

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Periwinkles – Science to support the delicacy!

It isn't just the French that eat snails - Tasmanians have been collecting native sea snails as a gourmet product for generations and they've been an important food source for Tasmania's Aboriginal people.

Periwinkles (or turbos) are a native sea snail found throughout Tasmania's coastal waters. They are collected by divers and exported to markets in Sydney and Melbourne, though occasionally they're spotted on the menus of Tassie's finest restaurants.

However, little is known about the species and recent catches and catch rates have dropped, with some divers expressing concerns that some areas have been slow to recover after harvesting.

Researchers at the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) are conducting a two-year study to gain better understanding of the biology and fishery for this delicacy and how to ensure the fishery is sustainable.

The study is led by Dr Jeremy Lyle and will involve surveys of fishers, catch sampling and field based research.

"The study will also focus on market supply and demand for periwinkles and investigate options to maximise economic returns to the Tasmanian industry," he said.

"The information will be used to obtain a detailed understanding of periwinkle biology, the status of the fishery, appropriateness of current management regulations and opportunities to improve the economic performance of the fishery."

The fishery for periwinkles is managed using a conservative total annual allowable catch limit of 35 tonnes.

The study has been funded through a grant from the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation on behalf of the Australian Government with support from the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment and the Tasmanian Commercial Divers Association.

IMAS researchers will be working in close collaboration with the Tasmanian Commercial Divers Association and Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment.

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IMAS – in collaboration with the Tasmanian State Government