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# Lakes and Coorong Commercial Fishery Net Work

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**Glen Hill flagging a  
banded stilt chick.**

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## Launch of New Fishery Website

We welcome all readers of this newsletter to explore the Lakes and Coorong Fishery website, [coorongfishery.com](http://coorongfishery.com) which went "live" Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2006.

Our fishery is very proud of its history and our vision for the future and our story is now on the World Wide Web for the entire world to see.

It has taken many, many hours of work by Tracy Hill to research and compile the information, design and write fact sheets and associated tasks. A local business, Webpizzazz, was used to design the site and do all of the technical "stuff". Thanks to Sue Piggott for all of her expertise, assistance and patience while we got the info together.

There are still many items that will be added over the next few months including news updates, photos, recipes and member information. So please check on it regularly to keep up with what the fishery and the Southern Fishermen's Association is up to.

Thanks to PIRSA Fisheries, SARDI Aquatic Sciences, Murray Darling Basin Commission, SA Museum and the local Ngarrindjeri community for their assistance.

Big thanks also to the **Sydney Fish Market**, our first Gold Sponsor, and **Boltons Lawyers**, our first Silver Sponsor.

There are several sponsor positions left so if, after viewing the site, you are interested please send an email, via the link and information will be forwarded to you.

[www.coorongfishery.com](http://www.coorongfishery.com)



## President's Piece

The fishing industry's two representative bodies, South Australian Fishing Industry Council and Seafood Council, are currently in the process of discussing a merger. I understand there are several issues that will take time to work through before a consensus is reached.

Finally, commonsense may eventually prevail. I'm just so disappointed that it has taken so long for grown men to cast aside their egos long enough to take the time to consider the fishing industry holistically and not be divided by the power of money and the need to control an agenda.

My involvement with the fishing industry has been short compared to the many fishing industry stalwarts. However I have not seen or heard of such an avalanche of losses experienced by the South Australian fishing industry as has taken place in the last 12 years, with little more than faint cries or whimpers from industry and its leadership.

In the real world, (the private sector), the natural selection process eliminates more than 98% of the population. The remaining souls tend to be very resilient, quick and adaptable. I hope the demise of commercial fishing in this state produces a "Super Fisher", who is not only innovative and adaptable but will lead our remaining fishers, fishery managers and politicians into a new management stratosphere.

## Coorong & SE Wader count

For the fifth consecutive year, several Lakes and Coorong Fishers donated their time, boats and expertise to assist the Australasian Wader Studies Group with the 2006 Coorong and Southeast Coastal Lakes Wader Survey.

Butch Ritchie, Rod Ayres, Glen Hill and Garry Hera-Singh used their intimate knowledge of the Coorong, and boat handling skills to take groups of wader counters into areas they cannot reach on foot. The fishers are also able to use their local knowledge to identify areas where birds may be found that are not easily accessed by land. The extensive survey is conducted throughout the Southern & Northern Lagoons and the Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth region.

Glen Hill also assisted Maureen Christie, from the Friends of Shorebirds SE Group, to catch and band some of the banded stilt chicks that resulted from a breeding event this year. Normally the chicks are rounded up on shore but as these chicks were on the verge of flying, they kept swimming into deep water to avoid capture.

Glen's slightly unorthodox method of rounding them up by boat and picking them up in a dab net caused a few moments of apprehension for the volunteers, until they saw that it was not harmful to the birds in any way and was a very effective method of capture.

The venture was so successful, she asked Glen to take her out a fortnight later to do further banding or "flagging" as they term it. Over 100 chicks were flagged that day and over 300 total which should give the group some good data over the next few years.

## Coxswains Course

Overwhelming is the only way to describe the response to expressions of interest for a coxswains course to be run in the region.

SAFIC Project Officer, Claire Van der Geest said that 42 responses came from the Lakes and Coorong Fishery, far in excess of the ten or a dozen license holders expected. To be able to conduct the courses, applicants have had to be split into smaller groups.

The additional interest has been shown by employees, who have taken advantage of both the Elements of Shipboard Safety and First Aid components, and some are also completing the whole certificate of competency.

Having this course held locally is another of the initiatives of the Southern Fishermen's Association. It not only meets Transport SA requirements but also fulfils OH&S objectives and increases the skill base of fishers in the region.

The cost has been substantially subsidised for members of the SFA by funding obtained by Claire from both the **Fleurieu and Murraylands Regional Development Boards**.

"We wanted to give the members a reward for their support of the Association, as it is sometimes hard to come up with your subs year after year." said President Garry Hera-Singh "There will be more of these types of benefits in the future"

Non members were also able to take advantage of a partial subsidy.

The courses will be run over the next 12 months.

## Joint Marketing Initiative

Lakes and Coorong Fishery (L&CF) has joined with seven other sectors to collectively finance and market their products both nationally and internationally. The group is called the South Australian Seafood Industry (SASI) Implementation Group.

