



MAFRI Research & Education

Anglers come up trumps!

Paul Hamer, Marine and Freshwater Resources Institute

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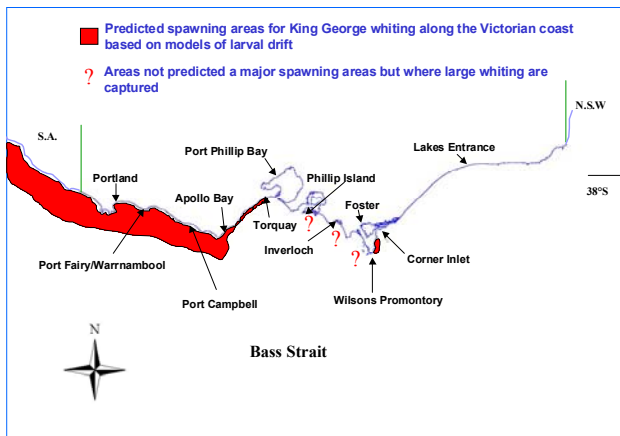
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Scientists at the Marine and Freshwater Resources Institute (MAFRI) have been delighted by anglers response to their call for volunteers to help them catch adult King George whiting in coastal waters.

“We have sent out information packs to over fifty interested anglers and they are already catching whiting for the project” said Paul Hamer.

Paul and his colleagues are trying to locate the spawning grounds of King George whiting. Earlier research and computer modelling suggested that King George whiting are spawning in a 300 km region off the western Victorian and South Australian coastlines (see below). There is also a possibility of spawning occurring off Wilson’s Promontory.



Predicted King George whiting spawning locations

Funded by the Recreational Fishing License Trust Account Grants Program and Fisheries Victoria, Paul has been recruiting willing recreational fishers to catch King George whiting.

“We are very happy with the response of anglers and their enthusiasm for the project.”

“To date anglers have sent in more than 100 King George whiting frames from fish caught from waters off Portland, Warrnambool, Apollo Bay, Lorne/Kennett River, Torquay, Westernport Bay, Shallow Inlet and Corner Inlet”, Paul says.

“None of the frames collected yet show any evidence of spawning, which is in line our expectations” Paul says. “We expect spawning to occur between April and July.”

However, for the project to be a success, it is vital that MAFRI continue to receive fish caught in coastal waters in the months leading up to and including King George whiting’s expected spawning period.

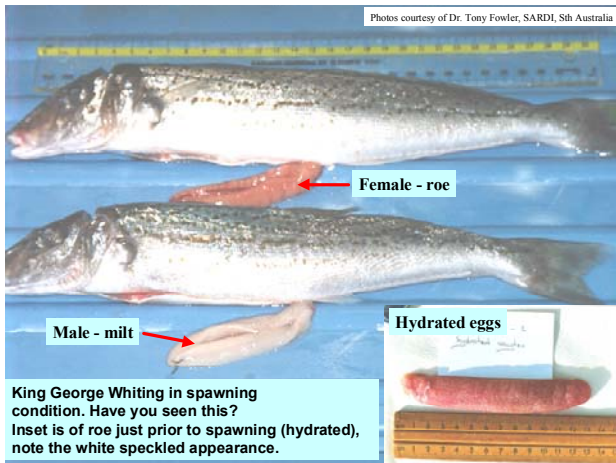
MAFRI also needs to ensure that fish are collected from all waters in and around the suspected spawning locations, so that they can define the geographic extent of the spawning grounds.

“We would like more anglers from Inverloch, Wilson Promontory, Apollo Bay and Port Campbell to become involved in the project”, Paul says. “Also anglers from the Lakes Entrance region interested in fishing for King George whiting in those coastal waters would be providing important information to the project.”

Anglers participating in the program are required to weigh and record the length of adult King George whiting, fillet the fish, “save” the carcasses, including the guts, by freezing them and drop off the frozen frames to centralised collection points.



The carcasses, containing the fish’s ear bone (used to determine its age) and reproductive organs (used to determine spawning condition see figure below) are used by MAFRI to fill in the gaps about the reproductive biology of this species.



King George whiting in spawning condition

The results of this study will add greatly to our knowledge of the life history of this important species and identify key habitats associated with spawning. This information will be used by managers to maintain a sustainable King George whiting fishery in Victoria.

Recreational fishers wanting to be involved in the study should contact Paul Hamer on 03 53580288 to register their interest.

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