

Wildlife Interaction Data

January - June 2024

Seal deterrent usage

In Tasmania, fur seals are known to interact with marine farming operations. Some interactions present a risk to the health and safety of marine farm workers and to the welfare of the seals. Seal interactions may also cause loss or damage to fish stocks and interfere with or damage industry infrastructure.

Under the *Seal Management Framework 2018*, seal deterrent devices may be deployed under permit by trained staff to deter fur seals from presenting an unacceptable risk to marine farm staff or interfering with marine farming infrastructure or operations.

The level of seal interactions on a marine farming lease and the need to deploy seal deterrent devices is influenced by a range of factors, including lease location and local environment, design and condition of infrastructure, fish stocking circumstances, and operational activities.

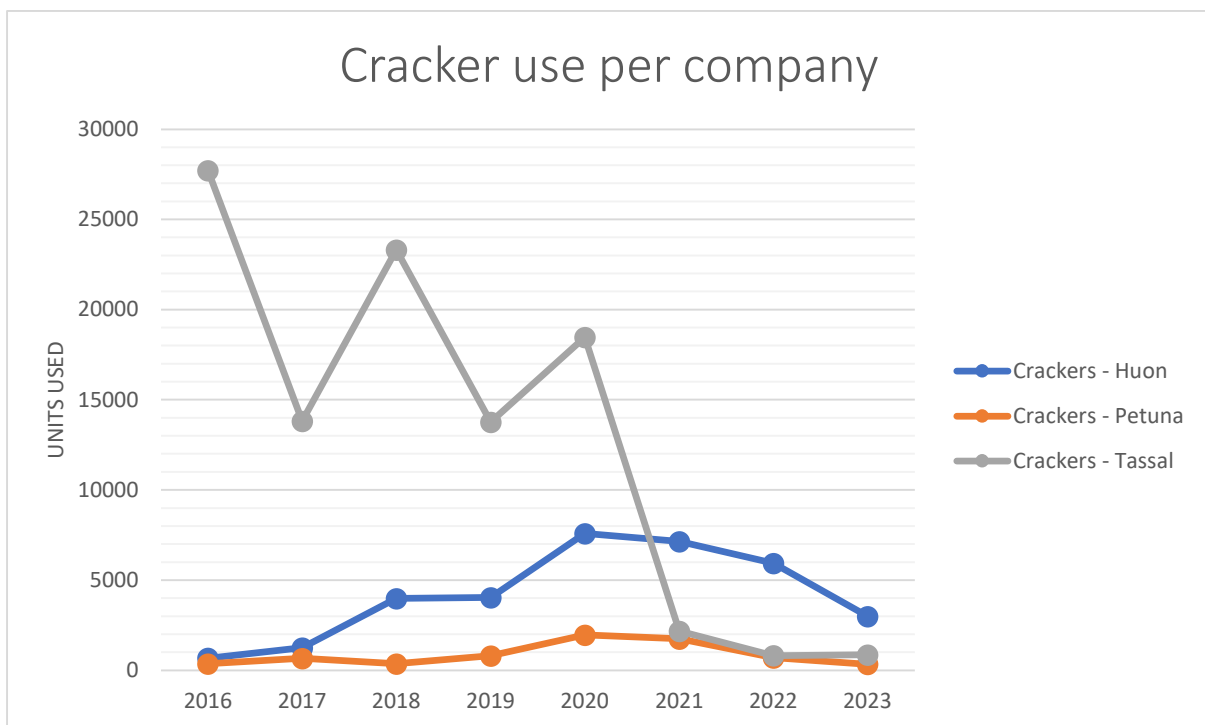


Figure 1: Reported usage of cracker units in Tasmania per company between 2016-2023.

Huon Aquaculture – Crackers

Table 1: Usage of cracker units reported by Huon Aquaculture between January - June 2024.

| Reporting month | Deterrent | Total usage | Regional usage | | |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------|--|-------------------|--|
| | | | D'Entrecasteaux Channel and Huon River | Macquarie Harbour | Storm Bay off Trumpeter Bay North Bruny Island |
| January 2024 | Crackers | 185 | 88 | 0 | 97 |
| February 2024 | Crackers | 147 | 71 | 0 | 76 |
| March 2024 | Crackers | 168 | 62 | 0 | 106 |
| April 2024 | Crackers | 256 | 68 | 0 | 188 |
| May 2024 | Crackers | 416 | 109 | 0 | 307 |
| June 2024 | Crackers | 350 | 115 | 0 | 235 |

Huon Aquaculture – Beanbags and seal scare caps

Nil use reported for January - June 2024.

Petuna – Crackers

Table 2: Usage of cracker units reported by Petuna between January - June 2024.

| Reporting month | Deterrent | Total usage | Regional usage | |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------|-------------------|---------------|
| | | | Macquarie Harbour | Tamar Estuary |
| January 2024 | Crackers | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| February 2024 | Crackers | 17 | 17 | 0 |
| March 2024 | Crackers | 22 | 22 | 0 |
| April 2024 | Crackers | 9 | 6 | 3 |
| May 2024 | Crackers | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| June 2024 | Crackers | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Petuna – Beanbags and seal scare caps

Nil use reported for January - June 2024.

