



redmap 
SPOT. LOG. MAP.

Website tracks **shifts** **in species ranges**

TAFI is abuzz with the expectation of the launch of the Range Expansion Database and Mapping Project. REDMAP is a new interactive website designed to collect data from the marine community about how marine species may be changing their distribution in Tasmanian waters.

Marine species are undergoing range expansions or shifts, with species more often associated with waters around Victoria, South Australia and even New South Wales being caught or seen by local fishers and divers in Tasmania. Species already present in the State's north are moving much further south. In fact, there is evidence to suggest that in Tasmania more than several dozen species have demonstrated significant alterations to their usual geographical ranges over the last few decades.

Shifts in range for many of these species are thought to be a consequence of waters warming due to the effects of global climate change. Waters off the East Coast of Tasmania are warming at 3-4 times the global average as this area gets a 'double-whammy' - the underlying warming that the rest of the ocean gets and an increased extension and persistence of the East Australian Current.

The database forming the backbone of the REDMAP site will allow the local community to act as 'citizen scientists' and record scientific data by logging sightings of species caught or observed outside their usual or known range. REDMAP representatives spoke

to many people throughout Tasmania and were surprised at the extent of changes that recreational and commercial fishers and scuba divers have noticed in local marine environments.

Some changes mentioned were stark, such as the effect the long-spined sea urchin (*Centrostephanus rogersii*) has had on East Coast reefs that are frequented by divers and now left relatively barren in the wake of hungry urchins. Other changes are more subtle, such as the slow infiltration of tailor into the St Helens region. Tailor, now a common catch, was a rare sighting as little as five years ago.

To check out the REDMAP website, log on to www.redmap.org.au and take the easy steps to register as a user. You can have a look without registering. Next, you may want to take a look at the species of interest. A list and photos show all the species the project is currently interested in logging. You never know, something you have seen recently may be on the list. You can also log sightings of species not on the REDMAP list if you know or suspect they may be a species usually found further north.

If you do make a sighting, log it. Fill out a simple on-line form that collects data and sends it to the TAFI database. Sightings are divided into two categories: those with photos and those without. If you attach a photo to your data form, REDMAP can

classify the data as 'verified' and the information is considered more robust. The location is recorded only at the level of fishing block - so we're not giving away your favourite fishing spots! If you do not have access to the internet, give us a call and we'll post a form out to you.

You will also find lots of useful information on the REDMAP website, particularly for school children. It also has considerable Tasmanian-specific information about the importance of fishing to our State, climate change and its effects on the Tasmanian marine environment, and information provided by Tasmanian marine scientists about their work.

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