

Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing

Outcomes from Meeting 44 – Tuesday 9 September 2008

Attendance

Bruce Schumacher (Chair), Kevin McKinnon, Neil Ryan, Charlie Howe, Ron Croker, Sanchia Glaskin, Max Castle, Claudette Rechterik, John Clarke, Ann Garard, John Humphries, John Drew and Nick James (NSW DPI).

Observers

Oliver Wady (on behalf of Adrian Wayne/underwater fishing sector)

Departmental Observers

Doug Hocking, Executive Director, Fisheries, Compliance and Regional Relations; Peter Turnell, Director, Fisheries Operations; Murray Spicer, A/Manager, Recreational Fisheries; Bryan van der Walt, Senior Manager, Recreational Fisheries; Cameron Westaway, Senior Fisheries Manager - Inland.

1. Apologies

John Dunphy, Jim Harnwell, Peter Cooley, Adrian Wayne and Jan McLeod.

2. Confirmation of minutes from previous ACoRF meeting

Motion: The council accepted the outcomes as a true and accurate record of discussions from the 43rd ACoRF meeting, held 5 June 2008. **Moved:** Neil Ryan. **Seconded:** Kevin McKinnon. **Carried.**

Business arising from the minutes

It was requested that more detail be provided in the outcomes on some issues. This will be on a needs basis and at the specific request of members.

Status of the proposed increase to the minimum size limit of snapper.

Action item

DPI to update the council at the next meeting.

3. Recreational Fishing update

a) Restructure of the Wild Harvest Fisheries Branch

The Wild Harvest Fisheries Branch within DPI was recently restructured to ensure best service delivery. A new Fisheries Operations Branch has been created and Mr Peter Turnell has been appointed Acting Director of the Branch. The position of Manager, Commercial Fisheries and Manager, Recreational Fisheries report to the Acting Director, Fisheries Operations. Mr Murray Spicer has been appointed Acting Manager, Recreational Fisheries. It was also noted that the Fisheries Manager, Recreational Access Saltwater and Fisheries Manager, Recreational Schools Program positions had recently been filled.

Information noted. No recommendations or action items.

b) Cobia and mangrove jack – bag and size limit issues

The department is awaiting the finalisation of Queensland DPI's review of bag and size limits for the east coast inshore finfish fishery and will consider the implementation of consistent management arrangements for these northern NSW species once the Queensland regulations have been finalised. In Queensland, the current review proposes to reduce the bag limit for cobia from 10 to 2 per person per day and retain the minimum size limit of 75cm, while for mangrove jack the proposal is to introduce a bag limit of 5 per person per day (currently no daily limit) and retain the minimum size limit of 35cm.

It was also confirmed that the DPI Catch and Effort Working Group (now called the Resource Assessment Review Committee) had upgraded the assessment status of mangrove jack from medium to high priority. Cobia is currently recognised as a high priority.

Information noted. No recommendations or action items.

c) Hire boat recreational fishing exemption certificate stickers

NSW DPI is developing exemption certificate stickers to provide clear demarcation of exemption certificate use on hire boats, to provide for more effective compliance.

Information noted. No recommendations or action items.

d) Red spot disease

Reports of red spot disease have recently been made in several rivers along the mid-north and north NSW coast, including the Macleay, Richmond, Manning, Clarence, Hastings and Wallamba (Wallis Lake catchment) Rivers, as well as further south in the Wisemans Ferry area of the Hawkesbury River. The disease is caused by a fungus (*Aphanomyces invadans*) and shows as red lesions (sores) or deep ulcers. Secondary bacterial infections are often also associated with red spot disease.

Fishers are advised that severely ulcerated fish should:

- not be eaten (advice from the NSW Food Authority);
- not be thrown back into the river;
- be euthanased by quickly removing the head (immersion in an ice slurry prior to decapitation should be done if possible); and
- be disposed of in land fill away from waterways.

Action item

DPI to provide information about red spot disease to fishing clubs in affected areas and include in Newscast (recreational fishing newsletter).

e) Eastern freshwater cod closure

The Mann and Nymboida Rivers are now closed to all fishing during the eastern freshwater cod's (EFC) breeding season. A three-month fishing ban came into force on 1 August 2008 (until 31 October) to protect EFC when they are most vulnerable. The penalty for fishing in the closure zone can be a fine of up to \$22,000.

