

New crabbing gear laws from 2 April

Inverted crab dillies also known as witches' hats have been banned in Queensland from 2 April 2010.

Fisheries resource manager Mark Lightowler said the ban was in place to combat 'ghost-fishing' and reduce entanglement and death of non-target marine species.

"Inverted dillies are made of a light gauge mesh, which can easily entangle marine

species such as turtles, sharks, rays and fish, and it is difficult to release these species" said Mr. Lightowler. Inverted dillies are light-weight in their construction and have a tendency to drift and become lost. They then continue to 'ghost-fish' until they become buried or breakdown.

Mr Lightowler said other types of crab pots or dillies allowed fish and unwanted crabs to be easily released unharmed.

The phasing out of witches' hats was announced back in December 2008 as part of an overhaul in recreational and commercial fishing rules for inshore fisheries. A long lead-in period for the ban was put in place to give both suppliers and consumers time to update their crabbing gear.

Other crabbing apparatus including hoop dillies (sometimes called lift dillies) and crab pots can still be used.

Fishers should also remember to mark their crab apparatus with an identifying tag bearing the owner's surname and address.

Individuals should not use a total of more than four items of crabbing apparatus, including any combination of crab pots or dillies per person. This applies if you are using crabbing gear from a boat or from the shore."

For more information visit www.deedi.qld.gov.au

Pest fish a threat to Northern NSW

A popular aquarium fish on the loose in northern NSW, continues to put native fish populations at risk.

The fish, known as the Pearl Cichlid or Pearl Eartheater (*Geophagus braziliensis*), was first reported in the areas around Murwillumbah and Uki in late 2008 and is believed to have

been released into local waterways from a personal aquarium.

In recent months there have been new reports of the pest fish being spotted near Dum Dum on the Tweed River and again at Doon Doon Creek, below Clarie Hall Dam, on a tributary of the Tweed River.

These new reports, together with the repeated floods experienced over the last year, have raised fears the cichlid may have become more widespread.

If you catch one, take a photo, freeze it and record exactly where you caught it, then call I&I NSW on 02 4916 3877

Farewell Jim Diamantaris

The sudden and untimely passing of Mr. Jim Diamantaris of Diamond Fisheries is a blow to the seafood industry that has deeply saddened his family, friends and many colleagues.

Mr. Diamantaris was born in the village of Repanidi on the Greek island of Lemnos in 1935 and was the youngest of five children. At the age of fourteen he was sponsored to come to Australia by the President of the Victorian Fishermens Association, Mr. Theo Marmaras. He arrived by ship at Station Pier, Port Melbourne, in 1950 with a suitcase filled with his few belongings and dreams of a better and brighter future.

Although he came from an island he was too young to have any knowledge or experience with seafood. His first job in Australia was as a oyster shucker. This was the beginning of a very successful career in seafood in the domestic and export sectors.

His specialty was wholesale seafood processing for both the domestic and export markets, particularly scallops and abalone. During the 1980's and 1990's his seafood processing plant on Flinders Island, Tasmania, produced many tonnes of scallops and abalone for the export markets. Today the business focusses on servicing major supermarkets and wholesalers nationally.

A far more personal tribute to Jim is the letter which we received from Mr Costas Cosmas a friend and colleague of Jim's.

Letter To The Editor:
Although I am not now a regular contributor



Jim Diamantaris in Indonesia demonstrating to the locals how to fillet shark

to Seafood News I could not allow the passing of such a character as Dimitri (Jim) Diamantaris to pass without me commenting.

I remember Jim as a young teenager at Greek dances and community functions. He used to sit at our table at dances and grace us with his overwhelming beaming character. He had a great sense of fun and to his last, retained a sparkle of mischief in his eye. He began working at the old Melbourne Wholesale Fish Market in the fifties. He worked extremely hard and lived a very active social life. It certainly was active. He



With such smiles, who can resist purchasing seafood from Dimitria (left) and her mother Pepina Paraskevas of "Fish on Sydney" in Coburg. Pepina who is Egyptian Greek has been in the seafood industry nineteen years and has never looked back. Some time ago when Seafood News spoke to them Dimitria lamented the scarcity of

seafood advertising material available to retail outlets. With womanly ingenuity and taste they have overcome the problem. They have designed and printed their own advertising material. Today their shop is decked out with posters, leaflets and point of sale material. In addition we also found Huon's "Winter Recipes" on display for their customers to take.

was as warm as toast, loving, enthusiastic and absolutely full of life. I remember when he used to do the country run serving the retail outlets. He was so open and giving, something that remained with him to the end. He was much loved by all of his customers. Anna Plafadellis, from ANZ Fisheries his Koumpara - told me that he had was a godfather or best man in every country town he served on his country run. Even during his relative short stay in hospital, his unexpected death brought the nurses to tears. Knowing

Jim Diamantaris I understand their reaction. These later years I lost social contact with Jim, but the thought of him will always bring a smile to my face.

