

SUNFISH FRASER COAST



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SUNFISH FRASER COAST MARCH 2011 NEWSLETTER.

SCOTT MITCHELL CHAIRMAN.

Since the last newsletter it has been an extremely busy time for the Branch and we hope some of our efforts will bring success.

SNAPPER FISHERY

Here is a case where the Government simply got it wrong in trying to impose a management system and a fee based on data that was not reliable. The new Minister for Fisheries the Hon. Craig Wallace has announced that the Govt will not proceed with the introduction of fees for recreational fishers to catch Snapper.

However other parts of the Rocky Reef RIS and Discussion paper are still open for consultation and response by Recreational Fishers and could seriously affect your fishing!

Sunfish is meeting with Minister Wallace in the near future and we acknowledge the Ministers willingness to discuss this important development.

However, all remaining public meetings, including the public meeting in Hervey Bay that was supposed to be on the 17th March, have been cancelled and we believe this is an unfair limitation on the average angler's rights in the consultation phase of these changes.

Please take the time to complete your response form [enclosed], and post to Fisheries Qld [or drop off to your local tackle shop].

Included with this newsletter are some suggested answers to the Response Paper, and reasons. If we don't respond to the Discussion paper we can expected to be screwed like we have in the past, on Recreational Fishing Issues.

Please be aware that you DO NOT have to choose an answer that Fisheries Qld are trying to force you to choose. In fact if you do choose one of their answers, we believe THEY WIN AND YOU LOSE.

SUBMISSIONS CLOSE ON THE 8TH APRIL 2011.

Bait Netting in Marine Park Yellow Zones.

As an election promise the Premier said she wanted to remove the use of bait netting by Commercial Fishermen in Conservation Park Zones.

A paper was circulated for comment and the red hatched yellow Zones in the Great Sandy Marine Park were excluded from the proposal. The outcomes are by no means clear with different proposals being considered. The Govt's proposal is that bream whiting and flathead [table fish] could not be taken using bait nets. Sunfish Qld proposed that only certain species of Bait Fish should be permitted to be taken. This Branch believes that all commercial netting in yellow zones should be prohibited. There are other issues involved like Fisheries Qld removing Bait net definition from the regulations and replacing it with small mesh nets [called a pea and thimble trick].

Minor Review of the Great Sandy Marine Park

We met with DERM personal and discussed a number of issues:

- ▲ DERM are making minor boundary changes to more clearly define the Boundaries of the Zones. They

refuse to consider any major changes to the Marine Park Zones.

- ⤴ On completion of the Review the datum points will be supplied to the Commercial Mapping Sector for electronic chart making.
- ⤴ We pressed the issue of compliance in the go slow zones in Sandy Straits.
- ⤴ We were asked to contribute to a review of the Go Slow zones and were they in the right places. This Branch suggested that the GS zone in the Burrum Heads area could be reviewed and the boundary altered. As for other areas in the GSMP we recommended no changes.

Fish-way No1 Dam Burrum River

A feasibility design has been prepared and agreed to by the Government Agencies. Funding is available and WBWC and they have made a public commitment to have this completed by mid 2013. Wide Bay Water have dragged their feet on this for many years now.

Life Style Kids Fishing Days

The first of three got off to a good start on Sunday 20th February with 20 kids all going home happy after a great day and a new rod reel and tackle box. Another day is planned in April and another in May. Watch the web page - sunfish.com.au for dates.

Areas for Further Assessment Fraser Island.

Many organizations have cooperated in bringing to the attention of the Federal Government the devastating effects any closures in the proposed area would have on the economies of the Tin Can Bay and Hervey Bay areas. At this stage the Government are looking favourably on the requests from the Recreational Fishing Sector.

Burrum Heads Boat Ramp

The saga continues. Its a slow process, however we are encouraged by Fisheries Qld to consider a revision of the Fish Habitat Boundaries to accommodate the Boat Ramp and a positive message from the Minister Kate Jones regarding a site called the Lions Park Spit Site. The FCRC is also showing a more positive interest in this project.

Gatakers Landing New Ramp

There have been some problems with a build up of sand on the toe of the Ramp, erosion of the bank adjacent and some erosion under the Ramp. Council is working with DERM for solutions as it is classified as an erosion prone area and requires special considerations. We have also raised with Council the need to revise traffic flows and roadways so that you don't have to back into the rigging bay. The ramp has also been included in the list of Ramps in the GSMP excluded from GSMP zonings. This will enable future channel maintenance to be carried out as it is a marked navigation channel.

Recreational Fisheries for the Future

The last Federal Election result was a wake up call for the political parties to give serious consideration to the recreational Fishing Sector and its voting strength. There are big issues like the failure of all parties to recognise its Economic value to the state and to small coastal communities. The Government needs to address resources allocation, and sustainability of various fisheries and to recognise that fishing affects both Recreation and Tourism issues that they have not provided for in State Planning. Pick up the phone and talk to your local members about the raw deal Recreational Fishers are getting in QLD.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES TO ROCKY REEF R.I.S. QUESTIONNAIRE.

Questions and Answers

1. Total allowable catch (TAC): Do not tick any options. Write "Refer to comments."

Comment:

No individual multiple choice option is appropriate!

This is a loaded and biased question.

Respondents should first be asked if they even support a TAC.

Any response could be taken as supporting the TAC of 400 tonne.

There is not enough proven science to justify a TAC of 400 tonne in the first place.

2 ..Charter fishing: Do not tick any options. Write "Refer to comments."

Comment:

No individual multiple choice option is appropriate!

