



12 February 2020

Guy Barnett, Minister for Primary Industries and Water

Recreational fishing remains a favourite pastime for Tasmanians

The most recent statewide survey of recreational fishing shows that almost one in four Tasmanians cast a line and that flathead continues to be the catch of the day.

Conducted every five years, the *Statewide Survey of Recreational Fishing (Marine and Inland) in Tasmania* by the University of Tasmania's Institute for Marine and Antarctic Science (IMAS) provides a snapshot of the people who fish, where they go and what they catch.

Minister for Primary Industries and Water Guy Barnett said the information gathered from the survey highlights recreational fishing's overall significance to Tasmania's lifestyle and economy.

"The survey found fishers spent an average of \$1800 per person or a total of \$161 million on boats, fuel, fishing gear and other equipment, delivering economic and social benefits to the local community," Mr Barnett said.

The Department's Director of Marine Resources Dr Ian Dutton said more than 3,000 households were surveyed in 2017/18 with almost 600 of these households then providing details of their fishing activities in a 12 month period.

"The survey, funded by inland and sea fishing licence fees, along with added support from Inland Fisheries Service, provides authorities with vital information to ensure that our recreational fisheries continue to be responsibly and sustainably managed," Dr Dutton said.

IMAS scientist and study leader, Associate Professor Jeremy Lyle, said the survey is designed to understand recreational fishing participation and catch as well as any recent developments in the fishery.

"Since the first statewide survey in 2000/01, we have seen changes in the fishery as well as some consistency. For instance, Flathead have continued to be the mainstay of the marine fishery while Trout are the most common freshwater catch," Assoc Prof Lyle said.

Other key results from the most recent survey show:

- almost one in four Tasmanians (aged 5 or older), or almost 106,000 people, went fishing during the 2017-18 survey period;
- Flathead was the most popular recreationally caught fish in Tasmania accounting for 70 per cent of all scalefish;
- Around 1.7 million flathead were caught with 56 per cent released;
- Almost 75 per cent of fishing days were in salt water; the remainder in fresh water;
- Males aged between 45-59 years represented the highest numbers of fishers.

The survey also identified other important information - for example recent findings show that the recreational harvest of sand flathead continues to be larger than the commercial harvest in Tasmania.

This finding supports other research which shows that sand flathead populations are subject to heavy recreational fishing pressure and means the Department will maintain a watching brief on the stock status for the species, including conducting more research.

More information about the survey results including copies of the full IMAS report are available at: www.fishing.tas.gov.au/whats-the-catch