



MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE INSTITUTE FOR MARINE AND ANTARCTIC STUDIES

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

Fishing for Facts – new study seeks valuable community input

A new study, funded by the Fishwise Community Grants scheme, is underway to examine the history of fishing in Tasmania and how popular recreational fishing species including rock lobster, flathead, flounder, trumpeter and gummy shark have responded to fishing and other pressures.

Dr Sven Frijlink at the University of Tasmania's Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) is collecting historical data for the study that will provide a better understanding of how the numbers, size and distribution of popular fishing species have changed over time.

"From a historical point of view, understanding the relationship between fishing and the viability of fish stocks is a growing area of research," said Dr Frijlink.

"Generally speaking, fishing pressures result in a reduction in both the numbers of fish available and average fish size - and because scientific assessments of fish stocks are relatively modern, the state of most fisheries prior to formal assessments is poorly understood. So fisheries researchers are increasingly turning to other methods to get a longer view on the health of fish stocks and to complement data from scientific assessments," said Dr Frijlink.

Dr Jeremy Lyle, a fisheries scientist from IMAS, said: "Information can be inferred through old government reports, newspaper articles, journal articles and commercial catch records. For example, a Royal Commission into Tasmanian marine fisheries conducted in 1882 provided numerous observations of how abundant various fish species were at the time.

"However, another way of collecting historical information is by talking to people who have been catching or observing fish for a long period of time. These are the people IMAS needs to contact."

Such people possess a wealth of knowledge that is valuable to researchers and may have implications for the way fisheries are managed. The value of such information is even greater if it can be supported by photographic or written accounts of fish catches or observations over the years

At this stage of the study, the research team are seeking people with an enduring involvement in Tasmanian marine fisheries to participate and contribute to this important study.

If you have been involved in fishing in Tasmania for at least 30 years and would like to know more about the study, please contact Dr Sven Frijlink on 6227 7155 or 0400 643 653 for further information.

Fishwise Community Grants provide funding for individuals and community groups to conduct projects that improve the management of marine resources or improve the awareness and knowledge of our fisheries. They are administered by the Tasmanian State Government's Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment.

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