

Submission to the Inquiry into Finfish Farming in Tasmania

This personal submission relates to finfish farming operations in Tasmanian waters and how these operations affect other users of those waters. Specifically, to the provision of sufficient information to enable other users to safely navigate the waterways. It relates to Terms of Reference 1a, 2a and 2c.

Information required by other users of the waterways is in two parts:

1. Notice of navigation hazards presented by farm equipment and debris which is in the waters outside of the farm lease areas; and
2. Information about the location of the farm lease boundaries and of the marks (incl lights) which are on those boundaries.

Representations on those two issues were made by the Cruising Yacht Club of Tasmania (CYCT) when the Marine Farming Review Panel was considering the draft MFDP amendments for the Storm Bay proposals. The result was an additional management control:

“3.12.15 A lessee who becomes aware of a potential hazard to navigation must, as soon as practicable after becoming aware of the hazard, notify the Marine and Safety Authority and take any other action directed by the Marine and Safety Authority and / or considered necessary by the lessee.”

This new control, along with the zero-tolerance approach being taken towards fish farm debris, should result in an improved environment for other waterway users. The number of Notices to Mariners regarding fish farm equipment which is off-station has certainly increased recently – hopefully because all hazards are now being notified, rather than the number of hazards increasing.

The issue of adequate information about the locations of lease areas and boundary marks was considered to be outside the scope of a MFDP; operators are required to mark their leases with marks (usually yellow buoys) as specified by Marine and Safety Tasmania (MAST). What information is displayed on the nautical charts is determined by Marine and Safety Tasmania and the Australian Hydrographic Service (AHS). However, although the provision of information about fish farms on the nautical charts is not a direct part of the marine farming regulations, it is important for the safe interworking of the industry with other users of the waterways.

Nautical charts are the ‘street atlas’ of the water. Commercial vessels are required to carry up-to-date copies of the official charts (produced by the AHS). Recreational vessels are advised to carry charts and many carry electronic chart plotters which display ‘licensed products’, chart information which is derived from the official charts. In conditions of good visibility, the marks can be seen and leases avoided; at night and in conditions of poor visibility, it is not always straightforward to determine on which side of the marks (when lit) vessels should navigate. Accurate and adequate information on a chart enhance the safety of navigation in such conditions.

To be useful for navigation, charts should show what is actually in/on the water. Fish farm leases (when occupied) are no-go areas for recreational and non-fish farm vessels. Showing the active Lease areas is considered to be the minimum requirement. Zones indicate to the mariner that there may be a lease somewhere (and sometime) in the zone area. But navigation is permitted within a Zone as long as it is outside the Lease.

The current situation

The information currently shown on the charts is inconsistent and inadequate. In the Huon and Channel area, Norfolk Bay and Okehampton Bay, the official charts display (mostly) the farm Lease areas. With one exception, none of the lease boundary marks is shown on the charts. All the salmon farm marks are IALA Special Marks (yellow, with a yellow ‘X’ topmark).

In Storm Bay, Wedge Bay and Port Arthur, the official charts show the MFDP Zones and display none of the boundary marks. All of the marks around Huon Aquaculture’s leases are IALA cardinal marks, some of Tassal’s are port lateral marks and the remainder are Special Marks.

Navionics charts (one of the 'licensed products') displays a mixture of zones (some out of date, eg Storm Bay) and an icon representing a fish farm but giving no information about the extent of the farm.

The attached table is a summary (manually compiled so not guaranteed 100 % accurate) of the information displayed on the official digital charts (Aus ENC) and one of the 'licensed products', Navionics. It shows the inconsistent nature of the currently displayed information.

Desired outcome

Active Lease areas are the only marine farm areas that vessels need to be concerned with. They are obliged to keep clear of these Lease areas. Vessels may navigate through areas where there is no Lease in a Zone or if a Lease is not active (no boundary marks). Ideally, active lease areas would be the only areas shown on the charts. As a second-best but easily achievable option, showing all Lease areas and the location and characteristics of the boundary marks will give vessels enough information to see where the 'no-go' areas are.

