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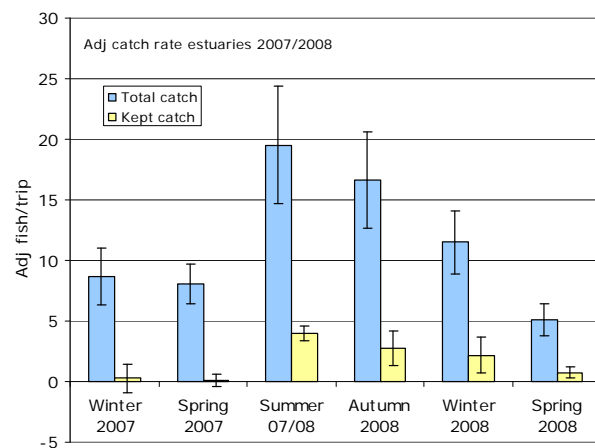
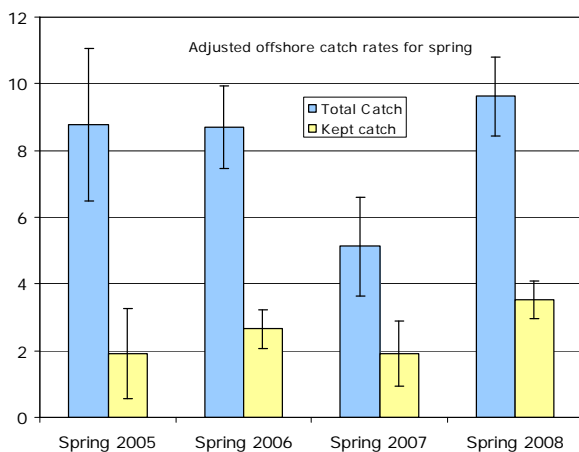
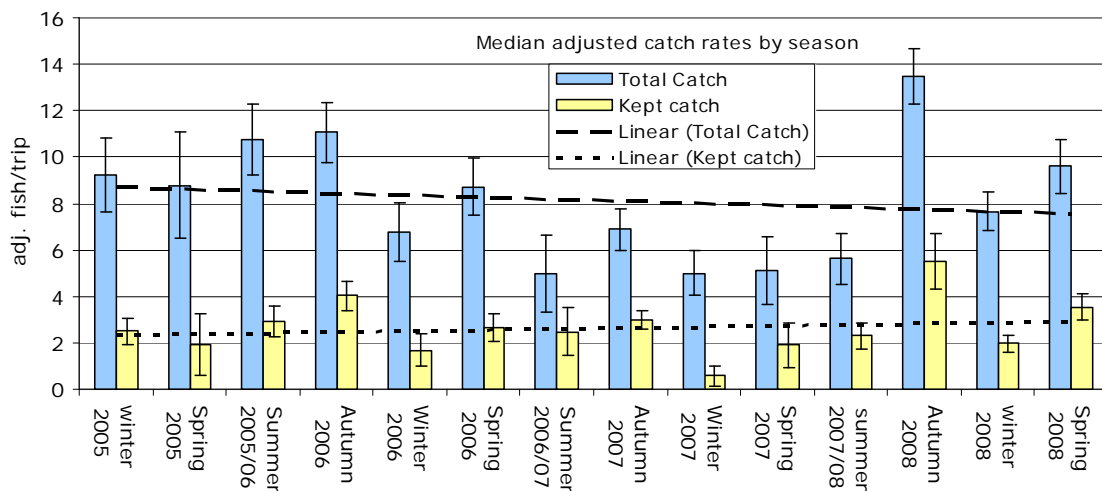
Contact CapReef on 1800-077-001 or at capreef@info-fish.net

Update of CapReef fishing catch rates

CapReef has now been collecting data on catch rates in Central Queensland for the past 3.5 years and we now have some catch trends emerging. Data collection extends from Stange Bay in the north to Turkey in the south. Since winter 2005 we have collected details on over 11,000 fishing trips (including estuary trips since winter 2007 and freshwater trips from autumn 2008). Preliminary catch rate for spring 2008 brings to 14 seasons where rates are available. Catch rates are calculated based on an adjusted fishing trip which is 2 people on a 7.5 hour fishing trip.

Catch rates by season showed a slight decline over the first 2.5 years but rose significantly in autumn 2008 and have remained elevated. CapReef has used fishing club catches to demonstrate a positive correlation between coastal and offshore catch rates and flooding from coastal rivers and streams, in particular the Fitzroy River. This is supported by the catch rates since the flooding in January-February 2008.

