



**Recreational
Fishing Trusts**

***Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust
Expenditure Committee***

MINUTES

**14TH RFSTEC MEETING
21 September 2004**

**CRONULLA FISHERIES CENTRE
21 NICHOLSON PARADE CRONULLA 2230
02 9527 8411**

**Fourteenth Meeting of the
Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust Expenditure Committee
FINAL MINUTES
21/09/04
9:15am
Cronulla Fisheries Centre
202 Nicholson Parade, Cronulla**

Attendance

Chair

Bruce Schumacher

Committee Members

Bruce Mahony	Region 1 – Qld border to Evans Head
Lisa Terry	Region 2 – Evans Head to Woolgoolga
John Drew	Region 3 – Woolgoolga to Port Macquarie
Graham Harrison	Region 4 – Port Macquarie to Seal Rocks
Lionel Jones	Region 5 – Seal Rocks to The Entrance
David Turner	Region 6 – The Entrance to Wollongong
William Heaton	Region 6 – The Entrance to Wollongong
Warren Buchan	Region 7 – Wollongong to Narooma
Greg Liddell	Region 8 – Narooma to Vic border
Malcolm Poole	Recreational Fishing Alliance
Doug Joyner	for John Millyard of Australian Fishing Tackle Association
Anthony Moore	Nature Conservation Council

NSW Fisheries (observers)

Dr Nick Rayns, Director, Fisheries Management, Agriculture & Fisheries
John Diplock, Manager, Recreational
Bryan van der Walt, Senior Manager, Recreational Fisheries
Jennifer Ranson, A/Manager, Recreational Fisheries

Business

Chair's introduction

Apologies

Confirmation of minutes from previous meeting

Business arising from the minutes

Agenda Items

1. Recreational Fishing Trusts report (Bryan van der Walt)
2. Remaining funding from the Recreational Fishing Haven fisher buy-out \$20 million loan (Bryan van der Walt)
3. Deferred program application (Bryan van der Walt)

Small grants

- a) Taylors Beach foreshore habitat rehabilitation project, Port Stephens

4. New program applications (Bryan van der Walt)

Large grants

- a) Fisheries benefits from Marine Protected Areas- Do Marine Parks increase recreational catch?
- b) Disability Access Ramp
- c) Angel Ring Projects 2005
- d) Angel Ring Brochure

Small grants

- a) Fish Cleaning Tables Nambucca Heads
- b) Marine Life Drink Coasters and Postcards

5. Marine Discovery Centre – program update (Will Jones)
6. Southern Cross University – Final Report for two programs and update on video equipment purchased for Recreational Fishing Havens research (Anthony Moore)
7. Communications - programs update (Bryan van der Walt)
8. Compliance - programs update (Tony Andrews)
9. Saltwater Tournament Monitoring - program update (Tim Park)
10. Small Grants - program update (Bryan van der Walt)
11. Fish Aggregating Devices and Artificial Reefs – programs update (Health Folpp)
12. Economic survey of 2 coastal towns – program update (Dr Alistair McIlgorm)
13. Other programs - Milestone Reports
14. Action Items from meeting 13
15. General Business

Meeting ends

3pm-4pm Committee training session with Dominion Consulting.

Business

Welcome by Chair

The Chair opened the meeting by greeting members.

Apologies

The Chair noted apologies from Lisa Terry and advised that Doug Joyner was attending on behalf of John Millyard, Australian Fishing Tackle Association.

The Chair welcomed Dr Nick Rayns, Director, Fisheries Management, Agriculture and Fisheries. Dr Rayns spoke about his previous role in the Department and his previous experience and employment with other state, Commonwealth and overseas agencies. Dr Rayns advised that in his current role as Director of Fisheries Management, he oversees management of recreational fishing, commercial fishing, aquaculture and fisheries conservation (including Marine Parks). Dr Rayns assured the Committee that the integration of the former NSW Fisheries, NSW Agriculture, State Forests and Department of Mineral Resources into a single, modern department would provide an appropriate balance between profitability and protection of our natural resources, including our recreational fisheries. He clarified that compliance, science and management of fisheries, including recreational fisheries, would continue to be a high priority for the new Department.

Minutes of RFSTEC meeting 13 held 29.06.04

The draft minutes of the 13th RFSTEC meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Moved: Lionel Jones. Seconded: Warren Buchan. **Carried.**

Business arising from the minutes

None

Issue

Recreational Fishing Trusts Report

BackgroundStatus of the Saltwater Trust

Total income received from licence sales in 2003/04 was nearly \$9 million, which is over \$500,000 more compared to 2002/03 (\$8,394 million). The funding level to the Freshwater Trust will remain at \$2.5 million in 2004/05. The saltwater expenditure committee has allocated a total of \$6.9 million to a range of compliance, research, management and education programs to improve recreational fishing in 2004/05 based on carryovers from 2003/04. The Trust financial tables, including the forward planning table, have been updated for the Committee's information. Based on predicted income levels for 2004/05, a balance of over \$700,000 is available for new programs.

