



The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP

Minister for Primary Industries

Minister for Small Business

MEDIA RELEASE

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HAVE YOUR SAY ON MURRAY CRAYFISH RULES

NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson, has today urged anglers to provide feedback on rules for fishing of Murray crayfish under the current strict regulations.

Ms Hodgkinson said a Species Impact Statement evaluating the impacts of the proposed fishing rules for Murray crayfish is on public exhibition for the next four weeks.

“Murray crayfish numbers have significantly declined and the species is listed as ‘vulnerable’ in NSW,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“There is currently an interim order allowing the continuation of recreational fishing for Murray crayfish, however, the NSW Government is proposing to make this permanent.

“That’s why a Species Impact Statement has been prepared and is being publicly exhibited so we can carefully assess the impact of the current recreational fishing rules on the species.

“The Species Impact Statement calls for ongoing monitoring of Murray crayfish populations so that any changes in population numbers can be quickly identified and the reasons understood.

“The current regulations provide a balance for the species – we are aware this fishery provides considerable social and economic benefits to local communities, however we want to protect Murray crayfish against any detrimental effects as well.”

The current fishing controls for Murray crayfish are:

- minimum size limit of 10cm;
- maximum size limit of 12cm;
- no taking or harming of females carrying eggs;
- bag and possession limits (2 and 4 respectively);
- fishing permitted only in open season: from June 1 to August 31;
- five hoop nets per person;
- when using a hoop net the letters “HN”, the users name and address must be clearly marked on the float; and
- removal of head, tail or claws in, on or adjacent to the waters is prohibited.

Murray crayfish once existed throughout the Murray and Murrumbidgee rivers, and many of their tributaries, however, they have disappeared entirely downstream of Mildura and are considered rare in the lowland reaches of the Murray and Murrumbidgee Rivers.

“There are a number of threats which have reduced the populations of Murray crayfish in NSW waterways including the removal of woody debris in rivers and streams, thermal

pollution from dams, altering the natural flow of rivers, a decline in water quality, loss of habitat and possibly recreational fishing activities,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“The findings of the Species Impact Statement, advice from the Fisheries Scientific Committee (FSC), other relevant advisory councils and public submissions will be taken into account before a decision is made.”

The Species Impact Statement and draft Ministerial Order can be found at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries or www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au.