



**TINDALE  
MARINE RESEARCH  
CHARITABLE TRUST**

Tindale Marine Research Charitable Trust quarterly report. Includes Trust member news, activities, engagements and achievements over Summer of 2021

**Scott Tindale**  
Founding Director

# SUMMER REPORT

## #12

December 2020 to end of February 2021



# TINDALE MARINE RESEARCH CHARITABLE TRUST

Charities Registration No. CC55555

IRD no. 126-648-057

## Newsletter #12 Summer Report 2021

Hi everyone I hope you all managed to get out on the water over the summer months. The uncertainty around Covid-19, the border restrictions and its impact on our daily lives has given many here in New Zealand an opportunity to explore our own country's back yard. I definitely have noticed an increase of activity at the beaches and out on the water like never before. Quite possibly adding to the huge jump in tagged fish recaptured this quarter. More on that later in this article.

The TMRCT inshore fish tagging program members have been busy over summer tagging and releasing around 1000 fish, increasing the number of tagged fish species to 40. We now have around 13,000 tags in circulation with just under a third of these already deployed. Membership in the inshore tagging program has just passed 560 with many new members excited about getting involved in this citizen science initiative.

Forty tagged fish were recaptured over summer including one at the Chatham Islands that was tagged nearly one and a half years earlier by Bay Fisher magazine editor Tony Dawson. No doubt a follow up article will be out soon.

## GIVE A FISH

## A SECOND CHANCE

Join the inshore fish tagging program  
& help to build a sustainable future.

Registration is free.

For more information

email: [tindaleresearch@xtra.co.nz](mailto:tindaleresearch@xtra.co.nz)

[www.tindaleresearch.org.nz](http://www.tindaleresearch.org.nz)



Some extraordinary travels have been made by many of these recaptured fish. For example a Yellowtail kingfish tagged in Tauranga was recaptured off Oriental parade in Wellington Harbour sixty two days later. A journey of over 850km.

The large number of Blue cod recaptured in the Marlborough region has produced some exceptional growth rates for a species that prefers colder water temperatures. This sort of data is valuable if water temperatures change over time, or their habitat is impacted natural events such as earth quakes or pollution. No doubt in the future we will look back at this project thankful that this group of dedicated citizen scientists took the time to record fish capture data and observations.

## Monthly Sponsors prize

We are pleased to announce that **Daiwa New Zealand** will support the TMRCT inshore Tagging Program until June with a number of tagging prizes to help promote and encourage environmental education, sustainable fishing practices and support marine research.

### Recapture Award

**Daiwa New Zealand** have kindly donated “*Bait Junkie*” soft lure packs to go out to any member that has a tagged fish recaptured providing all of the relevant data for the tag and release is sent in. In addition “*Bait Junkie*” packs will go to anyone who catches and reports the recapture of a tagged fish to the trust, again with all the relevant information.

**Congratulations** to all our February qualifiers:

**R. Janse, A. Kassal, T. Astridge, C. Rix, S. Vidler, G. Wilson (2) B. Riddiford, S. French, K. Glover, A. Harvey**



Please support our sponsors and we would love to see you posting a photo of a tagged fish using this product on the Tindale Research facebook page.

### Membership Draw

**Daiwa New Zealand** have kindly donated a KIX LT 2500D spinning reel valued at RRP \$369.99 to be given away each month until June. There are five to win so remember, to be into the draw you will need to send in you completed tagging data by the end of each month.

**Congratulations** to our February winner.....**Graeme Johnson** for a 25cm Snapper, Tag number T10817 tagged and released in the Kaipara Harbour on 5/2/2021

We are sure you will get plenty of fishing action with this great reel.



### Lucky Draw

Each report we draw a tag number from our data base using Random.org. As always you will need to send in all your tagging data to be in the draw as vacant tag numbers will be redrawn. The lucky winner of each draw receives a \$100 gift voucher thanks to the team at Bunnings Silverdale.

This reports random number is .... **Tag Number T2140**

**Congratulations** to M. Bawden who tagged and released a 42cm Snapper fishing the Kaipara harbour on 25/04/2019



### Donations

We would like to thank those of you that have donated funds either directly to the Trust account or via our give a little page over the last year. Your generous support is greatly appreciated. Many of the volunteer taggers have received a top up of tags from these donations ensuring a continuation of this citizen science around the country.



