yamba

## 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 **Amazon Outdoors (2/1273 The Horsley Drive, Wetherill Park, T: 9757 4466)**. Most of our drop-off points in metro Sydney are on the coastal fringe so having Amazon involved will provide the mulloway anglers of Western Sydney a convenient location to donate frames (and pick up anything else you need to enjoy your jewy fishing!). For the full and up-to-date list of places where you can drop-off your frames, 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 were decided by randomly drawing one frame donor from each month.

Congratulations to the following Research Anglers:

December	<b>Mike Hollis</b>	(Sydney)
January	<b>Brian Gowen</b>	(Yamba)
February	<b>Toby Piddocke</b>	(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 mullo-way-ready lure pack worth \$50 containing a selection of proven hardbody, soft plastic and blade-style mullo-way-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 a mullo-way 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.

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