

# YELLOWTAIL KINGFISH NEWSLETTER



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February 2015

A pretty good summer

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## Five year warrant of fitness for kingfish stocks

Kingfish is an increasingly popular target species for recreational fishers and divers. This project is collecting kingfish length and age data to monitor recruitment and exploitation rates in 2014–15. This will be compared to a similar survey 5 years ago which found large numbers of 5 and 6 year olds but few teenagers, especially in inshore waters. Areas like White Island have supported an excellent sport fishery for many years and still produce some of the larger older fish to be found in New Zealand. This is a testament to the conservation efforts and good handling practices aboard many of the charter and private boats that fish there.

## Progress so far

The project is aiming to collect 2000 kingfish lengths and 500 ages from kingfish over 75 cm from East Northland/Hauraki Gulf and the Bay of Plenty. So far

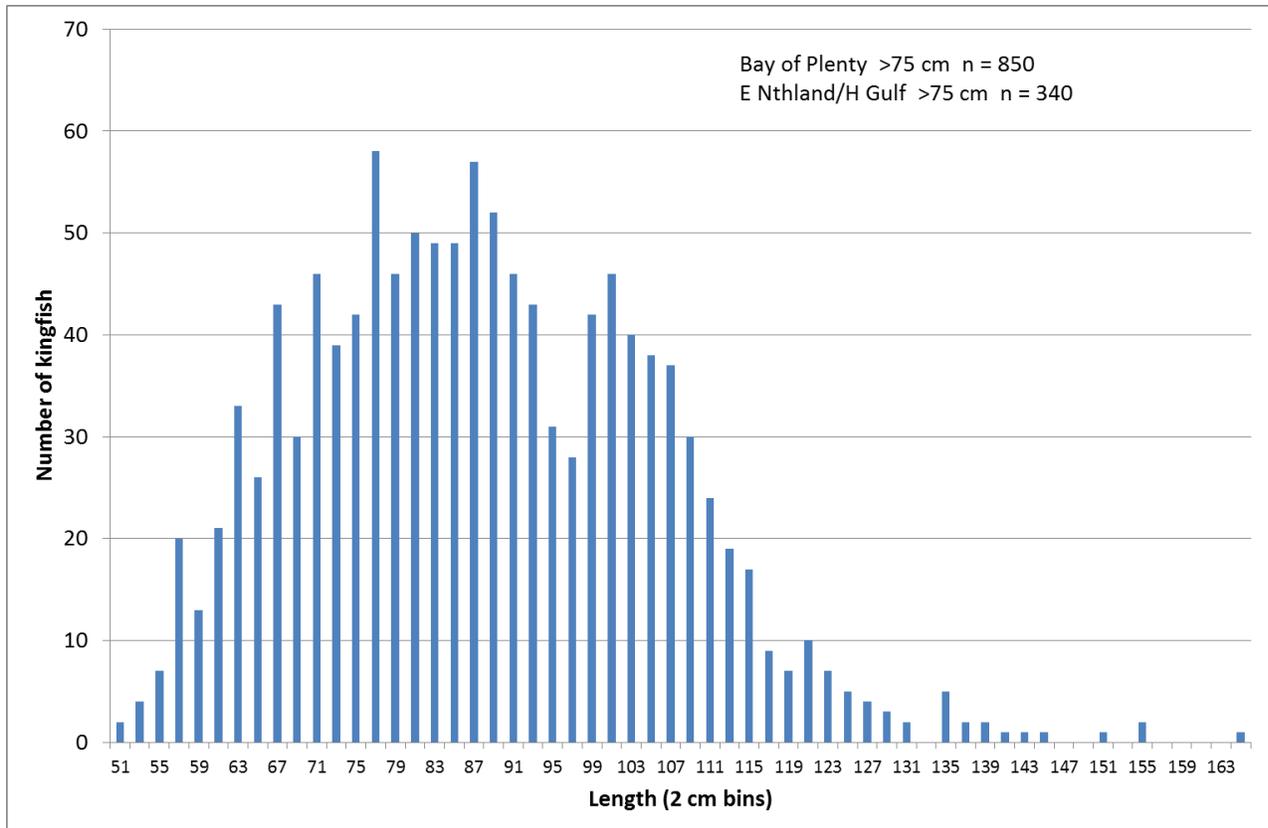
- We ask you to keep recording lengths from kingfish of all sizes over 65 cm;
- We have 271 pairs of otoliths (balance bones) successfully removed from the kingfish heads supplied;
- From East Northland/Hauraki Gulf we have 340 lengths 75 cm and over;
- From the BOP/ Ranfurly area we have 850 lengths > 75 cm entered so far;
- **We have enough heads from East Northland/Hauraki Gulf in the 810 to 940 mm range;**
- **We have enough heads from Bay of Plenty fish of 1000 to 1100 mm;**
- **Heads from large fish from all areas would be a useful addition to the project over the next 4 months;**
- For the first time the Three Kings area and Ranfurly Bank are included in the survey.
- Heads from tagged fish that have been recaptured are also of special interest, especially if they have been at liberty for a while. Often old tags are discoloured or worn.

If you have completed forms, please post them in or arrange for someone to pick them up so we can keep track of progress.

## Yellowtail kingfish length distribution to date

Almost everywhere people are commenting on the large number of rat kingfish that are around this year. Some of you are recording kingfish of all sizes which is proving interesting. If you want to do this, that is fine. Generally we have asked for kingfish 65 cm and larger to be measured. A plot of all the kingfish lengths over 51 cm is below.

**Figure 1: The lengths of kingfish in the database to date for Northland, Hauraki Gulf and Bay of Plenty areas combined.**



Some offshore locations have produced some nice fish over spring and summer. Here in Northland we expect the inshore fishery will pick up in autumn. As usual there have been some good fish lost to sharks, bronze whalers mostly. We recommend you don't use burly or clean fish near kingfish reefs. If your fish start getting taken it is better to move locations than waste good fish.

A pretty good summer so far. Enjoy it.

John Holdsworth and Pete Saul