

## CapReef - Crystal Bowl 4 December 2011

Visit CapReef at [www.info-fish.net](http://www.info-fish.net)

Contact CapReef on 1800-077-001 or at [capreefnews@info-fish.net](mailto:capreefnews@info-fish.net)

### CapReef update

Gladstone Harbour has been in the headlines recently and CapReef is focusing on collecting as much factual information as we can to help understand what the impacts are on recreational fishing.

Over the next 12 months you are likely to meet one of our CapReef staff at a boat ramp around Gladstone. You may even catch one of the tagged fish that are swimming around the harbour and local waterways.

With funding support from the QGC Sustainable Communities Program, CapReef will be collecting data on trends in recreational fishing in the Gladstone area.

CapReef will be collecting information on:

- ☐ Catch and effort from fishing trips
- ☐ Tagged fish
- ☐ Barramundi recruitment (where are the baby Barra?)
- ☐ Views on fishing in the Gladstone area
- ☐ Best fishing practices
- ☐ Historical information on fishing in the Gladstone area

Information from the project will be available shortly from the website [www.info-fish.net/capreefgladstone](http://www.info-fish.net/capreefgladstone) or you can follow us on Facebook or through the CapReef email news bulletin. Email [capreefnews@info-fish.net](mailto:capreefnews@info-fish.net) to subscribe.

The project is being undertaken in conjunction with the Gladstone Local Marine Advisory Committee and Gladstone Sportfishing Club.



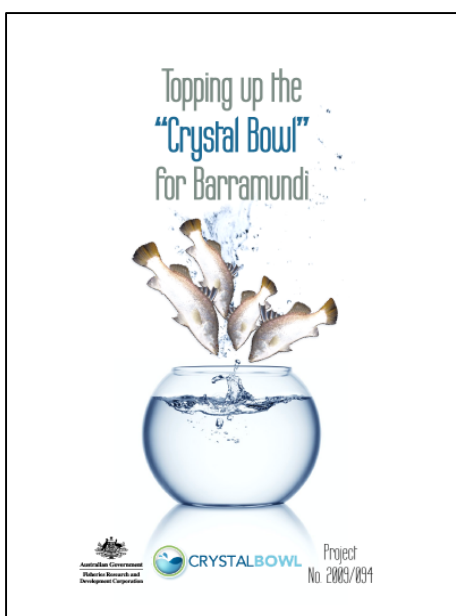
## Crystal Bowl update

The "Crystal Bowl" is about developing the capacity to predict Barramundi stocks in the Fitzroy River. Over the past 12 months CapReef has been working on filling the key information gaps. These centred on getting estimates of the commercial and recreational catch in the river. This project was titled 'Topping up the "Crystal Bowl" for Barramundi' and was funded by the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation. A report on the Barramundi fishery in the Fitzroy River covering the period from 2000-2011 has been produced and will be available shortly from the website [www.info-fish.net/crystalbowl/](http://www.info-fish.net/crystalbowl/).

The report provides some basis for assessing the impact of coal port development proposals in the Port Alma area. Information from the project has been provided to Xstrata for use in its Environmental Impact Statement on the Balaclava Island Coal Export Terminal (BICET) project. The report also provides a factual basis for informed debate on the future of the Barramundi fishery in the Fitzroy River and any move towards regional management.

The biggest influence this year was the flooding in the river which peaked from December-February however high flows and minor flooding started in September and went through to April. The photo shows the flow through the Barrage on the river during the January flood peak.

Funding has been provided by the Fitzroy Basin Association to continue collecting data and engaging fishers in the Fitzroy River for 2011/12.



Based on previous data collected and the data collected through the Crystal Bowl project it is possible to predict what Barramundi stocks are likely to be over the next 2-3 years in the Fitzroy River. At this stage the prediction is a qualitative one. The following is the prediction for the 2012-13 fishing years.