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## **End of year tax refunds**

For many of you out there the end of March is the end of the Tax year. This is important information for those that have or intend making a donation to this trust.

The Tindale Marine research Charitable Trust is a New Zealand registered charity with full donee status. This means that for individuals and corporates (companies), for any donations made to the Trust, you are entitled to a full tax credit as described below.

### **Individual's donations.**

Individuals can claim a 33.33% tax credit for all donations over \$5.00 they make to an approved donee. A tax credit reduces the amount of tax you have to pay. The total tax credits an individual can claim is capped at one third of their total taxable income. Remember to keep your valid donation receipts so you or your accountant can complete an IR526 Tax credit claim form and forward to IRD.

### **Corporate giving.**

Companies can claim tax deductions for all donations made to an approved donee providing their claim does not exceed their total annual income. A tax deduction is a reduction in the amount of taxable income. Companies can claim this deduction using the IR4 form.

You can only claim donation tax credits within a period of four years following the year in which the gift was made.



For more information go to [www.ird.govt.nz](http://www.ird.govt.nz)



## Fishing Competitions

Planning around Covid restrictions has been challenging for all of us. It is especially challenging when organising public and club events with this and the weather to contend with.

The Matakawau Boating Club approached us late last year for support of their “big event of the year” to be held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January 2021. Their members are keen followers of the Trust activities so we were happy to assist with promoting sustainable fishing initiatives and giveaways. Open to all fisher folk entries included over 270 competitors, around 50 of them young kids under 12 and made for a record turnout. Several sections were included for boat and land based fishing opportunities. The weather was dubious and rained mid-afternoon but did not dampen the spirits of this family event with prize giving attended by a spectacular crowd in a real community atmosphere...



It humbles me to see the vast amount of support from the community for the trusts programs and activities and we are glad to support these community activities where we can.

# THE **Hutchwilco** NEW ZEALAND **BOAT SHOW**

It's not far off now so fingers crossed we don't have a repeat of last year's cancellation.

The **2021 Hutchwilco New Zealand Boat Show** is to be held at the Auckland showgrounds from the 13th-16<sup>th</sup> of May. If the unthinkable arises again due to the Covid level changes a backup date is set for the 8<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> of July.

The **Tindale Marine Research Charitable Trust** has been offered stand 101 in hall 1 (the fishing hall) to showcase the inshore tagging program, marine research and where IGFA world records have contributed to science. This is a great opportunity to showcase our work in promoting citizen science as a way for all to contribute meaningful data that will hopefully lead to better understanding of our marine environment.

Scott will also be giving talks each day at the master classes on small boat game fishing and will be on the Trust stand for anyone wanting to know more about the IGFA world record rules and procedures.

Pencil in the date, come and have a chat to the team. No doubt many of you will want to chat to Clinton about sharks... we hope to see you there. If you are keen to assist or contribute to the stand give me a call.

## Oceanic Manta Ray Project

In the 2019 Sumer report I briefly mentioned the Trust's involvement in satellite tagging Oceanic Manta rays off our north east coast. This project is a collaboration between the **Department of Conservation**, the **Trust** and **Conservation International**. This was a first for New Zealand and the team was able to attach satellite tags to two of these elusive creatures, tracking one all the way to Fiji where the tag detached and was recovered. Initial findings show this Manta had dived to depths of over 1200m.

### Project overview

- This is the southernmost population of oceanic Manta Rays in the world
- Manta Rays are a protected species
- This is the first time that there has been any dedicated/targeted field research on Oceanic Manta Rays in New Zealand waters, and the first time any Oceanic Mantas have been tagged here
- The purpose of the work is to try and determine if the manta rays seen in NZ are a resident population, and what they do during winter
- The electronic tags float above the rays' backs and transmit their positions and stored information on diving behaviour each time the rays' surface.
- The tags are programmed to stay on for six months, with the tethers falling out of the rays within 12 months (based on experience elsewhere)
- This method has been successfully used to track Reef and Oceanic Manta Rays in Indonesia and New Caledonia.