Reminder notice

Reminder notices continue to be sent to one and three year licence holders as their licences expire. The system was implemented in April 2004 and results of an analysis of licence sales for the first three months of the program (April, May and June) will be provided at the meeting to determine whether the reminder system has resulted in more licences being renewed as they expire.

OutcomesStatus of the Saltwater Trust

The Trust financial tables, including the forward planning table, were provided to the Committee for their information. The Committee were advised that as of 30 June 2004 (end of the 2003/04 financial year), the balance of the Trust was \$1.66 million. Predicted income for the 2004/05 financial year is \$6.080 million. The Committee noted that the balance of the Trust for the next 3 years which is calculated using predicted allocations for ongoing programs, will be reduced over time but remains positive, which is mainly due to some research programs finishing this year, such as baitfish ecology, survival of line-caught fish and the impacts of mulloway stocking programs. The Department noted that at the April meeting the Committee provided in-principle support to fund a second recreational mobile squad, when sufficient funding of \$355,000 per year was available.

Reminder notice

The results of an analysis of licence sales to determine whether reminder letters had resulted in more licences being renewed was presented to the Committee. The Department noted that in 2003/04 total income from licence sales increased by \$600,000 possibly due to increased compliance, greater acceptance of the licence and where the fees go, improved fishing from the creation of recreational fishing havens, expiry of three year licences and reminder notices.

The Department noted that the sale of 3-year licences was much higher in March and April 2004 compared to previous years, which coincides with the three year anniversary date of implementation of the general licence. This apparent renewal of 3-year licences accounted for a large proportion of the increase in total income in that financial year. Reminder notices could also potentially account for some of that increase in April, May and June of this year. It was also noted that for the first 3 months of the reminder notice system in April, May and June 2004, more 1-year licences were sold compared to previous years, which may have been the result of anglers renewing their licences immediately after receiving their reminder letter. The Department proposed undertaking a small phone questionnaire survey of anglers to provide more information on the effectiveness of the reminder notice system.

Issue

Remaining funding from the Recreational Fishing Haven fisher buy-out \$20 million loan.

Background

At previous meetings the Committee has discussed options for the remaining funding from the \$20 million Recreational Fishing Haven fisher buyout loan. There is approximately \$1.5 million dollars available in the Saltwater Trust that could be committed to removing commercial fishing effort from high interaction areas such as the Clarence, Manning, Camden Haven and Hastings areas on the north coast and the area from Tuross through to Bermagui on the south coast. RFSTEC has previously provided in principal support for further voluntary buyouts of commercial fishing entitlements

There are 3 options for expenditure of the remaining funds:

1. Allocate the funds to the repayment of the \$20 million loan from Treasury.
2. Allocate the funds for additional voluntary buy-out of fishing entitlements.
3. Obtain additional funding sources for a major buyout program.

Potential sources include but are not limited to:

- a commercial industry contribution to match Recreational Fishing Trust funds as either a direct contribution or through a low interest loan;
- the Commonwealth Government; and
- additional State Marine Park buyouts.

The environmental assessments for each commercial fishery have identified, latent, real, surplus and excess fishing effort or pressure as a major long-term risk to the sustainable management of fisheries. Since the introduction of restricted fisheries in 1997 the number of fishing businesses have been reduced from about 2,800 to about 1,300 in 2004. This has been achieved through transfer and amalgamation programs and marine park and recreational fishing haven buyout processes. It is generally recognised within Industry however that further adjustment is required and the preferred approach is through a buyout program.

The sources in option 3, if combined, could provide for a substantial total funding package for both a targeted and voluntary buyout scheme.

The Department is currently developing a strategy for a buyout scheme and the Committee will be updated on the process.

Outcomes

The Committee discussed two letters received from commercial fishers regarding a proposal to buy out their fishing entitlements. The Committee were advised that the Department was currently developing a strategy for a major buyout scheme involving a number of funding sources, including the Saltwater Trust. It was noted that the buyout program need not be restricted to estuary commercial fishing entitlements. The Department advised that the Committee will be updated on the progress of the program, out of session if necessary. The Department is currently drafting a document which will identify the strengths and the weaknesses of any potential buyout process; potential formulas for determining buyouts; selection criteria for fishing business; buyout processes, including relocation/retraining; and potential areas for buy outs. The Department noted that the Committee was taking a proactive approach to resolving the issue of the remaining funding.

The Committee requested a timeframe for the process be provided and recommended that the Department develop a firm proposal by 31 March 2005 for the further buyout of commercial fishing businesses using the remaining funds from the \$20 million loan. Moved: Malcolm Poole. Seconded: Bruce Mahony. **Carried.**

Malcolm Poole noted his concern that there are only 22 commercial endorsements for hand gathering (that is, to collect bait such as worms and pipis) remaining in NSW. To avoid shortfalls in bait supply, it was suggested that these endorsements should be excluded from any buyout process.