The first meeting, on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2005, was a workshop attended by numerous representatives of the other wild-catch sectors as well as aquaculture and some individual producers. A range of issues were highlighted and discussed and some concerns that were raised by industry were worked through.

Of those who decided to make a commitment to the process, a steering committee was formed, with Tracy Hill being the Lakes and Coorong representative.

SAFIC and Seafood council will jointly administer the plan and the program will include:

- Organisation (inc. structure, funding and management)
- Market development
- Capacity building
- National positioning

A successful presentation was made to the Premiers Food Council meeting in December 2005, which prompted the State Government to pledge \$50,000 to kick start the program.

The benefit of Lakes and Coorong joining forces with the other sectors of as Rock lobster, Blue crab, Marine Scale, Prawn, Oyster and others is that we market products collaboratively and leverage funding which L&CF couldn't normally access alone. "Our sector is one of the smallest in value and it will enable us to gain access to markets and other initiatives while only contributing funds proportionate to our size" said Tracy.

Some are adopting a "wait and see attitude", but the Southern Fishermen's Association thought it best to be at the table from the start to help establish the groups' direction.

With funding secured from the participating sectors, there are already two projects underway with measurable outcomes for each. Lakes and Coorong have some work to do in the interim to be ready for the outcomes from the projects.

### **Targets for next six months are:**

1. Auditable standards in place for all seven sectors that meet the target market (super fine dining) requirements in both Sydney and US.
2. Trial shipments of products from all 7 sectors into each of the Sydney and US markets.
3. Understanding of the communications and distribution requirements in the US market.
4. Development of the understanding and capacity of the group to both function as an entity and understand the market issues.




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*Some of the species earmarked for export opportunities.*

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## Support for wild harvest fisheries

Lakes and Coorong fishers were very interested in the results of the FRDC funded report on the *Retail Sale and Consumption of Seafood* by Nick Ruello.

Of particular significance, “there was substantial latent support for commercial fishing, which Nick Ruello said could be nurtured and harnessed to add strength to the fishers’ voice in the public debate over resource allocation.”

L & C fishers have known this for some time, especially those who are selling direct to the public through door sales, at farmer’s markets etc.

Some of the results include:

- Almost 40% of Melbourne consumers surveyed would like to see more fresh local seafood
- 7% would prefer more fish to be made available for recreational fishing and
- Slightly more than 40% felt the balance was now right

This was in line with results for Perth in 1999, which saw 76% advocate a greater resource allocation to commercial fishing and 7% increase for recreational fishers, 6% were content with status quo.

These types of reports are important for industry not only to learn what the consumer wants but also to reinforce to politicians that there is not this large group of voters that are anti-commercial.

In fact the candidate for the Independent “Recreational Fishers” in the Legislative Council could only garner 0.2% of votes, less than for “No Battery Hens” and the “Shooters Party”.

I think the groundswell of popular opinion for commercial fishers supplying the families of South Australia, tourists and restaurant goers fresh, local seafood will grow. The industry only has to do a little education and communication to give voice to the 80% of people happy with the contribution that wild catch fisheries make to the society and the economy.

Politicians and decision makers should heed advice to catch up to that reality.



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*An Avocet chick  
waiting for its  
siblings to hatch.*

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## A statement of powerlessness

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Recently on television Noel Pearson stated this:

“I dedicate 95% of my time and knowledge to dealing with these problems but only have 5% of the power to do so.

Government on the other hand dedicate only 5% of their time, have only 3% of the knowledge about the issues but have 95% of the power.”

*Noel Pearson is currently an adviser to a number of indigenous organisations in Cape York, including the Cape York Land Council (CYLC).*

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**This can apply to many issues, including fisheries management!**

## New Coorong National Park Plan

The Coorong National Park Management Plan is currently under review. It has been 15 years since the drafting of the current plan, with the park extending its boundaries and a huge increase in the number of people using its facilities.

The fishing industry is represented on the Community Reference Group by Garry Hera-Singh with many issues relevant to industry being discussed.

One of the first issues addressed by the 20 odd stakeholders of the community reference group has been dogs. Until now dogs have been allowed to stay in a vehicle or be taken by lead on to the ocean beach.

The stakeholders have been put on notice that it is highly unlikely dogs will be allowed within the boundaries of the park under any circumstances.

This will be important for some commercial fishers who have dogs on their utes to deter would be thieves.

This directive is the first of a number of proposed changes to the current management regime.

As a commercial fishery operating inside a national park, and a wetland of international importance, the SFA understands that the fishers have an obligation in behaving responsibly and managing the resource on behalf of the community.



[www.coorongfishery.com](http://www.coorongfishery.com)

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**A Banded Stilt**

*A little bird we don't  
know much about.*

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