Information noted. No recommendations or action items.

4. Recreational Fishing Trust issues

Recommendations regarding new Trust funding applications reviewed by the Freshwater and Saltwater Expenditure Committees at recent meetings were considered by the council:

Programs supported by ACoRF (and RFSTEC)

Platform: Recreational fishing education

Program	Proponent	2008/09	2009/10
RFA Rockfishing Safety – Asian Angler Awareness Project July 2008 – this program will allow the RFA to replicate the media campaign it ran in Asian newspapers in 2006 as a reminder to Asian anglers about the dangers of rock fishing. <i>Note: this application was supported out of session by RFSTEC.</i> Motion: The council supports funding for the program. Moved: John Drew. Seconded: Ann Garard. Carried.	Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW	\$6,494	
Take the bait – involves a series of monthly fishing outings for youth at risk at Lake Illawarra to provide diversionary activities for anti-social behaviour. Motion: The council supports funding for the program. Moved: Ron Croker. Seconded: John Drew. Carried.	Lake Illawarra PCYC	\$3,000	\$3,000

Platform: Fishing Access and facilities

Program	Proponent	2008/09
<p>Merimbula Floating Pontoon Jetty – this program will replace the existing deteriorated jetty with a modern structure that will service both land and water based recreational fishers.</p> <p>Motion: The council does not support funding for the program. Moved: Max Castle. Seconded: Nil. Motion lapsed.</p> <p>Motion: The council supports funding for the program. Moved: Ann Garard. Seconded: Kevin McKinnon. <i>Vote: 8 for; 1 against; 2 abstained.</i> Carried.</p> <p><i>Note: DPI to negotiate an ongoing access arrangement for recreational fishers on the jetty.</i></p>	Bega Valley Shire council	\$10,000
<p>Fish cleaning table, Moruya Town ramp – aims to construct a fish cleaning table at Moruya town ramp.</p> <p>Motion: The council supports funding for the program. Moved: Ann Garard. Seconded: Kevin McKinnon. Carried.</p>	Bega Valley Shire Council	\$9,612
<p>Installation of fish cleaning tables, measuring stations and signage at 7 Tweed Coast Holiday Parks</p> <p>Motion: The council supports funding for the program. Moved: John Drew. Seconded: Ann Garard. Carried.</p>	Tweed Coast Holiday Parks Reserve Trust	\$28,000

Programs supported by ACoRF (and RFFTEC)

Platform: Aquatic habitat protection and rehabilitation

Program	Proponent	2008/09
<p>Yass railway weir management program aims to remove willows from the banks of the Yass River and to re-stabilise the river bank with native tree species <i>Note: To be funded under Habitat Action Program.</i></p> <p>Motion: The council supports funding for the program. Moved: Kevin McKinnon. Seconded: Neil Ryan. Carried.</p>	Yass Landcare Group	\$17,000
<p>Habitat Improvement in the Indi River program – restoration of 250m stretch of the Indi River by willow removal, stocking management and re-vegetation program. <i>Note: To be funded under Habitat Action Program.</i></p> <p>Motion: The council supports funding for the program. Moved: Neil Ryan. Seconded: Ron Croker. Carried.</p>	Murray Catchment Management Authority	\$9,960

Platform: Research on fish and recreational fishing

Program	Proponent	2008/09	2009/10
<p>Enhancing Australian bass populations in the Clarence River through increased knowledge of their biology.</p> <p>Motion: The council supports funding for the program. Moved: Ron Croker. Seconded: John Humphries. Carried.</p>	NSW DPI	\$10,000	\$10,000
<p>Continuation of established transect monitoring for the study of trout impacts on endangered frog demographics (Year 3).</p> <p><i>Note: To be funded under Small Grants Program.</i></p> <p>Motion: The council supports funding for the program. Moved: Kevin McKinnon. Seconded: Charlie Howe. Carried.</p>	Newcastle University	\$9,500	

Programs not supported by ACoRF (and RFSTEC)

