



Midweek (Mackay & Sarina)

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Fishers united in the cause

Saving our great fisheries

By LANCE MURRAY

A NEW fishing group – Queensland Recreational Fishing Network is up and running and recently unveiled its website qrfn.org.

Spokesperson for the group Kim Martin of Yeppoon said the body was not a representative group, but rather a group of like-minded people of vast experience and knowledge of recreational fisheries management, who are gravely concerned about fish stock sustainability, particularly inshore species.

They are also canvassing the urgent need for all mackerel species to be line fished only.

Their primary goals include, but are not limited to: the assessment and implementation of numerous net-free areas along the length of the Queensland coast, especially in areas of high recreational fishing, these should be commenced in 2014.

What will QRFN do?

1. QRFN will provide independent information, advice and opinion regarding the condition and management of fish stocks

in Queensland to the relevant fishing sector and any relevant fisheries agencies, organizations, businesses and individuals with interest in the well being of the states fisheries.

2. Advocate, campaign and lobby in pursuit of achieving significant improvement in the way fish resources are managed and allocated.

3. And will at all times adopt positions and campaign with the long-term interests of achieving a sustainable fishery in Queensland as its top priority.

Foundation members of the organization are from Weipa, Cairns, Mackay, Yeppoon/Rockhampton, Hervey Bay, Sunshine Coast and south-east Queensland and have been liaising via the internet for about five years, and decided 12 months ago to semi formalize the group and produce a website.

Gooseponds tilapia progress update

THE Tilapia eradication army is gathering strength.

About 20 residents have

put their hand up to assist. Tim Marsden, marine biologist from Reef Catchments, who is managing the eradication program and I have been playing phone tag for three days last week.

I can share with readers that a high level stakeholders meeting is planned for June 25, and Tim has asked me to contact all the volunteers and advise them the weed removal working bee at the Gooseponds is likely to be scheduled for early July.

Bruce Nash owner of complete angler North Mackay has generously offered to host a sausage sizzle/barbecue and provide drinks for all those who attend the working bee.

Tackle World Whitsunday have phoned seeking a donation bucket and have volunteered to lend a hand where possible.

Members of the Mackay Area Fish Stocking Association, in partnership with Mackay Recreational Fishers Alliance Inc are conducting a “buy a Barra-save our goose ponds” campaign. You can make contact by emailing Keith Day on

keith.day@crawlco.com.au or contacting Lance Murray 0411 550 684 email lancemurray@mcs.net.au.

As readers can appreciate; appropriate protocol must be adhered to, approval must be sought from Fisheries Queensland for the release of barramundi, and the eradication strategy has to be endorsed by DAFF – the authority responsible for pest incursion. Hopefully by the end of June plan A and plan B will be made public.

If by some terrible chance these fish end up in our stocked impoundments such as Kinchant Dam, Eungella Dam and Teemurra Dam, 20 years of volunteer fishing stocking will be virtually destroyed.

If they breach the Gooseponds, in five to 10 years the fishery from Cape Conway to Cape Palmerston will be stuffed, and one of the best barramundi nurseries on the coast of Queensland – Goorganga Plains could be wiped out.

All indications are the pests are confined to the Gooseponds for the moment.

We can't emphasise how serious this is to regional