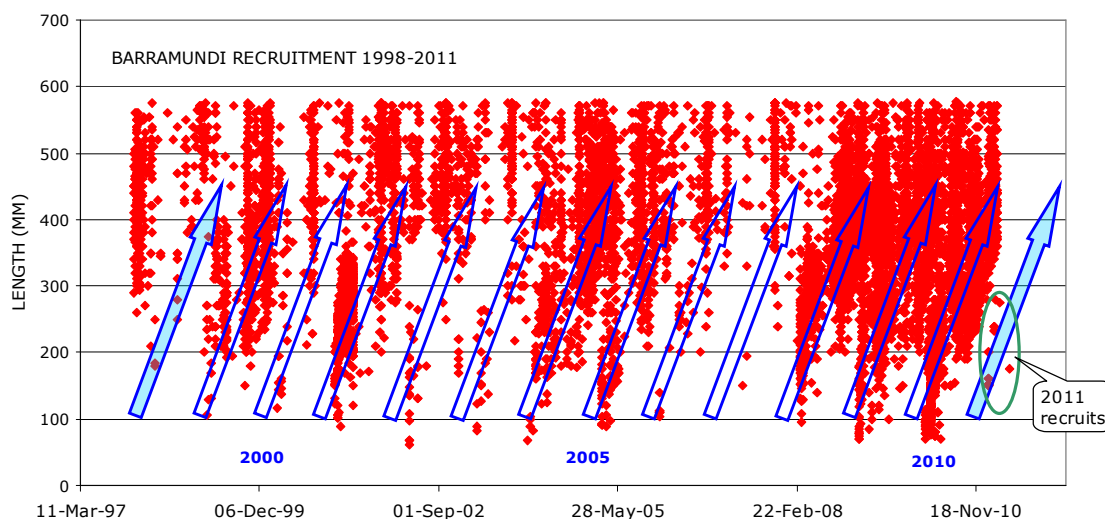
***In the 2012 fishing year Barramundi stocks will be high with 3-5 year old fish (580-850mm) dominating the legal catch. There are large numbers of juvenile fish aged 2-3 years (450-580mm) which will start to enter the fishery in 2012 and 2013.***



## Barramundi recruitment

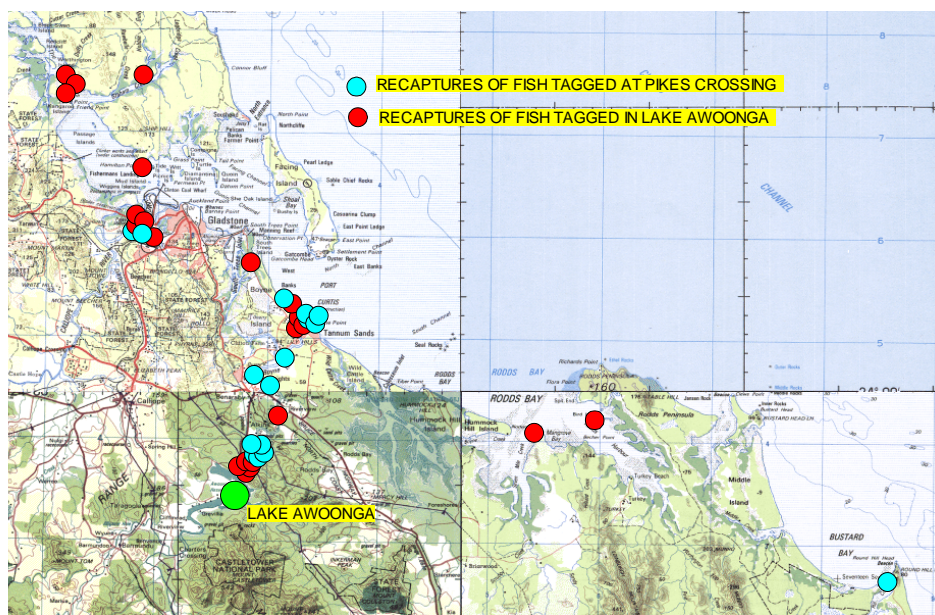
Understanding Barramundi recruitment is an important factor in being able to predict what stocks might look like in the future. Spawning occurs from around October to January each year with recruits (fish from 50-250mm) turning up in wetland lagoons (both saltwater and freshwater) from around January if there is sufficient flow to allow access.

The dots on the graph represent the length of individual fish at a point in time and the density of dots indicates the strength of recruitment. Arrows show the growth of recruits over time. Recruitment was strong in 2008, 2009 and 2010 however was poor in 2011. The early minor flooding in September and October pushed freshwater onto the spawning grounds and this is likely to have disrupted spawning which requires high salinity to be successful.



## Where have Awoonga Barra turned up?

With the flooding early this year Awoonga dam overflowed for the first time in many years. Estimates of the number of Barramundi that left the lake range up to 30,000 with most of these being large fish. Over the following months these fish moved down the Boyne River into Gladstone Harbour and beyond. Fortunately there were a number of fish tagged in the lake over the past decade and some of these have been recaptured providing some information on where the fish have moved to. The map shows where fish tagged in the lake have been recaptured since January.

