



Recreational fishers take the right steps to ensure sustainability

Recfishwest today praised a range of announcements by Minister for Fisheries, Jon Ford, and the Department of Fisheries designed to ensure the sustainability of the fish resources of Western Australia.

“The decisions which have been announced have all been instigated by Recfishwest or regional Recreational Fishing Advisory Committees and clearly demonstrate the commitment of the recreational fishing sector to proactive management of the resources of this state.” According to Frank Prokop, Executive Director of Recfishwest, the recreational fishing peak body.

The Minister for Fisheries has approved an increase in the legal minimum size limit for pink snapper in the Wilson Inlet from 280 mm to 410 mm effective from 6 July 2007. This creates a uniform minimum legal size limit for pink snapper across the South Coast and West Coast Regions.

“The coordination of local support by Mr Robert Robinson and local member for Albany, Mr Peter Watson has been an important consideration in getting this regulation implemented.” Mr Prokop said.

Local support from the Peel regional Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee, with strong endorsement from Recfishwest, has seen the prohibition of drag netting in the Peel-Harvey estuary. The reduction in prawn numbers and the by-catch of small crabs has been a key driver in the implementation of this management reform that has been widely canvassed and supported in the Mandurah region.

“Recfishwest is also pleased to see total protection for cobbler in the Swan-Canning catchment.” Mr Prokop said. “While recreational fishing is not the cause for the decline of cobbler, additional protection will increase the focus on managing the environmental factors which have greatly affected the cobbler and river prawn stocks in the Swan-Canning systems.”

Recfishwest has been working with the Swan River Trust to develop research projects that will identify impacts and recovery strategies for river prawns and cobbler.

“While a 10 year closure seems a long time, it is necessary to allow the species to recover. If cobbler do not show dramatic signs of recovery within 5 years, we will know that we must address environmental management in a much more robust way.”

Finally, Recfishwest is pleased to see a fishing closure for the lakes on Heirisson Island.

Bream appear to aggregate in this area prior to spawning and this closure will help to maintain bream stocks in the Swan River. This closure has been strongly advocated for by bream fishermen themselves.”

“These are more examples of where recreational fishers have proactively endorsed tighter restrictions on a fishery to ensure its sustainability in the future.” Mr Prokop said.

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