

Something fishy in the water

TAFI is a joint venture between the University of Tasmania and the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment and has been awarded an \$80,000 Tasmanian Community Fund grant to implement REDMAP.

Professional and recreational fishers along with the general public are playing a significant role in collecting data on fish species, including helping scientific research through keeping tabs on the distribution and volume of the range of fish found in Tasmanian waters.

The 'citizen scientists' are from Tasmania's relatively large commercial fishing community, recreational fishers, as well as the broader community who use the waters for yachting and scuba diving.

The research is being managed through the Coastal Climate Change Range Expansion Database and Mapping Project, or REDMAP, which comes under the umbrella of the Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute.

The project aims to interpret the impact of climate change on the waters of Tasmania through invaluable input from people with a history of observations and working knowledge of their particular patch of water.

REDMAP is delivered through an interactive website that allows the fishing industry and the general public to report sightings of marine species that may well be on the move due to warming waters along the Tasmanian coastline. The REDMAP website incorporates an interactive, extensive marine species database aimed at linking fishing, science and education.

It will rely on the knowledge and experience of local fishers and divers to create a network of observations from around the State that help identify how the waters are changing, in particular the marine species that are caught or seen.

TAFI marine biologist and REDMAP designer Dr Gretta Pecl said the project aims to engage and inform both the fishing industry and the community.

"Ocean warming will have profound implications for marine ecosystems, and the economic and social systems

that depend on them," she said.

"Recent research and anecdotal evidence has indicated particular marine species are shifting their ranges further south along the Tasmanian coast, with some species being 'newcomers' to our waters from Victoria and New South Wales," she said.

"While there may be many reasons for habitat shifts, it is suspected that the effects of climate change, in particular rising sea temperatures, are creating the greatest impact." As well as being available to the public, the information on the REDMAP website will be available as an educational resource. Primary and high school teachers will be able to download fact sheets and lesson plans on climate change and the marine environment, ecological changes occurring in Tasmanian waters and information on local research projects into the impacts of climate change.

For more information see www.redmap.org.au

TAFI researcher Dr John Keane doing a spot of fishing with REDMAP developers Rebecca Brown and Dr Gretta Pecl.