



Dear commercial fishing stakeholder,

Actions needed to rebuild dogfish (gulper) shark stocks in NSW waters, plus a call for persons who want to be included in an upcoming consultation process

I am writing to update you on the recovery planning process for two gulper shark species that reside off the NSW coast, and to notify you of a consultation process about to occur regarding proposed fishing closures in upper continental slope waters.

Previously, three species of gulper sharks were nominated for listing as threatened species under Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. In July last year, the Federal Environment Minister determined that the Endeavour dogfish was not eligible for listing and decided to defer his decision on whether to list **Harrisson's dogfish** and **southern dogfish** until 31 July 2012. The extension was granted to give time for further data analysis and for a recovery strategy to be finalised.

In the latter half of last year, the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) commissioned the CSIRO to carry out a project called "Using a habitat proxy to assist in spatial management of gulper sharks". The CSIRO started this project in late 2011 and has been pulling together information (recent and past) to document things such as areas where gulper sharks are encountered, suitable habitat, range limits, and the species mix at locations. The CSIRO work will identify areas that are considered vital for rebuilding Harrisson's and southern dogfish stocks and which will be the subject of proposed closures to some forms of fishing. The process has been driven by the Commonwealth to date, but because these species reside in waters under NSW jurisdiction as well, management action is also needed in relevant NSW fisheries.

NSW is in the process of writing to the Federal Environment Minister seeking a 3 month extension to the process, so that we can consult with stakeholders on the most accurate and up-to-date information, however an extension is not guaranteed. If a further extension is not granted, the entire process must be completed by the end of July. This means the 'implementation plan' needs to be submitted to the Commonwealth Threatened Species Scientific Committee by early May 2012.

Attached are two maps showing where possible closures for each species might be. These are preliminary maps only at this stage and are subject to change but are included to guide the discussions. The 'green' areas have been identified so far as important habitat sites for gulper sharks. The 'yellow/orange' areas are those that may support recovery. The 'pink' areas are likely to only have a minimal contribution to promoting recovery of those species, while the 'grey' areas are unlikely to contribute to the recovery objectives.

As yet, there is no indication of the extent of area that will need to be protected as that is still subject to CSIRO finishing its work and discussions with the Commonwealth. However, it is envisaged that the 'green' areas and at least some of the 'yellow/orange' areas will be affected. Fisheries NSW is maintaining the position that any fishing closures should only affect fishing methods that pose an unacceptable risk to Harrison's and southern dogfish.

We note that only a small proportion of endorsement holders who receive this letter are likely to be fishing on the upper slope area. So that we can target the upcoming consultation to operators who are likely to be potentially impacted by new fishing closures, please contact us ASAP if your fishing activities fall within the areas highlighted, or if you want to be involved in the next round of more detailed consultation (using the contact details in the box below).

We will create a list of interest persons and limit our upcoming communication on the closure proposals to people on the list. We will however, also place relevant information in the "What's new" section of the Commercial Fishing page on the DPI website, so others can keep track of progress (refer to www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/commercial).

To be on the list to receive more detailed information about the proposed gulper shark closures in the coming weeks, please provide your name and Fishing Business number using any of the following means:

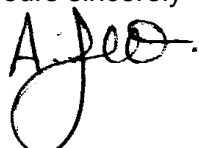
- ⇒ **By phone: (02) 9527 8424** (Note if it goes to voicemail, please leave a message with the above details)
- ⇒ **By fax: (02) 9527 8560**
- ⇒ **By email: miriam.vandenberg@dpi.nsw.gov.au**

In the meantime, if you require further information about the issue or wish to provide your views on interaction levels or management actions, please contact any of the following persons:

Organisation	Area of interest	Contact	Phone no.
Fisheries NSW	Manages NSW fishing activities	Veronica Silberschneider	(02) 9527 8550
C'wealth SEWPac	Manages the Commonwealth threatened species process	Shaneen Coulson	(02) 6274 2238
Professional Fishermen's Association (PFA)	Key industry representative working on behalf of PFA members	John Harrison	(02) 6645 0971

