This report was prepared by Rod Pearn, Principal Fisheries Management Officer (Recreational Fisheries) with input from other DPIPWE staff. It is an informal report that consolidates information relating to recreational sea fishing licence trends, revenue, program allocations and outputs for each year.

Financial information is for the 2017/18 financial year (1 July 2017 – 30 June 2018). Licence information is for the recreational licence/ fishing year (1 November 2017 – 31 October 2018).

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LICENCE TRENDS, FISHWISE FUND STATUS & ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2017/18:

Licence Trends:

- Recreational sea fishing licence holders decreased by ~800 from the previous year to almost 19,000 and close to the 2015/16 record low level of the last decade. Licence numbers still remain relatively low - around 10% less than the average of the previous ten years.

- Rock lobster is the main driver for taking out a licence. There were just over 17,200 fishers who held at least one rock lobster licence. This is a decrease of 5% from the previous year, and 20% lower than in 2007/08 - the peak year for licence numbers.

- Biotoxin closures were more extensive in 2017/18 than the previous year. The most notable biotoxin closures were 13 weeks for Wine glass Bay to Marion Bay (Maria Island Zone) and 9 weeks Chain of Lagoons to Wineglass Bay (Central east); 4 weeks (Marion Bay to Tasman Island).
  
  - The delay in opening some zones, combined with the low stock status and ongoing management interventions continue to impact licence sales.

Fishwise Fund Status:

- A total of $1.197 million was collected from the sale of recreational sea fishing licences in 2017/18 – a decrease of ~$18,000 from the previous year.

- A total of $942,000 made available to the Fishwise Fund after the agreed consolidated revenue contribution of $255,000 was made. If CPI is considered, Fishwise revenue is around 20% less in real terms compared to 5 years ago.

- The Fishwise Community Grant Fund as of 30 June 2018 has $167,052, and has no future funding commitments.

- Fishery adjustment fund remains with $122,000 in funds.

- Guidelines are needed for the Fishery Adjustment fund and the Fishwise Community Grant Fund, as there are no immediate funding commitments in these funds.

Recreational Fisheries Section Achievements:

- Administered the Fishwise fund to high level of governance.

- Administered the recreational licensing system and progressed digital licensing.

- Supported the recreational season operation (through enquiries and distribution of key fisheries awareness material) and liaison with the recreational sector and others.

- Wild Fisheries Management Branch operated an effective Recreational Fisheries Communication Program through:
  
  - Designing, developing and distributing communication products;
  
  - Designing, printing and distributing 42,500 copies of the Recreational Sea Fishing Guide.
  
  - Distributing fish measuring rulers and abalone, rock lobster and scallop measuring gauges.
  
  - Producing Regional Fishing Map pamphlets (aka Hot Fishing Spots) to aiming to subtly provide descriptive information about scalefish rules to new or non-avid fishers, and tourist fishers.
o Producing and installing temporary signs in the North to communicate the Northern squid spawning closure.

o Actively using social media and technology to communicate and provide interpretive information relating to responsible fishing, season and rule reminders, compliance and research by:
  ▪ Maintaining the Fisheries Tasmania Facebook page; increasing followers to 8000 likes.
  ▪ Initiating the Fisheries Tasmania Instagram account.
  ▪ Maintaining the DPIPWE fishing news email service; increasing subscribers to 23,000.
  ▪ Maintaining the interactive Recreational Sea Fishing Guide smartphone app Tas Fish Guide, which now has over 44,000 downloads since implemented in 2013.
  ▪ Producing video clips for rock lobster measuring, and handling to promote correct measuring, ability to distinguish males/females/berried state at exhibits, enhance web-site information and for social media campaigns (in partnership with DPIPWE Corporate Communications).

• Initiated and trialled enhancing community engagement by conducting Recreational Fisheries Forums, where research and management information is presented and discussed with recreational fishers. In 2017/18 Forums were held at St Helens and Devonport.

