

Let's hope these FADs don't go out of fashion

FISHING
By DAVID LOCKWOOD

FADS come and fads go, but the 15 fish aggregating devices temporarily deployed off the NSW coast between Byron Bay and Jervis Bay should become a permanent feature.

The FADs are part of a two-year pilot study conducted by the NSW Department of Primary Industries and funded by the NSW fishing licence. The study, to end next year, seeks to enhance recreational fishing opportunities, create research opportunities and determine the success of FADs in attracting fish.

Primary Industries is monitoring catch rates at the FADs. Anglers will tell you there is no doubt the FADs are working.

The FADs, buoys anchored to the seabed, attract marine growth then small fish and inevitably larger predators. Head to the FADs in summer and you will find hundreds of dolphin fish or mahi mahi - and sometimes marlin.

FADs have been deployed for summer off Byron Bay, Coffs Harbour, South West Rocks, Port Macquarie, Laurieton, Forster, Port Stephens, Swansea, Terrigal, Sydney, Wollongong and Jervis Bay.

Game-fishing clubs will deploy their own FADs this summer. There is talk of expanding the program to include extra buoys in deep water locations such as Browns Mountain.

For Sydney anglers, there are three FADs to the north, south and east of the harbour. FADs co-ordinates can be found at www.fisheries.nsw.gov.au/rec/sw/fad/fad-locations.htm.

Meanwhile, the warm summer current continues to bring improved game and sport fishing.

Steve Haygarth tagged three yellowfin to 20-odd kilos in about 160 metres off Broken Bay last weekend. The water was green, he said,

but loaded with slimy mackerel, especially in about 130m off Long Reef.

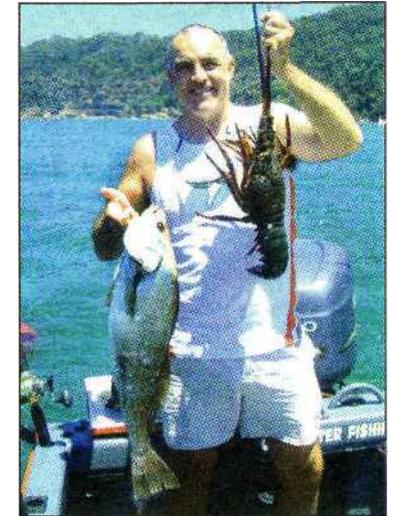
During the week, Glenn Hunter bagged yellowfin to 35kg on the shelf off Botany Bay.

Snapper have been slow to fire in the inshore green water, but the trevally don't seem to mind.

Rat kingfish are being taken on the troll around the Heads, with some nice Aussie salmon and solid tailor.

In recent weeks Greg Joyes has caught three lobsters of a couple of kilos each on baits intended for jewfish.

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LINE CALL: Rob Jeffress with a lobster and jewfish landed on the Hawkesbury.