

Media Release



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For Immediate Release

Flood update: Seafood industry cleaning up fishing grounds

Major clean up operations after Queensland's heavy floods are being extended to marine debris in valuable fishing grounds, by local fishermen and not-for-profit organisations such as OceanWatch Australia.

Commercial fishers from the Bundaberg region will be working with OceanWatch Australia this week to undertake a clean-up of the northern rock training wall in the Burnett River.

A survey by OceanWatch and commercial fishers in January identified a pressing need to remove rubbish left on top of and behind the 6 kilometre long rock wall by the floods, before the summer king tide. A king tide would wash much of the debris on the high tide lines into valuable fishing grounds, further impacting on the local seafood industry which has already been crippled by recent floods.

Executive Chair of OceanWatch Australia, Brad Warren, said "*Commercial fishers, government representatives, and local organisations have committed to a full day's clean-up effort on Friday. We are pleased to be able to assist them in any small way in what has been a very difficult time for the Queensland seafood industry.*"

Local OceanWatch Project Manager Michelle Haase reported that the rock wall and mangroves behind the wall are strewn with a myriad of litter and debris, such as plastic bottles, aluminium cans, plastic bags, timber from houses and boats, parts of sails, kettles, boxes, cigarette lighters, styrofoam, items of clothing, tables, chairs, refrigerators, rope, and corrugated iron.

"All these items have the potential to harm wildlife, pollute waterways and impede commercial fishing operations," she said.

OceanWatch Australia is a national not-for-profit environmental organisation working to advance sustainability in the Australian seafood industry. OceanWatch Australia supports this initiative through funding from the Australian Government's Caring for our Country program.

For further information or to participate in the clean-up, contact Michelle Haase on 4181 2999, or email – michelle@oceanwatch.org.au and at www.oceanwatch.org.au

Media Enquires:

Michelle Haase | Project Manager
OceanWatch Australia Ltd
Landline - (07) 4181 2999 (ext. 123)
Mobile - 0401 890 069