Estuary catch rates are only available for 6 seasons and longer term data is required to examine trends. There has been a steady drop in catch rates since summer 2007-08 when most estuaries had good flows. Catch rates for spring 2008 were lower than in spring 2007.

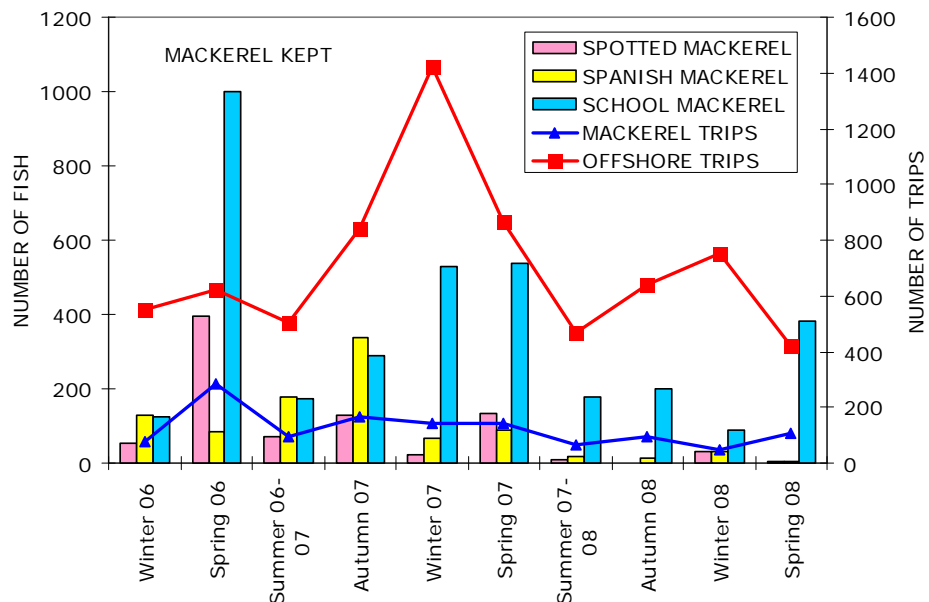


Where have all the Mackerel gone?

If you went out fishing last year with the expectation of catching a Mackerel or two then there is a very good chance you would have come home disappointed. 2008 was a very poor year for all Mackerel species with much lower catches than in the previous year, especially for Spotted and Spanish Mackerel. Even for School Mackerel where the peak season is spring the catches were the lowest for that season in the last 3 years. The graph shows the number of CapReef offshore trips obtained from boat ramp surveys and direct from fishers, the number of those trips where Mackerel were caught and the numbers of each species caught each season.

We are collecting Spotted and Spanish Mackerel frames so we undertook boat ramp surveys when Mackerel were being reported as being caught. Based on that we consider that the data collected indicated a real drop in the number of Mackerel caught.

The biggest fish caught during the year was a Spanish Mackerel that measured 167cm which was caught in the Port Clinton area.



No crying over spilled over fish

In CapReef News 5 we reported on the tagging of reef fish in green zones (no fishing) around the Keppels. One of the aims of the research is to look at any "spillover" effect of fish from the green zones. The tagging was completed in January 2008 just before the flood water from the Fitzroy River made it out to the Keppels. It was thought that if anything would trigger fish moving out of these zones it was likely to be freshwater from the flooding.

Since then 22 fish have been recaptured outside the green zone in which they were tagged but 18 of these were tagged very close to the boundary of the green zone and were recaptured on the same patch of reef just outside the zone. Of the remaining fish 2 Barcheek Coral Trout were caught within 2km of the where tagged and 1 Longfin Rockcod moved 5km. However the last fish which was another Trout did a runner and ended up down near Bustard Head.