Platform: Research on fish and recreational fishing

Program	Proponent	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Reviewing the current state of knowledge on alleviating effects of barotraumas and determining the swim bladder and brain location of key NSW fish species – this program aims to review pertinent literature on the various methods available for alleviating barotraumas in fish and provide a review of the topic to NSW fisheries.	DigsFish Services Pty Ltd	\$14,750		
A biogeochemical and ecological model to help manage de-oxygenation and associated fish kills in the Richmond River estuary – will provide scientific information and modeling that can be used to determine how long estuaries should remain closed following de-oxygenation events and reduce the impact on fish stocks.	Southern Cross University	\$250,000	\$200,000	\$150,000
Enhancing oyster leases as fish habitat for recreational fishing in NSW estuaries – aims to assess the importance of oyster leases as habitat for recreational fish species in NSW estuaries.	NMSC, UNE & SCU	\$79,255	\$150,521	\$107,165

Motion: The council does not support funding for these programs. **Moved:** Max Castle. **Seconded:** Kevin McKinnon. **Carried.**

Programs not supported by ACoRF (supported by RFSTEC)

Program	Proponent	2008/09	2009/10
Creating recreational fishing aquariums displays that inspire the public about recreational fishing – involves installation of large fish tanks to engage high school students and the public at the Centre.	National Marine Science Centre	\$19,750	
Educating high school students to get hooked on sustainable recreational fishing – development of a high quality exhibit that engages high school students and educate about sustainable fishing. Motion: The council supports funding for the program. Moved: John Drew. Seconded: Ann Garard. Vote: 4 for; 4 against; 3 abstained. Motion lost. <i>Note: The Council will re-consider this proposal at the next meeting.</i>	National Marine Science Centre	\$20,000 (\$36,000)	

Motion: The council supports funding for these programs. **Moved:** John Drew. **Seconded:** Ann Garard. **Vote:** 4 for; 4 against; 3 abstained. **Motion lost.**

Note: The Council requested that the next meeting be held at the National Marine Science Centre to enable a site visit and appraisal of the current display at the centre. This may provide an opportunity to reconsider the proposal at that time.

Charter Fishing Trust Fund (CFTF)

Recommendations regarding a 3 year budget for expenditure from the CFTF, as recommended by MERCMAC, were considered by the council:

Programs supported by ACoRF (and MERCMAC)

Program	Proponent	Ongoing or New	Budget		
			2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Charter fishing logbook monitoring program - There is a legislative requirement for charter boat operators to submit catch returns for fisheries monitoring purposes. This program provides for printing and distribution of logbooks to operators and supports data entry and validation of catch returns and maintenance of the DPI charter boat logbook database.	DPI	Ongoing	\$55,000	\$40,000	\$40,000
Charter fishing consultation/ MERCMAC meetings - The Marine and Estuarine Recreational Charter Management Advisory Committee meets two to three times a year and provides advice to the Minister on charter/recreational fishing issues. This program provides funding for meeting expenses such as airfares, mileage, accommodation and sitting fees, as well as stakeholder port meetings and other charter fishing related consultation.	DPI	Ongoing	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000
Charter Fishing Fisheries Management Officer position - This program provides funds for the employment of a Charter Fishing Fisheries Management Officer. The position provides administrative support for the management, consultation and monitoring related to the NSW charter fishing sector.	DPI	Ongoing	\$100,744	\$100,744	\$103,766
Fisheries enhancement (offshore artificial reef and fish aggregating device) program contribution - The charter fishing sector benefits from the artificial reef and FAD programs and supports an increase in the size and number of estuarine reefs, the deployment of reefs in offshore locations and more FADs along the NSW coast. Contributing funding will ensure that the programs can continue to expand and meet the charter fishing sector's needs and expectations.	DPI	New	\$70,000	\$70,000	\$70,000
MERCMAC representative attendance at 5th World Recreational Fishing Conference – The World Recreational Fishing Conference with the theme “The Angler in the Environment” will be held November 10-13, 2008, at Dania Beach, Florida. The conference is held every 3 years and is the key meeting for exchange on recreational fisheries management issues. Attendance at this meeting provides exposure to state of the art advances in management, and provides a showcase for developments in recreational fisheries in Australia to a global audience. <i>Note: the council noted the relatively short timeframe for the conference and that approval will need to be sought from the Minister for this proposal.</i>	DPI/ MERCMAC	New	\$6,000		
Total			\$261,744	\$240,744	\$243,766

Motion: The council supports the proposed Charter Fishing Trust Fund budget, as recommended by MERCMAC. **Moved:** Sanchia Glaskin.
Seconded: John Drew. **Carried.**

Trust Fund program issues

Action item

It was requested that the source of contributing funds (other than the Trusts) be provided for each project in future expenditure tables, for council's information.

