



Fishing for the Future

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MEDIA RELEASE

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MUD CRAB FISHERY NOT SUSTAINABLE UNDER A GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL

David Bateman AM Deputy Chairman of Sunfish said that he was amazed that the Government would even consider such an irresponsible act as allowing the taking of female mud crabs. In the past few years numerous meetings and a 2 day stakeholder workshop have been held to discuss this matter. Most of the stakeholders present had major concerns if this was to proceed and were not in favor of the proposal. At the workshop recreational fishers throughout the state unanimously rejected the proposal and there was only conditional support from commercial crabbers. To raise it again is just ignoring the wishes of the majority to benefit the short sighted greedy wishes of a few commercially oriented operators. I am surprised that the Government could be so naive as to expect support from the people of Queensland.

To add to the insult the Crab Management Plan is currently under review by a Queensland Fisheries Advisory Committee with all stakeholders represented and this proposal was not even considered worthy of consideration. It appears as if someone is trying to circumvent the normal consultation process.

Mr. Bateman said that the Queensland mud crab catches were stable and sustainable unlike other adjoining states where the crab populations were declining and females allowed to be taken.

Dr. Barry Pollock said that if this is introduced it will mean a major reduction in the female mud crab population. In Asian and Pacific Island countries mud crab populations have been severely depleted as a result of heavy fishing pressure on male and female mud crabs of all sizes. Mud crabs are an iconic Queensland seafood item and they must be carefully managed to ensure their sustainability. Female mud crabs can be fertile through their whole life cycle and crabs over 25cm across the shell are still capable of breeding. They store the male sperm in special internal receptacles until conditions are right to release their eggs.

Unlike recreational fishers, commercial crabbers have no catch limits and the female crab population will fall easy prey for export to the southern markets in Sydney and Melbourne Mr. Bateman said.

Again the recreational sector will suffer so that a few operators in the commercial fishing sector can make short term profits. Short term gain for long term uncertainty is not the way to manage a fishery. If the Government is really serious it would allow its appointed advisory committee to do its job and recommend responsible management arrangements.

All recreational fishers should contact their local state member and voice their objection.

SUNFISH QUEENSLAND IS TOTALLY OPPOSED TO THE TAKING OF FEMALE MUD CRABS and ANYONE REPLYING TO THE GOVERNMENT DISCUSSION DOCUMENT SHOULD JUST WRITE "NO CHANGE".

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Representing the interests of Recreational Fishing