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MEDIA RELEASE

BROOME SAILFISH TAGGING PROGRAM

The final phase of the Recfishwest and Woodside-funded study into the unique Broome Sailfish is now underway.

The Sailfish tagging program study seeks to answer a range of questions about the habits and movements of Broome's most famous fish.

Recfishwest Acting Executive Director Kane Moyle said the program tagging team was excited to be part of a world-first operation.

"The tagging programs involve different types of satellite tags, known as PSATs, and one type of 'transmitter tag', known as a SPOT tag deployed on the fish," Mr Moyle said.

"The PSAT tags log important environmental information such as depth, water temperature and light levels and when programmed will be able to detach themselves from the fish and begin transmitting this information to satellites for processing and analysis.

"This data can be used to provide valuable information on not only the movements of sailfish, but also their use of their marine habitat during daylight and night-time hours."

This information will not only provide a more comprehensive understanding of the Broome Sailfish but could also shed light on the sailfish populations in Dampier, Onslow and Exmouth.

The SPOT tags work like a radio transmitter and are mounted to the tail of the fish rather than the shoulder.

When the fish are 'tailing' on the surface the aerial of the transmitter is able to broadcast information to a satellite which can provide real time information on the

day to day location of the fish to the researchers. This information can even be put on a website for the public to see where the fish are at.

“This is very exciting, given this is the first time this style of tag been used on sailfish, previously they have only ever been used on striped marlin,” Mr Moyle said.

“This is the first time that these revolutionary tags have been used on sailfish and this research is an opportunity to cast the international spotlight on what is a world class recreational fishery.”

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