



Media Release

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PROJECT ADDRESSES CRITICAL GAPS IN THE MARINE HABITATS DATABASE

Tasmanian researchers and representatives from a number of sectors including industry, government and the community now have access to more detailed information on marine habitat distribution and extent.

The SeaMap Tasmania - Mapping the Gaps project has addressed significant gaps in the database of marine habitats in the NRM North region.

The project, co-funded by NRM North, aimed to improve our understanding of the marine environment and help develop a sound information base for the management of marine resources around the state.

NRM North's Chief Executive Officer, James McKee, said the area captured in this mapping research report adds a further 86,700 hectares to the SeaMap Tasmania marine habitat database.

"It completes the mapping of the coastal marine section within the NRM North region from the coastline to a 1.5 kilometre limit.

"The information was collected through a combination of aerial photography, acoustic surveys, underwater video and visual observations." Mr McKee said.

The database had critical gaps which needed to be addressed.

"These gaps included the coastline within the NRM North region from Swan Island to Low Head and specific priority areas in other NRM jurisdictions including the Tamar Estuary, Macquarie Harbour and the Ramsar listed wetlands of Orielton Lagoon, Moulting Lagoon and the Ringarooma lower floodplain."

Junior Research Fellow at the Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute, Miles Lawler, said the main objective of this project was to generate detailed marine habitat maps for the shallow coastal waters.

"Marine habitat maps provide the baseline information for a wide range of coastal research and planning issues such as environmental impact modelling and assessment, fisheries assessment, habitat monitoring, marine farm planning, localised coastal developments and pollution and oil spill response."

The project will also provide crucial information to councils to assist in land use decision making and establish the presence or absence of key invasive marine species.

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