

10 October 2022

Proposed amendment to commercial fishing regulations

Public consultation paper 9

Estuary General Fishery – Allow staking of Prawn Running Nets in all waters where use is permitted, including within 10m of the high-water mark

Overview of activities

The Prawn running net may only be used in Wallaga Lake, Cuttagee Lake, Middle Lake (Bega), Lake Wollumboola, Swan Lake, Coila Lake, Corunna Lake, Tilba Tilba Lake, Lake Brou, Tuggerah Lakes and Lake Illawarra by fisheries who hold a prawning endorsement. The prawn running net is a passive net with little if any bycatch issues. 115 fishers are endorsed to use this net under a prawning endorsement. Catch is managed by adjusting numbers of endorsements (or fishers) on an as-needs basis.

Current arrangement

In Lake Illawarra the net cannot be staked, while in other permitted lakes fishers have the option of staking the net or shooting and retrieving it within one hour.

Where a net is staked, it cannot be set within 10 metres of the high-water mark.

Proposed changes

Allow the net to be staked in all waters where the net may be used.

Allow a staked net to be set within 10 metres of the high-water mark.

What is the problem being resolved?

The current prohibition on staking in Lake Illawarra was likely initiated by industry in the past when competition for prawn running nets sites was high. The number of fishers has decreased, reducing competition and therefore the need for this additional prohibition.

The origin of the prohibition on staking nets within 10 metres of the high-water mark is not clear, but it may have been related to allowing access around the net. As nets that are not staked may already be used within 10 metres of the high-water mark, and because determining the high-water mark in coastal lakes (especially when closed to the sea) can be problematic, removing this prohibition will simplify the rules and improve compliance.

Removing the restriction on use of stakes and restriction for operating within 10 metres of the high-water mark will lead to state-wide consistency of regulations.

Outcomes

- Opportunity to improve fishing efficiency
- Simplify rules and improve compliance
- Improved business efficiency
- Reduced burden on Government and red tape for fishers
- Improved consistency with arrangements in other NSW commercial fisheries
- No discernible impact on the fisheries resource and environment

© State of New South Wales through Regional NSW 2022. The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing October 2022. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that the information upon which they rely is up to date and to check the currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the Regional NSW or the user's independent adviser.