It was hoped to continue the research in 2020 but Covid restrictions and the weather intervened. This year however field work resumed with the first sighting of Oceanic manta rays inside the Hauraki Gulf in early February 2021. NZ Geographic photographer Richie Robinson was aboard for a few trips to shoot a story on the project for an upcoming article. In subsequent trips the team was able to photo-identify a number of rays found feeding at the surface north of Little Barrier Island and deploy 6 additional satellite tags. As they travel north we will be able to follow their movements and diving patterns. It has really been a year of Manta rays sightings all along the northland coast. Scott and Sue recorded 24 over a two day game fishing trip in February south of the Bay of Islands, as well as 8 feeding off the Hen and Chicks late one fine evening in early March.



Oceanic Manta Ray Photographed using a drone of the northern side of Little Barrier by Dr M. Erdmann, Conservation International.

## **Inshore Tagging Program update.**

As mentioned earlier it has been a busy summer with around 1000 fish tagged and released and over 40 recaptures. Overall the project's recapture rate is about 4% recapture rate meaning that on average 1 fish in every 25 tagged and released is recaptured again. This is a high recapture rate by international standards.

Several estimates put recreational fishers at 20% of the population. In a recent NIWA report it was estimated 33% of recreational fishers' in NZ fish in the Hauraki Gulf maritime Park. It is therefore not surprising that 30% of the fish tagged by the tagging program members were caught in the Hauraki Gulf. It is the most accessible area for a large part of the population of New Zealand. So far 35% of recaptures have also been in the Hauraki Gulf. This included two fish caught on commercial longlines set in the outer Gulf.

Charter boats made up 7% of tagged fish recaptures. Land based fishing, including spearfishing, made up 36% of tagged fish recaptures. The average number of days at large between captures is 140 days. 16.5% of recaptures were over 300 days and 11% over a year at large. The longest time at liberty is 815 days which spans the length this project has been in operation. Nationally, 30% of recaptured fish have been released again.

## **Recapture Update for summer 2021**

### **T8297**

Warren Ruddell was fishing off the rocks at the Whangarei heads watching a green turtle while he landed several fish including a 46cm snapper with a green tag in it. The fish was a fat good condition 'kelpie' weighing 1.7kg.

This fish was tagged and released 97 days earlier by Adrian Johnson aboard "Banarama" fishing off Ngunguru in 14m of water. It measured 43cm on release and had travelled a shortest distance of 29.7km.



### **T8018**

Tom Lusk was fishing off the rocks at Cape Brett on the 11<sup>th</sup> July 2020 when he tagged and released a 67.5cm snapper

On the 4<sup>th</sup> December 2020 Stuart Caird went night fishing off the rocks at Motorua Island in the Bay of Islands when he recaptured this tagged fish stray lining a jack mackerel. The fish had travelled a straight line distance of 10.7km in 147 days. Stuart did not spot the tag in the dark but was able to send in the catch details when he got home. The snapper measured 68cm and weighed around 5kg.

### **T1768**

Kingi Ranui has had a lot of experience fishing the flats around the Tauranga Harbour. Often seen fishing, helping other anglers tag and release fish or filming the day's action. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of December Kingi was filming a kahawai that had taken a live bait. It had swallowed the hook and was bleeding heavily so the decision was made to keep it. On landing it he noticed a tag in it. Records showed it was a 50.5cm kahawai he had tagged and released a year earlier on the 21<sup>st</sup> December 2019. It measured 52.5cm on recapture so had grown 2cm over that time.

### **T3831**

Massey university student Alex Burton is studying the growth distribution and movements of school sharks (Tope) in the Kaipara harbour. An important part of this study involves tagging and releasing Tope caught at various locations within the harbour. The Trust has been supporting this research with tags and tagging kits, time on the water and access to the Trust's data.

One of the first fish tagged by Alex was a Tope (T3831) caught on a survey longline set from the university boat on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2020. It measured 47cm and was released in 8.5m of water.



On the 15<sup>th</sup> of December Trust directors Scott and Sue Tindale were out on the Kaipara harbour in "Red October" tagging and releasing fish along the Omokoiti flats. One of the fish caught was Alex's Tope. It measured 60cm and was re-released. It had moved a shortest distance of 2.84km in 142 days at large, and had grown 13cm in that time.