The lease areas are available as a layer on ListMap (search for 'marine leases'). Data is provided by the Marine Farming Branch of DPIPWE. Information about the boundary marks is also available (the marks are checked annually) but is not currently publicly available. With the GIS tools available to a casual user, it is straightforward to produce a chart overlay of the Lease areas, implying that the effort involved in massaging the Lease data into a form which the Australian Hydrographic Service can use to add all of the Leases to the official charts should not be too great. Replacing the current mixture of Lease, Zones and out-of-date areas with up-to-date Lease areas would be a significant improvement.

Similarly, assembling the database of boundary marks into a suitable format for the AHS should be straightforward. Some persuasion will be required to convince the AHS to display the marks as they have rejected requests in the past, even though marine farm marks in NSW are shown.

Andrew Boon
Cruising yachtsman

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Attachment: Table *What is shown on charts*

What is shown on the electronic charts for fish farms?

		AusENC (official digital charts from AHS)		Navionics	
MF #	Location	Zone or Lease		Zone, Lease or Icon	
3	Long Bay Shoal S	Lease		Lease	
16	Dart Island	Zone		Icon only	
34	Satellite Is N	Lease		Icon only	
34	Satellite Is S	Zone	On AusENC but not in water.	Icon only	
36	Pt Esperance - Hawkars Pt SW	Envelope of Lease areas.	Leases 36, 77 and 192 amalgamated on AusENC.	Envelope of Lease areas.	
45	Fleurtys Point N	Lease		Icon only	
55	Long Bay	Zone		Zone	
57	Fleurtys Point S	Lease		Icon only	
64	Great Bay	Envelope of Lease areas.		Zone	
66	Pt Esperance - Slacks Point	Lease		Icon only	
69	Great Bay	Envelope of Lease areas.		Zone	
72	Great Bay	Envelope of Lease areas.		Zone	
73	Sykes Cove	Zone		Icon only	Outside of Lease and Zone area
74	Apollo Bay	Zone	Not there	Icon only	
76	Gunpowder Jetty	Lease		Icon only	
76	Electrona	Lease		Icon only	
77	Pt Esperance - Stringers Cove	Envelope of Lease areas.	Leases 36, 77 and 192 amalgamated on AusENC.	Envelope of Lease areas.	
78	Lippias Point	Lease		Lease	
87	Flathead Bay	Lease		Lease	
89	Fancy Bay	Envelope of Lease areas.	Leases 89, 99, 205 and 206 areas amalgamated.	Zone	

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		AusENC (official digital charts from AHS)		Navionics	
MF #	Location	Zone or Lease		Zone, Lease or Icon	
90	Tinderbox	Zone		Zone	
93	Hideaway Bay	Lease		Zone	
94	Snug Point	Lease		Icons only	
99	Fancy Bay	Envelope of Lease areas.	Leases 89, 99, 205 and 206 areas amalgamated.	Zone	
100	Deep Bay	Neither	AusENC is longer than the actual lease (but smaller than the Zone).	Zone	Inaccurate - too big.
109	Butlers Point	Lease		Lease	
109	Butlers Point (inshore)	Not shown		Not shown	
110	Soldiers Point	Lease		Icon only	Icon outside Lease area. Incorrect mark symbols added by 'Navionics user'.
113	Dunalley Bay	Lease		Zone	
115	Simpsons Pt	Zone		Zone	
116	Fancy Point	Zone		Zone	
117	Green Head	Lease	Actual Lease area is larger than shown on AusENC.	Icon only	
128	Green Head	Lease		Icon only	
136	Gardners Bay	Lease		Icon only	
141	Zuidpool Rk NE	Lease		Lease	
141	Zuidpool Rk SW	Lease		Lease	
142	Roberts Pt	Zone		Icon only	
150	King George Is	Lease		Icon only	
151	Garden Island	Lease	Almost - actual lease is narrower (N-S) than lease area on ListMap.	Zone	
154	Peartree (Simmonds Pt)	Zone	One pile mark shown.	Icon only	Plus 3 pile marks.