My great sympathy goes out to his wife Mary, children and grandchildren. Their loss is great as is all who knew of Dimitri (Jim) Diamantaris

Costa Cosmas.

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Doha says NO to ban

Vic Mussels growing stronger

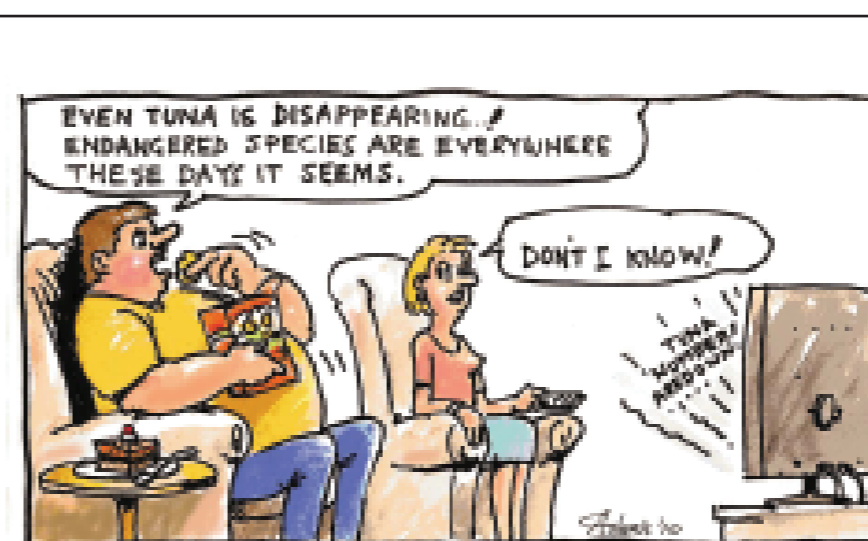
In Brief

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Tribute to Jim Diamantaris

Queenscliff seafood feast

Getting bigger by the year



1 Fishermen John Murdoch and Cliff Rossak from Geelong Victoria preparing a variety of seafood for the BBQ. 2 Some of the 15,000 visitors who queued for over an hour to purchase their fresh seafood lunch. 3 Volunteers Ian Miller and Dawn Shirley barbeque garfish. 4 Jenny Best and Kacey Bennett at the Huon marquee were offering their visitors salmon and smiles. Who could refuse such a treat.

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Doha says no to ban



Australia's Environment Protection Minister Peter Garrett

"Listing Atlantic Bluefin Tuna on Appendix II will help drive better conservation outcomes and management"

The contentious issue of placing a ban on the cross border trade of Atlantic Blue fin Tuna that had caused a storm at the 175 nation (CITES) Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species at Doha, Qatar has been settled.

Japan, who is the major consumer of Blue fin Tuna, had indicated from the very beginning that it would not abide by any ban on the species.

Its powerful lobbying was able to convince delegates to the conference not to place the ban. The motion was defeated the 68 against, 20 in favour and 30 abstentions. Japan has opposed the ban because of inaccurate scientific data suggesting that Atlantic Blue fin Tuna numbers are not as bad as the proponents of the ban are suggesting. They feel that the tuna and marine resources should be best regulated under regional authorities, such as the International Commission for Conservation of Atlantic Tunas

(ICCAT) in this case. The ban had been sponsored by Monaco which claimed that since 1957, numbers of the species have fallen by almost 75 percent. The most dramatic drop however is estimated to have occurred within the past decade and has been attributed to Japan's demand where raw tuna is used in traditional dishes such as sushi and sashimi. Almost eighty percent of Atlantic blue tuna caught finds its way to Japan.

Because tuna is a migratory species and can not be confined within the borders of a single nation the need for a ban is imperative say its supporters. Other threats come from illegal fishing and the failure of Governments to implement existing safety measures that would guaranty the species sustainability.

Although there seemed to be growing support for the ban it was not to be. Australia voted against the ban. Environment Protection Minister Peter Garrett had said Australia would support measures to improve the conservation and recovery of Atlantic Bluefin Tuna

Mr Garrett said listing of the species on Appendix II of the Convention would enable better accountability and improved fisheries management for the species to ensure sustainability into the future.

"Australia strongly believes that firm and effective fisheries management, including through international fora, offers the best means to secure populations of this species of

tuna across the globe. "Listing Atlantic Bluefin Tuna on Appendix II will help drive better conservation outcomes and management of tuna stocks through the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), which listing under Appendix I would not achieve.

