



The Passing of a Sydney Icon

Peter Doyle, founder of the Doyle's seafood restaurant empire, died on Sunday, December 12th following a series of strokes. Peter received a Medal of the Order of Australia in 1988 for his services to the commercial fishing industry. He is best remembered for Doyle's seafood restaurants, which grew from a small seafood cafe in Watson's Bay in the 1950's to one of Sydney's international tourist attractions.

Less well known was his significant involvement in the development of the Maritime Museum, the Sydney Fish Market, and Ocean Watch Australia. Peter initiated Ocean Watch in March 1989 as a direct response by industry to public concern about the reported effects of pollution on the States fishing resources. Ocean Watch was quickly supported by consignors to the Sydney Fish Market and many buyers who agreed to pay a levy on boxes sold at the Market to seed the organisation's establishment.

Ocean Watch has since gone on to improve public awareness of the importance of maintaining Australia's marine environment and promote action from all sectors to protect it.

In the words of Duncan Leadbitter, inaugural Ocean Watch Executive Officer, "Peter was an extraordinary individual, as comfortable with kings as he was with paupers. He has dined with the Queen Elizabeth II and George Bush Snr. but was just as comfortable with a grass roots fisherman. He crossed the political divide and was a true industry leader".

He will be sadly missed by all.



Changing of the Guard

It is with real regret that we say goodbye to Elton Robinson, our Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF) Officer for the last two and a half years. During this time, Elton has run with numerous innovative projects to reduce the incidence of bycatch in the ETBF. These include the ETBF code of practice for responsible fishing, the introduction of de-hookers and line-cutters, the underwater bait setting chute, trials of



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weighted swivels and tori lines for seabird mitigation and turtle education and research workshops for fishers, to name a few. All of us at SeaNet and Ocean Watch wish him the very best for his future, as I'm sure so too, do those of you that have met him along the way.

Dave Kreutz

Dave has replaced Elton as of mid December. Dave has been a professional fisher since 1990 in various NSW offshore and estuary fisheries and a skipper in the ETBF since 1995. He has been involved with Threat Abatement Plans, Pelagic Working Groups and underwater setting chute programs and is a committee member of Southern Seabird Solutions, an international body for the promotion and implementation of "seabird friendly" sustainable fishing practices. In his new role, Dave's aim is, together with industry, establish the ETBF as a world leading environmentally sustainable pelagic fishery for seabirds, turtles and other bycatch species.



Dave can be contacted on: 0413461120 or at kayleeanne@tsn.cc.

Fishing Line and Nets Recovery and Recycling

Monofilament line is another name for the single-strand, high-density, nylon fishing line used on fishing reels and in the manufacture of fishing nets. When discarded into the environment it can cause injury and death to marine fauna through entanglement, digestion and damage caused by attached hooks.



One of the trial monofilament recycling bins, installed at popular recreational fishing spots throughout the Noosa Shire.

The Monofilament Recovery & Recycling Program in Florida (USA) is a highly successful initiative designed to educate the public on the impacts caused by recreational monofilament line left in the environment, to encourage recycling through a network of line recycling bins and drop-off locations, and conduct volunteer monofilament line cleanup events.

On researching the success of the Florida based program, SeaNet Program Manager, Emma Bradshaw initiated an Australian version. The Fishing Line Recovery Project is currently underway as a three month trial, overseen by the Noosa Integrated Catchment Association and SeaNet. The project is being conducted by an industrial placement student from the University of Queensland (UQ).

The trial will raise public awareness of the hazards associated with waste recreational fishing line and the new options for proper disposal. As a result, aquatic and terrestrial flora and fauna, tidal and intertidal habitats (mangroves, seagrass beds and sand flats, etc.) will be better protected.

Twelve fishing line recovery bins have been installed at popular fishing spots throughout the Noosa Shire. Despite one being

vandalised, the remaining eleven have been well utilised. Contents of the bins are collected weekly, analysed and quantified.

To ensure the long term viability of the project, evaluation methods are essential. Studies are being carried out to determine regions of high fishing line waste and fisher concentration in consultation with local river rangers to compare past trends.



To maximise the public's positive response to the project, raising awareness is a priority. This has been addressed through local newspaper articles, television exposure, displays at local bait and tackle shops, media exposure through websites and newsletter articles, local river rangers "spreading the word", and Noosa Shire Council endorsement.

SeaNet is currently investigating options to recycle the collected monofilament. Recent developments are extremely positive with a NSW recycling company analysing samples and the associated contaminants to assess feasibility. The company is also in the process of analysing monofilament line from the Eastern Tuna and Billfish fishery, again with a high potential for success.