Action item: The Department to write to the two commercial fishers advising that a strategy for a major buyout scheme is being developed.

Issue

Deferred program application

Background

At the thirteenth Committee meeting on 29 June 2004, the Committee recommended deferring a late grant application to the next meeting.

A) Taylors Beach foreshore habitat rehabilitation project, Port Stephens

The project aims to enhance the estuarine ecology of the Taylors Beach area by protecting and creating a mangrove forest to improve habitat for fish, invertebrates, birds and other animals. In addition to the rehabilitation works, it is proposed to install an educational sign on the foreshore walkway to describe project benefits to recreational fishers. To reverse the erosion of the foreshore at Taylor's Beach, a 90m barrier to wind action parallel to the foreshore will be constructed and 200 mangrove seedlings will be planted to provide a buffer between incoming wave energy and the foreshore.

The total funds requested by the applicant is summarised below:

Program	Applicant	Funding Requested 2004/05
Taylors Beach foreshore habitat rehabilitation project	Port Stephens Council	\$10,500

Outcome

The Committee discussed the proposal and concerns were raised about the intention of the applicant to re-vegetate a salt marsh area with a mangrove forest. It was noted that saltmarshes are considered highly productive environments, therefore the justification for re-vegetating the salt marsh is not clear. The Committee noted that the proposal had little direct benefits to recreational fishing in NSW.

Recommendation

That funding of \$10,500 from the Saltwater Trust grants program in 2004/05 for the program 'Taylors Beach foreshore habitat rehabilitation project' **not be supported**. Moved: Lionel Jones. Seconded: Bruce Mahony. **Carried**.

Issue

New program applications

Large Grants**A) Fisheries benefits from Marine Protected Areas- Do Marine Parks increase recreational catch?**

This application submitted by University of NSW was initially titled 'Success of blue-water angling in the coastal zone in relation to the distribution, size and abundance of pelagic species' and was considered by the committee on 6 April 2004. The Committee noted that the information derived from the study would be useful but of limited benefit to the average angler. Funding for the program was not supported at that time.

The revised application has new objectives and a smaller budget. The study aims to use new methods to compare the distribution, abundance and size of highly mobile fish in protected and unprotected areas to see if marine parks:

- increase the abundance and size of highly mobile fish inside the protected area;
- provide any fisheries benefits outside protected areas. (This part of the study will focus on abundance of species that are popular angling species such as yellowtail kingfish, trevally, tailor, mackerels and yellowtail scad); and
- provide benefits to recreational fishers by increasing catch rates in surrounding areas.

B) Disability Access Ramp

This capital works program proposed by Port Stephens Council involves the rehabilitation and extension of the existing wharf at Little Beach, Victoria Parade, Nelson Bay, and the installation of a fishing platform. The works will enable people with disabilities to pass over a sandy beach and fish from a platform into saltwater. Matching funding for the program will be provided from Port Stephens Council, Shoal Bay Game Fishing Club and local sporting and community clubs. In addition an application for funding has been lodged through the Waterways Asset Development and Management Program (WADAMP).

C) Angel Rings Project 2005

The Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust has contributed \$32,410 since January 2001 to the Angel Rings program run by the NSW branch of the Australian National Sportfishing Association (ANSA NSW). The program aims to improve angler safety at rock fishing black spots along the NSW coast. The project involves the installation of Angel Rings (or life buoys) at known rock fishing black spots.

C) Angel Rings Project 2005 (cont)

Funds are sought to further expand this important fishing safety initiative. This project not only contributes to saving lives but also identifies regional rock fishing black spots and encourages community awareness. The project also aims to target ethnic communities who are highly represented in rock fishing fatalities, by installing signage in specific targeted languages and maintaining and distributing a register of angel ring locations to all rescue services.

ANSA was unsuccessful in their application for grant funding for the program through the Safewaters Taskforce. The Safewaters Taskforce application is provided as supporting material to the Trust application.

D) Angel Rings Brochure

ANSA NSW are also seeking funding to produce an Angel Rings brochure. The aim of the brochure is to communicate to the community, especially high risk ethnic communities, the dangers of ocean swells and the coastline of NSW, the presence of angel rings, their purpose, use and importance and to utilise the ethnic communities network to identify new locations for Angel Rings and involve them in the management and installation of new Angel Rings.

The total funds requested by each applicant is summarised below.

Large Grants Program	Proponent	2004/05	2005/06
Fisheries benefits from Marine Protected Areas- Do Marine Parks increase recreational catch?	University of NSW	\$18,320	\$13,720
Disability Access Ramp	Port Stephens Council	\$6,720	
Angel Rings Project 2005	ANSA NSW	\$38,550	
Angel Rings Brochure	ANSA NSW	\$33,900	

Small Grants

A) Fish Cleaning Tables at Gordan Park, Stuart Island and Riverside Drive Boat Ramps

The Nambucca Shire Council proposes to build three fish cleaning tables at different locations in the local area. The aim of the project is to provide updated, standardised, quality fish cleaning facilities where recreational fishing is a major attraction to both local and visiting anglers and where there are no existing tables. The Nambucca Head Lions Clubs and local fisherman have supported the proposal. The Council will provide matching funding for the project.