### **T9339**

Peter Bourke was fishing the 2020 Luremasters Tournament on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October when he tagged and released this 61cm snapper fishing in 6m of water on the eastern side of Great Barrier Island.



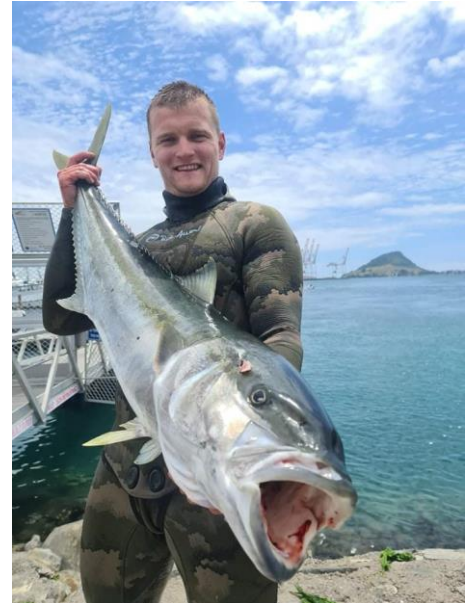
On the 4<sup>th</sup> December 2020, 64 days later, Peter Clayton recaptured this fish in Port Abercrombie on the west side of Great Barrier Island. This was 44.2km by sea from the tag and release point. It wasn't measured but weighed 4.2kg.



## **T6070**

Kingi Ranui tagged and released a kingfish measuring 109cm in 4m of water fishing in the Tauranga Harbour on 31st October 2020. This fish was one of two seen swimming together and noted it was in a poor condition. Kingi spotted his fish again a few days later and could clearly see the tag in it.

Fifty days later Nick Weyel was spearfishing off the Tauranga marina when he speared this tagged kingfish. Nick noted it was long and skinny and measured it at 112cm.



**Blue cod** are an important recreational fish in the south of NZ and Graham Wilson has been tagging and releasing them from the shore in the important Marlborough fishery. With 13 recaptures so far Graham is giving us a great insight into their seasonal growth rates and behaviour. Some of his results are:

**T8803** was 37cm when tagged on 20/6/2020 and measured 41cm when recaptured by Joanne May 184 days later.

**T8830** was 37cm when tagged on 8/11/2020 and measured 41.5cm when recaptured by Glen Richardson 45 days later. Glen released it and it was recaptured again 14 days later by Keith Richardson, who also released it again hopefully to be caught a 4<sup>th</sup> time.

**T8814** measured 34.5cm when tagged on the 19/7/2020 and 36cm when recaptured 162 days later by Mark Sullivan; Mark was fishing in 30m of water and said the fish had swallowed the hook so it was kept.

**T8805** was 33cm when tagged by Graham on the 20/6/2020 and 36cm when recaptured 200 days later by Dan Jamieson fishing from his small tinny in 30m of water.

**T8820** was 37cm when tagged by Graham on 8/8/2020, it was recaptured 156 days later by Colin Thompson fishing in 15m of water and measured 39cm

Graham was also able to recapture some of his own tagged fish including two on the same day, 31/1/2021:

**T8838** was 41cm when tagged on 19/12/2020 and measured 41.5cm when recaptured 44 days later;

**T8828** was 36.5cm when tagged on 3/11/2020 and 37cm when recaptured 90 days later. Both fish were released again.

On the 19/2/2021 Graham recaptured a 32cm fish (**T8847**) he had tagged 42 days earlier on the 9/1/2021. The same day he tagged and released another 32cm fish (**T10494**) which he then recaptured 23 days later on 13/3/2021.

## **T0852**

Richard Nawisielski, better known to us as 'Ski' has had quite a few recaptures since joining at the start of the TMRCT inshore tagging program and some of his earlier tag and releases are still being recaptured. The latest recapture of one of his fish was made after 602 days at liberty. The fish was a 30cm snapper tagged and released at Tiritiri Island, Hauraki Gulf, on 28/4/2019 in 15m of water. It was reported recaptured by Eddie Elliot fishing in the same area on the 19/12/2020. Eddie recaptured this fish in 24m of water just after lunch. Keeping the fish, he reported it measured 32cm and noted the tag had a bit of growth on it. That's two summer seasons later in the same area.

