

Media Release

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Fish-friendly accreditation given seal of approval by unusual visitor to Port Coogee Marina

An unusual sighting of a fish species normally found in deeper water has helped demonstrate the appeal of Port Coogee Marina as a safe harbour for a variety of sea life.

Observations as part of regular fish diversity studies conducted at the marina for the City of Cockburn have coincided with the marina again receiving accreditation from the Marina Industries Association (MIA).

The international clean marina accreditations included the marina's inaugural fish friendly accreditation.

During a fish survey at the marina in April, marine scientists Glen Whisson and Alexandra Hoschke of Aqua Research and Monitoring Services observed a Stott's Goatfish (*Upeneichthys stotti*), despite it being a deeper-water species.

Dr Whisson said the species was first described by Dr Barry Hutchins (former WA Museum Curator of Fishes) in 1990, who at the time, had only seen it once in inshore waters of the continental shelf.

"The typical depth range for Stott's Goatfish is greater than 50m, so an observation in the shallow waters of the marina was highly unusual," Dr Whisson said.

"Since we began the long-term biodiversity monitoring in 2018 we have made many interesting observations, including a few deeper-water fish species like Stott's Goatfish."

WA Museum Curator of Fishes Glenn Moore agreed that it was an "unusual record".

"Although this species occurs all the way from around Albany to Shark Bay, it usually lives in deeper offshore areas between 30 and 60m deep," Dr Moore said.

Media Release

“I know of a few shallower records but they are from muddy trawl grounds like the middle of Shark Bay. It’s amazing to see this species in the marina.”

Another April observation was a juvenile Indo-Pacific Sergeant Major (*Abudefduf vaigiensis*) which is usually found further north.

“This juvenile most likely arrived on the Leeuwin Current during the most recent marine heatwave, washing into the marina with floating seaweed,” Dr Whisson said.

“We also saw a really big school of hundreds of scaly mackerel all feeding quite near our boat at the end of our dive in April.”

The marina’s popularity with fish life is well known, with City marina staff, visitors, patrons and local residents experiencing daily observations of a range of permanent and passing sea life at the North Coogee attraction.

A 2022 Fish Diversity Study revealed 81 finfish species, including 15 not previously recorded in the 2019 study.

Marina Manager Samantha Standish said the City conducted a fish diversity study at the marina every three years and results from the new study would be available by the end of 2025.

“The City values the local environment and creating an environmentally aware, fish-friendly marina forms part of that philosophy,” Ms Standish said.

“One small way we do that at the marina is with a floating Seabin designed to capture any rubbish floating on the water’s surface, including many micro and macro plastics.

“We were the first to install the Seabin in 2019 in WA. The device, dubbed Bob due to its up and down motion in the water, has collected about 2.5kg of rubbish including cigarette butts, rope and fast-food packaging which usually ends up in the water due to the wind.

“Other actions we take to encourage and support the existence of fish life in the marina include regular audits of boats in the marina, ensuring fishers use the designated fishing jetty only, and installing additional floating jetties to provide more structures for



Media Release

marine life.

“We will soon install eight information plaques along 100m of the Chieftain Esplanade boardwalk to inform and educate members of the public about the marina’s fish and coral diversity.”

City of Cockburn Mayor Logan Howlett said the City worked hard to protect its waterways and oceans to support marine biodiversity and healthy aquatic ecosystems.

“The City aligns with the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals which are designed to address the world’s most pressing social, environmental and economic challenges by 2030,” Mayor Howlett said.

“That includes Goal 14 which deals with life below water and the conservation of sustainable use of our oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.”

Following a detailed audit, the marina achieved a 98.4 per cent clean marina score and a 96.15 per cent fish friendly score.

It is the third time the marina has earned the international accreditations, and the first time it has also qualified for the fish-friendly recognition, further evidence of its place as one of WA’s most environmentally responsible marinas.

Find out more about Port Coogee Marina in our [website](#).

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