Again this is a biased and leading question. The Charter industry is inextricably linked to the Recreational fishing sector but also have attributes that need to be managed separately from the Rec sector. To ask either/or or neutral to such a broad subject is destined to have conflicting answers and no clear outcomes.

3. Charter fishing: Do not tick any options. Write "Refer to comments."

Comment:

No individual multiple choice option is appropriate!

A notional TAC is only an option if there is also a notional TAC on the Commercial sector as well.

An ITQ or competitive TAC is impractical and unworkable in the Charter industry for charter businesses that may only catch a few Snapper per year.

A seasonal closure is only appropriate if all sectors are treated the same.

A closure is only appropriate if there is sound science proving spawning benefits or other benefits in each area proposed for closure.

Seasonal closures are not necessary throughout the whole state but may only in areas and instances when science can show a significant benefit.

Closures should only apply to specific species that have been proven to be under threat. Closures should not apply to species not under threat.

4 Commercial fishing: Tick the first 3 options. Write "Refer to comments."

Comment:

The first 3 options are all useful tools for managing the commercial fishery and should all be used to some extent.

Closures should apply to all fishers equally.

5. Recreational fishing arrangements: Do not tick any options. Write "Refer to comments."]

Comment:

No individual multiple choice option is appropriate!

Recreational anglers already have enough restrictions placed on them especially with bag limits and gear restrictions. They have already had significant further cutbacks and restrictions placed on them with the recent changes over the last few years, especially to Snapper. Recreational anglers in general already have a high sense of stewardship. Placing any or all of these restrictions would not encourage any further stewardship.

6.Recreational catch restrictions:

First part – reduced bag limits for Snapper: Tick "Strongly disagree". "Write Refer to comments."

Comment 6a:

No further restrictions on Recreational catches of Snapper are needed. Recreational anglers took massively reduced bag limits over the last decade but no corresponding restrictions or TAC's [Total Allowable Catch's] were placed on commercial fishers. TAC's need to be introduced to the commercial sector and then studies need to see the results of that before any further restrictions are placed on recreational anglers.

Second Part – Combined Rocky Reef species Bag Limit: Do not tick any options.

Write "Refer to comments."

Comment 6b:

Combined Bag Limits are appropriate ONLY when TAC's are introduced for Commercial fishers for all species.

7. Charter catch restrictions:

First part – reduced bag limits for Snapper: Tick “Strongly disagree”. Write “Refer to comments.”

Comment 7a:

No further restrictions on Recreational catches of Snapper are needed. Recreational anglers took massively reduced bag limits over the last decade but no corresponding restrictions or TAC’s [Total Allowable Catch’s] were placed on commercial fishers. TAC’s need to be introduced to the commercial sector and then studies need to see the results of that before any further restrictions are placed on recreational anglers.

Second Part – Combined Rocky Reef species Bag Limit: Do not tick any options.

Write “Refer to comments.”

Comment 7b:

Combined Bag Limits are appropriate ONLY when TAC’s are introduced for Commercial fishers for all species.

8. 8. Recreational and charter catch restrictions: Do not tick any options. Write “Refer to comments.”

Comment

Bag limits on recreational and charter fishers for new species must not be introduced until a corresponding TAC on all species is introduced for commercial fishers.

9. Fishing gear restrictions: Do not tick any options. Write “Refer to comments.”

Comment 9:

Snapper fishing by line only is supported. Incidental catch of snapper by net must not be allowed. Allowing “incidental” catch always leads to target netting in other fisheries and enforcement is non-existent.

10 Closures: Do not tick any boxes. Write on each “Refer to comments.”

Comment 10 a, b, c, d, e, f:

A seasonal closure is only appropriate if all sectors are treated the same.

A closure is only appropriate if there is sound science proving spawning benefits or other benefits in each area proposed for closure.

Seasonal closures are not necessary throughout the whole state but in areas and instances where science can show a significant benefit.

Closures should only apply to specific species that have been proven to be under threat. Closures should not apply to species not under threat.

11. Options for new management arrangements: Tick “Strongly disagree” to ALL 4 options! Write “Refer to Comments.”

Comment:

Treating the recreational sector unfairly and with bias is not acceptable.

Closures, if implemented, must be based on peer reviewed proven science and must apply to all fishers.

If a Notional TAC is implemented for the Recreational sector it should not have a fee attached or a compulsory log book. Monitoring fish stocks is core business for the Fisheries managers and should not be funded by individual and specific fees.

If a Recreational fishing license is to be introduced, it must be a single license that covers all forms of fishing and species, and funds must go into a dedicated trust fund for the benefit of Recreational Fishing only.

Recreational anglers took massively reduced bag limits over the last decade but no corresponding restrictions or TAC’s [Total Allowable Catch’s] were placed on commercial fishers. TAC’s need to be introduced to the commercial sector and then studies need to see the results of that before any further restrictions are placed on recreational anglers.

Further comments.

Recreational anglers have taken repeated, multiple and severe restrictions on bag limits over the last 2 decades. Commercial fishers have had no significant catch limits placed on them for Rocky Reef Species in that time. Commercial fishers must have restrictions placed on total and individual catches and the effect of this must be monitored before any further restrictions are placed on the recreational anglers.

If a Recreational fishing license is to be introduced, it must be a single license that covers all forms of fishing and species. All funds must go into dedicated trust accounts i.e. Freshwater & saltwater to be used solely to benefit Recreational fishing only. This would mean that the current SIPS scheme would be rolled into the freshwater trust & started at the highest average dollar value raised over the last three years and the balance then to go into the saltwater trust.

Why were other options such as increasing the legal length and slots size limits not included in the questionnaire?