## **T1781**

Another recapture with a long time at liberty was made by commercial cray fisher Dylan Shaw, who while checking his Cray pots at the Chatham Islands discovered this Blue cod in one of them. Recaptured in 18m of water near Durham point on 22 December 2020, Dylan said it was a solid fish and estimated it at well over 50cm. He returned it to the water after a quick photo.



We managed to track down Tony Dawson editor of Bay Fisher magazine who reported that he had been on a trip to the Chatham's island on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July 2019 where he tagged and released this Blue cod. It was caught in 35m of water and measured 48.5cm. It was one of two he tagged and released on his trip and was weighed at 1.8kg before release.

After 515 days at liberty this cod was recaptured only 2.79km from the original release location and is now back doing what blue cod do best.

## **T7316**

It is always great to see some long distance travels of tagged fish. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of October 2020 Rob Plant was land-based fishing in Tauranga Harbour and tagged and released a 78cm Kingfish caught in 3m of water.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of December 2020 Linh Bai was fishing with friends off the side of the road at Oriental Bay in Wellington when she recaptured it. They



estimated the fish at around 74cm so the fish was released again. Unfortunately the tag was removed before releasing again.

In 62 days this fish had travelled a shortest distance by sea of 844km.





### **T0246**

Severine Hannam was enjoying the day out fishing off Motutapu Island in the Hauraki Gulf on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2019 when she tagged and released a 66cm kingfish.

629 days later Michael Orton was fishing off the shore at Home Bay, Rakino Island when he recaptured this kingfish on a live piper. Michael measured the fish at 83cm. It was recaptured only 4km from where Severine had released it and had grown 17cm.

### **T6355**

Tom Lusk has had quite a few of his tagged fish recaptured. This time it was a snapper measuring 31cm that he tagged and released in Okahu Bay on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2020 from his kayak.

It was recaptured off the wharf at Okahu Bay 301 days later. Unfortunately the person who caught it didn't give their name or contact details on the emailed recapture form. At close to a year later this fish may have be a resident or could have returned from a winter migration.



### **T9423**



On the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 Josh Darby was soft bait fishing around Horn Rock in the Hauraki Gulf when he caught a tagged snapper T9423 in approximately 20m of water. Josh took the fish home measuring it at 61.5cm and weighing it at 4.2kg.



This fish was tagged and released 70 days earlier by Scott Malcon from Daiwa New Zealand fishing around Horn Rock on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October 2020. It was caught fishing in 25.5m of water. It measured 62cm and was recaptured only ½ a km from where Scott tagged and released it. This reasonably mature fish is another example of fish surviving deep water catch and release. It also shows how fish can contract in length once they are dead, so it pays to keep this in mind if you wish to keep any minimum legal size fish.



### **T9083**

On the 5/12/2020 Scott Tindale tagged and released a 67cm juvenile Tope (School shark) caught in 2m of water on the Omokoiti flats, south arm of the Kaipara harbour.

33 days later and over 38km to the north this fish was caught again near Ruawai in a set net. Walton Edwards said it had unfortunately died otherwise they would have released it again. Unfortunately they did not measure it. That's quite a journey for such a small fish.

### **T9486**

Chase Jarret was live baiting for kingfish in 33m of water off Mayor Island on the 9<sup>th</sup> of January 2021 when he landed this estimated 100cm Kingfish. It was photographed and released again. Chase estimated it at 14kg.

This fish was tagged just over 6km away 180 days earlier by Kalib Henderson fishing in 53m of water. It measured 95cm on release.



### **T8036**

The Bay Of Islands Swordfish Club reported the weighing of a tagged snapper at their club on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January 2020. The fish was caught locally by Wayne Henderson fishing at Paroa Bay in 15m of water. The fish measured 74cm and was just over 7kg.

This fish had been tagged and released by Jack Lusk 177 days earlier on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2020 fishing in 15m of water off Tapeka point. It measured 68cm on release and was recaptured within 2km of where Jack tagged and released it.

### **T5303**

Brandon Fowler reported the capture of a 38cm tagged snapper off Motuihe Island in the Hauraki Gulf. Brandon said it was fat and in good nick. The tag had a bit of green slime on it.

Michael Jenkins tagged and released this fish 432 days earlier in the same area. It measured 32cm when tagged. Another fish recaptured from one summer to another in the same area.



