



Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

Friday, 10 June 2016

Lobster tags: a prize for research and fishers

Tasmanian business identities today joined Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) researchers to urge commercial and recreational fishers to report any tagged rock lobsters they find off Tasmania's coast.

More than 350,000 rock lobster tags have been released into Tasmanian waters since 1958, with more than 90,000 tags recaptured and reported. However reporting is down this year, with only around 200 tags recovered and reported so far.

Professor Caleb Gardner, Director of the Sustainable Marine Research Collaboration Agreement at IMAS, said that while lower numbers are likely due to the partial fishery closures caused by summer algal blooms, fishers are encouraged to keep an eye out for tags and to report them.

"We've had reports from recreational and commercial fishers, as well as tourist operators, chefs, and fish processors, but we'd like to see more reports coming in.

"IMAS scientists use the reported tag information to research various aspects of the fishery, including lobster growth, population size, movement patterns, changes in natural mortality and recovery rates from damage or injuries.

"Some of the research outputs from the lobster tagging project include the ability to measure the extraordinarily different growth rates in regional populations of lobsters to assist with sustainable management of the fishery. For example, northern Tasmanian lobsters grow at twice the rate of southern Tasmanian lobsters.

"This world-class research supports the Tasmanian Government's sustainable management of the commercial and recreational rock lobster fisheries. The data collected has also contributed to more than 50 world-class academic publications and 15 PhD projects," Professor Gardner said.

As an incentive to report recovered tags, people who report the tags to IMAS will enter a prize lottery. Local businesses Sunderland Marine Insurance, Tamar Marine, Mures, Southern

Tasmanian Divers and Pennicott Wilderness Journeys donate prizes to a lottery draw, drawn five times a year.

People can report tag numbers, and the size, sex and location of a tagged rock lobster through the IMAS website at: www.imas.utas.edu.au, by emailing fish.tag@utas.edu.au, or by calling 03 6227 7280.

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