• Commenced developing fisheries awareness activities to address emerging issues relating to fishers from other language and cultural (OLAC) groups. See Emerging issues.

• Provided advice, policy and legislative development and input on recreational management for all fisheries, notably the East Coast rock lobster management strategy, Northern Squid Closure. Commenced planning and identification of minor shellfish issues.

• Provided executive support, operational input and fisheries management advice into the Recreational Fisheries Advisory Committee (RecFAC).

• Identified research and information needs, influenced or commissioned research. Notably, contracted IMAS for the annual survey of the recreational rock lobster and abalone fisheries and the five yearly general recreational fishing survey (recreational scalefish information) for the 2017/18 fishing year.

• The Fishcare Tasmania Program conducted 49 events to almost 1900 direct contacts involving school children and members of organisations and the public through school classroom/field activities, fishing clinics, community liaison patrols, forums and presentations. A further 73 exhibits and demonstrations were conducted at fairs, boat, fishing, regional and agricultural shows potentially exposing the 140,000 plus attendees to responsible fishing information.
Fishwise Fund description

The Fishwise Fund resources programs that maintain and improve the management of recreational sea fisheries and provide fisheries awareness activities. Fishwise funds are derived from the sale of recreational sea fishing licences.

Recreational Sea Fishing Licences: reasons, types and costs

In Tasmania, recreational sea fishing licences are required for fishing high value fish resources (such as rock lobster, abalone and scallops), for equipment (gillnets, beach seine nets, set line) that have a relatively high impact on the resource or the environment, and for fisheries that have high information needs. No licence is required by aborigines engaged in non-commercial fishing.

Recreational fishing licences benefits include providing:

- information on participation by fishery;
- a contact database for higher definition surveys and assessments;
- contact points for communicating with fishers;
- a financial contribution toward the additional educational, management and compliance costs incurred by Government in providing access.

In 2017/18, a recreational sea fishing licence was required for:

- abalone;
- rock lobster dive;
- rock lobster pot;
- rock lobster ring;
- scallop;
- graball net;
- mullet net;
- beach seine net; and
- set line (includes longline and dropline).

The sea fishing recreational licence framework operates as an ‘endorsement’ system. A minimum base licence fee applies to each person for the first type of licence then an additional ‘endorsement’ fee applies for each extra licence type. The fees are indexed on a government-set fee unit value, which automatically adjust fees each year after considering the Consumer Price Index (CPI);

The price charged for licences were:

- Standard Licence: $54.25 for the first licence and $7.75 for each additional licence type.
- Concession Licence: (Commonwealth Pension, DVA Concession, Government-issued Seniors Card holders and persons under 16 years): $31.00 for the first licence and $7.75 for each additional licence type.
- Special Rock Lobster Licence $46.50 in addition to the rock lobster licence fees.

Recreational Sea Fishing Licences: numbers and trends in 2017/18

Recreational sea fishing licence holders decreased by almost 800 individuals from the previous year to almost 19,000. Licence numbers still remain relatively low - around 10% less than the average of the previous ten years.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recreational licences type</th>
<th>2017/18</th>
<th>Change from previous year</th>
<th>% Change compared to previous year</th>
<th>% Change from average of previous 5 yrs</th>
<th>% Change from average of previous 10 yrs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abalone</td>
<td>11,011</td>
<td>-202</td>
<td>-1.8%</td>
<td>-3.1%</td>
<td>-8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beach Seine</td>
<td>994</td>
<td>-20</td>
<td>-2.0%</td>
<td>-7.6%</td>
<td>-15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graball</td>
<td>6,656</td>
<td>-436</td>
<td>-6.1%</td>
<td>-13.7%</td>
<td>-21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mullet Net</td>
<td>805</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>-3.6%</td>
<td>-9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock Lobster Dive</td>
<td>8,022</td>
<td>-50</td>
<td>-0.6%</td>
<td>-1.0%</td>
<td>-5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock Lobster Pot</td>
<td>14,554</td>
<td>-741</td>
<td>-4.8%</td>
<td>-5.9%</td>
<td>-13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock Lobster Ring</td>
<td>4,499</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>-8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scallop Dive</td>
<td>3,068</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set Line</td>
<td>4,544</td>
<td>-103</td>
<td>-2.2%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. of individuals</strong></td>
<td>18,990</td>
<td>-783</td>
<td>-4.0%</td>
<td>-4.6%</td>
<td>-10.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1: Total number of individual licence holders and number of licence types purchased in 2017/18 compared with previous years*
The rock lobster fishery is the main driver for the purchase of a recreational fishing licence with just over 17,200 individuals purchasing a type of rock lobster licence. Rock lobster licence numbers decreased 5% from the previous year, and 20% less than the peak licence number year of 2007/8.