DPI fishing competition Fisheries Management Officer position

It was confirmed that the position previously held by Mark James is being maintained within the Recreational Management team. Funding for the position for a further 5 years was supported by the council at the previous meeting.

Offshore Artificial Reefs

The council was advised that DPI is proceeding with an environmental assessment of 3 offshore artificial reefs at Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong. It is proposed to construct reef 1 and undertake a scientific assessment to determine the effectiveness of the reef before proceeding with reef 2 and 3. A revised funding budget for reef 2 and 3 will then be presented to RFSTEC and ACoRF.

5. Recreational Fishing Fee Administration program update

DPI advised that the Recreational Licensing System was integrated to the Government Licensing Service on 1 September 2008. This will enable a number of enhancements to be made. If you purchase a one year or three year licence online, over the phone, or at a Touch agent, you will now receive a plastic licence in the post. Licence renewal letters, with 5 easy options to pay, will also be sent to one and three year licence holders. If fishers renew their licence using their renewal letter, they will also receive a plastic licence in the post. Anglers will continue to be able to purchase their licences through the statewide network of fishing fee agents.

Information noted. No recommendations or actions items.

6. Estimating and maximising the post-release survival of key angler-caught fish in NSW

Since 2003, the NSW Department of Primary Industries (with funding from the Recreational Fishing Trusts) has been estimating and maximising the survival of released angler-caught fish. The work involves experiments in the field (as part of recreational fishing events) and aquaria that aim to (1) determine the mortality and main contributing factors for key saltwater and freshwater species associated with local angling-and-release practices, and then if required, (2) develop and test changes to gears or handling practices that maximise survival.

Information noted.

Action item

Matt Broadhurst to provide information regarding the post-release survival of tailor to John Clarke.

7. Fish stocking in marine waters

An overview of the process required for an environmental assessment of a marine stocking program of key recreational species to enhance recreational fishing in NSW was provided. The 3 main stages of the process are:

1. Undertake Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and develop Fisheries Management Strategy, which will ensure responsible marine stocking practices;
2. Exhibition and consultation; and
3. Assessment and determination

The council discussed potential species that may be included in the EIS and their priority and expressed strong support for recreational fishing havens (RFHs) to be a high priority as future stocking locations. It was also mentioned that partnership and potential funding opportunities from the commercial fishing sector regarding stocking of common target species/fishing areas should also be considered.

Mulloway

The council asked whether many of the juvenile mulloway caught by commercial trawlers on the far north coast earlier this year were stocked fish from the Richmond River.

Action item

Dr Matt Taylor (UNSW) to provide information regarding this issue. *Dr Taylor was contacted regarding this issue and will provide an update at the next meeting.*

8. Commercial fisheries management update

The council was advised of the main commercial fishing issues at present, including: the structural adjustment program to address latent effort; capture restrictions on large sharks (commenced 1 September 2008); mandatory use of bycatch reduction devices in the cod-ends of all estuary and ocean prawn trawl nets; a reduction of the abalone quota (set on a regional basis) for 2008/09; and an increase of 4 tonnes (to 128t) to the lobster quota for 2008/09.

9. Recreational Fishing Trust Community Education Program initiatives

The Community Education Programs Team manages and attends community based programs based around recreational fishing initiatives, including:

- Fishing Workshops
- Schools programs i.e. get hooked its fun to fish
- Recreational fishing events i.e. fishing competitions, shows and field days
- Fishcare Volunteers i.e. angler awareness, water advisory, land advisory, data collection, habitat restoration, research assistance and many more.

