



Media Statement



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David Llewellyn
Minister for Primary Industries and Water

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NEW WAYS TO MANAGE THE SCALEFISH FISHERY

The Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute (TAFI) at the University of Tasmania will develop a decision tool for the management of coastal multi-species fisheries, particularly the Tasmanian scalefish fishery, with funding from the Australian Government's Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC).

The scalefish fishery in Tasmania is relatively small in value but extremely important because of the number of participants and number of different species involved. Like many similar fisheries of its kind around the world the participants adapt their fishing to species availability and market opportunities. These characteristics make the modelling and management of this fishery very difficult, but all of that is set to change.

The Minister for Primary Industries and Water David Llewellyn has enthusiastically endorsed the project.

"The scalefish fishery is a difficult fishery to manage given the diversity of species and lack of strong data to support management decision making," the Minister said.

"It is also very important both to the commercial and recreational sectors. Accordingly, an effective tool capable of reliably informing decision-making in the fishery is likely to be appreciated by fisheries managers and fishers alike and will hopefully assist in the long term sustainable management of fish stocks and fishing activities," he said.

Chief investigator Dr Philippe Ziegler said stock assessments in this industry had previously focused on single-species approaches, which in reality, were not practical for a multi-species fishery.

“The Tasmanian scalefish industry targets a large number of species including Striped and Bastard Trumpeter, Australian Salmon, Banded Morwong, Wrasse, Calamari and Sea Garfish,” Dr Ziegler said.

“Because fishers continually adapt and change their operations in response to availability and market opportunities, we needed a model that could handle these changes,” he said.

A simulation model that has been developed and successfully applied in Europe to evaluate the impact of management measures on multi-species fisheries will be adapted for this purpose.

In a first step, Dr Ziegler will profile the scalefish fishery, looking at the range of species caught, fishing gear used, the number of fishers targeting a particular species and the key drivers of fishing activities.

Prof Colin Buxton, Director of TAFI said that the opportunity had arisen through a collaboration between Dr Ziegler and his colleagues working at the French Research Institute for the Exploitation of the Sea (IFREMER).

“Dr Ziegler and his colleagues are leading the way to improve the assessment and management of coastal small-scale multi-gear and multi-species fisheries.”

“And if this approach works for Tasmania, it would also be applicable to many other parts of Australia,” Prof Buxton said

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