



MEDIA RELEASE

WESTERN ROCK LOBSTER INTEGRATED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PUBLIC MEETINGS

Recfishwest urges all recreational western rock lobster fishers to attend the upcoming Integrated Fisheries Management (IFM) public meetings on the;

22nd November 6pm, Mandurah Gates Hotel, 110 Mandurah Tce, Mandurah, held in the “Pearlroom”

23rd November 6pm, WA Fisheries & Marine Research Laboratories, Hillarys, Meeting Room No. 3.

These meetings are an important opportunity for all recreational western rock lobster fishers to listen to the Department of Fisheries proposals and comment on the allocation of this resource.

The western rock lobster fishery is the first in Western Australia to undertake the IFM process. IFM involves the setting of sustainable harvest levels for a resource and then allocating an explicit catch share for use by indigenous, recreational and commercial fishers.

Currently the recommendation is for the recreational fishers to be allocated 4.9% of the overall resource based on predictions of catch in 2009/2010.

A capping of the recreational sector allocation at 4.9%, may force intra-sectoral resource sharing issues to emerge. As the natural population grows, recreational fishers will have to compete amongst themselves for a smaller portion of the catch.

As the recreational sector grows there will be a need to increase its share. This future share may have to be purchased back from the commercial sector.

To make recreational fishers pay to claim their share of the resource is not supported by Recfishwest and the price of even a small percentage increase would be an enormous cost to the community. The recreational sector already makes a significantly higher relative contribution for its small share of the catch than does the commercial sector. An equitable allocation of a community owned resource is only fair.

Recfishwest has proposed that the recreational sector be allowed to grow until it reaches a take of twice its current real catch share (8%) or its projected catches after 20 years, whichever is the greatest, to accommodate the natural growth in the recreational sector.

It is vitally important that the opinion of as many recreational rock lobster fishers as possible is conveyed at these meetings so that we are given an equitable share of this valuable community resource. Failure to speak out now could seriously compromise the recreational western rock lobster fishing in the future.

ENDS

More information: <http://www.recfishwest.org.au/SubIFMLobsterFMP192.htm>

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