

27 February 2025

EPA investigation into material found on southern beaches continues

The investigation into what led to biological material making its way onto two beaches in southern Tasmania is ongoing, with the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) undertaking additional investigative actions this week.

Acting CEO and Director of the EPA, Cindy Ong, said a team of EPA salmon scientists and investigators are making several lines of enquiry, including potential connections between the washed-up material and the elevated fish mortalities that have affected multiple pens at Tasmanian fish farms in recent weeks.

“Pollution incident investigation involves confirming the source or sources, which is not always straightforward,” Ms Ong said.

“The EPA conducted boat and drone surveillance activities in the D’Entrecasteaux Channel last Thursday, with further surveillance planned for later this week. We are receiving regular updates from the salmon companies that operate in the area to ensure that mortality waste is being managed in accordance with approvals.”

Analysis of the material found on Verona Sands beach on 16 February 2025 was found to be consistent with fish oil. Results do not indicate presence of the antibiotic medicine that was used to treat a bacterial fish disease endemic in Tasmanian coastal waters.

“We are pursuing multiple lines of enquiry with the salmon companies, including timelines, mortality retrieval, waste and disposal movements,” Ms Ong said.

Deceased fish are a controlled waste, and the sites receiving the material must have approval from either the EPA or local council. The EPA is monitoring the situation at waste management facilities that it regulates. Transporters of the deceased fish must also be registered with the EPA as Controlled Waste Transporters.

“EPA regulators have visited several facilities approved to receive deceased fish this week,” said Ms Ong.

“As with all our investigations, integrity is paramount, and we are taking a systematic and objective approach. Further comment on the investigation will be limited until it is concluded,” Ms Ong said.

Members of the public who discover any oil globules along a shoreline should notify the EPA pollution hotline **1800 005 171** (free-call number 24-hours a day) or create an online report at <https://epa.tas.gov.au/Pages/Make-a-Report.aspx>

ENDS.

For more information, please contact: nretas.media@nre.tas.gov.au