Biotoxin closures were also more extensive in 2017/18 than the previous year and decreasing licence sales close to the 2015/16 record low level in the last decade. The Eastern Region rock lobster fishery open date was 18th November, however delays due to biotoxin closures were 13 weeks for Wineglass Bay to Marion Bay (Maria Island Zone); 9 weeks Chain of Lagoons to Wineglass Bay (Central east); 4 weeks (Marion Bay to Tasman Island); 1 week Storm Bay/Bruny).

Profile of holders

Around 95% of licence holders indicated a Tasmanian residential address. This is similar to the previous years. It should be noted some licence holders provide an address which may be a temporary Tasmanian address.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>17933</td>
<td>94.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Licence holders by State

Age profile follow similar trends as the previous year.

Licence Revenue, Disbursements and Fishwise Program Descriptions

$1.197 million was collected from the sale of recreational sea fishing licences in 2017/18.

In accordance with the principles of the Fishwise Fund (a Special Deposits and Trust Fund for recreational sea fishing licences) established in 1995, $255,000¹ was collected for Consolidated Revenue. The remainder of $942,000 was retained in the Fishwise Fund with Program budget allocations made in accordance with previous directives. The Fishwise program descriptions of core activities and staffing are as follows:

¹ Contributes to government wide activities, including Marine Police, management planning, review processes and the research service agreement with the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS). Cost of providing services attributed to recreational fisheries is estimated to $2.5 to 3 million.
• **Recreational Fisheries Management** – funds the core activities for recreational fisheries management including 1.6 FTE and essential management, planning and policy development for recreational fisheries. Funding the operation of the Recreational Fisheries Advisory Committee (RecFAC) which provides advice on fisheries management issues, is has moved from Resource Management to this Program.

• **Licensing & Administration** – funds the costs of the recreational fisheries licensing system, database management, sales and distribution of licences, measuring gauges to licence holders, phone enquiry service and 0.4 FTE;

• **Communications** – funds recreational fishing information services, promotion of sustainable fishing and recreational fisheries awareness material and 0.6 FTE; includes most of the design, production and distribution costs of the Guide.

• **Community Partnerships** – Fishcare Volunteer program fosters responsible and sustainable recreational fishing practices; 0.8 FTEs and 2 X 0.6 FTE's.

• **Resource Management** –
  
o Makes a contribution ($68,000) to IMAS for an recreational fisheries researcher; and
  
o An important aspect of this Program is the ability for funds to be allocated each year and residual funds carried over to the next financial year. This provides the ability to plan, schedule, commission and fund recurrent research projects including: annual survey of the recreational rock lobster and abalone fisheries; general recreational fishing survey (recreational scalefish information) every 5 years. There is a discretionary component to periodically fund other research projects.

**Fishery Adjustment**

A total of $122,000 is held in the Fishwise fund for fishery adjustments.

**Fishwise Community Grants Fund**

There was no expenditure from the Fishwise Community Grant Fund in 2017/18 and as of 30 June 2018 has $167,052 of funds and no future comments.