"Australia believes raising the conservation status of the species as a means to deliver better international fisheries management, is the best way of ensuring sustainable harvest and management of Atlantic Bluefin Tuna into the future, rather than simply banning international trade alone.

"Imposing a blanket prohibition on international trade through an Appendix I listing would undermine international fisheries management and cooperation to protect this species, and at the same time allow individual countries to continue to catch Atlantic Bluefin Tuna for domestic consumption.

Australia is proposing that strong measures be taken to protect eight shark species currently exploited on a global scale for their fins and for liver oil products. Many of these sharks can be found in relatively healthy numbers in Australian waters. We will be backing an Appendix II listing for oceanic whitetip, spiny dogfish, porbeagle, scalloped hammerhead, smooth hammerhead, great hammerhead, sandbar and dusky sharks, which means ongoing take and international trade can continue on a scale that will not be detrimental to the survival of these species."

APFA member to participate in tenth NSILP

Matt West, the Mackay based prawn farmer at Australian Prawn Farms and member of the Australian Prawn Farmers Association (APFA) will be one of the participants in the 10th National Seafood Industry Leadership Program (NSILP).

Matt, who has been in the industry for the past nine years holds a Bachelor of Applied Science in Environmental Science with Honours in Aquaculture, and is a pivotal member of the APFA Research and Development committee. He also helps to run what may be the only aquaculture farm in Australia with ISO14001 accreditation.

The NSILP, which is in its 10th year, aims to develop new leaders for the seafood industry. The highly competitive program has this year selected 18 participants, with Mr West being one of them.

Funded by the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) and sponsored by the Sydney Fish Market (SFM), the NSILP commenced on March 30th, in Hobart and will conclude with the graduation ceremony in September 2010 in Canberra.

Ms. Jill Briggs, from Rural Training Initiatives and Manager of the NSILP, believes the program provides essential skill development and encourages program participants to implement leadership change at all levels of the seafood industry.

"It is evident that we have people who aspire to lead their industry into a sustainable and productive future, and whose impact may be felt from the small business level, through to influencing federal decision making. This makes for a very dynamic and complex process for the participants, this is not easy, but leadership isn't easy," Ms Briggs said.

Participants will attend three residential workshops over six months, learning how to apply their skills to a wide variety of areas, including involvement in regional development, industry association boards, government decision making, marine research initiatives and effective business management.



Matt West, one of the participants in the 10th National Seafood Industry Leadership Program (NSILP).

Sydney Fish Markets Managing, Director Grahame Turk said Sydney Fish Market has been a proud sponsor of the National Seafood Industry Leadership Program since its inception and is proud to be involved in the program once again in 2010.

"This important program is vital for the growth and success of our industry as it provides a valuable pathway for our upcoming leaders to develop and nurture the necessary skills so that they may lead our industry into the future," Mr Turk said.

Further information about the program can be obtained by contacting Jill Briggs on 02 60357284 or 0409 455 710, or via email at jill@ruraltraininginitiatives.com.au

Maria Damanaki visits Spain

Maria Damanaki, European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, paid a three-day visit to Spanish cities of Madrid and Vigo to meet with political leaders, industry representatives, shipowners and other stakeholders and gauge their views on a range of issues.

In Madrid, the Commissioner held talks with the Minister for the Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs, Mrs Elena Espinosa Mangana and met representatives from a number of Spanish fishing industry associations and discussed a range of topical issues, including Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) reform and the future of aquaculture.



Maria Damanaki, European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

The Commissioner's itinerary in Vigo included a visit to see the Community Fisheries Control Agency at work, a tour of Intermares – a vessel built to disseminate information and provide practical on-board training in a broad range of subjects – a visit to a shipowners' cooperative and an official dinner with ministries of Galicia. On Saturday the Commissioner took a tour local shellfish farms and processing facilities.

"Today I am visiting Vigo, the official seat of the Community Fisheries Control Agency whose activities fall under my remit as Commissioner. It is a priority to visit the agency as one of my first activities as European Commissioner at the beginning of my mandate, because our common fisheries policy will only work if we have effective implementation and a well functioning Europe wide system of control and inspections.

Maria Damanaki is from Greece has been a member of the Greek Parliament for many years.

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The Australian fishing industry had been characterised by exporting high value products, such as prawns and lobsters

Fall in Australian fisheries production

Delegates at the ABARE Outlook conference held in Canberra were told that the gross value of Australian fisheries production, over the course of this decade, has declined by around 30 per cent in real terms.

ABARE's Fisheries Manager, Robert Curtotti, said that the decline followed the sharp appreciation of the Australian dollar and changing trends in world fisheries production and trade. As a result, the real value of Australian fisheries exports has declined by 44 per cent since 2000-01.

"In 2007-08, Australia became a net importer of seafood products in value terms for the first time," Mr Curtotti said.

