

SUNFISH FRASER COAST



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SUNFISH DEMANDS SENSIBLE SNAPPER MANAGEMENT

Sunfish Fraser Coast Chairman Scott Mitchell has come out with both guns blazing at Fisheries Minister Tim Mulherin and his bumbling bureaucracy.

Qld Fisheries Ministers and managers have been accused in the past of mismanaging fisheries and penalizing recreational fishers with bad management decisions. It appears that snapper management is about to get added to the long list of complaints.

Mr Mitchell has challenged the Minister and managers to get an independent audit done of the data used, and conclusions from, the latest report into snapper stocks and management.

"Their report is seriously flawed, uses incomplete and inaccurate data and draws illogical conclusions. They also refuse to accept that snapper swim about and get caught in different places including NSW and beyond 100 metres depth of water." Mr Mitchell states.

Snapper stocks move significant distances and the same stock is shared with NSW fisheries. Yet NSW fisheries studies do not come to the same conclusions. Fisheries Qld have also ignored any fish that exist in water deeper than 100 meters. A lot of snapper exist in water over 100 meters but because the managers have refused to acknowledge this, it has resulted in biased stock assessments.

The end result is that the minister is saying that recreational anglers have to take more cut backs, yet he has not even done any studies to see if the significant cutbacks on anglers in 2003 have had any effect. There were no catch restrictions placed on commercial fishers at that time.

Mr Mitchell has also cautioned anglers about taking part in the Queensland Fisheries survey being conducted at boat ramps and jetties etc.

"We believe these surveys are sending out false or inaccurate information and are designed in a way that could result in decisions being made that are not in the best interests of anglers. Anglers are sick and tired of taking more and more restrictions when we are the least of the problem!" Mr Mitchell stated.

Facts about Snapper:

- **Snapper stocks are NOT severely depleted.**
- **Juvenile Snapper are very abundant - NOT depleted.**
- **Severe restrictions were placed on the take of Snapper in 2003 (bag limit of 5, and minimum size of 35cm) to protect Snapper stocks.**
- **No total catch restrictions have ever been put on commercial take.**
- **Adult Snapper spawn for two years before they can be taken at 35cm min size.**
- **Snapper are a long-lived species. In the most heavily fished areas (Gold Coast) the abundance of large/old Snapper (>50cm) is reduced. There is a moderate reduction in large/old Snapper off Moreton and the Sunshine Coast. Large Snapper remain abundant off Wide Bay/Fraser and further north.**
- **Before more Snapper restrictions are considered - assess the benefits of 2003 bag and size limits.**
- **No recent surveys of recreational catches have been done to assess the benefits of the 2003 restrictions on Snapper catches.**
- **The Snapper Fishery is a very important recreational line only fishery.**
- **Marine Park zoning totally protects a large proportion of the Snapper population.**
- **Seasonal closures for Snapper fishing are NOT needed and opposed by anglers.**
- **Sunfish has asked Minister Mulherin for an urgent independent scientific review of the Fisheries Queensland Snapper assessment.**

For Further details contact Scott Mitchell, Chairman Sunfish Fraser Coast. ph 0428484499