Discarded commercial fishing nets, or "ghost nets" are a major threat to marine fauna. They continue to catch everything in their wake (including turtles and marine mammals) and being plastic based, do not degrade for hundreds of years. In the Gulf of Carpentaria, the prevalence of ghost nets is a major environmental concern. In 2003, 420 nets were collected from a 23km survey site in the Gulf, of which 10% were larger than 10m², all of which were from foreign fishing vessels fishing in Indonesian waters¹.

FACT!

**MONOFILAMENT
FISHING LINE TAKES
600 YEARS TO
BREAK DOWN!**

However, the NSW recycling company is also positive that these nets are recyclable. This could be a major opportunity to mitigate this environmental problem and in the process manufacture useful merchandise such as the company's first product (the fishing buoy above), made from recycled plastic/tyre rubber composite.

For further information contact Emma Bradshaw – SeaNet Program Manager on: (07) 5514 6021 or 5533 7933, e-mail: ebradshaw@oceanwatch.org.au.

1. White, D. 2004. *Marine Debris in Northern Territory Waters 2003: WWF Report*, WWF, Sydney.

Net Fishers Association Cleans Up Parham Reef

Recently, the SA Net Fishers Association, in conjunction with SeaNet was awarded an EnviroFund grant to remove non-biological rubbish from Parham Reef.

The reef is situated approximately 60km north of Adelaide, 1nm from the shore, and unfortunately has been the dumping ground for urban rubbish. There is the belief that the rubbish provides habitat and is therefore a haven for fish, however the pollution may be



leaching chemicals and other water soluble pollutants. Furthermore, it may be degrading the natural environment that is supporting large biodiversity of which ~80% is endemic.

The Net Fishers Association will be completing a preliminary dive on the reef early in the new year to assess the extent, type and feasibility of removing the rubbish (some of which may require specialised equipment). The clean up dive is planned for late February 2005, when the tides are at their lowest on the reef.

Follow up dives to assess and monitor the recovery of the reef will be conducted at three, six, and 12 months. For more information contact Claire van der Geest on 0429 984 323 or email: seanet3@safic.com.au.

First National Prawn Conference

A very successful first National Prawn Conference was held in Cairns on 28th, 29th and 30th of November. Delegates from prawn trawl fisheries around Australia attended, including, marketers, researchers, managers and catching sectors, the complete cross section of the prawn industry, including aquaculture.

At the completion of the conference, a media statement was released stating that the Australian prawn industry was set to become a new influential, unified voice. The conference had been pivotal in identifying the major challenges to the development of a healthy national prawn industry and the decision to close ranks and meet those challenges was unanimous.

The following resolution was passed. "That the National Prawn Industry Conference commits to unifying the Australian prawn industry into a single powerful voice to manage those issues that threaten the profitability of prawn fishers and to develop opportunities to advance the interests of the industry. That a working party, representative of the various sectors, be formed to develop a blueprint for unity, including structure, mission statement, scope of activities and funding".

The Australian prawn fisheries have already established the working group to progress development of an organisation that represents the industry nationally. Membership of the working group was drawn from each fishery and key processor organisations.

Thanks to the generosity of MG Kailis, Ocean Watch and SeaNet were able to share their stand at the conference. The SeaNet promotional merchandise was very popular with the delegates. The hopper handbook made it's first public appearance and the 50 copies disappeared like "hot cakes".



SeaNet stand at the first National Prawn Conference courtesy of M.G. Kailis.

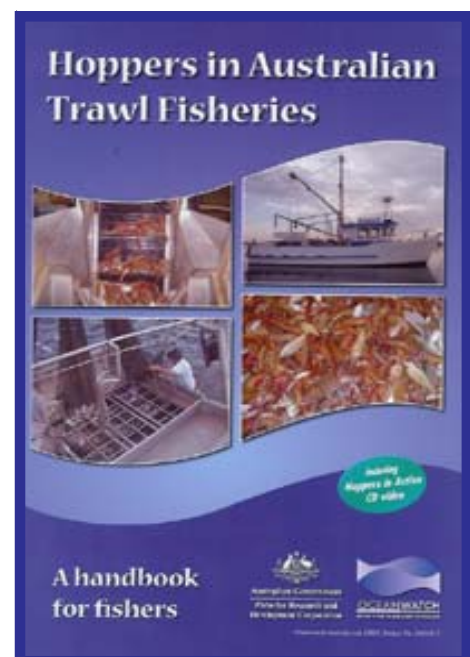


Official sponsors of the conference include: Fisheries Research & Development Corporation; Australian Fisheries Management Authority; South Australian Research and Development Institute; WA Department of Fisheries; MG Kailis; Queensland Department of Primary Industries & Fisheries; A. Raptis & Sons Pty Ltd; SGWCPFA; Harbourside Coldstores; MGA Insurance; QSIA and EcoFish.