The Fishwise Community Grants Program was initiated in 2006 to provide funding for projects run by individuals, organisations and community groups that improve the management of recreational sea fisheries and provide community education on recreational fishing issues, including discretionary research. In 2009, a review of the Fishwise fund identified several types of projects which tended to be recurrent and essential in nature, and funds were allocated for the respective needs. This included diverting budgets to the Resource Management Program for the rock lobster and abalone surveys, the General Fishing Survey and adequately funding Fishcare.

Open funding rounds has not occurred since 2011, with the last project payments made under that process in 2015/16. The Program made a $15,000 contribution in 2016/17 for the FRDC funded swordfish project conducted by IMAS.

Up until 30 June 2017, the Fishwise Community Grant Fund made an annual grant to the peak body for recreational sea fishing; Tasmanian Association for Recreational Fishing (TARFish Inc) to assist with independent consultation on resource management matters.
Fishwise Operating Statement, explanation of financial position and trends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LICENCE SALES AND REVENUE 2017/18</th>
<th>2016/17</th>
<th>Revenue and difference from previous year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Licence Sales total revenue</td>
<td>$1,197,302</td>
<td>$1,215,163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consolidated revenue payment</td>
<td>-$255,000</td>
<td>-$255,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishwise Licence revenue</td>
<td>$942,302</td>
<td>$960,163</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was a slight decrease in licence sales and subsequent decreases in Fishwise revenue (almost $18,000) in 2017/18. If CPI is considered Fishwise revenue is still less than 5 years ago.

The Fishwise program budgets were mostly underspent in 2017/18, as there were no major fishery reviews requiring substantial products to be redesigned and produced. In addition the Northern Fishcare Coordinator position was vacant for several months and several staff/positions are continuing part-time working arrangements and savings have been made with efficiencies in licencing (see Licence Cards below).

The ‘excess’ Fishwise Program revenue and residual program funds (except Resource Management) has been retained in the higher level Fishwise Fund in order to build capacity and buffer the fund against future licence sale decreases. When the fund has enough revenue to cover the next year’s fixed commitments, the excesses will be deposited into the Fishwise Community Grant Fund.

The total remaining in the Resource Management for 2018/19 is $493,950. Significant expenditure is being drawn from this fund relating to the 2017/18 Survey of Recreational Fishing in Tasmania ($220,000), annual rock lobster abalone surveys (~$85,000) and the future offshore fishing survey.

The delay in opening some zones, combined with the low stock status and ongoing management interventions have impacted on licence sales. Although, there is anecdotal reports, and IMAS modelling indicating that catch rates and stocks are improving in the East Coast licence sales and therefore revenue cannot be predicted. As such reversing some of the cutbacks made in the past should only be made with stringent planning.
Licence Sales and Fishwise Revenue Trends

Licence Sales and Fishwise Revenue

Licence Sales
Fishwise Revenue

Financial Year


$1,400,000
$1,200,000
$1,000,000
$800,000
$600,000
$400,000
$200,000
LICENCE ADMINISTRATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND FISHERIES AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

Recreational Licensing System
Recreational Sea Fishing Licences details are stored and maintained in the Fisheries Integrated Licensing and Management System (FILMS). Periodic enhancements are made to FILMS and the connecting interface internet and Service Tasmania systems (STARS).

Licences – Point of Sale
Licences are sold from Service Tasmania outlets or purchased over the internet through Department’s web page. There is an increasing trend for purchasing licences over the Internet rather than at Service Tasmania. In 2017/18, 60% of licences were purchased over the internet.

Recreational Fishing Licence transactions for each licensing year

![Graph showing RecFish Internet Transactions and Service Tasmania Transactions for each licensing year from 2012/13 to 2017/18.]

Licences Cards and Digital Licences
Licence cards with fisher’s name, address and licence endorsements are issued to the licence holder after purchase.

