



New West Coast Recreational Fishing Arrangements

Recfishwest today described the new management package for recreational anglers on the West Coast a necessary step in the right direction in the interest of resource sustainability.

Acting Executive Director of Recfishwest, Kane Moyle commented, “The recreational sector is generally accepting of the need for tighter management arrangements to provide additional protection to important demersal species. However, the timing and length of any closed season is critical to ensure sustainability targets are achieved with the least possible impact on the enjoyment of fishing.”

Recfishwest supports the Minister’s two and half month closure from 15 October – 25 December for the 2008/09 season, but believes it is too early to be prescriptive on decisions to extend the closure to include all of January and October in subsequent years.

“I am hopeful that if we reach the required annual target for reduction in fishing mortality during the first year closure the Government can be adaptive in its management of these important species.” Mr Moyle said.

“We are not opposed to tight management controls if they are necessary, however, a four month closure (as proposed for 2010/11) during the peak summer fishing period would impact heavily on fishers, the tackle and boat industries and the tourism industries from Kalbarri to Augusta.” Mr Moyle said.

Recfishwest did recommend including all Category 1 demersal species in any closed season. “This would have provided increased protection to these “vulnerable” species by removing any reason for fishing in deep water where the vulnerable species live and thus removing the potential for incidental mortality. We believe this should be considered a realistic trade off to extending the closure in 2009/10 and 2010/11.” Mr Moyle said.

Recfishwest has been a long time advocate for tighter management of our demersal scalefish, particularly for the vulnerable dhufish. Recreational fishers first began to formally voice their concerns about the status of dhufish stocks at the Dhufish Workshop, run by Recfishwest in 2004.

Recfishwest is cautious of the potential flow on effect the new management arrangements may have as recreational fishers shift their attention to important recreational “bread and butter” species like King George whiting and herring during closed seasons.

“It is important that researchers work closely with recreational anglers to monitor the impacts of the new management arrangements on catch and fishing behaviour.” Mr Moyle said.

Recfishwest applauded the Minister’s decision to establish a dedicated Recreational Fishing Trust Fund for recreational fishing expenditure priorities.

“It is great to see that recreational fishers will get greater say in the expenditure of existing licence monies with establishment of a Recreational Fishing Trust Fund. This will allow the recreational sector to fund research programs of interest to recreational fishers.” Mr Moyle said.

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