

What's been spotted on Redmap lately?

By Yvette Barry

Tasmanian fishers and divers are helping *Redmap.org.au* to track marine species that may be shifting their geographic ranges in Tassie seas. Tasmanians have shared over 500 sightings on Redmap, many of which were spotted away from their usual marine postcodes. Here are some of the latest sightings logged on the Redmap website and App.

We knew MONA was attracting visitors to Tasmania from around the country, but this may be going too far. Thousands of threadfin leatherjackets, up to 150mm in length, were reported washed up on East Coast beaches in May.

Apart from on a BBQ, the eastern king prawn (*Melicertus plebejus*) is more at home off the coast of Queensland and New South Wales; although its range does extend as far south as Georges Bay. It was a surprise, then, to receive this sighting near Hobart in April of this year. Redmap needs more of these sightings over time to indicate if this prawn is shifting its distributions south – or if it's just a temporary visitor who hitched a ride south on a strengthening East Australian Current. One to look out for in the future.

Redmap recently received sightings of threadfin leatherjacket (*Arotrolepis filicauda*). These leatherjacket species are usually found in tropical waters in northern Australia and places like Papua New Guinea. The sightings are also noteworthy because thousands of threadfin leatherjackets washed up on beaches along the East Coast of Tasmania in May.

It's believed the fish deaths were related to water temperature. Dr Neville Barrett from IMAS told ABC radio it was very unusual to see so many fish washed up on Tassie beaches. He said Tasmanian seas can get quite warm around Easter, up to 18 to 19 degrees even, which may have attracted the leatherjackets. But it's likely the species were

killed as storms pushed cold, sub-Antarctic waters up the East Coast.

"The species that are hanging out in that warm water don't like it, and tend to wash up onshore," Dr Barrett told the ABC. "But usually in the hundreds, not in the tens of thousands that has happened this time with this particular species."

Let the Redmap Team know if you have any other ideas why such large numbers of this tropical fish are washing up on Tassie beaches.

Redmap's most frequently sighted "out-of-range" species in Tasmania is the eastern rock lobster (*Sagmariasus verreauxi*), a species more common along the coast of NSW. Although it's not rare to spot the green rock lobster in North East Tasmania, relatively large groups of individuals were reported recently (→30 individuals) along the East Coast. Redmap tracks sightings in all Tasmanian waters to better map its distribution; and to gauge, over time, if this lobster is more frequently settling further south.

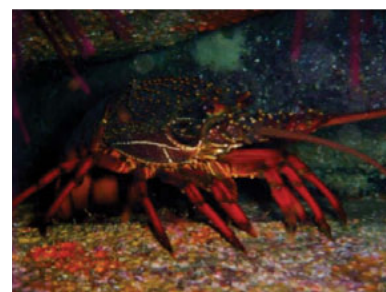
What is Redmap? The 'Range Extension Database and Mapping' project invites you to log marine species not usually found in your local seas. Waters off the East Coast of Tasmania are warming almost four times faster than the global average. Your sightings help scientists track marine life that may be moving into new areas, a.k.a extending their range, potentially in response to changes such as ocean warming. Or as Redmap likes to coin it: "moving south when things get too hot at home". Redmap taps into the knowledge that Tasmanian fishers have reeled in over many years on the sea. Visit www.redmap.org.au or download the Redmap App to share your uncommon sightings and photos! Redmap is hosted by the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies at the University of Tasmania.



Above: an eastern king prawn spotted near Hobart (Photo: Redmap member 'Andy').



Redmap sightings, top: Richard Dakin, Wineglass Bay; middle: George Cresswell, near St Helens; bottom: Adam Duraj, Bicheno



Above: Redmap member Danny Lee took a colourful shot of this eastern rock lobster near St Helens.

LOG YOUR UNUSUAL SIGHTING AT:



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