Licence cards have historically been mailed out to the licence by an external card provider. The costs associated for handling and posting the plastic licence cards have been increasing – primarily due to increasing postage costs. At the same time service standards have declined – through longer delivery times. Card delivery takes between 1 to 3 weeks.

In December 2016 (after the initial peak licence period) the internet licence transaction process was changed and licence holders who wanted to be mailed a licence card (and Recreational Sea Fishing Guide) had to opt in by checking a box. Licence holders purchasing online who do not check the box only receive their Fishing Certificate card as an image via email.

Compliance Officers are able to determine licence validity by direct database access and fishers are able to check their own licence details on line. The digital licence card process has saved substantial funds. For the 2017/18 licence almost 50% (up from 25% in 2016/17) received a digital licence card and were not mailed licence packages (including the Guide).
The costs and benefits of retaining physical recreational licence cards may be reviewed in the future due to the decreasing economies of scale associated with production and handling. In addition, wastage may increase, as it is becoming more difficult to predict the number of base stock cards required for printing. Initially, costs could be saved by redesigning the cards without colour coding indicating the year of validity and having more emphasis on a date field in the variable print data. This can also be reflected in the digital card to reduce set up work each year.

**Licence Contact details, Renewals and Licence cards**

Contact details are important to notify fishers of licence reminders and initiate contact for recreational fishing surveys and communication of fisheries awareness issues – including public health and emergency closures.

The email/mobile contact information has substantially improved in recent years by encouraging all applicants to provide their details and having mandatory contact requirements for all on-line applications, however applicants lodging at Service Tasmania are able to make application without these contacts.

In 2017/18, 91% of licence holders provided their mobile number and 80% their email. The latter figure suggests at least 80% of licence holders could purchase licences and uptake digital licences certificates and licence reminders. In 2017/18 60% of licence holders purchased on-line with a total of 50% issued a digital card. This is a substantial improvement than 2016/17 in which only 25% of licence holders were issued digital licences.

**Telephone Enquiry Service 1300 720 647**

An automated 24/7 telephone enquiry service provides callers with basic information such as emergency closures (biotoxin closures), seasons, catch and size limits. The calls can be diverted for licence enquires, Inland Fisheries Service and Fishwatch. All other diversions from this number is now handled by the Service Tasmania telephone call centre through a service level funding agreement.

In 2017/18 there was over 1800 calls made to the telephone enquiry service. Analysis suggests that 42% were diverted to Service Tasmania help line, 32% was diverted for licence enquiries (recreational fisheries staff), 10% to Fishwatch or Inland Fisheries. A total of 16% were answered by the message service (telephone tree automation), and mostly related to the rock lobster information.

In addition there were direct calls made to staff, or through the Department’s 1300 number (i.e not Rec Enquiries). October to February is the busiest period for phone enquiries.
Recreational Sea Fishing Guide

The Recreational Sea Fishing Guide provides comprehensive information and interpretation of the recreational sea fishing rules. It has fishery snapshots, brief details of research, stock trends and potential management considerations.

Guides are distributed to Service Tasmania, tackle shops, information centres and during Fishcare activities. Fishers purchasing licences at Service Tasmania are provided the Recreational Sea Fishing Guide, at the time of purchase. Those purchasing on-line, may choose to be sent a Recreational Sea Fishing Guide (and licence card through the mail). Previous to December 2016, all on-line licence purchasers were automatically sent a licence card and Guide.

A total of 42,500 copies of the Recreational Sea Fishing Guide were designed and printed. This is about 2/3 the number printed five years ago, with fishers increasingly accessing information using the web site, Fish App and social media. In the future lower production volumes may be considered, with view of limiting the wastage through maintaining stock control. In future, the aim is to print sufficient quantities to cover the peak fishing months up about Easter, if stocks run out people will have to rely on the Tas Fish App or web site. The guide can be printed from the web site.

