



Media Release

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Huon Aquaculture partners with Raptor Refuge and Wildlife Park

Today, Huon Aquaculture announced a new partnership with the Raptor Refuge and Wildlife Park to protect bird species and wildlife in the south of Tasmania.

The partnership includes providing the Raptor Refuge with netting for the new state-of-the-art eagle aviary that was officially opened today. In addition, the company will assist the refuge to procure much needed rope and additional netting to ensure that the rehabilitation enclosures can be maintained to the highest standard.

Huon Co-Owner and Director, Frances Bender, says it's important to take a collaborative approach that ensures we are doing everything possible to prevent harm to native wildlife.

"Craig Webb and his team do a fantastic job to rehabilitate and release or provide long-term homes for the birds that arrive at the refuge. We want to support that effort so that it may continue year after year," says Frances.

The Raptor Refuge is also developing a program to educate Huon staff on ways to successfully handle various species to further ensure their safety.

"Our aim is to continually reduce the impact of our farming operations on the local environment and the partnership with the Raptor Refuge is another way to help us do that but the real benefit will occur when we no longer have birds becoming entangled in farm nets.

"Salmon farms are attractive to a range of birds as they are seen as a place to perch and as a source of food – both from the fish and the fish-feed," says Frances.

Preventing birds from becoming entangled or drowning inside pens has been a driver in the development of Huon's new "fortress pens". Designed in-house by Huon staff, the new pens have been specifically developed to avoid bird entries and entanglement.

"Already we are seeing the benefit on the farm. To date there have been no bird entries or entanglements in any of the new pens deployed.

"However, until the new pens are fully rolled out across our entire farming operations, we continue to follow our clear and detailed protocols to safely remove birds from our pens by guiding them to an opening we create specifically for their release

"We've invested heavily in designing the most effective pens which use the strongest nets possible because we believe that the best way to ensure we keep wildlife safe is a focus on prevention," says Frances.

To read more about Huon Aquaculture's new pen rollout and view reporting on all areas of their operations please visit their Sustainability Dashboard at www.dashboard.huonaqua.com.au.

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“Fortress Pen” Details

- The new pens are being rolled out across Huon farms and use world first technology in pen structure and netting. All nets are made using Dyneema® fibre and are the strongest developed and used in fish farming world-wide.
- Specifically, the design includes higher, more taught nets that keep them well above the water and therefore keeps the birds away from the fish and also the fish feed pellets. The fully enclosed net using the smaller mesh size (60mm) keeps out all birds, including the smaller cormorants that traditionally have been able to get through any mesh above 75mm.
- By denying birds the opportunity to perch and access to both fish and feed, they are discouraged from viewing our pens as a place to rest and as a source of food.
- Huon Aquaculture has invested more than \$40 million in the development and construction of their new predator-proof pens which have been designed and constructed by their employees with the roll out expected to be completed in 2015.

Background on Huon Aquaculture

Huon Aquaculture was founded in 1988 by Peter and Frances Bender at Hideaway Bay in Tasmania’s rugged far south. One hundred per cent privately owned, the Huon Aquaculture Group produces around 15,000 tonnes of fresh salmon per year and is recognised globally as being the premium producer of fresh and smoked salmon products.

Huon currently employs around 480 people in most states of Australia and both Peter and Frances remain involved in all areas of the business on a daily basis.

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