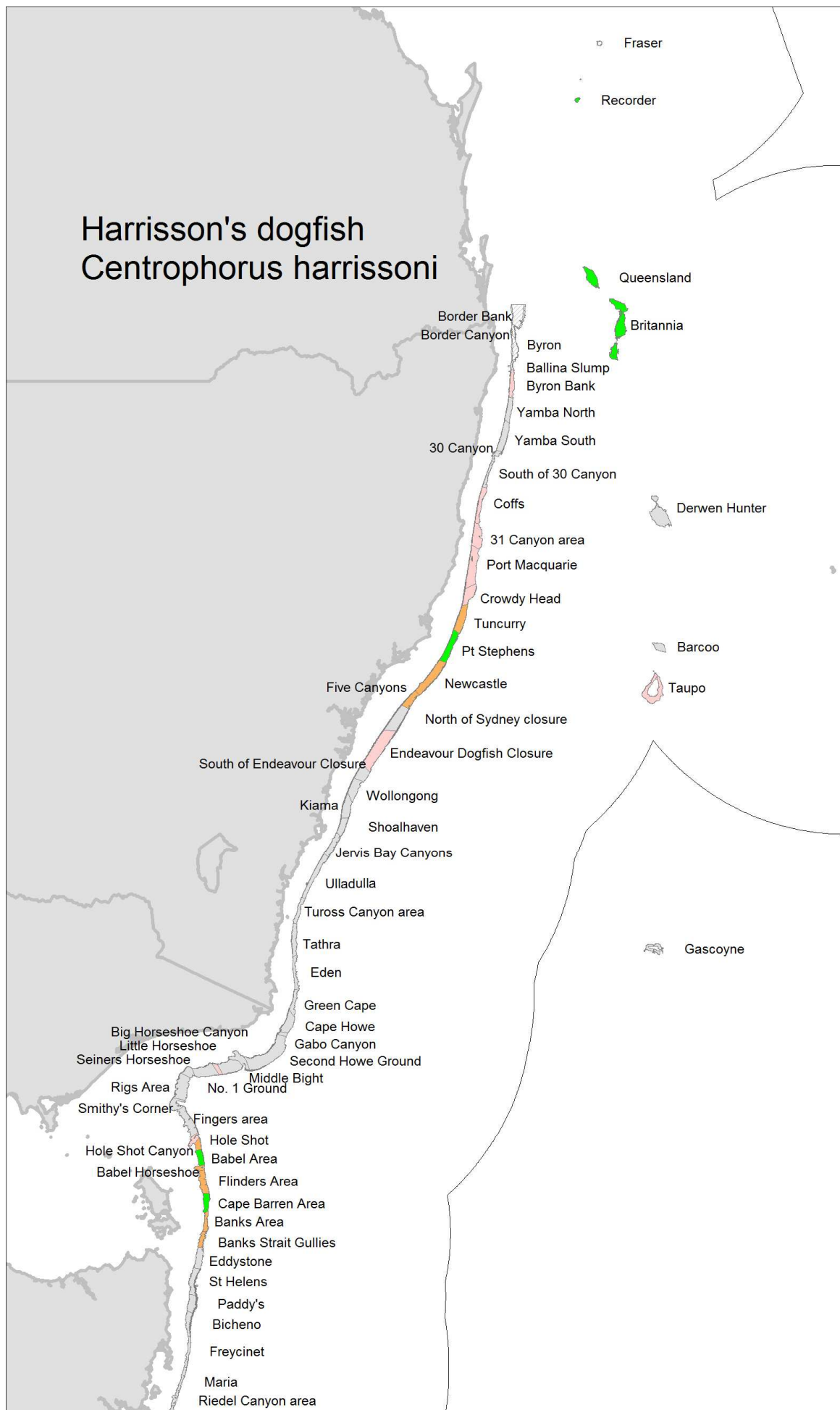
Fisheries NSW is committed to being part of the process to: (i) ensure adequate recovery of these dogfish species, (ii) help prevent the species being listed as threatened (which will ultimately lead to even more stringent fishing controls), and (iii) achieve the best possible outcome for NSW fishers from the options available.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Goulstone
Director, Commercial Fisheries
30 March 2012

Harrison's dogfish *Centrophorus harrissoni*



Southern Dogfish (*Centrophorus zeehaani*)