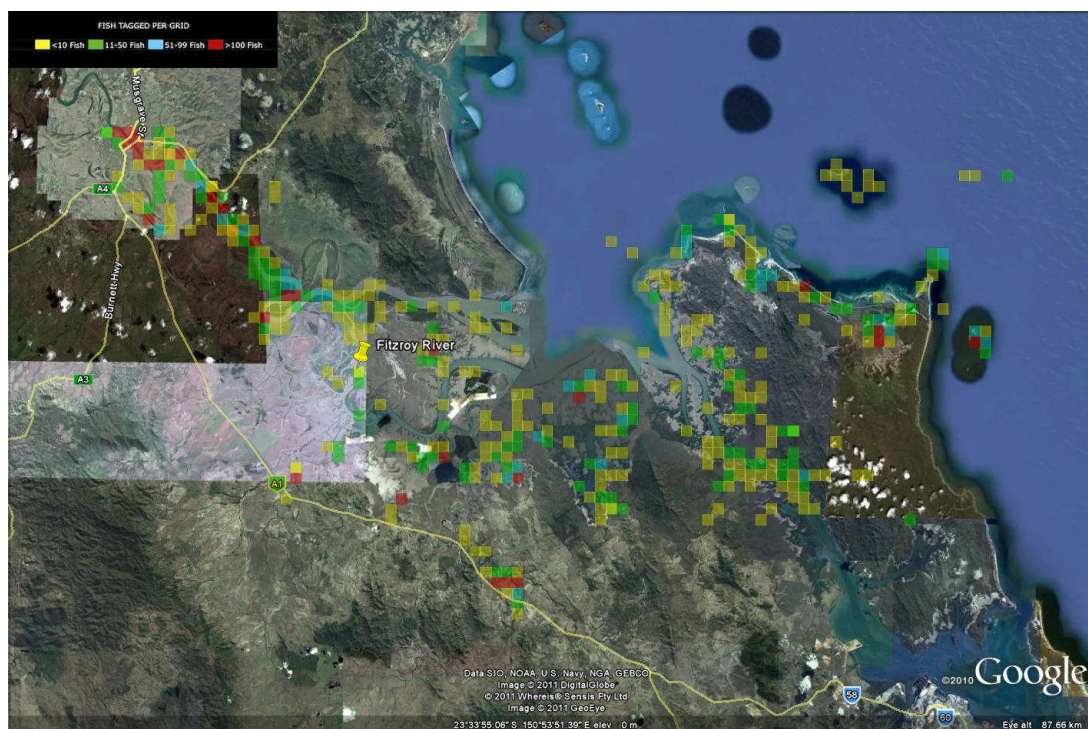


Most fish were recaptured in the Boyne River, Gladstone Harbour and the Calliope River.

Two fish were recaptured in Rodds Bay, another has been recaptured in Round Hill Creek and one fish has been recaptured in the Burnett River at Bundaberg. This fish was part of a batch of fish stocked into the lake back in Feb 2000. It was 174mm when tagged and was 1110mm when recaptured 4,247 days (11.6 years) later. After going over the dam wall it travelled 180 km to get to the Burnett River.

## Linking Suntag to Google Earth

The Suntag database has been linked to Google Earth which provides new ways to visualise information from the database. As an example the map shows where fish were tagged from 2000-2011 with red squares being where over 100 fish were tagged.



## How can you help?

These projects are for the benefit of all those that fish in Central Queensland, and particularly those that target Barramundi, as well as the wider community. The projects rely very much on community support and there are a number of ways that fishers can help by:

- ☐ Providing details of all fish caught on fishing trips (forms are available)
- ☐ Counting trailers at local boat ramps from Corio Bay to Gladstone
- ☐ Tagging Barramundi and providing details of fish caught
- ☐ Reporting recaptures of tagged fish
- ☐ Measuring and reporting baby Barramundi caught in cast or bait nets (date, length, location)
- ☐ Providing fish frames for Barramundi, Spanish Mackerel, Spotted Mackerel and Grey Mackerel (just call us and we will arrange to collect the frames)

## Contact us

For more information on CapReef or Crystal Bowl  
Information line (toll free):

**1800-077-001**

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