

Marron Stocking Initiative - Improving the Recreational Marron Fishery through Stock Enhancement

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development in conjunction with Recfishwest will be investigating the benefits of stocking juvenile Marron into recreational dams in Western Australia.

Staff at the Pemberton Freshwater Research Centre (PFRC) have begun a new captured Marron breeding program.

This program is based on recent advice provided from a Marron research project funded by the Commonwealth Government through the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) that looked at ways to improve the sustainability of WA's iconic Marron fishery.

If the captured Marron breeding program is successful, a trial stocking program is planned which will see thousands of tiny "craylings" (juvenile Marron) released into Harvey Dam, a popular recreational Marron fishing location, only one and half hours South of Perth.

Due to continuing human and environmental stressors, the iconic Western Australian Marron fishing experience, a major recreational activity in regional areas in the South-West of WA, has been slowly diminished.

For over 60 years Marron breeding research and hatchery production has been conducted at the PFRC. This has included selective breeding programs based on improving genetic traits in Marron for commercial Marron Aquaculture.

This latest breeding program for the purpose of stocking juvenile Marron into recreational dams in Western Australia will likely ensure a sustainable Marron fishery into the future and is expected to greatly improve the community amenity.

It will also provide an opportunity to reinvigorate the local Marron aquaculture industry by providing healthy and productive animals to be grown out by licenced grower's in commercial Marron ponds. Semi-intensive culture of Marron provided 51 tons in 2014/15 at a value of approximately \$1.56 million dollars making it a significant aquaculture industry in Western Australia that is a valuable contributor to regional employment. This industry has the potential to expand significantly with improved breeding.

FACT FILE:

- Number of recreational Marron licenses 2016 season was 11,366.
- Wellington Dam and Harvey Dam are the most popular fishing locations.
- The estimated 20,000 individual days of marroning in regional locations provide a significant economic boost to regional towns in the South-West.
- In 2015 fishers caught an estimated 70,000 marron despite research showing more than 100,000 marron could have been sustainably harvested during this period.
- Research and development is focussed on improving the resilience of the fishery whilst enhancing the experience of the States many marroners.

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