



GERALDTON  
FISHERMEN'S  
CO-OPERATIVE

Rock Lobster Exporters

# the BROLOS Catcher

September 12, 2017

Issue No. 145

## GFC Member China Tour 3 – A Tour of Firsts

In the past two editions of the Brolos Catcher you would have seen snippets of some the activities our members were involved in during China Tour #3. So now let's take a look at all the activities and highlights of another successful trip.

As the title suggests this tour was truly a "Tour of Firsts" with our members being exposed to a variety of different activities from the previous two tours. This shows how quickly the Chinese market can evolve and develop in just 12 months and importantly how GFC, as usual, is on the frontline, developing and promoting your product in this ever changing and exciting environment.

This leg of the trip was centred in the South where we flew direct into Guangzhou from Perth. As we have done on previous tours we kicked off with an official welcome dinner function, and heard an address from Australian Consul-General Dominic Trindade. Over the next 2 days we visited GFC's China office in Guangzhou, toured the dry seafood market, and the Huangsha wet markets where we found some happy and healthy Brolos lobster.

Next we took a trip down memory lane to Yantian Harbour, where our lobsters once entered China via Hong Kong. Our time in the south ended with an amazing seafood dinner in the company of one of our oldest clients, Jin Tai. This is where our members got their first look at the Chinese drinking customs and use of the word of "Cheers" or "Ganbei" in Chinese.

The next leg of our journey saw us jump on the 300km/h bullet train from Shenzhen to Quanzhou where we met with our good friend and loyal GFC customer Mr Wong. Visits to see Mr Wong have become an essential stop on GFC China tours for a numbers of reasons. We witnessed first-hand a unpack of live Brolos lobster at Mr Wong's live holding facility. Seeing the delight on our members faces as their lobster sprung out of the boxes after a 30 hour journey was a highlight for all. That night we were joined by Mr Wong's family for a wonderful dinner.



*Travis & Rhys Nelley get stuck into some Alaskan King Crab*



*Basil Lenzo proudly hold a Brolos Lobster esky at the Huangsha Wet Market*

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*Butch Maddren inspects the quality of a Brolos lobster*



*A great night had by all with the Wong Family*

After four jam-packed days we headed east to Shanghai for three days of new and exciting activities. All of our tours are aligned to coincide with a major seafood show, and this year it was the Shanghai International Fisheries & Seafood Expo. The sheer size of the expo facility was a highlight in itself: Three giant buildings jam packed with all thing seafood and in the middle of it all were our members proudly wearing their purpose made expo shirts complete with Chinese translation and QR coded name badges to help us communicate and promote the Brolos brand.



*Ready to take on the Shanghai International Fisheries & Seafood Expo*

You would have read about the Pop-up Store initiative in the previous Brolos catcher. This was a yet another first for GFC and a first for the Western Rock Lobster industry to have Co-op members selling their product direct to the Chinese public: an amazing experience for members and GFC Staff alike. While in Shanghai we also visited new-age shopping centre “HEMA” which runs on an online offline platform for fresh food products: customers can view live seafood instore or online, place an order and have staff pack their selection and deliver it to their home.



*Bev Shannon, Wayne & Sandra Brown and Rob Wuillemin in front of the GFC exhibit*

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For the final leg of our tour we headed north to the countries capital - Beijing. Our first stop as soon as we landed was to the brand new SF Express facilities where one of GFC's live lobster storage and distribution hubs are housed. SF is China's largest courier company. This was great opportunity for members to see the infrastructure GFC has put in place to stay ahead of the game as we continue to move closer to free trade with China. This hub, along with hubs in Shanghai and Guangzhou, forms an integral part of GFC's B2B and B2C strategy.



*Members get first look at the GFC Beijing Hub*

The final day of the tour was met with great anticipation as we headed away from the inner city smog through the lush mountains to climb the Great Wall of China. A truly amazing experience and given it was at 35 degrees and close to 90% humidity a huge effort to climb as far as we did.



*Lobsters on display at the Great Wall of China*



*George & Anne Bass, Bev and Frank Shannon & Basil Lenzo talk all things Lobster with Ambassador Adams*

In yet another first for GFC we were invited to the Australian Embassy in Beijing for a Q & A session with government officials who gave us a great insight into the opportunities and challenges involved in doing business in China. This was followed by a farewell dinner dubbed the "See You Later" dinner. In a huge coup for the Brolos brand in China, the Australian Ambassador to China Ms Jan Adams accepted our invitation to attend and speak at this dinner, which was also attended by 70 current and potential business partners and clients. There really was no better way to finish our tour then to have our members on hand to showcase their Co-op and assist in building and strengthening key relationships in China.

At the conclusion of every tour we ask members to provide feedback on their experiences so we can not only hear what they learned but continue to improve for future trips. The overwhelming message from all members was that "until you come and see it first-hand you cannot fully understand the size, complexity and competitiveness of the Chinese market and importantly the work our co-op is doing to capitalise on every opportunity"

That's a wrap from another busy, exciting and very successful GFC member tour. We will keep you updated on plans for our next tour and encourage you to take the advice provided by your fellow members and see it first-hand....

