

Leanne Thompson
Plan Coordinator
Indicative Management Plan for the Proposed
Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park
Marine Policy and Planning Branch
Department of Environment and Conservation
47 Henry Street
FREMANTLE WA 6160

Proposed Walpole Nornalup Inlets Marine Park IMP 2006-2016

Dear Leanne

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the proposed Walpole Nornalup Inlets Marine Park Indicative Management Plan (IMP).

Recfishwest is the peak stakeholder body representing the interests of the estimated 788,000 recreational fishers in Western Australia. We are formally recognised and funded by the Government in that role. The habitat in which fishing is carried out and access to those areas are of particular importance to Recfishwest and we place the highest priority on preserving the future of recreational fishing and the resource it depends on.

We are encouraged by more recent efforts of the Department of Environment and Conservation Marine Policy and Planning Branch (DEC) and the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority (MPRA) to engage Recfishwest and recreational fishers in a meaningful way in the marine parks planning process.

Recfishwest would firstly like to commend Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), the Focus Group and the Marine Park and Reserves Authority (MPRA) for producing in this case a well balanced indicative management plan for this very important area.

Recfishwest were pleased to be part of the community based Focus Group that worked effectively through the efforts of Tammy Reid (DEC Facilitator) and Alan Kendrick (DEC Planning Coordinator). Recfishwest recognises that a marine park is a resource for the entire community and although it is vital to have local community involvement, the importance of a strategic, state-wide viewpoint can not be discounted.

Recfishwest believes that the Marine Park challenge in terms of recreational fishing is to adequately provide for the conservation values of a marine protected area in an equitable, integrated and sustainable manner while minimising the impact on the historical and social values of recreational fishing.

The decision to zone the entire Marine Park as a recreation zone was not taken lightly by the Focus Group. The decision reflects the important historical and social values of the Walpole and Nornalup Inlets. The Recreational Zoning also reflects the vision of the Focus Group to achieve biodiversity conservation values

Chairman – Des Wood

Executive Director – Frank Prokop

Email: recfish@recfishwest.org.au

Website: <http://www.recfishwest.org.au>

with minimal impact on the highly valued recreational activities. Recfishwest believes the Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park will serve as an example of how recreational fishing can coexist with biodiversity conservation.

The challenge henceforth is to effectively manage the permitted recreational activities via the many marine natural resource management processes.

Recfishwest was concerned by the Department of Fisheries (DoF) quotes (pg.48, par. 2) of unpublished data indicating that 38,365 black bream were taken by recreational fishers between Dec 2002 and Nov 2003. Recfishwest was of the belief that the reported figure was excessively high and misleading to readers of the IMP.

Recfishwest made several enquiries to the DoF and DEC querying this figure. At a rough calculation the figure represents 105 bream being taken every day. Recfishwest investigated this matter and requested information regarding the analysis that sits behind the data provided to DEC. The revised catch estimates for South Coast Inlets have been checked by DoF and they have revised their draft research report accordingly.

The DoF now estimate the annual number of black bream taken by recreational boat and shore-based fishers (including house boats) from Walpole/Nornalup Inlet is 26,600.

Recfishwest were disappointed by the lack of acknowledgement within the IMP of the DoF South Coast Recreational Fishing Review outcomes and its implementation on January 1 this year. Through out the consultation process the Focus Group discussed the pending outcome of the review and specifically the potential reduction in bag limits for commonly caught fish species including black bream.

The IMP did not include information regarding the DoF change in bag limits for black bream from 20 to 8 which is a 60% bag limit reduction and the introduction of statewide possession limits in 2003. For example the possession limit away from a person's residence is 16 black bream in total regardless of how many days or weeks a visiting recreational angler may spend in the region.

Recfishwest would again like to acknowledge the good work of DEC and the Focus Group in the development of the IMP. Recfishwest looks forward to monitoring the progress of the Marine Park's all inclusive recreation zoning.

Recfishwest wishes to thank you for the opportunity to comment on this plan. Should you require any further information or clarification please do not hesitate to contact me on 9246 3366

Yours sincerely

Frank Prokop
Executive Director

30th November 2006

CC Hon Mark McGowan, Minister for the Environment
Hon Jon Ford, Minister for Fisheries
Peter Millington, Acting CEO, Department of Fisheries.
Doug Bathgate, Chair, Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee

Chairman – Des Wood
Executive Director – Frank Prokop

Email: recfish@recfishwest.org.au
Website: <http://www.recfishwest.org.au>