B) Marine Life Drink Coasters and Postcards

The Ocean and Coastal Care Initiatives (OCCI), an environmental organisation on the Central Coast has applied for funding to develop, produce and distribute drink coasters and postcards to coastal hotels, clubs, and coffee shops on the central coast. The project is supported by Wyong City Council and Central Coast Community Environment Network and aims to raise awareness of marine conservation issues, particularly rock pool diversity; to offer simple solutions for individuals to take action to improve the quality of marine environment; and to prompt within the community a greater sense of stewardship for the marine environment.

The total funds requested by each applicant is summarised below.

Small Grants Program	Proponent	2004/05
Fish Cleaning Tables at Gordan Park, Stuart Island and Riverside Drive Boat Ramp	Nambucca Shire Council	\$3,750
Marine Life Drink Coasters and Postcards	OCCI	\$4,629

Outcomes

The Committee acknowledged the merit of the program 'Fisheries benefits from Marine Protected Areas' but did not consider the research as high priority. It was acknowledged that the information derived from the study would be useful but of limited direct benefit to recreational anglers. The program also proposed to investigate a number of highly mobile pelagic species, which would not be expected to be resident in marine parks, therefore it may be difficult to assess if marine parks increase recreational catch..

The Department advised the Committee that the funding requested for the Disability Access Ramp was to purchase materials to build a fishing platform at the end of the access ramp. Doug Joyner advised that the Australian Fishing Tackle Association had also contributed \$10,000 to the large-scale re-development program. The Committee recognised the direct benefits of the program to recreational fishing and supported the program.

The Committee noted the merit of the Angel Rings program and the benefits the rings provide to rock fishers and the community. Malcolm Poole advised that many volunteers spend many hours ensuring the continuation of the program. The majority of funds used for the program are for direct operating costs, such as purchasing rings and ring holding assemblies. Mr Poole also advised that the Department of Environment and Conservation (formerly National Parks and Wildlife Service) had recently approved the installation of Angel Rings in national parks and five installations in Lake Munmorah National Park are planned during the next 12 months.

The Committee discussed the Angel Rings brochure proposal, acknowledging the merit of producing advisory material translated into 4 Asian languages. The Department advised that printing costs in the budget were high, mainly because of the costs of the high quality paper. Fisheries brochures are usually printed on a lower quality but acceptable paper. This reduces the publication costs substantially. The Department also noted that the budget did not include distribution costs, which can be significant. It was also noted that usually specific locations or coordinates are usually not included in advisory material to increase the lifespan of brochures. A contact phone number or website address to obtain locations can be used instead. The Committee suggested that the Department's information advisory phone line and email could potentially be used as the contact for Angel Rings locations. The Committee recommended that ANSA NSW review their proposal and the Department offered assistance with the re-drafting of the budget.

Action Item: The Department to provide advice and assistance, if necessary, to ANSA NSW on the Angel Rings brochure proposal. Moved: Doug Joyner. Seconded: Lionel Jones. **Carried.**

The Committee discussed the Nambucca Shire Council's proposal to erect fishing cleaning facilities located on public land on the Nambucca River. The Committee also noted the foresight of the Council to install tables to enable wheelchair access and supported the program.

The Committee acknowledged the merit of the drink coasters and post card education proposal submitted by OCCI. However the Committee considered that it was not appropriate that anglers fund the program as it has little direct benefit to recreational fishing in NSW.

The Committee discussed the letter from the Department to the Chair requesting the use of the mobile education units for an indigenous event. The Committee advised that the Fishcare program should have priority use of trailers and that any plan to use the trailers for the indigenous display should be coordinated through the State Co-ordinator Community Programs and the relevant education officer for each trailer. Moved: Warren Buchan. Seconded: Graham Harrison. **Carried.**

Recommendations

That funding of \$18,320 in 2004/05 and \$13,720 in 2005/06 from the Saltwater Trust grants program for the program 'Fisheries benefits from Marine Protected Areas - Do Marine Parks increase recreational catch?' **not be supported**. Moved: Graham Harrison. Seconded: John Drew. **Carried**.

That funding of \$6,720 in 2004/05 from the Saltwater Trust grants program for the program 'Disability Access Ramp' **be supported**. Moved: Malcolm Poole Harrison. Seconded: Graham Harrison. **Carried**.

That funding of \$38,550 in 2004/05 from the Saltwater Trust grants program for the program 'Angel Rings Project 2005' **be supported**. Moved: Lionel Jones. Seconded: Warren Buchan. **Carried**.

That funding of \$3,750 in 2004/05 from the Saltwater Trust grants program for the program 'Fish Cleaning Tables at Gordan Park, Stuart Island and Riverside Drive Boat Ramp' **be supported**. Moved: John Drew. Seconded: Lionel Johns. **Carried**.