Email Subscription Service

An email subscription service currently operates for around 23,000 subscribers – almost 9000 more than the previous year. The majority of email addresses are derived from the FILMS database – hence a large proportion of subscribers are rock lobster fishers. Other subscribers register via the www.fishing.tas.gov.au website.

The service is used for key notifications including the new licensing year, seasons, and alerts (eg. biotoxin public health). Other information such as research findings and fisheries awareness activities such as Fishcare are included on an opportunistic basis. Email is a highly cost effective contact medium.

Fisheries Tasmania Facebook Page

The Fisheries Tasmania Facebook page is used to communicate messages and alerts to a range of commercial and recreational fisheries and community members. The page currently has around 8000 likes - ~ 2000 more than last year.

The Fishcare Tasmania Facebook group has been maintained to communicate with the Fishcare volunteers.

Fish Measuring Tools – rulers and gauges
The graphics and design of the Fish ID measuring stickers and fish measuring rulers remain the same since November 2015 when the most recent scalefish rules were implemented.

The rulers are available free at Service Tasmania shops and tackle shops, tourist information centres. Stockists can use the online order form from www.fishing.tas.gov.au. Fishcare Tasmania also actively give out the rulers. Due to their cost, and for reasons of simple stock control, gauges are only available to licence holders from Service Tasmania Shops.

**Information Sheets and Pamphlets**

**Flathead Pocket Ruler**

A fold out flathead ruler was initially designed and produced to promote flathead identification and catch and size limits. The image of a flathead on the ruler illustrates an actual size flathead. They are available from Fishcare displays. Stocking these in tackle shops is being considered.

**Fishing Hotspot maps**

The fishing maps were recently updated. These maps are targeted towards shore fishers, particularly novice saltwater anglers and tourists. Eleven different regional info map sheets have been produced and include basic information about the rules, fish likely to be caught, their catch limits, and where to get other information. They are available from tackle shops, fishing organisations and visitor centres. They are also available at Fishcare exhibits and activities, noting that these are much cheaper to provide than the recreational guide. They are also available for download from the website.

**Distribution of Guides and Rulers**

The Recreational Sea Fishing Guide is now only mailed direct to licence holders who purchase their licence online and nominate to receive a licence card. Service Tasmania, tackle shops, visitor centres also distribute the Guide and rulers.

Distribution by the licence card holder was almost 50% less than the previous year – due to the increase uptake in on-line licence cards. An additional 1400 guides were distributed to tackle shops and information centres, which may be due to the on-line purchasers seeking out the Guide from tackle shops or due to increased interest from tourist numbers at information centres.
**Web pages: fishing.tas.gov.au**

Significant time is spent by the Fisheries Communications Officer maintaining the web pages.

Topics of importance were emphasised on the Sea Fishing & Aquaculture landing page.

**Recreational Sea Fishing Guide Phone App**

There have been approximately 44,000 downloads of the Tas Fish Guide smartphone app since it was released in September 2013. The free app has fish information, size and bag limits, fishing rules, seasons, alerts and area restrictions using interactive maps. It also incorporates a function to log fish. This is for the fishers’ purposes only, however information can be exported, should the fisher wish to share their log.

**Promoting Fishwatch**

Fishwatch and compliance issues are promoted in the Recreational Sea Fisheries Guide, Web site and at Fishcare events. Fishwatch is also used to report lost gear.

There are some issues with fishers calling Fishwatch for general fishing enquiries. Community awareness is needed to ensure callers understand that this is a Marine Police compliance line which should not be used for general enquiries. The Marine Police landline and email are now listed in the Guide for non-urgent matters.

**Media, News Columns and Radio**

Social media is now generally used instead of print media for general advertising. Public notices were published in regional papers, as required by the Act.

DPIPWE provide marine fisheries news for most editions of Tasmanian Fishing and Boating News. DPIPWE also periodically provide content or topics for fishing commentators.
Fish Platform Measuring Rulers

Stainless steel fish measuring rulers are installed on fishing platforms on an opportunistic basis by staff and Fishcare Volunteers.

