

**Eleventh Meeting of the
Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust Expenditure Committee
Final Minutes
25/11/03
9:30am to 3.30pm
Cronulla Fisheries Centre
202 Nicholson Parade, Cronulla**

Attendance

Chair

Bruce Schumacher

Committee Members

Bruce Mahony

Lisa Terry

John Drew

Graham Harrison

Lionel Jones

David Turner

William Heaton

Warren Buchan

Region 1 – Qld border to Evans Head

Region 2 – Evans Head to Woolgoolga

Region 3 – Woolgoolga to Port Macquarie

Region 4 – Port Macquarie to Seal Rocks

Region 5 – Seal Rocks to The Entrance

Region 6 – The Entrance to Wollongong

Region 6 – The Entrance to Wollongong

Region 7 & 8 – Wollongong to Vic border

Geoffrey Woolley

Malcolm Poole

Doug Joyner for John Millyard

Anthony Moore

NSW Game Fishing Association

Recreational Fishing Alliance

Australian Fishing Tackle Association

Nature Conservation Council

NSW Fisheries (observers)

John Diplock, Principal Manager, Recreational Fisheries

Bryan van der Walt, A/Senior Manager, Recreational Fisheries

Jennifer Ranson, A/Manager, Recreational Fisheries

Apologies

Lisa Terry

Geoffrey Woolley

Anthony Moore

Agenda Items

- 1) Recreational Fishing Trusts report
 - a) Expenditure update
 - b) NSW Fisheries Service Agreement
- 2) Deferred program applications
 - Small grants
 - a) Deepwater FAD trial
 - b) Boat Ramp Signage Upgrade applications
- 3) New program applications
 - a) Pilot Artificial Reefs Comparative Study
 - b) Framework for determining appropriate harvest sizes for coastal fish
 - c) Anglers Oracle-internet site
 - d) Enhancing stocking and recreational catch of Mulloway by identifying key location and sub-adult habitats
 - Small grants
 - a) Marine protected areas: a novel tool for fisheries management?
 - b) Abating Bird Disturbance- providing alternate weed bait source for recreational fishers
 - c) Restoration of riparian fish habitats, Shoalhaven estuary (re-submitted)
- 4) NSW Fisheries Licence update
 - a) Licence summary
 - b) Licence review
 - c) New Plastic licence
 - d) Licence Research Database and reminder notices
- 5) NSW Fisheries communications programs update
- 6) NSW Fisheries Life History and Tagging of Black Bream and Luderick update
- 7) NSW Fisheries Recreational Mobile Squad program update
- 8) NSW Fisheries Fish Attracting Devices program update
- 9) UNSW impact of restocked mulloway fingerlings update
- 10) Southern Cross University Programs update
- 11) Other programs - Milestone Reports
- 12) Action Items from meeting 10
- 13) General Business
- 14) Next meeting

Business

Welcome by Chair

The Chair opened the meeting by greeting members and noting a full agenda for the meeting, including a number of presentations from external speakers.

Apologies

The Chair noted apologies from Lisa Terry, Geoff Woolley and Anthony Moore.

Minutes of RFSTEC meeting 10 held 12.8.03

The draft minutes of the 10th RFSTEC meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Moved: Graham Harrison. Seconded: Lionel Jones. **Carried.**

Business arising from the minutes

None

Agenda item 1

NSW Fisheries

Issue

Recreational Fishing Trusts report

Background

a) Financial report

The Trust Fund cashflow tables have been updated for the Committee's information (Attachment 1). All costcentres have been loaded for the 2003/04 financial year and new costcentres have been created for programs commencing this year. This includes programs supported by RFSTEC on 12 August 2003 and approved by the Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing and the Minister for Fisheries.

Total funds allocated to saltwater programs by RFSTEC and the Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing in 2003/04 is just over \$7 million (after the transfer of \$2.5 million to Freshwater Trust).

A demographic breakdown of Trust Fund allocations to each region has been prepared for the Committee's information and will be presented at the meeting.

b) Service agreement

All successful external applicants are required to complete a Recreational Fishing Trusts Project Agreement before Trusts funds can be transferred. The agreement ensures that the Trust Fund is acknowledged at all times, that project objectives are met, that detailed financial records are kept by program managers, that all unspent funds are returned to the Trust Fund etc. Currently there is no agreement between NSW Fisheries and the Trust Fund to ensure that project objectives are met. A service agreement to serve this purpose has been drafted for the Committee's consideration and will be presented at the meeting. The document defines the project objectives, responsibilities of the project manager and the timeframe in which the project is to be completed by NSW Fisheries.

Outcomes

a) Financial report

Updated cashflow financial tables were presented to the Committee showing the current status of the Saltwater Trust. The 2003/04 financial table shows that just over \$7 million has been allocated to saltwater programs in this financial year. It was noted that the balance at the start of the 2003/04 financial year (1 July 2003) was \$1.8 million, therefore, the total available for allocation in 2003/04 was \$7.8 million. The expenditure committee has already allocated \$7 million in the 2003/04 financial year. The Committee was advised that a number of media releases regarding expenditure from the Trusts had gone out, including a major release detailing total freshwater and saltwater expenditure allocations (over \$9 million) and releases for each of the research programs and small grants programs (such as fish cleaning tables).

The forward planning table was also presented to the Committee for forecasting purposes. It was noted that ongoing programs were included in the table and that a positive balance was maintained in the Trust Fund for the next five years.

NSW Fisheries advised the Committee that nearly \$50,000 had been allocated to small grants in 2003/04. The Committee would need to allocate additional funding to the small grants program if new applications were to be considered and approved at this meeting.

At the tenth meeting the Committee requested additional budget information to assist with the review of applications for funding from the Saltwater Trust. A table showing the demographic breakdown of Trust Fund allocations to each region was prepared for the Committee's information. It was noted, however, that many programs are statewide making it difficult to apportion funds between regions. For example, the baitfish ecology and hooking mortality research programs have statewide benefits. However, the allocation of \$1.05 million for nine coastal Fisheries Officers was split according to where the Fisheries Officers were based. Similarly, the Fishcare allocation was split based on the number of volunteers trained in each area and the funds from the two Recreational Fishing Haven surveys were split based on the estuaries where the studies were being undertaken namely Lake Macquarie, Tuross Lake, Tweed River, Richmond River and Camden Haven River.

The Committee discussed that region 5, 6 and 7 had large percentages of the total apportioned allocations compared to the other regions but noted that these regions were also the most densely populated in NSW. The Committee requested that a breakdown of licences sold in each region be added to the table for comparison with apportioned funds. It was noted that the regional breakdown table was informative and useful when considering expenditure and that it should be updated at each meeting.

Table: Demographic breakdown of Trust Fund allocations (where possible)

Region	Apportioned Allocation
Region 1	\$262,449
Region 2	\$339,431
Region 3	\$261,162
Region 4	\$184,904
Region 5	\$478,555
Region 6	\$835,150
Region 7	\$606,105
Region 8	\$236,688

Action Item: NSW Fisheries to update the demographic expenditure table with the number of licences sold in each region.

The Committee was provided with a draft document outlining the role of the expenditure committees, major funding priorities identified by the Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing (access and facilities, administration, advisory and education, compliance, habitat restoration, management, research and stocking) and current funds allocated to the major categories expenditure. It also included draft funding targets that the Committee should aim for to achieve consistency across each of the major categories. The Chairman requested that the Committee provide comments to NSW Fisheries out of session.

Category	Percentage of total budget 03/04	Percentage of total budget Target
access & facilities	1	4
administration	8	10
advisory and education	16	15
compliance	18	20
habitat restoration	1	1
management	15	10
research	17	10
buyback loan	24	30
Total	100	100

b) Service Agreement

The Committee were presented with a draft service agreement to be completed by all NSW Fisheries program managers to ensure that they are aware of program responsibilities, that project objectives are met and to ensure proper financial management. NSW Fisheries requested that the Committee provide comments to NSW Fisheries out of session.

Recommendation

That funding of \$50,000 in 2003/04 for the Small Grants program **be supported** from the Saltwater Trust. Moved: Malcolm Poole. Seconded: John Drew. **Carried.**

Issue

Deferred program applications

Background

At the tenth Committee meeting on 12 August 2003, the Committee recommended deferring a number of grant applications to the next meeting.

Small Grants

a) Deepwater FAD trial - Recreational Fishing Alliance

The project involves the deployment of 2 deepwater FADs off Sydney in depths of 70 fathoms, similar to other international FADs. For example FADs are placed between 3.2km and 46km from the Hawaiian shoreline. The Deepwater FAD program will complement the data and results obtained through existing FAD logbook program.

b) Boat ramp Signage – Gosford City Council

An inter-agency project aims to facilitate signage improvements at seven high profile boat ramps in the Gosford region. The project will result in warnings, bag and size limits and other safety messages being conveyed more effectively to the recreational fishing and boating community.

The total funds requested by each applicant are summarised below:

Small Grants Program	Proponent	2003/04	2004/05
Deepwater FAD trial	Recreational Fishing Alliance	\$3,782	\$1,125
Boat Ramp Signage Upgrade Program	Gosford City Council	\$5,000	

Outcomes

The Committee discussed the two deferred applications from the previous meeting. The Committee was advised that the NSW Fisheries Fish Attracting Devices (FADs) program currently funded by the Saltwater Trust has deployed ten FADs along the NSW coastline, with an additional five to be deployed this summer. The program is a pilot study to determine the effectiveness of the devices and involves a comprehensive logbook monitoring program. It was considered inappropriate to implement a second program before the results of the current program were known.

The Committee acknowledged the merit of the Boat Ramp Signage program. It was noted that extensive signage at boat ramps from different agencies, including NSW Fisheries, Waterways Authority and councils result in 'visual pollution'. Gosford City Council will also receive contributing funding from the Waterways for this program.

Recommendations

That funding of \$5,000 in 2003/04 for the 'Boat Ramp Signage' program **be supported** from the Saltwater Trust. Moved: Warren Buchan. Seconded: Malcolm Poole. **Carried.**

Issue

Recreational Fishing (Saltwater) Trust - new program applications

Background

The following new applications have been received by NSW Fisheries for programs to be funded from the Saltwater Trust:

a) Pilot Artificial Reefs Comparative Study

Artificial reefs placed in barren areas have the potential to create essential fish, invertebrate and marine plant habitats thereby enhancing angler catch. This program involves a pilot study to construct artificial reefs in 3 estuaries that have been declared Recreational Fishing Havens namely Lake Macquarie, Botany Bay and St. Georges Basin. Species composition, size range and catch rate of angling species on fished and unfished artificial reefs will be monitored to determine the effectiveness of the structures. The program will establish guidelines for the consideration of any future artificial reef proposals for NSW.

b) Framework for determining appropriate harvest sizes for coastal fish

An application for funding to Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) titled "Determining appropriate harvest sizes for species in the New South Wales demersal trap fishery" was recently evaluated by the NSW Fisheries Research Advisory Body (FRAB). The FRAB ranked this proposal as the highest priority for research projects. Most of the species included in the study are also important recreational species. Contributing funding is sought from the Saltwater Trust.

c) Anglers Oracle –internet site

This project aims to develop a map based internet site containing information of interest to recreational anglers, including stocking locations, species & numbers, river/estuary access points (boat ramps, public lands etc), regulations, likely species, declared special management areas (trout waters, fishing havens etc). Links to currently available information (eg. regional fishing guides) will be incorporated. The project has been successful in obtaining funding from the Community Access to Natural Resource Information (CANRI) program.

d) Enhancing stocks and recreational catch of Mulloway by identifying key location and sub adult habitats

Little is known about the preferred habitat for sub adult Mulloway (less than 45 cm legal size; <2 years old) in south-eastern Australia. The objectives of the project are to determine home range and habitat preference of sub-adult Mulloway; compare the movements of naïve and re-caught (or wild) hatchery-reared Mulloway within two different New South Wales estuaries (lagoon versus riverine estuary) and determine patterns of daily and seasonal migration by Mulloway. The proposal includes tagging young Mulloway with small, lightweight pingers. Determining and protecting key habitats of the juveniles Mulloway fingerlings will maximise the benefit of Mulloway restocking. The St George/Sutherland Shire Anglers Club will provide support.

Small Grants

e) Marine protected areas a novel tool for fisheries management - University of Melbourne

The project aims to determine the origin of kingfish recruits and assess the implications of these findings to the implementation of the marine park area at Lord Howe Island and to the future management of kingfish in NSW. The University of Melbourne is undertaking the investigation and providing matching funding. Australian Research Council Discovery Grant and National Geographic are also providing funding.

f) Abating Bird Disturbance- providing alternate weed bait source for recreational fishers

The Stockton High Tide Roost and Ash Island are part of the Kooragang Wetland Rehabilitation Project (KWRP). The aim of the KWRP is to restore fisheries and other wildlife habitat in the Hunter River Estuary and create research, education and recreation opportunities. These sites also provide a source of weed bait for recreational fishers, which may have an impact on the Kooragang wetland habitat and the wader birds themselves. The main aim of the weed tank project is to reduce possible disturbance to wader birds at Stockton and reduce habitat damage on Ash Island by providing an alternative, accessible and reliable source of weed bait at no cost to recreational fishers in the Hunter.

g) Restoration of riparian fish habitats - Shoalhaven Riverwatch (re-submitted)

This application was initially considered by RFSTEC on 22 May 2003. The project is aimed at stabilising and rehabilitating eroding riverbanks in the Shoalhaven River estuary. The capital works will reduce sedimentation pressures on neighboring fish habitats, re-establish riparian vegetation, improve water quality and improve aesthetics for river users. Mr Charlie Weir is the program leader and has recently been awarded the 2003 NSW LandCare Award For An Individual.

The total funds requested by each applicant are summarised below:

Grants Program	Proponent	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Pilot Artificial Reefs Comparative Study	NSWF	\$168,578	\$173,091	\$180,313
Framework for determining appropriate harvest sizes for coastal fish	NSWF		\$50,756	\$51,256
Anglers Oracle	NSWF	\$100,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Identifying Mulloway sites	UNSW	\$23,553		
Small Grants Program				
Marine protected areas a novel tool for fisheries management	University of Melbourne	\$5,100		
Weed Tank- Hunter	Newcastle Coastcare	\$3,555		
Restoration of riparian fish habitats- Shoalhaven River Estuary	Shoalhaven Riverwatch	\$5,000		

Outcomes

NSW Fisheries provided a brief outline of the application titled 'Pilot Artificial Reefs Comparative Study'. The project will involve deployment of artificial reefs in three Recreational Fishing Havens. A scientific research will be undertaken as part of the

program to determine the effectiveness of artificial reefs. The Committee acknowledged the direct benefits of this program to recreational fishers.

The Committee discussed the program 'A framework for determining appropriate harvest sizes for coastal fish'. Size limits are a widely used management tool in recreational and commercial fisheries around the world and are usually based on the size at which fish mature which allow fish to spawn at least once before being harvested. This information is lacking for a number of important recreational species, which will be addressed by this study. The Committee provided **in principle support** for the program, provided **contributing funding** was obtained from the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC).

NSW Fisheries presented the program titled 'Angler's Oracle', a map based information source for recreational fishers in NSW. It was explained that contributing funding had been obtained from Community Access to Natural Resource Information program (CANRI) for the computer software. Funding from the Trust was required for computer hardware for the project. The Committee was shown an example of how anglers could use the proposed website to obtain information, such as tips on where to fish (locations of recreational fishing havens and FADs), what might be caught (based on catch records), information on closures, stocking sites, locations of licence agents and boat ramps and links to other fishing websites. The Committee acknowledged the benefit of the program to anglers but had concerns about the number of anglers that had access to the internet. It was noted that the program would also have benefits for freshwater fishers, therefore, it was appropriate that **pro-rata funding** (70%:30%) be sought from the Freshwater Trust.

NSW Fisheries advised that funding recommendations for the above two programs would only be referred to Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing (ACoRF) **once** FRDC and the Freshwater Trust had confirmed contributing funding.

Action Item: NSW Fisheries to seek pro-rata funding for the Anglers' Oracle from the Freshwater Trust.

The Committee considered the proposal to undertake acoustic tracking of the juvenile Mulloway to investigate habitat, home range and migration of the species and optimise stocking density. The project would enhance stocks and the recreational catch of Mulloway by identifying key locations and sub adult habitats.

NSW Fisheries advised the Committee that little was known about the breeding cycle of kingfish in NSW. Tag returns as part of the Gamefish Tagging Program has shown that adult kingfish can migrate between New Zealand, Lord Howe Island and Australia indicating a single stock in these waters. This study would provide valuable biological information for the management of this species in NSW.

The Committee was advised that NSW Fisheries had visited the Stockton High Tide Roost near Stockton Bridge and the proposed site for the weed tank on Ash Island. This program would have direct benefits for anglers in the Newcastle region providing a reliable source of green weed bait and would reduce the disturbance to the vast number of wader birds observed at the site.

The Committee acknowledged the benefits of stabilising and rehabilitating eroding riverbanks in the Shoalhaven River to fish habitat but re-iterated that other sources of funding were available for this type of project. It was noted that the pilot habitat program in the Clarence region was its second and final year and that the outcomes of this program should be assessed before the Saltwater Committee considers any other coastal habitat programs.

Recommendations

That funding of \$168,578 in 2003/04, \$173,091 in 2004/05 and \$180,313 in 2005/06 for the 'Pilot Artificial Reef Comparative Study' program **be supported** from the Saltwater Trust. Moved: Lionel Jones. Seconded: John Drew. **Carried.**

That **in principle** funding of \$50,756 in 2004/05 and \$51,256 in 2005/06 for the study titled 'Framework for determining appropriate harvest sizes for coastal fish' **be supported** from the Saltwater Trust provided contributing funding was obtained from the Fisheries Research Development Corporation. Moved: Malcolm Poole. Seconded: Graham Harrison. **Carried.**

That **in principle** funding of \$66,667 in 2003/04, \$10,000 in 2004/05 and \$10,000 in 2005/06 for the 'Angler's Oracle' program **be supported** from the Saltwater Trust provided pro-rata funding was obtained from the Freshwater Trust. Moved: John Drew. Seconded: Graham Harrison. **Carried.**

That funding of \$23,443 in 2003/04 for the study 'Identifying Mulloway sites' program **be supported** from the Saltwater Trust. Moved: Warren Buchan. Seconded: Bill Heaton. **Carried.**

Small Grants

That funding of \$5,100 in 2003/04 for the study 'Marine protected areas a novel tool for fisheries management' program **be supported** from the Saltwater Trust. Moved: Malcolm Poole. Seconded: David Turner. **Carried.**

That funding of \$3,555 in 2003/04 for the 'Weed Tank-Hunter' program **be supported** from the Saltwater Trust. Moved: Graham Harrison. Seconded: Warren Buchan. **Carried.**

Agenda Item 4a

NSW Fisheries

Issue

NSW Fisheries Licence update

Background

a) Licence Sales

The amount of money collected from the recreational fishing fee from 1 July 2003 to 31 September 2003 (first quarter of fiscal year) was just under \$1 million dollars. The number of the different types of licences sold during this period is as follows:

Approximately

2,300 three year licences (4.1%);

24,500 one year licences (44.2%);

7,300 one month licences (13.1%);
18,500 three day licences (33.4%); and
2,900 prepaid three day licences (5.2%).

A report of monthly licence sales since the implementation of the licence is provided for the Committee's information (see Attachment 2).

Data entry operators have captured images of licences sold between January 2003 and March 2003. These images are currently being verified for accuracy and the accuracy levels received to date are positive. Completion of the project will enable electronic agent reconciliations, which will commence in July 2004.

b) Licence Review

When the general recreational fishing fee was introduced in March 2001 the government committed to implementing a transparent and cost effective administration scheme designed to maximise the benefits to recreational fishers. The government also committed to ensuring that the fees collected went to improving recreational fishing through an approvals system based on advice from grass-roots anglers from around the state. After 2 years of operation it is timely to review the general recreational fishing fee to ensure that the objectives are being met, and to identify opportunities for improved efficiency. A draft discussion paper has been prepared for community consultation to better manage the administration of the fee, and to generally improve service delivery. The paper will be widely distributed to allow recreational fishers and other stakeholders to have their say. (see Attachment 5).

c) New Plastic Licence

NSW Fisheries is implementing a plastic credit card size recreational fishing receipt, which will be issued to anglers purchasing one, and three year licences over the web and the Internet. A number of quotes have been obtained for the production of pre-printed A4 letterheads with adhesive pre-printed plastic cards. Samples have been printed using inhouse laser printer systems and tested for waterproofing.

d) Licence Research Database and reminder notices

A data entry consultant has been contracted to complete the Licence Research Database project. A backlog of data entry is currently being worked to enable the issuing of reminder notices for 1 and 3 year licence holders. A Trust Fund brochure is being developed for inclusion with the reminder notice.

Outcomes

a) Licence Sales

The Committee was advised that licences sales for the first four months of this financial year were very similar to the previous financial year. Currently, licences can be bought from a number of sources including select Shell service stations with Touch machines. Touchcorp have proposed extending this service to EFTPOS terminals which has the potential to increase the agents network considerably. A major disadvantage is the heat sensitive receipt issued by the current Touch machines and EFTPOS terminals. Advantages include automatic data entry of licence holders and electronic transfer of funds collected. NSW Fisheries is currently considering this proposal.

The Committee raised concern about the apparent decrease in the number of licence agents particularly in some regional areas, making it difficult for anglers to buy a licence. The Committee were advised that this decrease had been offset by increases in the number of agents in other regions which has kept the total number of agents constant.

b) Licence Review

The Committee was presented with a draft discussion paper for community consultation regarding a review of the licence. The Committee highlighted the need for a review to ensure ongoing improvements to the current licence system. The Committee highlighted the need for an appropriate consultation period to enable all stakeholders to make submissions. The three year licence was discussed by the Committee and the need to encourage anglers to purchase 3 year licences was identified. This could be achieved by offering a more generous discount on the sale of a 3 year licence. NSW Fisheries requested that the Committee forward any other comments on the draft review paper to the Recreational Management team.

c) New Plastic Licence and d) Licence Research Database and reminder notices
For information.

Recommendation

That a more generous discount on the sale of a 3 year licence be incorporated in the review of the recreational fishing licence. Moved: David Turner. Seconded: Malcolm Poole. **Carried.**

Agenda item 5

NSW Fisheries

Issue

NSW Fisheries communications programs update

Background

Summer education and information programs are well underway. NSW Fisheries is raising awareness of responsible fishing, fishing rules and fishing closures through an integrated campaign of newspaper, radio and magazine advertisements and editorials at key fishing times.

At a cheaper cost than last year, 200,000 Saltwater Fishing Guides were printed for 2003-04. Fishing rules summaries have been translated into several languages to facilitate communication with multicultural communities.

The three coastal Fisheries Education Officers are managing a total of 239 coastal Fishcare Volunteers. A Fishcare Volunteer Program review is underway to assess ways of strengthening and progressing the program. Feedback from volunteers and committee members is a major part of the review. A report on the review will be provided at the meeting.

An events program is being developed to enhance NSW Fisheries profile and effectiveness at community events, education programs and fishing clinics. Three new advisory trailers for use at events and schools have been constructed and are now

being commissioned for summer use. Last year saw almost 2000 children and families participate in 55 coastal fishing clinics - a record number compared to previous years!

Outcomes

Information and advisory

NSW Fisheries provided an update on the Trust funded Communications programs. It was highlighted that 80% of the branch's resources focused on recreational fishing initiatives.

The Committee was presented with the new saltwater fishing guides for 2003/04, which were ready for distribution. The achievements of the fishing clinics program were discussed. It was highlighted that the number of participants in the 55 clinics held in 2002/03 year had doubled compared to the previous year and five clinics for disabled persons and four clinics for persons from non-English speaking backgrounds had been held. The Committee was also advised about the future direction of fishing clinics, including the need to develop a consistent statewide approach. The Committee suggested that the program should become an end point of an education program rather than just a one day program. The fishing clinic program is currently being incorporated into the NSW Fisheries school program 'It's Fun to Fish'.

Fishcare Review

NSW Fisheries advised the Committee that the Fishcare Volunteer program had grown rapidly in the three years since the programs inception. The Communications Branch commissioned an independent review to enhance the quality of the program and to strengthen the program's operation. The Committee was provided with a summary of recommendations from the Fishcare Volunteer Program review which were considered accordingly.

Recommendation 1. That as a matter of priority a comprehensive policy and procedure manual is developed for the Fishcare Volunteers Program. Moved Lionel Jones. Seconded William Heaton. **Carried.**

Recommendation 2. A thorough reassessment of the programs activities and the current location of volunteers should be carried out and volunteer activities enhanced in some areas and phased out in others. Moved Graham Harrison. Seconded Warren Buchan. **Carried.**

Recommendation 3(1). That in the first instance contact by way of a regular newsletter is developed to keep volunteers in touch with NSW Fisheries and to provide program calendars and important information updates. Moved Lionel Jones. Seconded Bruce Mahony. **Carried.**

Recommendation 3(2) (amended). That the program is managed at the local level through the regional Education Officer's to ensure regular contact is maintained with volunteers and their ideas and needs monitored, assessed and acted upon where appropriate. Moved Bruce Mahony. Seconded Lionel Jones. **Carried.**

Recommendation 4(1). That reporting at an agreed frequency is made with the Recreational Fishing Trusts Expenditure Committees on the program covering the

above points and that the Recreational Management Branch be included in the reporting process.

The Committee discussed this recommendation and supported the following amendments:

Recommendation 4(1) (amended). That reporting at an agreed frequency is made with the Recreational Fishing Trusts Expenditure Committees on the program covering the above points and that the Recreational Management Branch be included in the reporting process. Moved John Drew. Seconded Bruce Mahony. **Carried.**

Recommendation 5(1). That the current practice of recruiting Education Officers from within the Public Service is reviewed and contract employment is investigated. Moved John Drew. Seconded Malcolm Poole. **Carried.**

Recommendation 5(2): That the Regional Managers or their delegates should take greater responsibility for the day to day management of the work program of the Education Officers and that State Coordinator Community Programs take an active role in policy and overall program strategy development and direction.

NSW Fisheries advised that the delegates of Regional Managers may include Fisheries Officers. The Committee was concerned with increasing the workload of Fisheries Officers and that this arrangement may not significantly distinguish the role of the Volunteers (and Education Officers) from the Fisheries Officers. The proposed system was, therefore, not ideal. The Committee believed that the State Coordinator, not the Regional Managers, should continue to manage the day to day activities of the Education Officers. The Committee supported the recommendation with the following amendments:

Recommendation 5(2) (amended): That the State Coordinator should continue to be responsible for the day to day management of the work program of the Education Officers and that the State Coordinator Community Programs take an active role in policy and overall program strategy development and direction and report through the Trust Fund Executive Officer. Moved Lionel Jones. Seconded Bruce Mahony. **Carried.**

The Committee commented that the Fishcare program was fully funded by the Trust Funds and suggested that the program be renamed the Recreational Fishing Trusts Fishcare Volunteer program, which would ensure acknowledgement of the Trust.

Recommendation 5(3). That activities undertaken by volunteers be managed as projects within a project management framework developed by the State Coordinator Community Programs and implemented by the Education Officers. Moved Malcolm Poole. Seconded Warren Buchan. **Carried.**

Recommendation 5(4). That the system of leader volunteers be strengthened and formalised to organise volunteers locally and that leaders be offered a small remuneration for out of pocket expenses associated with the role.

The Committee acknowledged the proposal for a system of leader volunteers but were concerned about out of pocket remuneration. The Committee suggested that suitable policy be developed and reviewed by the Committee before implementation.

Recommendation 5(4) (amended). That the system of leader volunteers be strengthened and formalised to organise volunteers locally. Moved John Drew. Seconded Malcolm Poole. **Carried.**

Recommendation 5(5). That the State Coordinator Community Programs and the Education Officers undertake training in the management of volunteers programs. Moved Lionel Jones. Seconded John Drew. **Carried.**

Recommendation 5(6): That volunteers are compensated for out of pocket expenses incurred in direct relation to their duties and that a formal policy be developed to cover these matters.

The Committee supported the recommendation in principal and requested that a suitable policy be developed for consideration by the Committee. Moved David Turner. Seconded William Heaton. **Carried.**

Recommendation 5(7): That a volunteer recognition program be developed that is simple in construct and administration. Moved David Turner. Seconded William Heaton. **Carried.**

Recommendation 6. That given the links between the objectives and content of the Fishcare Volunteers Program, the Events Program and Advisory Services the programs should be managed within the Communications Branch of NSW Fisheries.

The Committee did not support the recommendation. The Committee felt that the Trust Fund, which is overseen by the expenditure committees had lost "ownership" of the program, largely as a result of the current reporting structure. The Committee had no input into the strategic direction of the program under current management by the Policy Division. The Committee believed that volunteers should be more involved in other Trust Funded programs, such as Research and Monitoring, to keep their activities interesting and productive. The Committee strongly recommended that the Fishcare program be managed by the Recreational Management Branch, which was also responsible for managing the recreational advisory committees, including the expenditure committees and other stakeholder groups. This would ensure that the Committees had the opportunity to be involved in policy and overall program strategy development and direction. The Committee noted that the program is fully funded by the Freshwater and Saltwater Trusts (nearly \$900,00 in total) and should be managed accordingly. The Committee therefore recommended that the program be managed by the Recreational Fishing Branch.

Recommendation 6 (amended) The objectives and content of the Fishcare Volunteer Program should be managed within the Recreational Management Branch of NSW Fisheries. Moved Malcolm Poole. Seconded Lionel Jones. **Carried.**

Recommendation 7. That survey and other data collected by volunteers must be part of a defined project that is required by Fisheries managers to enhance strategic programs. Moved Graham Harrison. Seconded Warren Buchan. **Carried.**

Recommendation 8. That a risk management plan for the Fishcare Volunteer Program be developed as a matter of priority. Moved John Drew. Seconded David Turner. **Carried.**

Recommendation 9(1). That in circumstances where there is a demand for volunteers, short training sessions be offered to potential volunteers prior to the full training program and final acceptance into program. Moved Malcolm Poole. Seconded John Drew. **Carried.**

Recommendation 9(2). That short specialised training programs be developed for the volunteers as part of specific project needs. This training should be budgeted as part of the specific project. Moved Malcolm Poole. Seconded Lionel Jones. **Carried.**

Agenda item 6

NSW Fisheries

Issue

NSW Fisheries Life History and Tagging of Black Bream and Luderick update

Background

a) NSW Fisheries Life History and Tagging of Black Bream

Black bream is a key recreational fish species in southern NSW Estuaries, yet very little is known of its biology and ecology. Anecdotal reports from recreational fishers indicate that black bream stocks have significantly declined over the past decade. However there is no quantitative data to assess these claims. To ensure sustainable management, assessment of the demographic characteristics of NSW black bream populations is essential. Currently the project is focused on obtaining biological samples from various estuaries along southern NSW. To date 187 black bream have been dissected for gonad, scale and otolith samples from two different estuaries (Lake Brou and Lake Coila).

b) NSW Fisheries Life History and Tagging of Luderick

Luderick is also a key recreational fish species. Although information is available on the diet of luderick there is only limited information available on reproduction, age, growth and movement of the species. Such information would be very valuable in assessing the status of the fisheries resource. Currently the project is focused on obtaining biological samples from various estuaries along southern NSW. To date 166 luderick have been dissected for gonad, scale and otolith samples from three different estuaries (Shoalhaven River, Tuggerah Lake and the Clarence River).

Outcomes

a) NSW Fisheries Life History and Tagging of Black Bream

NSW Fisheries advised that Black Bream was being sampled in 3 systems, including Lake Coila (open to the sea), Tuross River (river system) and Lake Brou (temporarily open to the sea). This would give an excellent comparison of the population structure

in 3 different ecosystems. Sampling using gill and seine nets, traps and rod and line has resulted in 225 fish from Lake Coila, 0 fish from Tuross River and 1 fish from Lake Brou. All fish caught have been sexually mature ranging in size from 15 to 33 cm. Spawning fish have only been caught at night at a specific salinity and water temperature. No pre-spawning fish have been caught in Coila Lake. More work is required to establish robust 50% maturity estimates in Lake Coila and other estuaries. The Committee was also advised that it appeared that the lack of small fish could be due to recruitment failure last year.

The Committee enquired about the status of a closure to commercial fishing in Coila Creek to prevent targeting of spawning black bream by commercial fishers. NSW Fisheries advised that this issue would be investigated and referred to ACoRF for consideration.

Action Item: NSW Fisheries to investigate the status of a closure to commercial fishing in Coila Creek and refer the issue to ACoRF for consideration.

b) NSW Fisheries Life History and Tagging of Luderick

NSW Fisheries advised that the aims of the program were to assess the reproductive biology (size/age at maturity, fecundity, spawning locations/time), age and growth characteristics of luderick in NSW. The program will also assess the results of previous tagging studies on luderick and develop a 'recreational fisher-based' tagging program for the species in NSW. Sampling of luderick from the Clarence River, Tuggerah Lake, Shoalhaven and Tuross River had been successful and had shown that there were marked differences in the reproductive activity of the species along the NSW Coast. Pre-spawning fish have only been obtained from the Clarence River. It appears that the spawning season may be over due to the absence of pre-spawning fish and large numbers of juveniles. The Committee was also advised about a planned tag retention experiment. Dorsal versus ventral tag sites will be compared using standard T bar tags and small dart tags.

For information.

Agenda item 7

NSW Fisheries

Issue

NSW Fisheries Recreational Mobile Squad program update

Background

The objectives of the Recreational Mobile Squad program are to maximise voluntary compliance in the marine recreational fishery by creating effective deterrence. Recreational Fisheries Mobile Squad is successfully working under the operational plan for 2003/2004. With most equipment purchased, extensive patrols have been conducted in Recreational Fishing Havens (RFH's), particularly Lake Macquarie and Botany Bay. Operations have also targeted illegal netting for Australian Bass.

Outcomes

The Committee was advised that the program strategy was creating effective deterrence to illegal fishing activities by:

1. Rapid response to District requests for assistance by providing additional regulatory presence in areas subject to high levels of illegal fishing at peak times;
3. Detection, apprehension and reporting on fisheries offenders;
4. Maximising regulatory presence in activities associated with the recreational fishing licence and recreational fishing havens; and
5. Advising and reporting on activities detrimental to coastal fish habitats.

Voluntary compliance is being maximised by:

1. Establishing and maintaining an intelligence and communications network with Fisheries staff, industry groups, individuals and other government agencies to enable appropriate compliance priorities to be set; and
2. Effective delivery of education and advisory programs.

There have been extensive patrols in the Recreational Fishing Havens, including Lake Macquarie, Botany Bay, Tweed Heads, Richmond River, Clarence River and Tuross Lake. Statistics on patrols of coastal waters between Tweed Heads & Tuross Lake including popular bass waters were provided to the Committee and included 43 patrols, 271 recreational boat inspections, 997 recreational fishers checked, 258 offences recorded and 52 SEINS notices issued.

The Committee was also advised about the advisory activities of the squad which involved attendance at State Bream Pro tournaments (Lake Macquarie & Hawkesbury River), a State Bass Pro tournament at Lake St-Clair and the National Sportfishing titles on the Clarence River.

The Chairman received a letter from Manning River Recreational Fishing and Tourism organisation requesting that the recreational mobile squad undertake night patrols in the Manning district to address the problem of illegal netting.

Action Item: NSW Fisheries to respond to the request from the Manning River Sustainable Recreational Fishing and Tourism organisation for the mobile squad to undertake patrols in the Manning district.

For information.

Agenda item 8

NSW Fisheries

Issue

NSW Fisheries Fish Attracting Devices program update

Background

Ten Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) were deployed along the NSW coast for the 2002/03 fishing season. Monitoring of recreational catches commenced late season with small numbers of logsheet returns received from recreational fishers. Research into the recreational fishing effectiveness of the FADs commenced in July 2003. A small pelagic tag has been developed (as an extension of the Game Fish Tagging Program) for use in tagging of various small pelagic fish species around FADs

including dolphinfish. Application for an additional five FADs has been submitted, to test deep water FAD designs during the 2003/04 fishing season.

Outcomes

NSW Fisheries advised the Committee that early season reports of catches around the FADs have been promising. Catches of dolphinfish up to 20kg have been reported off the Coffs Harbour FAD and 15kg off the South West Rocks FAD. Two striped marlin have already been caught, tagged and released from these two FADs. A number of small black marlin have also been sighted by divers.

An additional 5 FADs will be deployed this summer. The eleventh FAD was deployed at Laurieton on 3 December 2003 and the locations of the remaining 4 FADs are being finalised. Deepwater FAD designs will also be trialed to assess their effectiveness. A new radar reflector has been developed which is more effective than the current St Johns navigational cross.

Research sampling, in addition to the logbook monitoring program, will commence this summer to provide further information on the effectiveness of the FADs. It will assess temporal variation in the fish that are associated with FADs, variability of catch rates over time and measure the relationship between catches and distance from FAD.

For information.

Agenda item 9

University of NSW

Issue

UNSW impact of restocked mulloway fingerlings update

Background

In May 2003, around 120,000 juvenile mulloway were released into two NSW estuaries to study the growth, survival and predatory impact of stocked mulloway in the natural environment. The first phase of the project has been completed: technology has been developed to mark the fish for identification on recapture, the fish have been released into the target estuaries and re-captures are starting to come in. The methods developed to mark these mulloway will be discussed, as well as preliminary results of growth and predatory impact for recaptured fish. The implications of this information for recreational fishers, and further directions for the project will also be addressed.

Outcomes

The University of NSW provided the Committee with an update on the program. The Committee was advised about the method of marking the bony structures in juvenile mulloway with a harmless chemical. Scale pattern analysis was also being used to identify wild from stocked fish. The University intends to undertake a second release of juvenile mulloway in February 2004. A brochure has been prepared requesting anglers to assist with the program by reporting catches of mulloway in Botany Bay and Smiths Lake using a hotline number (02 9385 3792). If possible, the head and the gut of the fish can also be collected for analysis.

The Committee was also advised that stocked fish can become accustomed to 'safe' crowded hatchery conditions. It is proposed to undertake predator training for stocked mulloway to enhance survival of the juveniles once released. Tracking of juvenile mulloway using acoustic tags will also be used to investigate habitat, home range and migration of the species which will provide information on appropriate stocking densities.

For information.

Agenda Item 10

Southern Cross University

Issue

Southern Cross University Programs update

Background

a) Fish tagging pamphlet

The objective of the project is to provide a cheap and effective pamphlet for recreational anglers showing the latest techniques in fish handling and release, and unintentional harm to angled fish. The pamphlet will be distributed to recreational fishers at competitions and via Fisheries officers and the Fish Care volunteer program.

b) Stock enhancement workshop proceedings

The objective of the project is to formulate papers relating to stock enhancement of marine and freshwater fisheries, presented at the Australian Society for Fish Biology in August 2000. The book will bring together relevant experts in the general field of stock enhancement detailing the past, present and future of restocking practices within Australia. Presentations focused on new methods of stock enhancement, ecological impacts, genetic impacts, measuring success – marine, estuarine and freshwater fisheries and management implications. A publication of this kind will have direct benefit to anglers in NSW as many fisheries currently rely on restocking. The intent of the book is to provide techniques and guidelines for enhancing native and non-native fisheries within NSW.

c) Population genetics of bream

Yellow fin bream are considered a key recreational target species by anglers in NSW and recreational anglers have recorded significant decline in the number of bream caught. Bream have been highlighted as a species that could breed in captivity and be restocked into state waters. Before restocking any native fish into NSW waters a genetic analysis must be carried out to determine genetic population subdivision. The researchers have completed most of the genetic analysis, however the results highlighted the need for a more detailed sampling protocol. Samples have now been collected and await screening. The aim is to screen the additional 228 samples for genetic diversity. This research will provide the necessary information on population subdivision of yellowfin bream in NSW, which can be used for better fisheries management and in the planning of restocking programs.

Outcomes

Anthony Moore from Southern Cross University was unable to attend the meeting and a presentation on the above programs will be provided at the next meeting.

Agenda item 11

Issue

Other programs - Milestone Reports

Background

Program managers of all other trust funded projects not presenting at this review meeting have prepared milestone/progress reports for the Committees information (see Attachment 3). These reports include details on project objectives, activities since the last meeting and any variations to the project.

Outcomes

The Committee was advised that the Wooloweyah Lagoon: Mangrove/ Salt marsh Rehabilitation program, which is part of the Pilot Habitat Program, had been terminated due to the landholder withdrawing from a signed agreement following imposition of an additional requirement for an easement over the new proposed levee. The Committee was advised that negotiations are currently underway to identify an alternative site as the basis for a revision to the funding application. A revised application will be completed in January 2004.

The Committee requested that the Recreational Fishing Havens administration program provide a final report detailing funds unspent at the next meeting.

Action item: The Recreational Fishing Havens administration program to provide a final report (detailing funds unspent) at the next meeting.

12. Action items from last meeting
(See attached summary)

13. Other Business

1) Standard design for fish cleaning tables

The Committee was advised that Trust funding has been provided for a number of fish cleaning tables. Funding proposals have ranged between \$2,500 and \$5,000. It is proposed to develop a standard design for a table which can be forwarded to future applicants. This issue will be discussed at the next meeting.

2) Capture of exempt anglers on licence research database (Graham Harrison)

The Committee was advised that only 1 and 3 year licence holders are currently entered on the licence database. It was noted that other methods could be used to collect data on exempt anglers, such as Fishcare Volunteer angler surveys.

3) Balance of Recreational Fishing Trust buyback loan (Graham Harrison)

NSW Fisheries advised that ongoing claims for accelerated depreciation, retraining and relocation costs were being received and processed. Administration and correspondence for this process is being finalised.

Correspondence received

4) Letter from Plastral Fidene - regarding biodegradable fishing bait bags. The letter outlines the benefits of the bag and advises Markwell's Bait in Brisbane is currently using the bags to pack bait. Letter to be considered at the next meeting.

General business

The Committee was advised about the Botany Bay Research Challenge in February 2004 as part of the hooking mortality study funded by the Saltwater Trust. The Challenge aims to evaluate the survival rate of line caught fish in a collaborative project involving recreational fishers and NSW Fisheries scientists. The survival rates of these released fish are important when comparing the overall impact of recreational fishing on fish stocks. Anglers are being invited to take part in this research by making available fish they catch in Botany Bay over a weekend event. NSW Fisheries researchers will then make observations to assess any trauma, which may have occurred to the fish during the hooking and handling process.

The Committee raised the issue of a variation to the Richmond River Recreational Fishing Haven. NSW Fisheries advised that commercial fishers have made representations to NSW Fisheries to resume mullet hauling at Missingham Bridge, Ballina. The NSW Government is endeavoring to seek stability in the commercial fishing industry after a period of significant changes and adjustment. Changes to the current closures would only be considered if there was strong community consensus involving all sectors.

The Committee also raised concerns about the loss of access for recreational fishers due to Grey Nurse Shark critical habitat areas. The Committee questioned whether a consultant should be funded by the Trust to undertake an independent assessment of the Grey Nurse Shark Critical Habitat Proposal. NSW Fisheries advised that the population modeling, which forms the basis of the Grey nurse shark recovery plan, was reviewed by 3 international referees before implementation.

14. Next Meeting

6 April 2004