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## GFC Market Update

We're finally nearing the end of the unlucky months! The Ghost Month (or seventh month on the Lunar Calendar) ends next Tuesday. Historically we would expect to see demand increase in the lead up to and during the luckier eighth Lunar month. Initial signs this week have been positive, suggesting that 2017 will follow a similar trend.

Just to recap, the mid-autumn festival (in the middle of the eighth lunar month) falls in the first week of October this year, which coincides with Chinese Golden Week (from the 1st of October). We expect to see demand picking up in the lead up to these events. Of course, how prices respond to any increases in demand will be dependent on how quickly landings from WA respond during this period.

Another factor to watch in the coming month is exports of Mexican and Florida lobsters which typically hit the market around this time of the year. These tend to be smaller sized lobsters. Some people predict that Hurricane Irma will have a negative impact on exports of the small Florida lobsters which will be positive for Western Rock Lobster demand but it's too early to assess the damage and gauge whether these predictions will come true.

The Aussie dollar continues to perform strongly (which is negative for beach prices) recently breaking through the US\$0.80 barrier. We're not going to predict how our currency will perform from here but obviously any further increases is not what we, as exporters, want

## Make your lobsters really something - with little bubbles of nothing

With catches being compressed into shorter fishing periods and many fishermen increasing the number of baskets they can hold onboard to take advantage of windows of high beach price, onboard live holding tanks are being subjected to peak loads more often. Given these changes, it is important to make sure your holding tanks and pumps are keeping up. Most importantly, is the dissolved oxygen in your tanks sufficient?

Lobsters must have high levels of oxygen at all times. Without adequate oxygen, your lobsters may appear healthy, but they will experience problems down the track, perhaps dying in GFC's tanks or during export. Any such losses come out of your pocket, so it is in your interests to invest in better lobster storage tanks.

The next few months are the ideal time to ensure your onboard holding tanks are running properly for the coming whites.

There are two main ways to ensure holding tank oxygen levels are high enough: 1) supply adequate volumes of well oxygenated seawater water and 2) aeration of water in the tanks.

**Water supply:** Water pumps that deliver a constant flow of water are best. Pumps that have variable output that depends on engine revs (e.g. Jabsco's, etc. that supply your deck hose) are not ideal.

**Aeration:** Using an air pump to deliver a constant stream of fine bubbles to your holding tanks is the best step you can take to ensure lobster quality. Many types of air pumps are available, but the GFC Marine Store stocks a solid proven model called a Hiblow HP200. These pumps are high output, very low maintenance and draw little power.

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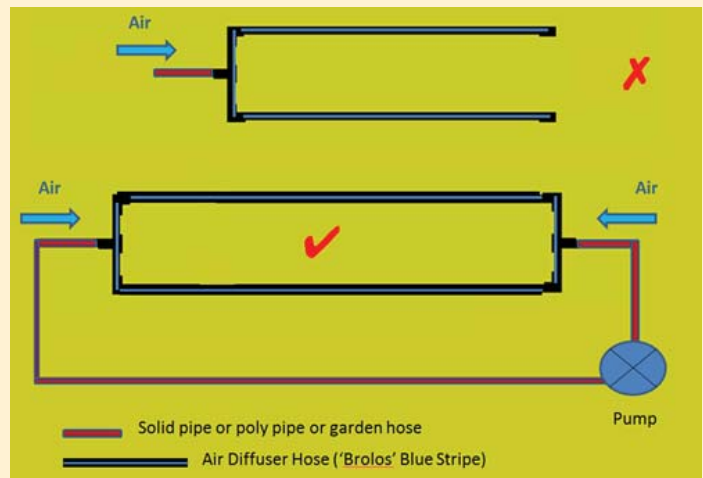
Setting up aeration is best done by a professional marine outfitter or shipwright, but you can install a simple set up yourself. There are some important things to remember when designing your system:

- Air distribution – this is best achieved with a balanced layout of air diffuser hose (see diagram below). The type of diffuser hose used is critical to maintaining the health of your lobsters. The GFC Marine Store stocks a brand of hose that we recommend as proven and reliable – ask for ‘Brolos Blue Stripe’ air diffuser hose. This hose has low resistance and produces lots of fine bubbles (the smaller the bubble the better the oxygenation). It is cheap to buy and if maintained properly, can last several seasons.
- For DIY set ups, always ensure that the pump is installed at least 50 cm higher than the water level of the holding tanks. It also a good idea to install a gooseneck between the pump and the holding tank to prevent siphoning of water from the tank and back through the pump (see diagram below). The delivery line from the pump to the holding tank can be as simple as black poly pipe or braided garden hose.