That funding of \$4,629 in 2004/05 from the Saltwater Trust grants program for the program 'Marine Life Drink Coasters and Postcards' **not be supported**. Moved: Doug Joyner. Seconded: Bruce Mahony. **Carried**.

Issue

Marine Discovery Centre, Bondi – program update

Background

Funds from the Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust have been allocated to enhance the existing education programs of the Marine Discovery Centre (MDC) in the Bondi Beach Pavilion. The funding has allowed the enhancement of the MDC Bondi's existing school excursion program to help educate Sydney's school children on sustainable recreational fishing.

The MDC Bondi is a non-profit organisation that offers marine and coastal education excursion programs to schools and communities in the Sydney region. Located at the south end of the Bondi Pavilion, the Centre has large screen audio-visual facilities, aquariums with local marine life and educational activity materials. School excursions utilise modified activities from the Department's "*Get Hooked its Fun to Fish*" program, including: an exploration of the local rock platforms at North Bondi; a talk on the "*Junior Recreational Fishing Code*" outside the North Bondi Recreational Fishing Club; activities on the beach focussing on stormwater, called "*You're the Solution to Water Pollution*" and "*Saltwater Detectives*"; as well as activities in the Centre using individual mini-aquariums, a local marine life film and the video microscope.

The MDC Bondi also enhances the Department's recreational fishing education programs – "*Get hooked its Fun to Fish*", Fishcare Volunteer program, Fishing clinics and community events (eg. Ocean Care Day & Seahorse Open Day). Action orientated education and awareness programs include topics related to habitat protection, bag limits, closures, litter prevention and pest species identification. The Discovery Centre will increasingly be able to provide educational facilities for communities of non-English speaking backgrounds.

Building on the funding from the Recreational Fishing Trust, the MDC Bondi secured additional funding of \$20,000 from Waverley Council; \$25,000 from International Fund for Animal Welfare; \$50,000 from Sydney Water and \$20,000 from NSW Department Primary Industries. Combined, this funding enabled the centre to secure an additional \$201,000 matching funding from the federal Department of Transport and Regional Services' *Regional Partnerships Program*. In kind support has also assisted the program, \$87,000 from Waverley Council (value of space in Bondi Pavilion); \$30,000 from Coral Sea TV (40% production costs); \$10,000 from Design Troupe (Architectural fees); and \$10,000 from TND (IT & Website). The funding will enable the Centre to commence Stage 2 re-development in the very near future.

Outcomes

The Committee were advised that the project aims to change the way people look, feel and act towards the marine environment. The main activities carried out by the Centre include school excursions and fishing clinics. Eight MDC staff have been trained and over 2,000 children have been through the centre since January 2004. Will Jones noted that the close proximity of the facilities at Bondi Beach to the Intertidal Protected Area at the southern end of the beach and a popular rock fishing spot at the northern end of the beach helps the children visualise the education messages being taught at the Centre. The aim is for 3,500-4,000 primary school students to experience the Centre annually. Will Jones advised that the program had received recent media attention through the Department, Waverly Council's newsletter and local newspapers.

For information.

Issue

Southern Cross University – Final Reports

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 tagging. The pamphlet will be distributed to recreational fishers by Fisheries officers, Fishcare Volunteers and also at fishing competitions. A copy of the pamphlet will be provided to members at the meeting.

B) Stock enhancement workshop proceedings

The objective of the project is to collate papers relating to stock enhancement of marine and freshwater fisheries, presented at the Australian Society for Fish Biology in August 2000. The book brings together findings from relevant experts in the field of stock enhancement detailing the past, present and future of stocking practices within Australia. Presentations focused on new methods of stock enhancement, measuring the success, the ecological and genetic impacts and the management implications of these activities. A copy of the publication will be provided at the meeting.

Outcomes

A) Fish tagging pamphlet

Anthony Moore from Southern Cross University presented a copy of the draft tagging brochure to the Committee for their consideration. The Department provided comments on the draft and advised of several improvements that could be made. The Committee recommended further discussion between the University and the Department to ensure that appropriate and accurate information was included in the brochure. The Committee also noted that further information regarding tagging, especially what to do when an angler finds a tag, should be included in the brochure and also in the Saltwater guide.

Action Item: The Department to liaise with Southern Cross University regarding the content of the fish-tagging brochure.

B) Stock enhancement workshop proceedings

Anthony Moore presented a draft of the publication 'Stock Enhancement Workshop Proceedings'. The Committee were advised that following final formatting, the report will be printed and distributed to Committee members and to workshop attendees. The publication will also be available for stocking groups, Universities and the general public.

