



Hon Norman Moore MLC
Minister for Mines and Petroleum; Fisheries; Electoral Affairs
4th floor London House,
216 St Georges Terrace
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Minister

RE RECREATIONAL ROCK LOBSTER MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Thank you for your letter requesting Recfishwest's views on the appropriateness of the recreational sector undergoing tighter management in light of the concerns in the commercial rock lobster fishery.

Recfishwest believes that these recommendations are not consistent with Integrated Fisheries Management. The recreational sector is currently fishing well below its formal allocation of 5% and is extremely unlikely to take 275 tonnes in the coming season if the commercial fishery is restricted to 5,500 tonnes.

The recreational sector took a bag limit reduction at the start of the 2008/09 season from 8-6, representing a cut of 25%. Despite not catching our allocated share we accepted this reduction in the best interest of the sustainability of the fishery.

Given the small catch of the recreational fishery the benefits from implementing these proposed management changes would be minimal. Bringing in these changes for the recreational fishery would incur significant administrative, education and compliance costs for a marginal stock benefit. Recfishwest is of the view the costs of these initiatives would be better focussed towards the west coast demersal scalefish fishery where a significant sustainability concern exists within the recreational fishery.

We believe any changes with such short notice for the recreational sector would cause significant compliance difficulties. Recfishwest has been informed by the tackle industry that there are only a couple of manufacturers of rock lobster gauges, with one of the most popular also incorporating a 54mm escape gap gauge. We have been informed that it would be impossible to accommodate a change in escape gaps on stocked or already sold pots in time for the start of the recreational season.

Recfishwest is pleased to hear your commitment to the Integrated Fisheries Management process and decision not to adjust the start date for the recreational rock lobster season. This period is critical for the recreational fishery to have first access to the 'whites'. Recfishwest believes that serious consideration should be given to prohibiting commercial rock lobster fishing within 3 km of the coast during the period 15 November to 1 February in at least a significant part of C Zone. This would reduce resource sharing conflicts and reduce the commercial exploitation of 'whites' lobsters in C Zone. As part of the integrated process the recreational sector could look to implement these changes for the 2010/11 season.

Please feel free to contact our office directly on 9246 3366 if you have any queries on this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig Leatt-Hayter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Craig Leatt-Hayter
Chairman

30 September 2009

CC Doug Bathgate, Chair RFAC
Ron Edwards, Chair RLIAC