New priorities for the next financial year include:

- Rollout of the Get Hooked program across NSW, targeting approximately 250 schools. It is estimated 20,000 additional primary school children will be introduced to the concepts of safe, responsible and sustainable fishing.
- Four fishing workshop weeks will be run across NSW, allowing students to put into practice the skills learnt from the get hooked class lessons.
- Training 100 additional dedicated schools fishcare volunteers to assist teachers with the classroom activities and delivery of the program.

10. Fisheries enhancement program update

Deferred – to be presented at next meeting.

11. Fishing Closures

The following closures are due to expire in the near future:

- Wonboyn River (County of Auckland) closure expires 25 September 2008
- Hunter River and Tributaries closure expires 7 December 2008
- Manning River and Tributaries closure expires 11 December 2008
- Prohibition on the taking of fish using abalone viscera as bait expires 11 December 2008
- Southern Burns Point Ferry Approach Ramp closure expires 1 January 2009
- Moruya (or Deua) River and tributaries, and Willija (or 'Y') Swamp at Moruya Heads closure expires 29 January 2009
- Bega River, its creeks, tributaries, inlets and lagoons closure expires 29 January 2009.

Motion: The Council supports the renewal of the closures, as outlined. **Moved:** Max Castle. **Seconded:** Kevin McKinnon. **Carried**

12. Development of the Marine Park Authority Cultural Resource Use Policy

The council was informed about the intention to formulate the Marine Park Authority Cultural Resource Use Policy, which will formally provide for Aboriginal involvement in Marine Park management in the future. Preliminary consultation involves ACoRF, the DPI Aboriginal Reference Group, the DECC Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Advisory Council and the Seafood

Industry Advisory Council. The council requested input into the development of this whole-of-Government Policy.

Out of Session items

Nil.

Correspondence received

- Fishing competitions in the Port Stephens – Great Lakes Marine Park (letter submitted at the last meeting by Darrell Dawson, representing local environmental group EcoNetwork)

John Clarke advised that the continued promotion and enhancement of fishing competitions held within the boundaries of the marine park was supported by conservationists, tourism and Shire Council delegates at the recent Marine Park Advisory Committee meeting, following recommendations presented by recreational fishing representatives Graham Duffy and Mr Clarke. These included, for example: options for tournament organisers to voluntarily consider implementing reduced bag limits; increasing prizes for fish that are weighed in live and released back into waters of the marine park; and photographing trophy fish and offering prizes for video captures. It was noted that spearfishing and game fishing competitions were not addressed.

It was confirmed at the council meeting that Mr Clarke and Mr Duffy's involvement on the Marine Park Advisory Committee is as local recreational fishing representatives, not as representatives of ACoRF.

DPI advised that some competition organisers considered the Neatfish fishing competition accreditation scheme challenging and difficult to adopt. Therefore, DPI had developed an alternative, simpler approach to work with competition organisers to improve environmental and social outcomes of events by encouraging the use of voluntary guidelines developed by DPI for this purpose. It was noted that DPI has worked with many other competition organisers across a range of events to introduce improved competition formats on a gradual, voluntary basis over time. Some examples include annual events such as the Evans Head Fishing Classic, Great Inland Fishing Festival at Copeton Dam and Grabine Classic Freshwater Fishing Tournament at Wyangala Dam.

DPI advised that the Recreational Management Unit will offer assistance to work with Port Stephens fishing competition organisers in the future.

Action item

DPI's Recreational Fisheries Manager responsible for fishing competitions to attend the next meeting to discuss these issues with the council.

- Letter from the Marine and Estuarine Recreational Charter Management Advisory Committee (MERCMAC) regarding a request to remove the requirement for charter operators to fin clip high value species. During discussion of MERCMAC's request, it was confirmed that the requirement to fin clip all recreationally caught species was recommended in the Palmer report into illegal fishing activities, which may be considered during the next formal review of recreational fishing rules. Peter Turnell offered to discuss these issues with MERCMAC at its next meeting.

Other Business

- John Clarke's proposal to seek the removal of commercial trawling within the Port Stephens – Great Lakes Marine Park.

Motion: The Council provide in principle support for this proposal. **Moved:** John Humphries. Seconded: Ron Croker. **Carried.**

- Recfish Australia membership – nominations are required for delegates of ACoRF on Recfish and the Recfish Board.