George Kailis, Professor of Management at the University of Notre Dame in Western Australia, outlined future trends for the domestic fishing industry.

Professor Kailis said that since the 1970s, the Australian fishing industry had been characterised by exporting high value products, such as prawns and lobsters, while imports, although higher in volume, remained lower in value.

"However, in 2007-08 a key cross-over event

occurred when both the volume and the value of imports exceeded that of Australian production," Professor Kailis said. "For the domestic fishing industry this cements a long-term shift towards domestic markets and consumers," he said.

Ewan Colquhoun, Director of agribusiness and resources consultancy, Ridge Partners, said the fishing industry should have the opportunity to better inform the decision-making process, and that there was a need for targeted research and development.

"Trade-offs in how marine resources are used are necessary, and research and development can help resolve these trade-offs," Mr Colquhoun said.

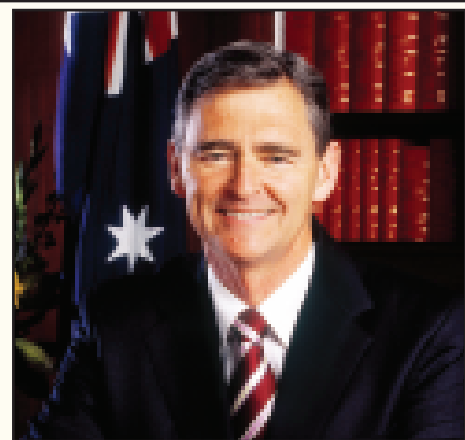
Executive Director of Reefishwest, Frank Prokop, highlighted to delegates the benefits of recreational fishing and its role in Australian society. "Recreational fishing is a sizeable industry that provides significant health benefits and positive family activity opportunities," Mr Prokop said.

Mr Prokop said the future of the sector will require an ongoing focus on responsible and sustainable fishing in which anglers have a key role to play.

\$38 million development for Queenscliff Harbour

John Brumby, the Premier of Victoria last month officially opened the new Queenscliff Harbour redevelopment. "The redevelopment has secured the future of the Queenscliff Harbour as a working commercial fishing harbour.

The Harbour was developed under a public/private partnership between Parks Victoria and Queenscliff Harbour Pty Ltd at a cost of \$38million. The Victorian Government contributed \$5 million to the redevelopment of the harbour with the remainder \$33 million in public sector investment.



The Premier of Victoria, Mr John Brumby

The redevelopment includes an expanded safe harbour, improved environmental protection, 24-hour public access to the harbour perimeter, an expanded marine servicing area, improved boat sewage pump out and fuelling facilities, the latest travel lift technology and a working port for the commercial fishing and charter vessel fleets.

Victorian mussels growing stronger

Victoria's Port Phillip Bay's once struggling mussel industry is nearing full recovery with this year's harvest expected to produce approximately 500 tonne of mussels. This figure is expected to double next year.

The recovery has been attributed to the successful collaborative research program between Government and industry. The Victorian Minister Responsible for Fisheries, Mr. Joe Helper said "without the collaborative investment, the bay's mussel farming industry would probably be non-viable by now."

Funded jointly by the Brumby Government's \$205 million Future Farming Strategy and industry, the program involved the development of a small state-of-the-art bivalve shellfish hatchery and a production and selective breeding research program.

Mr Helper said before the hatchery was established, Victorian mussel harvest had fallen dramatically because of poor availability of wild spat (baby mussels) in Port Phillip Bay.

The shortage of spat is thought to have been due to the impacts of drought, exotic marine species and other environmental factors.

A joint research and development agreement was developed between Government and industry to

start a hatchery-based mussel breeding program at the Department of Primary Industries' Queenscliff research facility to address the shortage.

After some initial difficulties were overcome, researchers and employees from the mussel industry successfully produced spat at the Queenscliff hatchery. They are now looking at ways to utilise new technology to expand what the hatchery can produce.

Mussel farmer, Lance Wiffen who runs Sea Bounty, the only Organically Certified Mussel growing company in Victoria, believes the industry can recover to its previous level within two years. "It's fantastic to finally see a big bright light at the end of a long tunnel," Mr Wiffen said. The idea of a hatchery was put to the Government by Mr. Wiffen who also convinced a number of other growers to participate in the project.

State Parliament Member for Bellarine, Lisa Neville, said it was fantastic to see the bright outlook from an industry that had been doing it tough. "Aquaculture is such an important part of the Bellarine region and the mussel industry has faced some bleak times. However, through industry working with the Brumby Labor Government, the horizon is much brighter which can only be a good thing for the Bellarine" Ms Neville said.



Lance Wiffen (left) from Sea Bounty and John Mercer from Fisheries Victoria examine mature mussel ropes and hatchery produced mussel spat.



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