



NSW DPI / Huon Yellowtail Kingfish Research Project - Stakeholder Update

March 2017

The growth rates for Yellowtail Kingfish on the Marine Aquaculture Research Lease are faster than anticipated with fish in both sea pens doing well.

The first net change to a larger mesh size will take place 24 February for the pen with the October 2016 stocked fish. The nets are being cleaned regularly with a submersible net cleaning robot, preventing the build-up of biofouling and maintaining optimum water flow across the pens.

Other than Mutton birds resting on the sea pen walkways, there have been no other interactions with wildlife. Wildlife monitoring results are updated regularly to the website: www.huonaqua.com.au/wildlife-interactions/

Huon and the University of Newcastle have undertaken additional water and benthic sampling over the last month aimed at improving baseline data as the fish grow in size. For previous results see:

www.huonaqua.com.au/about/portstephens/environmental-monitoring/

www.huonaqua.com.au/about/portstephens/benthic-monitoring/

Port Stephens Fisheries Institute hosted 24 personnel from Marine Parks, NPWS, DPI, Huon and Dolphin Swim Australia for accredited wildlife interaction training provided by the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. The training was initiated under the Research Lease Marine Fauna Interaction Management Plan to: *'develop a response plan to deal with incidents with NSW OEH and other relevant departments; and to ensure that a number of staff members receive training in wildlife rescue techniques to ensure appropriate response to potential incidents'*. Day One of the training focussed on theory and practical issues with Day Two on the water, freeing a towed "whale tail" entangled with ropes and buoys. The Birubi Point Surf Life Saving Club kindly supported this initiative with the use of their inflatable rescue boat.

DPI and Huon provided an update to the 8 February Council Estuary Management Committee meeting. A Marine Rescue Port Stephens meeting 21 February was also attended to provide an update for members and to thank them for their work in informing the community of changed navigational conditions in Providence Bay during the installation of the sea pens and over the busy Christmas period.

Work has commenced at Port Stephens Fisheries Institute to develop a 12 tank nursery facility for Yellowtail Kingfish. A new hatchery technician employed by Huon has commenced work, and further part-time staff are being employed by Huon.

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

Upcoming events:

- Deploying three sea pens end March/April 2017
- Stocking fingerlings to one sea pen 22 April 2017
- Emergency response simulation exercise

More information

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



Yellowtail Kingfish stocked in October 2016



Feeding fish



Wildlife interaction training underway off Taylors Beach



Cutting obstructions from the “whale tail”

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