### **T8877**

Jeremy Bathurst reported the recapture of a tagged Kahawai on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2021. It was caught by the concrete marker, south arm of the Kaipara Harbour on a live bait and was released again. This fish was tagged and released 158 days earlier on the 13<sup>th</sup> August by Scott Tindale fishing the Kaipara Harbour channel edge 8km to the west. It measured 37cm at the time of release.

Graham Johnson kindly donated a \$20.00 Shelly Beach Café voucher to Jeremy for reporting and releasing a tagged fish in the Kaipara. So keep an eye out there for tagged fish and remember to record all the details before re-releasing again.

Unfortunately another fisher, Max Oulton, forgot to record the tag number for a 34cm tagged snapper he caught in the Kaipara Harbour on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021. It was the first time he had come across a tagged fish so had no idea it had a serial number on it under the weed. Max even recorded the water temperature and wind direction. It was photographed and re-released again.





### **T9459**

Aaron Young was spearfishing on the western side of Great Barrier Island when he shot this 82cm snapper weighing 9.9kg. It was tagged and released 109 days earlier by Ben Starns fishing in the same area on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2020 and measured 82cm.

..... Ben Starns writes....

*'The fish was hooked in very shallow water +-2m on the edge of a rock with heavy kelp just below water level. The fish buried its head very quickly resulting in a few minutes of alternating between letting it swim free under light pressure and trying to lift it out.*



*Upon landing the fish was in very good condition. As I was fishing in a competition at the time I had to photograph and record the entry, as well as photograph the fish for the launch of the Daiwa BaitJunkie soft lures, before finally tagging and releasing. This process took longer than I would have liked. It required several minutes holding the fish with water running over its gills before it had the energy to slowly swim back down to the safety of the kelp. I did have some initial concern over its condition upon release, so it's good to see that it survived...*



### **T8663**

Robert Janse is a veteran at tag and release with many recaptures to date. This time it was a 44cm snapper he tagged and released near the Ahaahas area in the Hauraki Gulf on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2020. It was recaptured 208 days later on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2021 in the same general area by Matt Greacen while drifting a live bait in 12m of water.

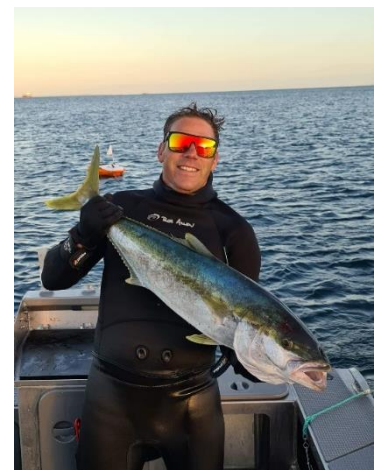
### **T6918**

There has been quite a few kingfish tagged and released around the North Island this summer and quite a few recaptures as well.



This 86cm kingfish was tagged and released in Tauranga Harbour by Hunter Stevenson fishing from a boat on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2020.

Luke McFarlane speared this fish 23 days later just outside the harbour entrance. It measured 87cm on recapture and had travelled 14km from the tagging location.



Many of the fish we see tagged and recaptured during a particular season are caught in the same area. This is a good indication that tagging and releasing does not change the foraging behaviour of these fish. Tagged fish that are recaptured elsewhere during other seasons may be undertaking a seasonal migration explaining why that spot “x” only produces the goods at certain times of the year.

### **T9958**

Andrew Kassal tagged and released a 41cm snapper on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2020 while soft baiting off Motutapu Island in the Hauraki Gulf. Todd Astridge recaptured this fish 106 days later in the same area in 13m of water on bait. Todd did not notice the tag in the fish until he got around to filleting it.

### **T6930**

On the 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021 Sharlene Vidler was fishing with TV personality Adam Clancy in Tauranga Harbour when she caught a tagged kingfish on a live piper. The fish was kept and weighed in at 11.9kg.



This fish had been tagged and released 32 days earlier by Chris Rix just over 5km away. It had been caught on a live mackerel bait. The fish measured 98cm and was caught in 8m of water.

### **T8073**

Ben Riddiford was fishing in Tauranga Harbour on the 15<sup>th</sup> December where he caught a nice 100cm kingfish on a lure fishing from the shore.