Tassal – Crackers

Table 3: Usage of cracker units reported by Tassal between January - June 2024.

| Reporting month | Deterrent | Total usage | Regional Usage | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| | | | D'Entrecasteaux Channel and Huon River | Great Oyster Bay and Mercury Passage | Macquarie Harbour | Tasman Peninsula and Norfolk Bay |
| July 2023 | Crackers | 41 | 35 | 4 | 0 | 2 |
| August 2023 | Crackers | 44 | 39 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| September 2023 | Crackers | 76 | 53 | 6 | 0 | 17 |
| October 2023 | Crackers | 84 | 76 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| November 2023 | Crackers | 29 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| December 2023 | Crackers | 17 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 2 |

Tassal – Beanbags

Table 4: Usage of beanbags reported by Tassal between January - June 2024.

| Reporting month | Deterrent | Total usage | Regional usage | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| | | | D'Entrecasteaux Channel and Huon River | Great Oyster Bay and Mercury Passage | Macquarie Harbour | Tasman Peninsula and Norfolk Bay |
| January 2024 | Bean Bags | 54 | 45 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| February 2024 | Bean Bags | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 15 |
| March 2024 | Bean Bags | 30 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 30 |
| April 2024 | Bean Bags | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| May 2024 | Bean Bags | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| June 2024 | Bean Bags | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Tassal – Seal scare caps

Nil use reported for January - June 2024.

Wildlife mortalities

A wildlife mortality that is attributable to salmon farming is defined as ‘mortality caused by an interaction with marine farming activities, operations and infrastructure including but not limited to: entanglement, vessel strike, other infrastructure interaction, deterrent use, sedation, and humane destruction’.

Table 5: Wildlife mortalities reported by the industry between January - June 2024.

| Date | Company | Region | Broad taxon | Number | Cause of death |
|---------------|---------|--|-------------|--------|--------------------|
| January 2024 | Huon | Storm Bay off Trumpeter Bay North Bruny Island | Dolphin | 1 | Entanglement |
| January 2024 | Huon | Storm Bay off Trumpeter Bay North Bruny Island | Fur Seal | 1 | Entrapment |
| January 2024 | Tassal | D’Entrecasteaux Channel and Huon River | Bird | 1 | Entanglement |
| January 2024 | Tassal | D’Entrecasteaux Channel and Huon River | Bird | 1 | Entanglement |
| January 2024 | Tassal | D’Entrecasteaux Channel and Huon River | Bird | 1 | Found in pen |
| January 2024 | Tassal | D’Entrecasteaux Channel and Huon River | Bird | 1 | Entanglement |
| January 2024 | Tassal | D’Entrecasteaux Channel and Huon River | Bird | 2 | Entanglement |
| February 2024 | Huon | Storm Bay off Trumpeter Bay North Bruny Island | Fur Seal | 1 | Vessel interaction |
| March 2024 | Huon | D’Entrecasteaux Channel and Huon River | Fur Seal | 1 | Entanglement |
| March 2024 | Tassal | D’Entrecasteaux Channel and Huon River | Bird | 1 | Entanglement |
| March 2024 | Tassal | Great Oyster Bay and Mercury Passage | Bird | 1 | Entanglement |

Wildlife injuries

A wildlife injury that is attributable to salmon farming is defined as ‘injury to wildlife caused by an interaction with marine farming activities, operations and infrastructure including but not limited to: entanglement, vessel strike, other infrastructure interaction, deterrent use and sedation’.

Table 6: Wildlife injuries reported by the industry between January - June 2024.

| Date | Company | Region | Broad taxon | Number | Cause of injury |
|---------------|---------|--|-------------|--------|-----------------|
| February 2024 | Huon | D’Entrecasteaux Channel and Huon River | Bird | 1 | Entanglement |

Seal trapping

Historically, seal trapping was used for the relocation of seals away from salmon farm operations. Relocation has not been authorised as a widespread management tool since 2017 and may now only occur in exceptional circumstances such as animal welfare reasons and to disrupt aggressive seal behaviour towards farm staff. Seal trapping is subject to approval from NRE Tas on a case-by-case basis. Trapping of furs seals remains a permitted management tool that can be used for several reasons, including:

- As a method for removing a fur seal from a fish containment pen;
- When a fur seal exhibits repeated unprovoked threatening behaviour towards staff and marking the individual has been recommended by NRE Tas for identification purposes;

- As part of authorised sedation or humane destruction process.

Strict protocols apply to the trapping and holding of fur seals (as described in section 5 of the *Minimum Requirements 2018A*).

Table 7: Seal trapping conducted within the industry between January - June 2024.

| Date | Company | Region | Number | Relocation | Reason |
|-------------|----------------|--|---------------|-------------------|---|
| May 2024 | Tassal | D'Entrecasteaux Channel and Huon River | 1 | No | Seal posing WHS issues trapped for bleach marking |

Seal sedation

Sedation of fur seals is a permitted management tool that can be accessed by trained personnel in situations where all other measures (i.e. provision of an exit, use of deterrent devices or trapping) have failed in removal of a fur seal from a fish containment pen. Strict protocols apply to the sedation of fur seals (as described in section 6 of the *Minimum Requirements 2018A*).

Table 8: Seal sedations performed within the industry between January – June 2024.

| Date | Company | Region | Number | Reason |
|-------------|----------------|----------------------------------|---------------|---|
| March 2024 | Tassal | Tasman Peninsula and Norfolk Bay | 2 | Seals unable to be removed from pen via usual methods |

Humane destruction applications

Humane destruction of a fur seal requires approval from NRE Tas on a case-by-case basis and is only considered as a management option in situations where a clearly identifiable fur seal is demonstrated to pose an ongoing unacceptable work health and safety risk to fish farm workers. Strict procedures and criteria need to be met (as described in Section 7 of the *Minimum Requirements 2018A*) for a company's humane destruction application to be considered by the NRE Tas Secretary.

Nil humane destruction applications were submitted in January - June 2024.