

# SUNFISH FRASER COAST



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## Anglers Stunned By More Bad Decisions

Sunfish, the peak body representing recreational fishing in Qld is stunned by the proposals released by Minister Mulherin for the management of Snapper and other rocky reef fish species.

Minister Mulherin claims that the Snapper stock in Queensland is reduced to "35% of its unfished level". However the independent scientific review of Snapper stocks initiated by the Minister found that there is insufficient data to determine the exact status of Snapper stocks.

The Minister did not mention the 2003 management review which reduced the Snapper recreational bag limit to 5 per person, and increased the minimum size of Snapper to 35cm – which enables Snapper to spawn for two years before they are taken. There was no total catch limits or other restrictions placed on commercial fishers at that time.

The Minister also failed to acknowledge the importance of the recent marine park green zones which act as vast sanctuaries for fish stocks such as Snapper in the Moreton region where Snapper fishing is most heavily concentrated.

The Chairman of Sunfish Qld, Dr Barry Pollock, said that Snapper anglers had provided advice at public meetings and to Sunfish that their Snapper catches were not in decline and large Snapper in the range 7-9kg were common. Dr Pollock said that Sunfish fully supported healthy and sustainable fish stocks. However restrictions such as seasonal closures to completely stop Snapper fishing, and compulsory licences and logbooks for Snapper anglers are not necessary and opposed by Sunfish.

Sunfish has a major concern that the Minister would announce that the Queensland Snapper stock is depleted when the scientific basis for such a determination is questionable. Statements like this give a false impression and put recreational fishing in a bad light.

The Chairman of Fraser Coast Mr Scott Mitchell commented that the Minister and his Department have implemented a blanket one size fits all throughout Qld. There is no evidence to support any of the proposed restrictions in the Fraser Coast region.

There does not appear to be any evidence of declining recreational catches on the Fraser Coast. However there have been concerns about netting of snapper in this region with resultant potential inaccurate logging of the catch, but Fisheries Qld refuse to even address that issue.

Sunfish has never before come out publicly stating that they do not agree with a stock assessment. This time they have and this forced an independent assessment which backed up Sunfish's position that the data used by Fisheries Queensland to come to their less than 35% assessment was incomplete, non-factual and flawed.

"It is embarrassing that the minister does not even recall what his own independent scientific review found and what he announced only a month ago!"

There has been no up to date information with respect to the recreational and commercial catch on the Fraser Coast as Fisheries Qld has not published reliable catch data from 2005 for the Commercial harvest and 2002 data for the Recreational take. There have been numerous closures and restrictions imposed in that time.

"Until this data is available Sunfish Fraser Coast clearly rejects the proposals based on incomplete, inaccurate and irrelevant data." Mr Mitchell stated.