Hopper Handbook - FRDC Project No 2003/012

The hopper handbook is an information package targeted at prawn trawl fishers around Australia to inform them of the benefits of hoppers as an onboard product handling system. The handbook aims to:

- detail the design, operation and use of hoppers (back deck water tanks/sorting devices) in trawl fisheries around Australia;
- enable the sharing of industry knowledge on hoppers among fishers from all Australian trawl fisheries;
- provide readily accessible information to fishers on the use and application of hoppers;
- facilitate the broader adoption among trawl fisheries of the best practice use of hoppers in fisheries where hoppers are not yet widely used but may be useful, and help stimulate the development and uptake of new and suitable designs;
- provide a tool to inform and educate the general community, fisheries and environmental managers about the initiatives developed and adopted by Australian trawl fisheries to reduce the impacts of trawling on the aquatic environment; and
- to work towards achieving sustainable operating practices and improved economic efficiency.



The information presented in the handbook has been obtained through interviews and discussions with many trawl fishers across Australia, hopper manufacturers and through surveys conducted with fisheries researchers, fishing companies and other industry bodies.

The handbook is primarily a technical manual for fishers. It is however, a useful resource for others interested in the environmental management of Australian trawl fisheries. For copies of the Hopper Handbook contact Ocean Watch on (02) 9660 2262 or email: ocean@oceanwatch.org.au.

SeaNet Secures Funds to Trial Circle Hooks

The Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon. Warren Truss, recently announced the National Landcare Program (NLP) Innovation Grants. The innovation grants are being provided to promote sustainable primary industry practices. Over ½ million dollars has been provided to 20 projects throughout Australia.

SeaNet South Australia, was awarded \$62,800 to conduct comprehensive trials of circle hooks throughout the SA Marine Scale Fishery. The trial will be conducted on both longline and handline gear which is predominately used to target snapper, whiting and shark.

Circle hooks are believed to reduce the incidence of internal hooking of fish, reduce handling times when releasing fish and reduce the catch rate of undersized and non-target species.

The main objectives of the current trial are to:

1. ascertain the effectiveness of the circle hooks, compared to "J" hooks, at catching the target species while minimising undersized and non-target catch,
2. determine whether circle hooks, hook the fish in the mouth more regularly than "J" hooks, and;
3. determine whether circle hooks reduce the handling times of landed fish.

For more information on the trial progress contact Claire van der Geest on 0429 984 323 or email seanet3@safic.com.au.



FRDC Workshop

R&D Solutions to Best Practice Environmental Management of Prawn Trawl Fisheries

The workshop was held in Cairns at QDPI&F Nth Fisheries Centre on December 1st following the National Prawn Conference. Trawl fisheries managers and researchers from prawn trawl fisheries throughout Australia attended the workshop, along with trawl industry representatives and netmakers.

The objective of the workshop was to increase awareness between researchers and managers from different jurisdictions of current research and development (R&D), to identify best practice R&D methods and to determine required R&D for the next 3 to 5 years.

Popeye netmaking presented the fish excluder BRD as one of the innovations in bycatch mitigation. Steve Ayres from the AMC advised that BRD development needs to continue with fresh ideas and we all need to start thinking laterally and perhaps outside the square for the next innovations in bycatch reduction.

Co-management initiatives from the NPF were discussed. Real time fisheries management from the Spencer Gulf trawl fishers was also presented. Impacts of prawn trawling on the benthos was addressed by Dave Sterling with new otter board and ground chain designs.

Implications for target species was addressed by Ib Svane from SARDI aquatic sciences. Patrick Hone advised that the FRDC's new focus is on people and the exchange of ideas through a mentoring process would form part of transferring best practice information at a practical level between fisheries.

For further information on the workshop contact Denis Ballam on: 0403 065 723 or: burbrook@bigpond.com.



SeaNet WA

SeaNet WA has had a busy few months with several projects in the final stages of development.

The draft South Coast Purse Seine Managed Fishery Code of Practice and accompanying handling manual has been distributed to all licensees and other industry stakeholders for a 21 day comments and submissions period.

A great deal of effort has been put into facilitating fishermen's input into these documents, including several trips to Albany and a recent "tour" which included visiting the ports of Esperance and Bremmer Bay, ending in Albany. The code has been developed through direct input from person's operating in this fishery including experts on the various fields the code addresses.



A successful application submitted by SeaNet WA on behalf of Lake Argyle fishers to the Industry Development Unit, has seen operators in the Lake Argyle Freshwater Catfish Managed Fishery receive funding for a two year project to pursue gear development. The Lake Argyle Bycatch Action Plan has been completed and is due to be released early January 2005.