C) Video sampling in RFHs

An update on the video sampling equipment and software purchased recently to assist with the Recreational Fishing Havens effectiveness study was provided. The Committee were provided with footage recorded on the baited underwater video camera, which clearly showed images of stingrays, whiting, bream and shovelnose sharks. The Committee were advised of the proposed methodology of counting and measuring fish in and outside havens. Preliminary footage indicates that scavenger species like bream and whiting are attracted to the baited-video, whereas ambush species such as flathead do not feed on the bait and are rarely seen in the footage.

Southern Cross University advised that the Department was a co-investigator in the program and had received a small component of the first years funding from the Trust grant to assist with net sampling in the survey. The University requested an update on the Department's contribution to the program.

Action Item: The Department to provide an update on its component of the northern recreational fishing haven survey to Southern Cross University.

Issue

Communications – programs update

BackgroundSaltwater Responsible Fishing Awareness

An advertising campaign focused on the busy Easter holiday period to encourage responsible fishing and to promote the fishing licence. This included a program of radio advertisements on regional and Sydney-based radio stations and advertisements in peak metropolitan and regional newspapers. Each campaign was also combined with a departmental media release and newspapers were contacted in order to secure editorial/background coverage. Advertisements were also placed in major fishing magazines. A similar campaign is now being planned for 2004/05 and details will be provided at the meeting.

Saltwater Fishing guides

Production of the 2004/05 Saltwater Fishing Guide is on schedule for publication in early October 2004 (rather than the December date of previous years, in order to maximise distribution in the peak Christmas/New Year period). Trust members as well as Department staff have reviewed the content of the guides to ensure the most current information is being provided for anglers. External advertising is reducing the cost of production. A total of 200,000 guides will be produced and widely distributed.

All funds for the above two programs are used for direct advertising and production costs and no salaries or cost recovery are funded from these allocations.

Fishing clinics

Over 70 fishing clinics were held along the coast in 2003/04, including six clinics for special needs groups and multicultural communities. The development of a detailed fishing clinics program has progressed significantly. Both internal and external workshops have been held (including thorough consultation with Trust members), and a detailed plan is now being developed. The work on redeveloping the fishing clinics program is focused on:

- clarifying program objectives and ensuring they are being met;
- improving clinic content and staff training;
- improving equity and consistency across the state;
- making coordination and budgeting more professional and efficient;
- ensuring all legal requirements are met;
- exploring ways to increase collaboration with fishing clubs and other groups; and
- developing corporate sponsorship for the program.

A new cost centre will be set up for the fishing clinics program to facilitate tracking of expenditure and transparent financial reporting.

Mobile education units

Three custom-made mobile education units are now in operation along the coast, under the management of the Education Officers. The units are being used on the coast at fishing events, community days, schools visits and fishing clinics and have been extremely well received by the general community.

Communications management program

This program aims to inform and educate the community about responsible fishing using a wide range of communications tools, including the above programs. The Saltwater Trust Fund continues to contribute annual funding per year to assist the delivery of the program to anglers. The Communications Branch will continue to provide these services within the new Departments structure. Some of the services include:

1. Managing the information and advisory service (1300 550 474), which responded to over 3,000 angler enquiries during the summer period alone. On average, over 10,000 calls and about 2,500 emails are serviced every year. Over 75% of these enquiries are about recreational fishing rules and licence enquiries.
2. Coordinating the content of the recreational fishing homepage on the Department's website on an ongoing basis. The number of hits on the fisheries web site has tripled from about half a million per month in 2002 to nearly 1.5 million hits in January 2004, with approximately 40,000 unique visitors. A large proportion of visitors view the recreational fishing pages.
3. Designing, producing and distributing well over one million booklets, flyers, sticky rulers, and other print materials to educate and inform anglers about recreational fishing rules and practices. A new Trust brochure is also being developed. A list of all recreational brochures produced is provided to the Committee for their information.
4. Organising and running fishing clinics during school holiday periods in the Sydney area.

Outcomes

Saltwater Responsible Fishing Awareness

The Committee were advised that a similar campaign to last year is planned for 2004/05 and will commence prior to Christmas. The program will include advertising in 17 regional and coastal newspapers at peak fishing periods such as Christmas, Easter and School Holidays; advertisements in fishing magazines; and translated advertisements in non-English speaking newspapers and on radio.

Fishing clinics

The Committee were advised that a review of clinics had been undertaken and workshops had been held with staff and potential program partners. It was noted that the review had highlighted the potential for fishing clinics to be self funded, similar to the hatchery run clinics. The Trust grant will continue to provide for enhancement of fishing clinics for disabled/disadvantaged persons and other community groups. The Committee requested that any funds such as fees charged at clinics be returned to the Trust clinics program. Dr Nick Rayns confirmed this agreement and advised that a system will be set up to facilitate this process.

Mobile education units

Malcolm Poole advised the Committee that he attended a La Perouse education event with the local Education Officer and 'Bluey' the trailer. Rock fishing surveys were also undertaken. Malcolm noted that the brightly coloured advisory trailer drew people towards the display.

Communications management program

The Committee were provided with a copy of the proposed new coloured sticky ruler that has pictures of each of the saltwater species with bag and size limits. Malcolm Poole advised the Committee that he had received a positive response to the ruler from non-English speaking fishers.