Feedback from the public and marine police indicate that platform measuring rulers or small signs are needed to remind fishers (particularly tourists) to measure their catch. Design and production of these will be considered in 2018/19 and a priority will be made for installation using Fishcare volunteers.

Fish id signs

Sixty fish identification signs are installed in key recreational fishing sites around Tasmania.

Promotion of fish survival

Fish de-hookers labelled with “De-hook your fish” and fish handling cloths labelled with “Handle fish using a wet cloth” are used by staff and Fishcare volunteers during responsible fishing demonstrations which incorporate discussions on the significance of the recreational catch, fish survival and valuing fish. A limited amount of de-hookers are given to fishers who actively participate in demonstrating their use.

Posters sales

The Fishes of Tasmania posters continues to be sold at Service Tasmania. Sets of posters may be provided on request when Fishcare attend schools.
Recreational Exhibits – AgFest

Wild Fisheries Management Branch with the assistance of Fishcare volunteers continue to have a major recreational sea fishing exhibit at AgFest. The Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) shared the site with their research displays assisting to connect research, management and fishing.

The 2018 AgFest exhibit was more successful than recent years primarily due to be centrally sited, in the Marine Precinct, which was established by Marine and Safety Tasmania (MAST).

The exhibits demonstrated the vast range of our fisheries awareness materials and activities for all ages. Fishcare volunteers are an essential ingredient of the success of the display. Feedback and direct enquiries indicate attendance at these events is worthwhile. Attendance at AgFest is planned for May 2019.
RECREATIONAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Recreational Fishery Advisory Committee

Three meetings were held in 2017/18.

- Campbell Town – 8 August 2017
- St Helens on 20 October 2017
- Devonport on 16 April 2018

Recreational Fishing Forums

Recreational Fisheries Forums, where research and management information is presented and discussed with recreational fishers aims to enhance community engagement ahead of any formal management reviews.

In 2017/18 Forums were conducted back to back with Recreational Fishery Advisory Committee meetings held at St Helens and Devonport and provided an opportunity for fishers discuss local issues with managers and researchers whose primary purpose was to attend RecFAC meetings.

Fisheries Legislation and Policy

- The Section continues to contribute to consultation, legislation and policy development. The east coast fishery rock lobster continued to be the priority.
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM – FISHCARE

Fishcare Tasmania promotes sustainable fishing and encourages fishers and the wider community to obtain information about the fisheries rules and responsible fishing practices through a range of activities, including:

- Schools education program – talks and excursions;
- Support Fishing clinics, promoting responsible fishing with schools and community groups;
- Conducting fisheries awareness and education exhibits and talks;
- Maintain fishing information signs, measuring rulers; and
- Conducting community liaison patrols.

In 2017/18, Fishcare Tasmania key achievements included:

