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*Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation*

**GARY NAIRN**

*Special Minister for State*

*Federal Member for Eden-Monaro*

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## **Trawl fishery educational kit gets environmental seal of approval**

A new educational kit will help fishers in the South East Trawl Fishery (SETF) gather detailed information on seals, Australian Fisheries Minister Senator Eric Abetz, and Federal Member for Eden-Monaro Gary Nairn, announced today in Eden, NSW.

Minister Abetz said the kit, which includes a DVD/video and seal identification poster, was part of a wider industry-based programme designed to encourage fishers in the SETF to provide regular and more accurate information on their interactions with seals.

“There’s little information available at the moment on how seals and fishers interact in the ‘wet-boat’ sector of the fishery, making it difficult to assess the nature and extent of the issue or, if there are particular concerns, to develop effective mitigation measures,” he said.

Launching the kit, Mr Nairn said it will help raise industry awareness by providing the latest information on the biology and conservation status of seals.

“It sets out, in simple terms, the correct ways of reporting seal interactions and collecting biological material, helping provide us with a clearer picture of the hotspots of interactions, and gender and age make-up of the seals, interacting with this fishery,” Mr Nairn said.

“And the poster, with its full-colour images and descriptions, will help fishers identify particular species.

“The DVD/video will help fishers become familiar with appropriate ways of interacting with seals, especially in relation to reporting incidental by-catch and mortality rates.

“The educational kits will be sent to all fishers in the SETF.

“The posters will also be distributed in other fisheries, as well as to marine, finfish aquaculture operators, where interactions with seals are also known to take place.”

The educational kit was developed by the Bureau of Rural Sciences, Fishwell Consulting and the South East Trawl Fishing Industry Association, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Australian Fisheries Management Authority, the Department of the Environment and Heritage and the Fisheries R&D Corporation.

**Ends**

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