Issue

Compliance – programs update

Background

Nine Coastal Fisheries Officers

The Saltwater Trust is funding nine fisheries officers in the following coastal locations Clarence, Hastings, Port Stephens, Hunter, Sydney (*2), Shoalhaven, Batemans Bay, and Far South Coast regions. These positions form an integral component of the team of officers based across coastal NSW. Fisheries officers aim to effectively manage compliance and advisory activities in the saltwater recreational fishery by:

- Maximising awareness of fishing rules and community expectations by all fishers;
- Providing highly visible fisheries officer presence in all areas to maximise the deterrent to illegal fishing activity and minimise illegal activity opportunities;
- Maintaining regular and strategically focused presence and profile in all saltwater fishing areas;
- Strategically focusing on areas of known low compliance with a combination of covert and overt intelligence driven operations;
- Developing and maintaining communication links with recreational fishers to enhance the quality of intelligence of non compliance;
- Identifying legislation enhancement opportunities to maximise deterrents to non compliance; and
- Targeting illegal commercial fishing activities affecting key recreational species.

Operations are conducted in all coastal areas, from Tweed Heads to Eden.

Recreational Fishery Mobile Squad of 3 fisheries officers

The Recreational Fishery Mobile Squad enhances recreational fishing opportunities by increasing community awareness, understanding and acceptance of saltwater recreational fishing conservation values and fishing rules. The Squad has the capacity to target high-risk offenders, areas and times of peak fishing activity. Both covert and overt operations are conducted in the Recreational Fishing Havens to detect and deter illegal fishing activity. The squad's enforcement, education and advisory activities enhance fisher's confidence in the future of recreational fishing subsequently increasing the participation rate in recreational fishing. The high profile nature of the squad with its trust marking and signage creates a visible indication of how fishing fee funds are being allocated by the expenditure committee.

Mr Tony Andrews will present a 6 monthly update on the two programs for the period 1 January to 30 June 2004.

Outcomes

The Department updated the Committee on the recent activities of the nine coastal fisheries officers and the recreational mobile squad, including the results of recent significant prosecutions and seizures:

- Pipi gathering on NSW south coast near Gerroa where 3 people were fined for illegally gathering more than 3,000 pipis. Two of the people were issued with \$12,000 fines each and ordered to pay court costs.
- Manning River where approximately 200kg of long-finned eels were seized. The poacher had a significant record of fisheries offences, was fined \$5,000 and had his boat forfeited.
- A Tweed Heads licensed commercial fisher who was not authorised to use fish traps, was convicted for unlicensed commercial fishing and fined \$1,000.
- A fisher was found guilty of using 400m of meshing net with undersized mesh (55-60mm) on the Clarence River. The mesh net was seized and a fine of \$2,500 imposed.
- Two men were fined \$7,000 for set lining on the Murray River. Eight setlines seized with a total of 170 hooks attached. Three Murray cod were seized and returned to the water alive.

The Committee were also advised about some significant apprehensions and pending prosecutions, including:

- Two men to face court for illegal trout fishing using night vision equipment. Fisheries Officers observed the men using scoop nets and torches to catch trout in the Eucumbene River.
- A man was apprehended at Kioloa with over 260 abalone. The car transporting the abalone was seized.

The Committee were advised that the recreational mobile squad had maintained an extensive high profile presence in all recreational fishing havens following the delivery of the new boat, a 5.7 Cobia Enforce Rigid Hull Inflatable with twin 4 stroke motors. The Committee was invited to meet the members of the squad and see the new boat when the squad travelled into their area. The recreational mobile squad has carried out special patrols and operations between South West Rocks and Lake Conjola focussing on areas of known high levels of fishing activity and maintaining an advisory presence at fishing events on the Hawkesbury River and in Sydney. A breakdown of the mobile squads recent actions and activities from January to June 2004 was presented to the Committee. Some of the activities included coastal vehicle and boat patrols, attending fishing club meetings, fishing clinics and court attendance. The squad had undertaken 399 Recreational Boat Inspections and 2,653 angler inspections. From these inspections, 1,576 fish were seized, fishing equipment was seized from 39 persons and there had been 465 enforcement outcomes.

Issue

Saltwater Tournament Monitoring

Background

The Recreational Fishing Trust is funding the collection and analysis of angling catch and effort data at selected fresh and saltwater fishing events. The research started in freshwater regions in 1999 and expanded into saltwater in 2002/03. Approximately 45 freshwater, 15 saltwater and 25 game fishing tournaments were monitored in 2003. So far in 2004 data from 21 saltwater competitions has been collected. Anglers at selected competitions are issued with catch cards, upon which they record their fishing activities during the event. This includes the number and size of fish landed and how long they spent fishing. The information allows a catch rate (number of fish caught per angling hour or angling trip) to be calculated for various waterways, which can then be compared year on year. This essential information gathering process helps the Department to monitor the status of fish populations and also enables anglers to contribute to the sustainable management of NSW fish stocks. Tim Park will provide an update on the tournaments monitored and some results from recent competitions.

