

Annual Report Addressing DEW Recommendations on the Harvest of Cast Bull Kelp on King Island by Kelp Industries Pty Ltd – February 2007

In February 2005, the Department of the Environment and Water Resources (DEW, formerly the Department of the Environment and Heritage) responded to a proposal from King Island Kelp Industries Pty Ltd to harvest and export kelp from King Island. The response specified three recommendations and asked that DPIW prepare periodic reports identifying progress to addressing these recommendations. The recommendations and associated actions are shown below.

Conditions on the Approved Wildlife Trade Declaration for the harvest of cast bull kelp by Kelp Industries Pty Ltd

1. Harvesting of beach-cast *Durvillaea potatorum* is restricted to:
 - a. the west coast of King Island between Cape Wickham and approximately five kilometres due south of Ettrick Beach;
 - b. the south coast of King Island from Surprise Bay to the east of Stokes Point; and
 - c. the south-east coast of King Island from three areas around Red Hut Point, Grassy Harbour and City of Melbourne Bay.

No kelp is gathered from any other part of King Island

2. Harvesting is to be in accordance with conditions stipulated on relevant licences issued by the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment (TDPIWE).

Kelp Industries only accept kelp from harvesters who provide a current Marine Plant licence, vehicle & trailer registrations, ABN number, drivers licence, insurance and record of induction.

3. The harvest is restricted to a maximum of 50% of available beach-washed material at each harvesting site.

In most cases more than 50% biomass remains at each harvesting site, as other species and smaller kelp pieces are not picked up.

4. Harvesting and transporting of kelp and/or equipment is prohibited from August to March (inclusive) on sandy beaches, except the north-end of British Admiral Beach and any other sandy beach for which a representative from TDPIWE has verified in writing that harvesting would not be detrimental to nesting *Thinornis rubricollis* (hooded plovers).

No Harvesting occurs on sandy beaches except the north end of British Admiral beach, where the kelp is usually winched from the car park due to the risk of getting bogged in the soft sand.

5. Recording of monthly harvest figures is to be undertaken as specified by the Secretary of the Department of the Environment and Heritage.

All records are maintained and royalties paid

6. A quarterly report on the monthly harvest figures to be submitted to the Secretary within one month of the end of each quarter.

Quarterly reports are provided on time

Recommendation 1:

DPIW to pursue a strategic approach to management of marine plants in Tasmania and, in particular, management of the harvest of beach cast bull kelp on King Island.

DPIW is in the process of developing a formal policy paper that will provide greater control over the kelp industry by government authorities and increased certainty and security for all industry stakeholders. Discussions are currently under way between members of DPIW, the Parks and Wildlife Service, Reserved Lands Leases and Licences Business Services and the key kelp harvesters and processors to develop a process for allocating licences. The approach being developed will mean licences will only be allocated or renewed once the proponent can demonstrate they have gained access approval from the relevant land manager or owner which will see an increased level of co-operation between government agencies. Prior to granting access to kelp, Parks and Wildlife will be able to assess the level of impact any proposed operations will have and make their recommendation to DPIW accordingly.

It should be noted that the new strategies under development are not as relevant for the King Island operation as for other areas, as Kelp Industries have exclusive rights to all kelp harvested on the Island and they are currently running under an approved code of conduct and are abiding by the arrangements agreed to by DEH in their proposal submitted in 2004. They have recently confirmed that they are 80% toward attaining ISO 14, 0001 accreditation and will continue moving toward that goal.

The operations on King Island will however, still be considered under the policy review and improvements will be initiated where warranted.

Recommendation 2:

DPIW to inform DEH of any changes to the management arrangements for the harvest of bull kelp on King Island that may impact on the ecological sustainability of the operations.

There have been no significant changes in the management arrangements for the harvest of bull kelp on King Island. DEH will be notified of any changes to arrangements should they occur.

Recommendation 3:

DPIW to develop formal liaison arrangements with Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife to monitor the impacts of the harvesting of cast bull kelp on protected bird species.

DPIW has formally written to the Manager Reserved Land and Leases and Licences from Parks Tasmania to initiate the formal liaison arrangements (see **Attachment A**). There have been a number of meetings with DPIW staff, the Manager Reserved Land and Parks Wildlife Rangers from the North West region to progress management arrangements which will help ensure impact from kelp harvesting does not significantly impinge on natural systems.