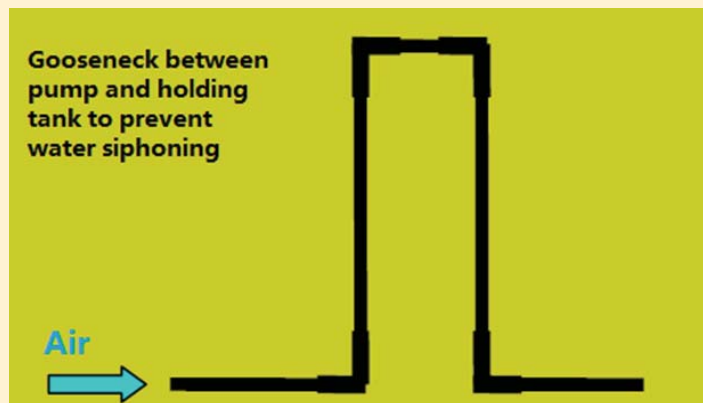
Once you have your aeration system installed, keep air flow high by occasionally emptying your holding tanks, covering the air diffuser hose with freshwater and allowing aeration to flow for a couple of hours. This will dissolve any salt crystals that may have started to clog the air diffuser hose pores.

When landing your catches, remember to always keep aeration running until the tanks have drained completely. This will prevent the lobsters in lower baskets from being in stagnant, deoxygenated water during draining.

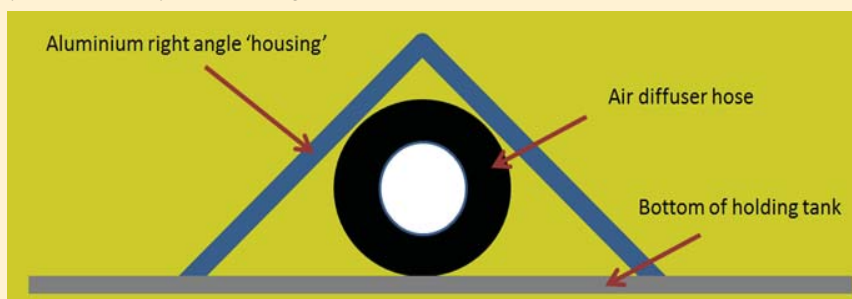
Lastly, don't let your baskets crush the aeration hose as this will cut off the air supply. One easy way to overcome this is to use short lengths aluminium right angle to ‘house’ the aeration tube. This keeps the aeration tube on the bottom of your holding tank (in the pattern you originally designed) and protects your hose by providing a support for the baskets.



Example of a well-designed, balanced pump and hose layout (bottom)



Gooseneck between pump and holding tank to prevent water siphoning



Cross section of aluminium right angle housing to support baskets and protect air diffuser hose.

## Other tips to remember ...

- Within reason, it is impossible to over-aerate the water in your holding tanks
- Lobsters will not get “the bends” from aerating the water this way
- Check survey requirements for any modifications made to your vessel

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## Upcoming GFC Fishermen Barbeques

This week we will kick off our next round of fishermen barbeques starting in Two Rocks then Geraldton before a couple of weeks' break for school holidays. Then we are off to Kalbarri, Dongara and finishing with our very first Welshpool barbeque which is sure to draw a big crowd. Directors and executives will be in attendance, and we look forward to your company.

Dates and locations are as follows:

Location	Address	Date	Time
Two Rocks	Two Rocks Depot	Wednesday, 13 September 2017	1:00pm
Geraldton	GFC Marine Store	Wednesday, 20 September 2017	4:00pm
Kalbarri	Kalbarri Depot	Wednesday, 11 October 2017	1:00pm
Dongara	Dongara Depot	Thursday, 12 October 2017	4:00pm
Welshpool	62 – 66 Banksia Rd Welshpool	Wednesday, 18 October 2017	TBA

## It's not too late to register



From 23 to 25 September 2017, the Tasmanian Rock Lobster Fishermen's Association (TRLFA) will be hosting the 10th National Rock Lobster Congress in combination with the 4th Trans-Tasman Rock Lobster Industry Conference in Hobart. Event organisation is being shared between the TRLFA and NZ Rock Lobster Industry Council, with valued input from various other participants.

The event will build on the success of the 2015 event which was held in Fremantle and co-hosted by the Geraldton Fishermen's

Co-operative and WRLC with the theme being '*adapting to new challenges and opportunities in order to prosper and grow*'. The theme will cover topics such as climate change, management, resource sharing, markets, social acceptance, succession planning, research priorities and needs. GFC's Operations Manager Dr Glen Davidson will be making a presentation, and as always, it's a great opportunity to meet with your fishermen-peers from around Australia and New Zealand.

Registrations will remain open right up until the congress - we know a lot of you are out fishing and can't make a decision until the last minute.

For more information including congress program and registration visit the website [www.rocklobstercongress2017.com](http://www.rocklobstercongress2017.com)



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