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VIDEO TRIAL FOR DATA COLLECTION

New high-tech video equipment capable of automatically monitoring fishing operations is being trialled by AFMA in an effort to improve the collection of fisheries data and reduce costs for fishermen. The trial will assess the effectiveness of specially designed 'on-board' video cameras in collecting fisheries data and will examine their potential for reducing the number of human observers placed on-board fishing vessels.

The equipment, which is currently used in several fisheries in the United States, Canada and New Zealand, can be used for gathering both setting and haul information. It can record target species and bycatch taken on a 'hook by hook' basis. The videos use sensors attached to fishing equipment to record when fishing operations begin and end. At the end of a fishing trip the recorded data is collected and analysed.

Bob Stanley from AFMA was in Albany WA on Monday 18 April, installing the equipment on the *Avro Chieftain*. The boat departed for Heard Island on Tuesday, and will return at the end of May. The equipment is also being trialled on the *Ellidi* in Tasmania next week. When the boats return AFMA will analyse the data and determine the equipments suitability for use in other Commonwealth managed fisheries. For further information contact Bob Stanley on 6272 5416 or email bob.stanley@afma.gov.au

NEW ONLINE QUOTA CONVERSION CALCULATOR

A new quota conversion calculator is available for use on AFMA's website. The online calculator gives operators an indication of how kilograms of quota for a variety of species in the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery convert into Statutory Fishing Rights (SFRs). It can also convert numbers of SFRs back to kilograms of quota.

You can find the calculator on the website at <http://www.afma.gov.au/fisheries/sess/default.php>.

FIRST MEETING OF THE SMALL PELAGIC FISHERY MAC

The first Small Pelagic Fishery Management Advisory Committee (SPFMAC) meeting will be held in Canberra on 27- 28 April 2005. Items on the agenda include developing a Statutory Management Plan for the Small Pelagic Fishery and recommending trigger catch limits for 2005/06. The agenda for this meeting is up on AFMA's website at <http://www.afma.gov.au/fisheries/pelagic/mac/20050427/default.php>

REMINDER: CALL FOR INTEREST IN CHAIRING MANAGEMENT ADVSORY COMMITTEES

AFMA is looking for suitably qualified people for the position of Chair of one or more of its Management Advisory Committees (MACs). MACs act as the primary liaison body between AFMA and those with an interest in Commonwealth fisheries, providing advice on management arrangements, research, compliance and finance.

Each MAC (there are currently 12) consists of up to nine members drawn from the commercial industry, fisheries management, environment and scientific communities, and state governments. The MAC Chair is the primary communication link between the fishery and the AFMA Board and plays a key role in ensuring effective discussion of issues affecting each fishery and communicating recommendations to the AFMA Board.

If you have experience in fisheries or resource management, chairing meetings, excellent communication skills, and the ability to identify strategic objectives and facilitate their achievement, please contact Garry Collins, Manager Planning, AFMA on (02) 6272 5187 by Friday, 29 April 2005.

WESTERN TUNA AND BILLFISH (WTBF) MAC

The WTBF MAC will be holding its next meeting on 26-27 April 2005 in Fremantle, WA. This includes the MAC's Annual Public Meeting at 9-10 am on Tuesday 26 April. The main items on the agenda include the Management Plan and grant of Statutory Fishing Rights (SFRs) in the fishery, draft fishery and MAC budgets 2005/06, Offshore Constitutional Settlement, Striped Marlin TACC, WTBF interactions with SBT, and management of pelagic sharks.

ESTABLISHING ECOSYSTEM BASED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

AFMA is taking a holistic, 'ecosystem-based' approach to managing its fisheries through its Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management (EBFM) project.

The three year EBFM project will run until mid 2006 and will provide benefits for the marine environment while assisting fisheries to be sustainable and productive into the future. The EBFM project is funded through the Australian Government Natural Heritage Trust. In 2003 and 2004, the project supported the development of ecological risk assessments (ERAs) for Commonwealth fisheries and ecosystem data plans for three AFMA fisheries. A range of activities are planned for the EBFM project during 2005 and 2006 and include:

- Continuing the ERAs for Commonwealth fisheries;
- Developing strategic ecosystem data plans for all AFMA fisheries;
- Improving the extension and communication activities of AFMA, particularly in regard to bycatch and non-target issues;
- Enhancing AFMA data collections through increased data collection and management processes;
- Assisting a number of fisheries investigate alternative management options; and
- Providing incentives for implementing actions/devices to reduce fishing impacts on bycatch and the marine environment.

For more information on the EBFM project and activities being undertaken, please contact Tim Smith, AFMA Environment Policy Section, on (02) 6272 5631 or Tim.Smith@afma.gov.au.

SEAFOOD DIRECTIONS 2005: NETTING PROFITS

The draft program for Australia's peak seafood industry conference, Seafood Directions, is now available. The conference, to be hosted by Sydney Fish Market, is being held on 12-14 September 2005 at Star City, Sydney. The conference is an initiative of the Australian Seafood Industry Council (ASIC) and sponsored by the Fisheries research and Development Corporation (FRDC).

A unique conference program has been put together highlighting the latest trends and crucial issues which have an impact on Australian seafood businesses. The conference will examine key strategies and develop a course of action for a sustainable, profitable and resilient seafood industry in Australia. *Online registrations will be available shortly.* Visit <http://www.seafooddirections.com/> and click on the program link.

MARINE PROTECTED AREAS - WHAT'S HAPPENING IN 2005?

In 2005, the federal Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEH) will continue to work with industry, the community and other Australian and State government agencies to develop a network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Australia's south-east region.

For a recap on the where this is up to, outcomes so far and a summary of what is planned for 2005, go to 'MPAs' on the DEH website. You'll find the latest information on the MPA development process, including maps, key actions, how DEH intends to handle fishing and zoning issues and who to contact to have your say. Check it out at <http://www.deh.gov.au/coasts/mpa/southeast/planned-2005/index.html>.

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