This fish was recaptured 67 days later by Shane French 6.8km away while fishing under a bridge from a dingy. Shane kept the fish weighing it at 9.2kg and said it was caught on a pilchard bait.

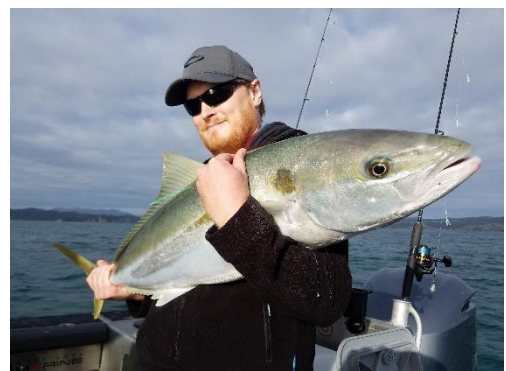


### **T6232**

Jake Pyne tagged and released a 95cm Kingfish at Bowentown on the 22nd January 2021.

It was recaptured off Whitianga 35 days later by Peter Nicol fishing on an Epic Adventures charter. The fish was caught on a live bait in 19m of water and was kept.

This fish had travelled over 82km from its tag and release location.



## T6686

Another example of possible seasonal returns to an area is a 28cm snapper tagged and released by Kerry-Ann Glover. This fish measuring 28cm was released in 2m of water on 12 February 2020 in Tauranga Harbour. It was recaptured 383 days later on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2021 in the same area approximately 2km from the release point. It was caught by Andrew Harvey stray lining in 1.5m of water. The fish was kept and was a fat fish in great condition. Andrew measured the fish at 39cm. That's 11cm growth in just over a year.

Apologies if your catches or recaptures are not mentioned in this report. With the increase in participation in the program there have simply been too many recaptures to mention all in a newsletter. The extra work load also means social media posts from the admin are kept to a minimum as it has been hard to keep up to date. Thankfully members are adding and sharing posts to keep us informed when they can. The inshore tagging program is now into its 4<sup>th</sup> year and has come a long way in that time. I am humbled by the support and enthusiasm for this project and hope you all enjoy these reports.

Some of the 'recaptures' recorded by the Trust have been tags found on beaches after having been apparently cut out of fish and discarded. All tagging programmes suffer from a certain level of non-reporting due to a lack of interest, apathy or misunderstanding of the purpose of the tag. Unfortunately over the last year non-reporting of recaptures may have been heightened by continuing misinformation about the programme. Some of those responsible have gone as far to encourage anglers not to report any tagged fish that they catch. Tagging programmes like the Trusts are a basic tool used by scientists and fisheries biologists the world over to learn about the movements and growth of fishes and to assist fisheries management. By being involved we can all be better informed in our own decision making. All we ask is for anyone catching a tagged fish to report out of respect for the effort that others put into tagging and releasing and the interest they had in finding out more about these fish. The tag is just there to make it possible to identify the fish. No one will suffer any accusations or recriminations for retaining a tagged fish, we've always been clear that's entirely the anglers call, and it's not about anyone wanting to know your secret spots, politics or taking sides. The Trust is independent of any political or sector group, or government agency. As the data collected by participating anglers grows we all hope to learn more about the fishes we catch and for that information to be used to improve our sport. Reflecting on some of the criticism the programme has attracted recently reminds me of the quote ***'without data you are just another person with an opinion'***.

And lastly I couldn't let this story go unmentioned...

J \*\*\* contacted me in February to say he had recaptured a tagged silver belly eel measuring 18". It was one of 3 tagged eels he had caught that day but had thrown the tags away as he thought Fish & Game would find his favourite fishing spot and track him home. Js' nephew rescued one of the tags telling the 80 year old that they were for research and that they couldn't track him electronically anyway. In the course of our conversation I was able to ease his concerns and explain what we were doing. We continued to tell stories of hunting and fishing adventures, finding we had crossed paths on several occasions. I later contacted Ron and Karen Hough from the Aorangi Whanau Trust who had purchased 30 tags to put on eels in the Jerusalem area of the Wanganui River in attempt to see how far they would travel. Js' eel it turned out had travelled over 6km towards the coast in the 138 days it had been at large.

Tight lines

Scott and the crew