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		AusENC (official digital charts from AHS)		Navionics	
MF #	Location	Zone or Lease		Zone, Lease or Icon	
159	Simpsons Bay W	Zone	May be Lease if 100% of Zone available.	Icon only	
163	Norfolk Bay	Lease		Zone	
164	Mercury Passage	Lease	With marks!	Lease	With marks.
166	Little Norfolk Bay	Zone		Icon only	
167	Police Point	Lease		Zone	
170	Fulham Is	Lease		Zone	
172	Smooth Is	Lease		Zone	Larger than Lease but different from ListMap.
177	Long Bay N	Zone		Zone	
180	Missionary Bay W	Lease		Icon only	
182	Simpsons Pt S	Not shown	Not on AusENC - not in water?	Zone	
185	Great Taylors NW	Envelope of Lease areas.	AusENC boundary encloses MF185 and MF203	Envelope of Lease areas.	
186	Brabazon Point E	Lease	Now has one pile marker (not on AusENC).	Icon only	
187	Wheatleys Bay	Lease	On AusENC but not in water.	Icon only	
188	Brabazon Point N	Zone		Zone	
189	Killala Bay	Lease		Icon only	
190	Creeses Mistake	Zone	Port laterals on SE side (not on AusENC).	Zone	
191	Chronicle Pt	Lease		Icon only	
192	Pt Esperance - Hawkers Pt	Envelope of Lease areas.	Leases 36, 77 and 192 amalgamated on AusENC.	Envelope of Lease areas.	
193	Parsons Bay	Zone		Icon only	

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MF #	Location	Zone or Lease		Zone, Lease or Icon	
194	Parsons Bay	Zone		Icon only	
196	S of Flinders Bay	Lease	Almost.	Lease	Almost - not quite large enough
199	Eaglehawk Bay	Zone		Icon only	
199	Flinders Reef	Zone		Icon only	
201	NNE of Blubber Head	Lease		Lease	
203	Great Taylors SE	Envelope of Lease areas.	AusENC boundary encloses MF185 and MF203	Envelope of Lease areas.	
204	Great Bay	Envelope of Lease areas.		Zone	
205	Fancy Bay	Envelope of Lease areas.	Leases 89, 99, 205 and 206 areas amalgamated.	Zone	
206	Fancy Bay	Envelope of Lease areas.	Leases 89, 99, 205 and 206 areas amalgamated.	Zone	
207	Simpsons Bay S	Zone	Inaccurate on AusENC	Not shown	
208	Simpsons Bay SE	Zone	Inaccurate on AusENC	Not shown	
209	Pt Esperance - Lomas Pt	Envelope of Lease areas.	Leases 209 and 244 amalgamated on AusENC.	Envelope of Lease areas.	
221	S of Huon Pt (Redcliffs ?)	Lease		Lease	
235	Wykeholm Point	Zone	Probably Lease as well (100 %?)	Icon only	
236	Okehampton Bay	Lease	Almost. Actual farm (and as shown on AusENC) is smaller than Lease.	Zone	
244	Pt Esperance - Lomas Pt	Lease	On AusENC but no longer in water. Port lateral only.	Envelope of Lease areas.	

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		AusENC (official digital charts from AHS)		Navionics	
MF #	Location	Zone or Lease		Zone, Lease or Icon	
250	Long Bay Shoal N	Lease		Lease	
261	Storm Bay 1	Zone	Cardinal marks, not shown	Zone	Out of date
261	Storm Bay 2	Zone	Cardinal marks, not shown - there yet?	Zone	Out of date
261	Storm Bay 3	Zone	Special marks for seaweed trial only.	Zone	Out of date
261	Storm Bay 4	Zone	Not there	Zone	Out of date
276	Fancy Point	Zone		Zone	
277	West of Wedge	Zone	Not there	Zone	
278	West of Wedge	Zone	One Sp Mk on chart. No farm gear.	Zone	
279	West of Wedge	Zone		Zone	
280	West of Wedge	Zone	Not there	Zone	
281	Yellow Bluff	Zone	Lease actually occupies N half of Lease. Cardinal marks (not on AusENC).	Zone	
290	Long Bay Shoal N	Lease		Lease	
SL1	Hospital Bay	Not shown		Not shown	
	N Sheepwash Bay		Removed years ago?	Zone	
	Pilings Bay	Not shown	Old Lease shown on AusENC. Should show licence area with 3 sp marks.	Icon only	