

## Media Release

### Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

Friday 13 February 2015

---

## Swordfish researchers, recreational fishers in quest for knowledge

Australians will soon know more about the effects of an emerging recreational fishery targeting Swordfish, thanks to a new study by researchers at the University of Tasmania's Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS).

The results will provide fisheries managers with information to assess the effectiveness of current recreational fisheries management of the species as well as inform recreational fishers of best practices to minimise their impact on the fish, and promote responsible fishing.

According to fisheries ecologist and study project leader, Dr Sean Tracey, the research will reveal critical information on recreational fishing impacts on swordfish.

State-of-the-art satellite tag technology will be used to inform scientists of the fate of Swordfish once they are released after being caught using recreational rod and line fishing techniques.

The technology will also allow monitoring of the fish for up to a year after release. This will identify whether the fish remain in the waters adjacent to Tasmania, or migrate up the east coast to the warmer waters where Swordfish are more commonly found and also where spawning occurs.

Releasing fish is considered a positive step to reduce pressure on fish stocks if post-release survival is high. If low survival rates are found however, other options such as a harvest-only fishery could be considered.

While there is a commercial swordfish industry in Australia, the recreational sector is only just emerging.

Dr Tracey said targeted recreational fishing for Swordfish began last year with a handful of fish caught but with several large fish caught recently, it is expected that increasing numbers of fishers will venture to the east coast of Tasmania to try their luck.

“Collaboration between research, the recreational sector and management so closely at the inception of a recreational fishery is a unique precedent. Strong engagement with the

recreational fishing sector is vital so that all fishers are exposed to the project findings to improve their knowledge and ultimately promote responsible recreational fishing practices.” Dr Tracey said.

The project is supported by the Australian Government Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, the Tasmanian Government, as well as Game Fishing Association of Australia and TARFish.

Information released on behalf of IMAS by:  
University of Tasmania Communications and Media Office  
Phone: (03) 6226 2691  
Email: [Media.Office@utas.edu.au](mailto:Media.Office@utas.edu.au)



**Australian Government**  
**Fisheries Research and  
Development Corporation**



**Tasmania**  
Explore the possibilities