- Promoted Sustainable fishing practices, distributed fisheries awareness products, conducted responsible fishing activities and exhibits, promotion of the Tasmanian Sea Fishing phone application and maintained fishing information signage. Encourage participation in a healthy outdoor activity.
- School Activities: Twenty Nine events (21 fishing clinics and 8 in class rooms) involved direct contact with almost 1000 students in 8 different schools. Although this is substantially less than previous years, a wide geographic area, including the West Coast, Far south east (Dover) was covered.
- Fishing Clinics: A total of 34 fishing clinics were conducted, including the 21 school fishing clinics to 689 students, and a further 13 clinics were under taken with community groups, such as migrant groups, council run fishing days, to 551 individuals. All clinics had a fisheries awareness component discussing sustainability, correct handling methods, accessing the rules and other information conveying the key Fishcare messages.
- Conducted fishery awareness exhibits at 13 community and school fairs with an estimated event attendance of around 16,000.
- Conducted exhibits at major and regional events, fishery forums and boat shows including AgFest, the Tasmanian Outdoor, Boat and Caravan Show, IFS Liawenee Open days. This provided the estimated 140,000 attendees of these events access and exposure to fishery communication products and key responsible fishing messages and practices. The “kids fishing pool” was at most of these events.
- Targeted fisheries awareness and education with direct contact to recreational fishers by attending fishery forums and boat shows and conducting group patrols at several key fishing locations.
- Maintained sixty signs Fish ID signs around the State and place stainless fish measuring rulers at key fishing platform.
- Kept the Fishcare calendar events on the Fishcare web pages up to date.
- Reviewed WHS and drafted the Fishcare Program Manual, which outlines the role or the program, procedures and risks.
- Fishcare had 56 registered volunteers.
Summary of Fishcare Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Events</th>
<th>No of events</th>
<th>Attendance *</th>
<th>Activity Duration (Hrs)</th>
<th>Staff hours</th>
<th>Volunteer hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School classroom activities</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School fishing clinics or Field activities</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>689</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairs associated with schools or small communities</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15800</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing clinics conducted with community groups</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing Forums/Boat Shows/ Fishing Shows</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6600</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Liaison Patrols eg. Opening of the rock lobster season, Sign and ruler maintenance</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>782</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks and presentations Fishing clubs and other community groups.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional events and Agricultural shows.</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>59095</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Wide Events</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>73000</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liawenee IFS Open Day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Events- non specific to fishing or boating.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>157,266</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>727</td>
<td>2520</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*School events are direct contacts; other events are estimations of the actual event attendance from media or event organisers.
EVALUATION AND PLANNING

The Recreational Fisheries Section undertakes periodic debriefs of major events and at least one planning meeting each year. Status of fish stocks from IMAS fisheries assessments, topics under management review; and feedback from Fishcare volunteers, marine police, RecFAC and from public enquiries made throughout the fishing year is considered in planning future work and priorities.

Evaluation of Recreational Information Sources

The use and effectiveness of communication products is periodically evaluated during the “wash up” component of recreational fishing surveys. The 2016/17 survey\(^2\) of recreational rock lobster and abalone fishers conducted by the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) asked rock lobster fishers about the source and usefulness of information, such as season opening dates, bag and size limits. The Sea Fishing Guide, licence renewal newsletter and DPIPWE website were the most commonly cited sources of information, followed by the Tas Fish Guide phone app and DPIPWE Fishing News email alerts. The Table from the IMAS report is below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information sources used by respondents to find out about Rock Lobster fishing regulations, including those considered to be most useful.</th>
<th>Used No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Most useful No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sea Fishing Guide</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licence renewal newsletter</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPIPWE website</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tas Fish Guide phone app</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends/family</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPIPWE Fishing News email alerts</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisheries Tasmania Facebook</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Addressing Emerging Issues

Fishing from other language and cultural (OLAC) groups

Commenced developing fisheries awareness activities to address emerging issues relating to fishers from other language and cultural (OLAC) groups. Along with the assistance of Fishcare Volunteers and bilingual assistants the recreational fisheries staff conducted a Fisheries Forum targeting the Asian community, and conducted an exhibit targeting international students at the UTAS market day. In addition two bilingual (English/Mandarin) Fishcare volunteers have been recruited.

Compliance Hotspots

The Department receives fairly persistent reports about non-compliance for Margate Wharf, McGee’s Bridge and Beauty Point. These reports are forwarded to Tasmania Police. In addition the Recreational Fisheries Section has:

- Posted on Tas Fisheries Facebook and drafted articles in the Tas Fisheries email news service communicating, the reasons for rules (eg size limits, Shark Refuge Areas), encouraging reporting to Fishwatch; and the fines for non-compliance.
- Fishcare will maintain fish platform measuring rulers in these areas;
- Rec Fisheries may develop small signs with tailored messages.