



## **NEWS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 15, 2009

### **MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR FLYING FISH**

#### **AS CLEAN SEAS STOCKS UP**

One of Australia's most complex airlifts will take place on Monday (May 18) as aquaculture pioneer Clean Seas Tuna Ltd transports millions of dollars of Southern Bluefin Tuna from sea-pens to its purpose built on-shore breeding facility at Arno Bay, on the State's Eyre Peninsula.

The airlift will see up to 10 Southern Bluefin Tuna weighing as much as 200 kilograms each lifted from the sea by helicopter and then lowered through a five metre by five metre access hatch in the roof of the giant breeding facility.

The highly prized Tuna will join others in the breeding tank as broodstock for the company's world-first commercialisation of aquaculture-bred Southern Bluefin Tuna later this year.

In March, Clean Seas successfully spawned Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT) for the first time and subsequently produced SBT fingerlings - opening the door for commercial aquaculture production from the company's next scheduled spawning in October/November, 2009.

Clean Seas' Chairman, Mr Hagen Stehr AO, said transferring additional mature SBT to the on-shore breeding facility meant the company could be very sure of adequate egg supplies.

"We have already achieved continuous spawning by our captive Southern Bluefin Tuna broodstock over more than a month, and the production of more than 50 million fertilised SBT eggs and 30 million larvae," Mr Stehr said. "Ninety per cent of the eggs produced were fertilised and we now have baby tuna more than 12 centimetres long that could grow to 40 kilograms within three years.

"We have achieved a major breakthrough in aquaculture technology and we anticipate even better results from our next spawning as a result of what we have learnt and continue to learn about husbandry procedures, diet and fingerling management," Mr Stehr said.

Mr Stehr said the fish were being airlifted now because of the seasonal compatibility of ocean and tank water temperatures and so they also would have six months to integrate with the breeding cohort which is already ashore before the next breeding season in October/November, 2009.

"The fish we are transferring have been carefully selected over a long period by divers and scientists observing them in their sea cages."

Up to 30 divers, scientists and aquaculture technicians will be involved in the highly complex airlift.

Divers will be located in the sea pens at depths of 30 to 40 metres to muster the tuna; aquaculture technicians will be directing the airlift operation; while scientists will be monitoring the health of the multi-million dollar fish.

A medical team will also be on-site to ensure the health of the divers.

Mr Stehr said a temporary air traffic control system would be set up to monitor wind conditions and aircraft, working with spotters to guide the helicopter's delivery of the tuna through the roof of the breeding facility.

"It is a very expensive, extensive and complex operation but we have a detailed plan to ensure our very valuable assets enjoy the journey and arrive in great shape. The only thing we're missing is flight attendants!"

*Clean Seas Tuna wishes to acknowledge its appreciation for the contributions made to its endeavours by the following organizations, Ausindustry, Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, Seafood CRC, Kinki University, University of Sunshine Coast, South Australian Research and Development Institute, Flinders University, Hellenic Center for Marine Research, Heinrich-Heine Universität, Inter American Tropical Tuna Commission, The University of Maryland, SELFDOTT, REPRODOTT, Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute, New South Wales Department of Primary Industries Port Stephens Fisheries Centre and the Darwin Aquaculture Centre.*

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**NOTE: Members of the media are invited to cover the Southern Bluefin Tuna airlift on Monday. Due to changeable weather conditions, the timing of the operation will not be known until about 12 hours ahead of the transfer. Please contact Hagen Stehr on the numbers below for details.**

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**FURTHER INFORMATION:**

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