Kelp Industries have also been liaising with Birds Tasmania and arranged for its Chair, Dr Eric Woehler, to visit their operations to assess the impact of kelp harvesting on local bird populations. The report was very supportive of the industry stating that the low number of collection sites is unlikely to impact on the breeding populations of plovers and oyster catchers on the Island (see **Attachment B**). He went on to say that the high use of vehicles on beaches by the general community was more of a concern. He did however state that the lack of surveys and scientific data was an issue.

Kelp Industries is working with Birds Tasmania to try to address the shortfall and next year there will be a survey conducted by Birds Tasmania on the bird population on the Island. Arrangements have also been made for an Honours student to conduct a study on mapping shorebird nest and roosting areas around King Island in conjunction with the mapping of the various human activities to determine the extent of spatial and temporal overlap. The study will then identify any management issues in relation to the birds on King Island.

Attachment A

22 December 2006

Contact: Greg Ryan
Phone: 6216 4227

Mr Chris Price

Manager Reserved Land Leases & Licences
Level 2, 134 Macquarie Street,
Hobart TAS, 7001

Management of Tasmanian Marine Plant Harvest

As you are aware, the Department of Primary Industries and Water (DPIW) is working toward improving management strategies for the harvest of marine plants. A large part of the approach being developed is to work more closely with the land managers to ensure that the industry functions in a sustainable manner.

An important aspect of management of the industry is the protection of the natural ecosystems including the bird species reliant on the cast marine plants for their survival. DPIW recognises the important role played by The Parks and Wildlife Service and the high level of expertise it can provide in the protection of these systems. The "on ground" location and day to day operations of your officers also makes them an invaluable source of advice for this Department which should help develop a practical and effective mechanism for the safeguard of these bird species.

We would therefore like to suggest that formal arrangements be set in place that will allow officers from The Parks and Wildlife Service and officers from DPIW to liaison directly on the monitoring of impacts of the harvesting of cast bull kelp on protected species.

I would suggest that there should be a person from your area to be a first point of contact for all issues relating to the harvesting of cast kelp. This approach appears to be working well for access issues in certain areas under The Parks and Wildlife Service's management.

The two areas most likely to be effected by the harvest of marine plants are King Island and the North West of the State. It would therefore be appreciated if you could nominate an officer as a first point of contact. If you would like to discuss this issue further, please contact Greg Ryan on 6216 4227.

Grant Pullen
Manager, Wild Fisheries Management



21 November 2005

John Hiscock
General Manager, Kelp Industries P/L
PO Box 314 Currie
King Island

Visit by Birds Tasmania

Dear John,

I would like to thank you and Kelp Industries P/L most sincerely for the most generous support and assistance provided to Birds Tasmania last week when I visited King Island at your invitation to provide advice and guidance on future collaborations aimed to minimise any disturbance to beach nesting shorebirds.

Based on my observations in the areas used by kelp harvesters, it appears that the kelp harvesters do not have any significant impact on nesting shorebirds, with the following caveats:

(i) British Admiral Beach, a sandy beach where there is at least one pair of nesting Hooded Plovers, may experience disturbance leading to breeding failure from kelp collection. However, given the high level of vehicles on this beach by the general community, it would appear that the disturbance by occasional kelp harvesting is a minimal contribution to the overall level of disturbance and potential breeding failure, and

(ii) It is possible that some kelp harvesting from shingle beaches (for example, below the Currie golf course) MAY affect nesting species such as Red-capped Plovers and possibly Pied Oystercatchers. I located a nest with 2 eggs on a shingle beach adjacent to a kelp harvesting site below the golf course that, were it to be present on a beach from which kelp is collected, would be destroyed during the collection operation. In contrast to British Admiral Beach, the level of disturbance from the general community is minimal. However, the low number of kelp collection sites is unlikely to impact on the breeding populations of plovers and oystercatchers on the island.

As stated in Birds Tasmania's letter to DEH in 2004, the primary concern remains the lack of survey and scientific data for all species of shorebird on King Island. As we discussed, there are many opportunities for conducting surveys and in so doing, increasing community awareness of shorebirds on the island, and I will send a separate email with the various projects and roles for future collaborations we discussed last week.

On behalf of Birds Tasmania, a sincere thanks once again for your willingness to collaborate, and we look forward to working with you and the King Island community to improve the conservation status of shorebirds on King Island.

Yours faithfully,

Dr E J Woehler
Chair