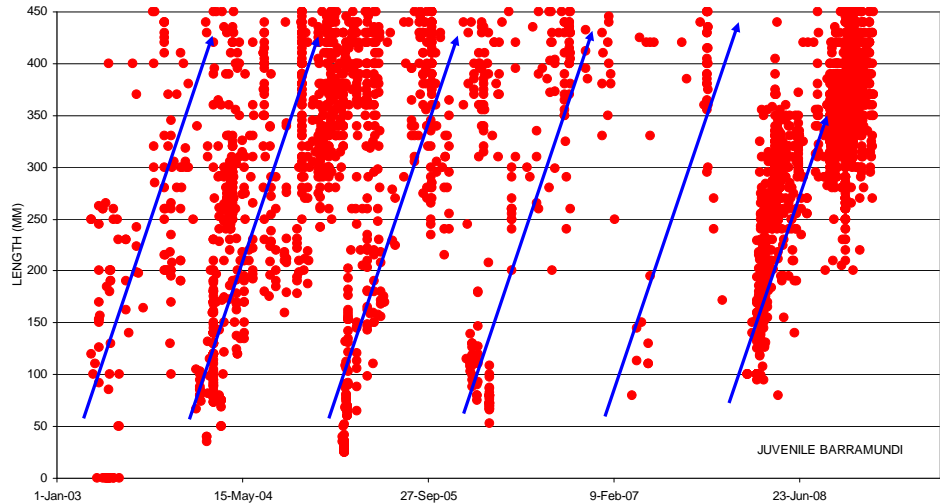
Tag details		Recapture details	
Tag	T25375		
Species	Barcheek Coral Trout (<i>Plectropomus maculatus</i>)		
Date	22/1/2008	6/11/2008	
Length	416mm	423mm	
Location	Middle Island	Middle Rock	
Fisher	Research 1	Barry Vondeest	
Days Out	289		
Growth	7mm		
Movement	127km south east		
Released	No		
Details of this fish were verified.			



So you want to catch a Barra?

If you are itching to catch a Barra the season starts shortly on 1 February. The Fitzroy River will be the target of both commercial and recreational fishers and it will be interesting to see what the level of catch will be. There is every likelihood that following a big year last year, especially for commercial fishers following the flooding, that this year will see much leaner times. A bit like the economy.

However the good news is that summer 2008/09 was the best year for Barramundi recruitment since 1996 and juvenile fish in the river and brackish and freshwater lagoons are growing fast. Fish in the lagoons range from around 400-500mm while those in the river range from 300-450mm. Members of Captag, Gladstone and Bundaberg Sportfishing Clubs have been tagging these juvenile fish in large numbers with 1,890 fish tagged since March 2008.



The graph shows the Barramundi recruits found each year since 2003 with the bumper crop for 2008 at the right. Arrows show the growth of recruits each year.

Saddle a Snapper and head for the hills!

With the support of the Department of Defence Captag has been tagging fish in the Shoalwater Bay Training Area for a number of years. This included juvenile Saddletail Snapper (Red Jew). We now have the first fish tagged in Head Creek that has move out of Shoalwater Bay. A fish tagged in July 2006 at 330mm was recaptured in December 2008 at 550mm at High Peak Island which is 80km from where it was tagged.



CapReef wants your Mackerel and Barramundi Frames

CapReef is continuing to collect fish frames in support of the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries Long Term Monitoring Program. Frames are required from Spanish Mackerel, Spotted Mackerel, Grey Mackerel and Barramundi. What is required is all the frames from an individual catch, that is if you catch 3 Spanish Mackerel we would like to get all 3 frames. Just fillet the fish and leave everything else including the gut intact. If you are keeping frames for crab pot bait we may be able to supply alternative baits.

Anyone fishing offshore from north of Yeppoon to Agnes Waters is urged to keep frames from these species and contact CapReef to arrange collection. Contact Wendi Parsons on 04-2864-1066 or ring the CapReef hotline 1800-077-001 to arrange the collection of frames. We are providing a neat "Good Grief CapReef" drink cooler for each set of frames, or a cap or t-shirt for a number of frames.



Become a part of CapReef

CapReef is a community based program monitoring fish resources in Central Queensland that has the support of government agencies and researchers. Its success comes from involving the community as much as possible and to make sure we get information about what we are doing back to the community.

The easiest way for anyone to become involved is simply to provide details of your fishing trips. We want to know about fishing trips from Stanage Bay to Bundaberg. This includes offshore, estuary and freshwater be they out of a boat or landbased. The more fishing trips we have the more accurately we can calculate catch rates and catches. To reward you for providing trip details we provide a cap or drink cooler for 5 trips and a t-shirt for 10 trips. Just ring the CapReef hotline 1800-007-001 after you have been fishing and we will get the details. Alternatively we can provide an electronic form that you can fill in and email back to us. Just contact us at capreef@info-fish.net to get a copy of the form.



CapReef is supported by:

