



**Recreational
Fishing Trusts**

***Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust
Expenditure Committee***

MINUTES

**12TH RFFTEC MEETING
25 MARCH, 2002**

**CRONULLA FISHERIES CENTRE
202 Nicholson Parade, Cronulla**

**Twelfth Meeting of the NSW
Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee
Minutes
25.3.02, 9:30am to 3.30pm
NSW Fisheries Cronulla Fisheries Centre, 202 Nicholson Parade,
Cronulla**

Attendance

Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee Members

Bruce Schumacher	Chair
Janine Rudder	Region 1
Doug Joyner	Region 2
Steve Tooley	Region 3
Elizabeth Brodbeck	Region 4
Keith Woolbank	Region 5
Debbie Lennon	Region 6
Richard Ping Kee	Region 7
Kevin McKinnon	Region 8

+ former members to the Committee (Regions 4, 5, & 7).

NSW Fisheries (observers)

Dr Steve Kennelly, NSW Fisheries Chief Scientist
Mr John Diplock, Principal Manager Recreational Fisheries
Dr Andrew Sanger, Regional Manager Fisheries Services Western
Mr John Pursey, Senior Conservation Manager, Threatened Species
Mr Craig Watson, Fisheries Manager

Other NSW Fisheries staff to give presentations

Business

Meeting agenda items

1. RFFTEC terms of reference / terms of appointment (Andrew Sanger)
2. Proposal for a trust fund accounts manager (Tim Powys)
3. Funding for the preparation of the Recreational Fishing Management Strategy and associated environmental impact statement. (Doug Ferrell)
4. Native fish production program, Narrandera Fisheries Centre (Stephen Thurstan)
5. Catfish genetics and the implications for stocking programs (John Pursey)
6. Proposal to use unspent eastern drainage dollar-for-dollar funds to purchase eastern cod fingerlings for the 01/02 stocking season (John Pursey)
7. Innovative fishways study and state fishways program (Tracy MacDonald / Cameron Lay)
8. Expression of Interest process for restoration of aquatic habitats program and conservation managers update (Sharon Molloy)
9. National Recreational Fishing Survey (Gary Henry)
10. Trust funded program summary reports (Dr Andrew Sanger)

Other business

1. ANSA proposals (John Pursey, Craig Watson)
2. Species Impact Statement for Lower Murray Darling Endangered Ecological Community and implications for the Freshwater Fishing Regulation Review (Dr Andrew Sanger)

Apologies

Mr Terry Cooke (former member for Region 8).

Introduction

Dr Steve Kennelly welcomed new members to the Committee and thanked former incumbents for their past contributions to RFFTEC. The Committee has overseen the introduction of some excellent programs which are generating benefits for inland fisheries. RFFTEC will continue to play a key role in evaluating projects aimed at improving the health and vitality of the State's freshwater fisheries. New members have been appointed for a three-year term.

Chair's welcome

The Chair welcomed members to the 12th meeting of the Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee (RFFTEC), and introduced new members to the Committee: Mr Richard Ping Kee (Region 7), Mrs Elizabeth Brodbeck (Region 4), Mrs Janine Rudder (Region 1) Mr Keith Woolbank (Region 5) and Mr Kevin McInnon (Region 8) and former members Mr Larry Sykes (Region 7), Mr Karl Schaerf (Region 5) and Mr Peter Williams (Region 4). The Chair expressed appreciation for the time previous members had committed to the Committee on behalf of the anglers of the State, and congratulated RFFTEC on its achievements over the past 3 years.

Minutes of previous meeting

Resolution

RFFTEC approved the minutes of the previous meeting.

Issue

RFFTEC terms of reference / terms of appointment.

Background

The Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee (RFFTEC) is a non-statutory committee of the Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing (ACoRF). ACoRF was formed in 1998 subsequent to the introduction of the freshwater fishing licence.

RFFTEC members are appointed based on expertise and ability to represent their region following an expression of interest process. There are eight positions on the committee: three representatives from east of the dividing range; being north, central and south coasts (regions 1-3), three representatives for the highland and western slopes; being north inner-west, central inner-west and south inner-west (regions 4-6) and two far west representatives; being far north west, and far south west (regions 7-8). Members are generally appointed on a 3 year-rotational basis.

The Recreational Fishing (Freshwater) Trust funds a number of programs for the benefit of recreational fisheries. RFFTEC's role is to review these programs and to advise on new funding initiatives, given the levels of expenditure from the freshwater and saltwater trust accounts. RFFTEC members also seek expenditure priorities from their region or organisation and bring these to committee meetings. The committee then gives advice and makes recommendations to the Minister for Fisheries, the Hon. Eddie Obeid MLC, via ACoRF on expenditure from the freshwater trust account, for the enhancement of recreational fishing opportunities.

Outcomes

Dr Andrew Sanger confirmed the role and responsibilities of the committee and the funding arrangements in place.

Recommendation

Presentation noted by the Committee.

Issue

Proposal for a trust fund accounts manager.

Background

At its previous meeting, RFFTEC suggested that an accounts system could be set up to provide for withdrawals from the trust fund directly. It was suggested that this might maximise the accrual of interest on licence income by allowing overall project allocations to remain in the trust fund, rather than being deposited via the normal departmental cost centre process.

RFFTEC asked that consideration be given for a financial manager dedicated to the fisheries trust funds and for NSW Fisheries to report back to RFFTEC on this issue at its next meeting.

NSW Fisheries is an inner budget sector agency and receives interest on trust accounts according to the Treasury cash management system. Interest is calculated monthly, based upon cash balances at the end of each month, and paid at the end of March and September each year. Interest accrued is apportioned between and fresh and saltwater trust funds according to market fluctuations. The *Public Authorities (Financial Arrangements) Act* restricts government agency investment to the Treasury banking system. NSW Fisheries, and the trust funds, do not have the power to invest outside of this process.

The amount of interest received is unlikely to justify the employment costs of such a position.

Outcomes

Explanations were provided about the accounting processes and arrangements for the trust fund, and the way interest was calculated for trust account balances. The proposal to employ another accounts manager is not feasible given that the process for transferring interest to the trusts is already being managed by existing staff, in accordance with whole-of-government Treasury guidelines.

In relation to the payment of interest on balances, the trust funds are Government special deposit accounts recognised by legislation, and are bound by all the normal Government financial rules. NSW Fisheries does not have the power to invest outside of this process.

Recommendation

RFFTEC did not consider it feasible to appoint a trust fund accounts manager.

Issue

Funding for the preparation of the recreational fishing management strategy and associated environmental impact statement.

Background

In the year 2000, during consultation on the *Sustaining Our Fisheries* discussion paper, many recreational fishing representatives expressed support for the preparation of a comprehensive management strategy for recreational fishing. Such an exercise has taken place elsewhere such as in Western Australia.

The benefits of a recreational fishing management strategy include:

- ◆ development of a formal management framework for recreational fishing;
- ◆ monitoring of the environmental, social and economic performance of the recreational fishery; and
- ◆ greater participation of stakeholders in fishery management

On 4 October 2000, the Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing (ACoRF) expressed its support for the preparation of such a management strategy and an appropriate environmental assessment.

Following the support of ACoRF, the *Fisheries Management Act* and *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act* were amended to require a recreational fishing management strategy and environmental assessment to be prepared. The Act also permits the Recreational Fishing Trusts to meet the costs of preparing the strategy and assessment.

Outcomes

NSW Fisheries informed the Committee that there is a legislative requirement for the preparation of a fishery management strategy for fish stocking and recreational fishing, and that this would create the certainty and a long term vision for recreational fishing in NSW, long sought after by key angling groups.

NSW Fisheries proposed the preparation of a combined management strategy for freshwater and saltwater (including charter fishing), which would be preferable to preparing separate strategies. This would avoid duplication of issues inherent in both fisheries and reduce production costs.

In accordance with legislation, the draft management strategy and environmental assessment will, before being finalised, be reviewed by the Fisheries Resource Conservation and Assessment Council (FRCAC) and publicly exhibited for community consultation.

Recommendation

That a detailed funding proposal for the preparation of the Fisheries Management Strategy and Environmental Impact Assessment for recreational fishing (both freshwater and saltwater combined) be prepared for consideration of the expenditure committee at its next meeting.

Issue

Native fish production program, Narrandera Fisheries Centre.

Background

Since the early 1970s NSW Fisheries has been breeding various native inland fish species at Narrandera Fisheries Centre, for public stocking programs. Since that time, the centre has developed techniques for the extensive and intensive breeding of major recreational species such as Murray cod, golden perch and silver perch, as well as trout cod which are produced as part of the trout cod recovery program. Stocking of major recreational species occurs into western drainage reservoirs across the State. Some fish are also made available for the stocking of small dams.

This year's stocking season is well underway. To date, the target stocking rate for Murray cod (300,000) has been exceeded. Around 1.2 million golden perch and silver perch have been stocked, with further releases planned over the coming months. Trout cod releases for this season are complete.

Funds from the Recreational Fishing Fee have been made available to enhance long-term production outcomes.

Outcomes

NSW Fisheries provided an overview of the historical development of artificial induction and breeding methods for inland native fish species at the Narrandera Fisheries Centre. The biology and behaviour of these species were discussed. Genetic management protocols in relation to broodstock collection and rotation were outlined.

NSW Fisheries confirmed that \$300,000 per annum is allocated from the freshwater trust for the enhanced fish production program based at departmental hatcheries in Port Stephens, Ebor, Jindabyne and Narrandera. In relation to the Narrandera Fisheries Centre, funds have been used for the construction of a new broodstock holding facility, which has increased the capacity for holding broodfish enabling staff to lengthen the fish breeding season, and has made additional pond space available to allow for better production of species such as Murray cod and trout cod.

NSW Fisheries confirmed that a fisheries technician has been employed to help in the monitoring of water quality. Funds have also been used to support additional production expenses including feeding and stocking costs.

The Narrandera Fisheries Centre is now a multi-disciplinary facility comprising staff from the research, aquaculture, fisheries services and conservation management divisions.

Recommendation

Noted. RFFTEC asked NSW Fisheries to promote the important role that large Murray cod play in the inland rivers in a future NSW Fisheries "Newscast", including the contribution large cod make to reproduction of the species.

Issue

Catfish genetics and the implications for stocking programs.

Background

RFFTEC previously recommended that eel-tailed catfish be placed on the list of species permitted to be stocked into western drainage waters, via the dollar-for-dollar native fish stocking program, commencing 2002-03 stocking season.

The Threatened Species Unit (TSU) has advised that there may be problems with including this species on the dollar-for-dollar program, particularly in relation to the genetic suitability of hatchery produced eel-tailed catfish for release into existing wild populations. It is thought that there may be a number of separate genetic stocks of eel-tailed catfish, and that the origin of hatchery broodstock is not well documented.

Outcomes

John Pursey discussed catfish genetics and the implications for stocking programs. John Pursey confirmed that there appears to be a high degree of genetic variability between catfish populations in NSW. The genetic strains of western drainage catfish populations are not well known at this stage. Two hatcheries in NSW are presently breeding catfish and there is uncertainty over the genetic status of this stock. Subsequently, the Threatened Species Unit (TSU) has asked RFFTEC to review its recommendation on this issue as the re-stocking of hatchery bred catfish species could potentially compromise the genetic viability of discrete wild populations.

RFFTEC discussed the possibility of translocating catfish from Copeton dam into suitable habitat of the Gwydir River catchment, below the dam wall. NSW Fisheries advised that it will investigate this issue and report back to Mr Richard Ping Kee at a later date.

Recommendation

1. NSW Fisheries investigate the feasibility of translocating catfish from Copeton dam into the Gwydir River delta and report back to Mr Richard Ping Kee on this issue.
2. NSW Fisheries provide RFFTEC members with draft recovery & management options for eel tailed catfish.

Issue

Proposal to use unspent eastern drainage dollar-for-dollar funds to purchase eastern cod fingerlings for the 01/02 stocking season.

Background

The Endangered Species Eastern Cod Recovery Team has notified NSW Fisheries that the supplier of eastern freshwater cod fingerlings has produced an excess for the 01/02 stocking season. NSW Fisheries is proposing to use some of the remaining eastern drainage dollar-for-dollar funds to purchase eastern cod fingerlings for this year's stocking season, at a cost of around \$20,000.

Outcomes

RFFTEC questioned the population status of eastern cod and the results of previous fish releases in the upper Clarence and Richmond River catchments. NSW Fisheries advised that wild fish are now considered to be extinct in the Richmond River system and very rare in the major northern tributaries of the Clarence River system.

Preliminary surveys of stocked populations have indicated that past diffuse fish releases might not have been effective. Therefore, NSW Fisheries and Project Big Fish will continue to concentrate future stockings at a number of key sites identified in the eastern cod recovery plan and will monitor the outcomes of these actions in the future.

The re-stocking program is a part of a long-term strategy to establish self-sustaining breeding populations, which requires a coordinated approach to research, management and habitat protection.

Recommendation

RFFTEC supported the use of unspent eastern drainage dollar-for-dollar funds for the 01/02 season, to purchase fingerlings for the eastern cod conservation stocking program, for release in accordance with the eastern cod recovery plan.

Issue

Innovative fishways study, Balranald weir and update on state fishways program.

Background

The innovative fishways study is to trial a method of fishway assessment that will determine the destination of fish once they migrate through a fishway, and how soon they are attainable for recreational fishing. Difficulties in constructing the Deelder fishway at Balranald weir have delayed the expenditure of funds and the commencement of the radiotracking project. On the assumption that the fishway is built in the coming winter, the following timeline provides an accurate representation of expected developments:

- ◆ *August 2002* - Project will commence, immediately following construction of the fishway (provided suitable flow situations exist). Fish will be sampled, tagged and released below Balranald weir,
- ◆ *September 2002* - Tracking of tagged fish will commence,
- ◆ *February 2003* - Tracking studies will conclude and data will be collated and analysed,
- ◆ *April 2003* - A report detailing the outcomes of the study will be completed.

DLWC's funding for the state fishways program ended in 2001. However, NSW Fisheries has pursued a number of relationships with other organisations, which are providing positive outcomes in relation to fish passage. These include:

Murray Darling Basin Commission – the MDBC have recently committed to the “Hume to the Sea” fish passage program, which will provide uninterrupted fish passage between Hume Dam (at Albury) and the sea over the coming 5 years. The project represents the largest level of fishway expenditure in Australian history and will result in 11 new fishways being constructed on the main stem of the Murray River. NSW Fisheries is closely involved in the corresponding monitoring and assessment program as well as in advising the MDBC on technical aspects of fishway design.

Sydney Catchment Authority – the SCA have continued to support improved fish passage through the completion of the Tallowa Dam High Fishway Feasibility Study. The study has recommended the construction of a fish lift at Tallowa Dam and the SCA and cabinet will consider the proposal in the coming financial year. The SCA have also commissioned a report into fish passage throughout the upper Nepean and are currently investigating the possibility of constructing two new fishways, remediating three ineffective fishways and removing one weir.

State Water – as a component of their Asset Management Plan, State Water are working with NSW Fisheries to provide fish passage at all structures to be upgraded over the next 10 years. This long-term commitment will significantly improve fish passage throughout NSW and help mitigate negative impacts of river regulation.

Outcomes*Innovative fishways study at Balranald weir:*

Cameron Lay advised that a series of difficulties in constructing the Deelder fishway at Balranald has prevented the expenditure of funds and the commencement of the radiotracking project at this stage. NSW Fisheries is hopeful that the fishway will be built this coming winter and expects to commence the project immediately following construction of the fishway, provided suitable flow situations exist. However, NSW Fisheries is mindful that the funding allocation for this project has not been spent and therefore seeks the Committee's concurrence to transfer the experiment from this location to a fishway at Euston weir, in the event that construction at Balranald weir is delayed further.

State fishways program

Tracy MacDonald advised that the Department of Land and Water Conservation's (DLWC) funding for the state fishways program ended in 2001, however NSW Fisheries is continuing to work in cooperation with a number of government agencies such as the Murray Darling Basin Commission, the Sydney Catchment Authority, State Water, Parramatta City Council and the Great Lakes Shire Council to negotiate the installation of fishways at sites with key barriers to fish passage in NSW. A list of current fishway projects in northern, central and southern NSW was presented to Committee members.

NSW Fisheries discussed the process for prioritising potential sites for fishway installation and the methods of negotiation for fish passage at a weir, taking into account the ecological, hydrological and social aspects of the barrier. Examples of structures under investigation in the Hunter Valley, Border Rivers, Macquarie Catchment, Gwydir River, Namoi River, Upper North Coast and Hawkesbury/Nepean catchment areas were shown.

Recommendation

RFFTEC supported the relocation of the radiotracking project from Balranald weir to Euston weir, in the event of further delays to the proposed construction date for the Balranald fishway.

Issue

Expression of interest process for the restoration of aquatic habitats program, and conservation manager's update.

Background

The expression of interest review criteria for the restoration of aquatic habitats program and notes for the accompanying media release are currently being prepared by NSW Fisheries and are anticipated to be available for members in the near future.

Over the past year, conservation managers have spent a considerable amount of time with the various inland river management committees during the completion phase of Water Sharing Plans. There have been significant achievements for the benefit of freshwater fisheries, particularly in relation to the amount of water that will be allocated for environmental flows. Other responsibilities have involved assessing a growing number of development applications, dredging and reclamation applications and Environmental Impact Statements. Conservation managers have also participated in 20 conservation workshops throughout inland NSW. The feedback has been positive and a list of angling contacts has been drafted that will assist with future rehabilitation works in these areas. A Gwydir oral history project is also underway at present.

A conservation module is being developed and will be available shortly for use by the Fishcare Volunteers and others. This module has focussed on issues relating to the conservation of native fish in inland NSW and will be a valuable document for many forums in the future.

Outcomes

Restoration of aquatic habitats program:

Sharon Molloy advised that the department is currently assessing the draft Expression of Interest form and draft set of assessment criteria for the restoration of aquatic habitats program. The purpose of the program is to provide "on-ground" rehabilitation of fish habitats. Projects will be undertaken by a range of stakeholder groups such as angling clubs, local councils and Rivercare and Landcare groups in collaboration with NSW Fisheries. Participants in the program must demonstrate that they have been able to gain matching funds to support the proposed project.

Conservation manager's update:

Sharon Molloy discussed the roles and responsibilities of conservation managers in inland NSW. Achievements with respect to inland river management committees, environmental impact assessments, site inspections and investigations of unauthorised works were outlined. Details on the outcomes of the 20 inland conservation workshops were provided. The Committee was briefed on the Gwydir Oral history project and the Walcha fish management strategy. Accomplishments relating to the development of water sharing plans for the Tenterfield, Mooki, Macquarie-Cudgegong, Upper Castlereagh, Horton, Gwydir, and Lachlan catchment areas were highlighted.

Conservation manager's update continued:

Sharon Molloy advised that eight conservation fishnotes have been distributed to regional offices and other government departments. Up until recently there has been little published material addressing inland conservation issues and as a result the fishnotes have been very well received by the community.

Recommendation

Noted

Issue

Update on National Recreational Fishing Survey.

Background

A national recreational fishing survey was conducted in Australia during 2000-01. The primary objective of the survey was to collect nationally consistent and comparable fishery statistics (fish catch, fishing effort, catch rate, species composition) for the non-commercial components of Australian fisheries. The survey also collected information on the number of fishers, their demographic profile, expenditure associated with fishing and the attitude and awareness of anglers to a number of prominent fisheries management issues.

Telephone/diary survey techniques were used to gather information on the major component (recreational fishing) of the non-commercial sector. On-site (face-to-face) survey techniques were used to validate diary information and to collect data for the indigenous and overseas fisher components of the survey. Secondary data sources and a number of calibration techniques were developed to improve the stability and accuracy of the data.

Approximately 44,000 Australian households were contacted by telephone in March/ April 2000 to determine the level of participation in fishing. Each household was asked a series of questions regarding their fishing and boating activities and their demographic profile. A full response to all questions was achieved from 78% of households. A response to at least the fishing/ boating question was achieved from 90% of households. A relatively small proportion of households (3.7%) refused to answer any questions.

Co-operating fishing households were invited to participate in a 12-month diary survey. The diary acceptance rate was exceptional with 89% of eligible households and 84% of eligible anglers agreeing to participate in the survey. The collection of fisheries statistics and economic data began in May 2000 and finished in April 2001.

Outcomes

Gary Henry provided an update on the progress of the National Angling Survey. The project was first planned in 1994 and is the biggest recreational fishing survey ever conducted in Australia. The program is funded by the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, the Natural Heritage Trust and the various state fisheries management agencies. Detailed information has been obtained on more than 100,000 fishing events encompassing some 340 fish species. 18,000 anglers from 10,000 fishing households participated in the survey, receiving monthly telephone calls to collect details from their fishing diaries. 90% of all participants remained with the project for the full year.

It was explained that the database is rich in detail on recreational catch, effort and expenditure and will be of great use to anglers and fisheries managers in the future. The project is drawing to conclusion and the national report is expected to be released in late 2002.

Recommendation

Noted.

Issue

Trust fund program summary reports.

Background

A pro-forma has been developed for project managers to provide a means for standard project reporting. Annual reports for each of the freshwater trust funded programs will be provided to RFFTEC for consideration at the meeting. Freshwater trust funded programs are:

- ◆ enhanced NSW Fisheries fish production;
- ◆ purchase of fish from private hatcheries;
- ◆ recreational freshwater advisory and education;
- ◆ effectiveness of stocking research;
- ◆ angler catch monitoring;
- ◆ recreational fishing expenditure survey;
- ◆ restoration of aquatic habitats;
- ◆ small project enhancement;
- ◆ inland field operations;
- ◆ impoundment access;
- ◆ regional fish habitat;
- ◆ fish passage;
- ◆ innovate fishway development;
- ◆ fish conservation education module;
- ◆ bass habitat mapping;
- ◆ Fishcare volunteers and
- ◆ fishing fee administration.

Outcomes

Dr Andrew Sanger provided a synopsis of current freshwater trust funded programs. A report on the progress and achievements of each project over the preceding 8 months (July 01 – March 02) was distributed to RFFTEC members. RFFTEC questioned the progress of the impoundments access program. NSW Fisheries advised that it has commenced discussions with key agencies to improve recreational angler access to publicly owned water storages. A consultant will also be commissioned in the near future to investigate the possibility of obtaining access to a number of key sites that exist around Sydney, Wollongong, and Newcastle.

Recommendation

Noted.

Other business

Issue

Species Impact Statement for Lower Murray Darling Endangered Ecological Community and implications for the Freshwater Fishing Regulation Review

Background

Dr Andrew Sanger advised that in light of the lower Murray River catchment recently being listed as an endangered ecological community, the review of freshwater regulations has been delayed. The reason for the delay is that following the listing, the Minister for Fisheries is required to draft a species impact statement (SIS) for the listed community. The SIS will investigate the impacts of fishing and activities that may damage habitat on fish indigenous to NSW. The SIS must be completed prior to the freshwater regulation review as conducting both processes simultaneously could cause confusion as a number of issues are similar. The SIS is expected to be released by mid June. It is envisaged that the revised release date of the freshwater fishing review options paper will be late 2002.

Recommendation

Noted.

Issue

ANSA funding proposals

Background

The Australian National Sportsfishing Association (ANSA) is seeking funding to develop a bass tagging program in Tallowa Dam on completion of the fishway, to determine the number of fish that are able to move into the upper Shoalhaven and Kangaroo Rivers. As a separate project, ANSA are proposing to collect and collate catch and release data on eastern cod. Funding is sought to produce an information package that includes a brochure on eastern cod, an incidental capture log sheet and a fish handling policy produced by ANSA.

Outcomes

Eastern cod incidental capture program:

NSW Fisheries advised that this proposal posed a potential for duplication of resources given that an eastern cod brochure is already available and an incidental catch reporting system has been put in place in accordance with the eastern cod recovery plan. Programs designed to assist in conservation of the species must be considered in relation to the aims and objectives of this plan. Concern was raised that the ANSA proposal in its current form could encourage anglers to target eastern cod.

RFFTEC did not consider this funding proposal to be feasible given that an eastern cod brochure is currently available and reporting methods for incidental catch of eastern cod are already in place.

Outcomes*Tallowa Dam bass tagging project:*

The Chair noted that feasibility study for the Tallowa Dam project has only recently been completed, and funding for the capital works has yet to be confirmed. Whilst the possibilities for the project to proceed are very good, it may be some years before a fishway is actually operational at Tallowa Dam given the extensive design and approval process that will have to be undertaken prior to construction. In light of this, the tagging of 1000 individual bass in the Tallowa impoundment may be premature at this point in time.

RFFTEC did not consider this funding proposal to be feasible at this point in time given that the expected mortality of individuals and shedding of tags in the time between the fish being tagged and implementation of the fishway will significantly reduce recapture rates.

Recommendation

NSW Fisheries to correspond with ANSA in relation to these matters. NSW Fisheries to discuss the feasibility of the bass tagging proposal with ANSA, immediately prior to the opening of the Tallowa dam fishway. NSW Fisheries to discuss the eastern cod tagging proposal with ANSA within the framework of the existing eastern cod recovery program.

Issue

Draining of waters of Lake Mulwala

Background

Dr Andrew Sanger advised that the Murray Darling Basin Commission periodically draws down the water from Lake Mulwala to carry out upgrades and maintenance on the weir. The draining of the waters of the Lake can cause native fish and fish habitat to become vulnerable to over exploitation. A temporary fishing closure will be drafted to prohibit the taking of fish from the Lake during this period. A steering committee has been established to oversee the project.

Recommendation

Noted.

Issue

Purchase of advisory trailers for use by Fishcare Volunteers

Background

There was some discussion from RFFTEC about whether advisory trailers or vans had been obtained for the Fishcare Volunteer program.

Recommendation

RFFTEC asked for the NSW Fisheries Communications Branch to provide an update on the purchase of education and advisory trailers for the Fishcare Volunteer program. Correspondence on this issue to be forwarded with the minutes of the meeting.

Next meeting

The next RFFTEC meeting was scheduled for Thursday 9 May 2002 at the Cronulla Fisheries Centre from 9.30am – 3.30pm.

The Chair thanked outgoing members for their attendance.

Meeting concluded at 3.30pm.