Motion: The council nominates John Drew and Max Castle as the ACoRF delegates on Recfish and Bruce Schumacher for the Recfish Board. **Moved:** John Humphries. **Seconded:** Sanchia Glaskin. **Carried.**

- Recfish Australia - 2008 Recfishing Awards

Motion: The Council nominates John Diplock, a former DPI recreational fisheries manager, for the Excellence in Innovation and Leadership Award. **Moved:** Max Castle. **Seconded:** John Drew. **Carried.**

Action item

Recreational Management to forward this nomination to Recfish by close of business Friday 12 September 2008.

Nomination forwarded to Recfish on 12 September 2008.

- The council requested that a letter be forwarded to John Diplock to express the council's appreciation for his efforts on behalf of recreational fishers over many years and wish him the best with future endeavours.

Action item

Forward letter from ACoRF to John Diplock.

- 5th World Recreational Fishing Conference – (1) John Drew, (2) Ann Garard, (3) Sanchia Glaskin and (4) Kevin McKinnon were selected as the potential ACoRF representatives for the 2008 World Recreational Fishing Conference.
- Concerns about spearfishing activities near sea cages – DPI had received reports of spearfishers fishing under the aquaculture sea cages in Botany Bay. The sea cage operation is a private enterprise and is a formal worksite. Spearfishing under the cages is extremely dangerous as there is an extensive mooring system under the cages. DPI will request the USFA to advise its members that this practice is dangerous and should not occur. DPI also advised that a formal fishing closure may be necessary if the practice continues.
- Port Kembla - new Inner Harbour security arrangements
From Monday 15th September 2008, new access and security arrangements will come into force for road entry to Port Kembla's Inner Harbour via Tom Thumb Road. Access will be restricted to port related traffic in order to ensure the ongoing safety and security of port operations. This will restrict recreational fishing access.
NSW DPI is currently liaising with the Port Kembla Port Corporation regarding this issue.
- John Clarke requested that greater emphasis be given to increasing regional representation on the council when conducting an expression of interest/appointment process in the future. Consideration would be in addition to existing legislative requirements for members to have skills and experience in one or more of the recreational fishing methods/areas of expertise outlined in the *Fisheries Management (General) Regulation 2002*.

Next meeting

- ACoRF meeting 45 (3/2008) – Thursday 11 December 2008 at the National Marine Science Centre, Coffs Harbour.

Action items from 44th ACoRF meeting on 9 September 2008

Agenda Item	Action	Due date - if applicable	Team Responsible	Status
Business arising	DPI to update the council at the next meeting regarding the status of the proposed increase to the minimum size limit of snapper.	11/12/08	Recreational Management	Pending – next meeting
3.	DPI to provide information about red spot disease to fishing clubs in affected areas and include in Newscast.		Recreational Management	Pending
6.	Dr Matt Broadhurst to provide information regarding post-release survival of tailor to John Clarke. (Fisheries Research vol. 58 2002, pp. 241-248, Short Term Hooking Mortality of Tailor in Western Australia)		Science & Research	Completed <i>Recreational Management obtained & forwarded information on 3/10/08</i>
7.	Dr Matt Taylor (UNSW) to provide scientific information regarding the studies conducted on juvenile mullet that were caught by commercial trawlers on the far north coast earlier this year, including what percentage were stocked fish from the Richmond River research program conducted by UNSW.	11/12/08	Dr Matt Taylor (UNSW)	Pending – next meeting
Correspondence received	DPI's Recreational Fisheries Manager responsible for fishing competitions to attend the next meeting to discuss competition issues with the council.	11/12/08	Recreational Management	Pending – next meeting
Other business	The Council nominated John Diplock, a former DPI recreational fisheries manager, for the 2008 Recfish Excellence in Innovation and Leadership Award.	12/09/08	Recreational Management	Completed <i>Nomination forwarded to Recfish on 12 September 2008.</i>
Other business	Send letter to John Diplock to express the council's appreciation for his efforts on behalf of recreational fishers over many years and wish him the best with future endeavours.		Recreational Management/ ACoRF Chair	Pending