

Media Release

Recreational rock lobster licences to rise to \$140 per year.

Recfishwest has today warned recreational fishers of the grave consequences of the adoption of the Integrated Fisheries Management report on Western rock lobsters.

The Executive Director of Recfishwest, Mr Frank Prokop said that if the recommendations of the Integrated Fisheries Management Committee were adopted then recreational rock lobster licences would have to increase to at least \$140 per year from the year 2010 onwards.

“The committee recommends that the recreational fishing sector should have to buy back a share of the resource from the year 2010. There would be no additional benefits to the recreational sector – this is merely to accommodate natural growth in the population.” Mr Prokop said.

“The committee seems to have forgotten that this is a community resource. It is totally illogical to expect the community to pay commercial fishers to access a part of the resource that is theirs by definition. Just when the rest of the world is introducing resource rents for the commercial industry, Western Australia is looking to introduce a community funded rent back to the commercial sector.”

Mr Prokop said that many recreational fishers had not realised the impact of the recommendations and so the level of concern was not as great as it should be.

“The committee has prepared the report and has extended the time for submissions until the end of February. Copies of the paper can be obtained from the Department of Fisheries.”

“I would like to stress that the recreational fishing sector already pays the government a greater pro-rata amount for its current small share of the resource. To penalise only the recreational fishing sector because more people want to live in Western Australia is unacceptable.”

Mr Prokop said that the report proposed making an allocation to the recreational sector equivalent to the anticipated catch in 2009/2010. However, after that time the recreational sector will have to buy catch from the commercial sector or take management cuts to keep their catches from growing. This will cause competition among recreational fishers and greater competition at already crowded boat ramps.”

“Of course many people will refuse to pay at least \$140 a year each and every year for a recreational rock lobster licence. This may be exactly what the commercial sector wants. Unfortunately there are no planned mechanisms for the commercial sector to pay the recreational sector if they take part of the recreational catch.”

Mr Prokop said that Recfishwest had urged the committee to make an allocation that allowed for community growth so that the wider community could have access to the common property rock lobster resource. The Recfishwest submission is available on request.

“If people do not take the trouble to comment on this proposal, then the traditional and highly valued pastime of pulling a few pots or diving with your mates will be under tremendous threat. Recfishwest needs most of the 40,000 recreational rock lobster licence holders to tell the government that they need a few rock lobsters for themselves.”

“Recreational fishers have until the end of February to make their views known and get a more realistic solution to this problem.” Mr Prokop warned.

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Calculation of recreational rock lobster licence fee

Integrated Fisheries Management Report predicted 0.5% increase in recreational catches in 2010/2011. The impact of fee increases for rock lobster in 2010 if recreational sector has to fund a re-allocation of 0.5% as forecast has been calculated.

Western Rock Lobster Fishery (commercial) worth about \$350 million (would be averaged over 5 or perhaps 10 years).

Value of half a per cent is \$1.75 million. Compensation provisions currently used for fisheries and valuer general is for between 2-3 times the absolute value to be offered as compensation. The higher figure is more applicable if need is obvious or 'voluntary' nature of exchange impacted (likely in this scenario). This doesn't allow for potential significant market distortion when recreational sector enters the market. Therefore direct compensation expected at \$3.5 - \$5.25 million first year – projected to continue.

If we assume about 50,000 recreational licences at this time this means a community dividend (extra fee) of \$70 - \$105 per licensee per year.

If we use CPI of 4% on license fee - Currently \$32

2006/2007 - \$33

2007/2008 - \$34.50

2008/2009 - \$36

2009/2010 - \$37.50

2010/2011 - \$39 plus \$100 resource sharing levy

2011/2012 - \$40 plus \$100 resource sharing levy

Projections not available through IFM after this time.