In conjunction with MG Kailis, Carl Bevilacqua (SeaNet WA) has also developed a cheaper, alternative safety hook knife (above). Contact Carl on (08) 9244 2933 or email: seanet@wafic.org.au.

Code of Practice: The Victorian Rock Lobster Fishing Industry Reduces Risks of Whale Entanglements in Lobster Fishing Gear

The Victorian Rock Lobster Fishery traditionally has little interaction with whales. There is only one recorded instance of a whale being entangled in Rock Lobster fishing gear in Victorian waters. However, the growing populations of many cetacean species suggests that whale entanglements may increase.

Fishing practices sometimes involve leaving long trailing ropes on the surface to allow easy recovery, and unbaited pots being left at sea. The excess rope in the water column and on the surface presents the risk for whale entanglements. The code outlines simple mitigation measures for fishers to reduce the risk of entanglement.

These measures are considered normal practice by many fishers, but an industry wide acknowledgment of standard practices was deemed appropriate. The measures include:

- Ensuring that the length of rope between the pot and floats is appropriate to the depth and tidal conditions being worked;

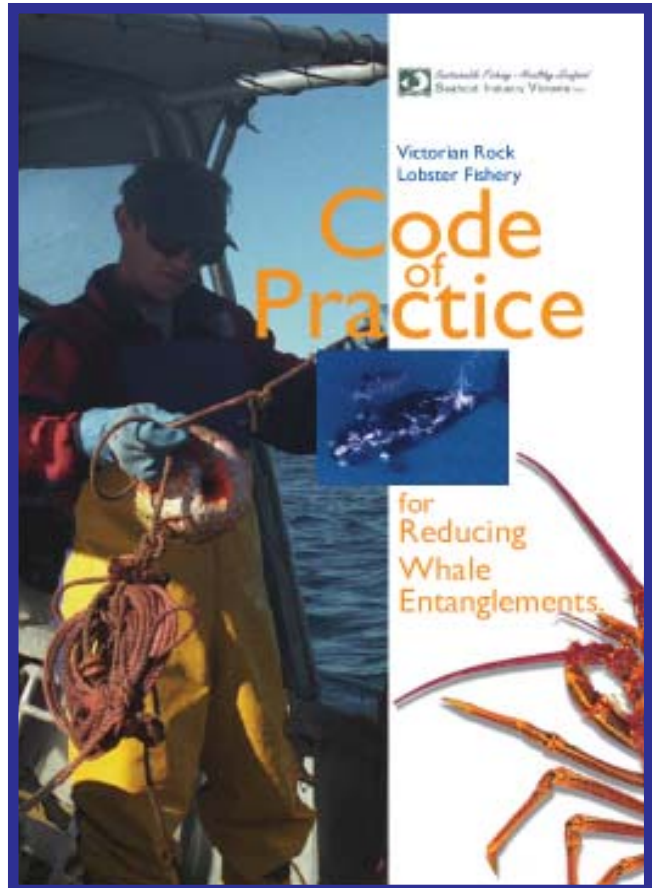


- Regularly checking pots;
- Returning pots to shore when not fishing for long durations; and
- Promptly reporting entanglements if they occur.

Other contents of the code include an identification guide and ecology briefing for whale species which may be encountered, a brief description of the fishery and management plan, and an outline of the disentanglement program.

The code encourages industry involvement in a disentanglement program managed by the Department of Sustainability and Environment. The program will involve cooperative training with industry and departmental staff members on disentanglement procedures.

The program is based on a keggung technique that has been developed and used successfully in North America. Industry participation will bring ready vessels and expert seamanship skills to the program, beginning in the new year.



The code of practice was stipulated as an action in the fishery management plan under ecological integrity and industry participation objectives, as a measure to reduce the risk of fishers activities interacting with protected species. This issue could not easily be addressed through further regulation of the fishery. By adopting a voluntary but formalised measure, the industry can address this risk while incurring no further management costs.

The code was developed by industry members through SIV, with input from state and federal government stakeholders and SeaNet. It is anticipated that this code will become part of a wider ranging code addressing other aspects of the industry's activities. The code was published with the intention that vessels should carry it on board, with waterproof copies distributed to all licence holders and paper copies for other stakeholders.

Distribution coincided with the beginning of the current fishing season in November. Rock Lobster fishing using pots is an environmentally benign practice that has little impact on the environment. By encouraging a better understanding of environmental aspects of the fishery in the community, it is hoped that perception of the industry may improve.

For copies of the Code, contact Jim Newman on: (03) 9824 0744 or: seanet@siv.com.au.