Outcomes

The Committee were advised about the objectives of the program, including:

1. monitoring the status of recreationally important fish populations through angler generated data;
2. providing a tool for assessing the effects of management initiatives; and
3. providing an opportunity for involvement and communication with angling groups.

Investigations have been carried out to determine the most suitable fishing events that best represent the diversity of angling in NSW. The saltwater events monitored in 2003/04 included: Tweed River Classic, Greenback Tailor Charity Event, Evans Head Fishing Classic, Evans Head Junior Competition, ABT Bream Series, Foster Bream Challenge, NSW Pro Bream Series, Trailer Boat Tournament, Pitt Town Fishing Club Hawkesbury Classic, Botany Bay Research Challenge, Lake Illawarra Flathead Classic, Leisure Coast Bream, St Georges Basin Meet and the Renegade Lure and Fly Classic. The Committee were provided with tables showing submission rates for each of the saltwater and freshwater competitions that are monitored by the Department. It was noted that the submission rates for log sheets in saltwater competitions were low compared to freshwater competitions, which have been monitored for a number of years. Strategies to address these low submission rates are currently being developed. After the data is collated results are provided to competition anglers and tournament organisers, posted on the Department's website and summaries provided in Newscast (the monthly newsletter for recreational fishers). A saltwater angling database has also been developed for gamefishing and spearfishing competitions with contemporary and historical data included.

The Committee were advised about the activities planned for the tournament monitoring program in 2004/05, including:

1. increasing the amount and coverage of the data collected;
2. targeting submission rates by anglers;
3. focussing coverage & collection by using all available staff including Fishcare Volunteers;
4. prioritising tournaments according to their importance, scale and adherence to the Department's policy;
5. refining the established databases to improve access to collected information;
6. establishing a matrix of tournaments by type region, latitude, and species;
7. formalising data processing and analysis procedures to improve efficiency;
8. disseminating findings through the completion of a report outlining results as well as management implications;
9. reporting via the Department's Website, Newscasts and other print media.

Issue

Small Grants – programs update

BackgroundProgress of small grants

A summary of all small grants approved by the Saltwater Expenditure Committee, including the current status of each program, will be provided at the meeting. Many programs have been delayed for a number of reasons, including obtaining relevant approvals, exchange of Trust contracts, and submission of tax invoices to enable payment of funds. To ensure that program managers deliver on their project objectives, part payments are issued on commencement with the remaining funds being paid on completion of milestones. This also applies to large grants. For the Committee's information a demographic breakdown of small grant funding will also be provided.

Checklist for capital works programs

At the previous meeting, the Committee discussed developing a checklist to ensure applicants are aware that some capital works projects may require approval from local council and that environmental issues may need to be considered. A draft checklist has been prepared and will be presented to the Committee for comment.

Outcomes

The Department advised that the Committee has allocated a total of \$127,000 to twenty six small grants programs since 2001. Funds of \$23,500 still have to be issued due to part payments and outstanding invoices from applicants. The Committee was advised that a part payment plan (with payments made on completion of milestones similar to Fisheries Research and Development Corporation grants) had been implemented to ensure applicants deliver on program objectives. The committee were advised that 12 programs had been completed, including fish cleaning tables at Narooma, Malua Bay (Eurobodalla Shire Council), St Georges Basin and Burrill Lake. The Committee was advised that anglers are using the new Weed tank at Kooragang Island also funded through the small grants program and that the installation of signage is required to complete the program.

Issue

Fish Aggregating Devices and Artificial reefs – programs update

BackgroundFish Aggregating Devices (FADS)

The Saltwater Trust is funding the Fish Aggregating Devices program designed to enhance angler catch. All 15 FADs will be redeployed for the 2004/05 season by mid October. Exact locations for new FADs at Swansea, Sydney North and Wollongong are currently being finalised. Heath Folpp will provide preliminary results of his postgraduate FADs research and from the logbook-monitoring program for the 2003/04 season. The FADs continue to receive exposure on radio and television programs, including Escape with ET, which has generated considerable interest and positive feedback from recreational fishers. NSW DPI has obtained a ten-year exemption certificate from the Commonwealth Department for the Environment and Heritage to allow the continued deployment of FADs in NSW.

Artificial Reefs

The Saltwater Trust is also funding the 3 year artificial reefs pilot program, which has recently commenced. The approvals process is continuing for the deployment of the first reefs in Lake Macquarie. An environmental consulting group has been approached to conduct the Development Application through Lake Macquarie Council and to obtain other relevant approvals through Lands NSW. Consultation with user groups has begun to establish suitable sites for deployment. Reefball moulds and accessories have been ordered from the Reef Ball Development Group in the United States of America. Delivery is expected by mid October. Initial construction training is envisaged to begin soon after with the assistance of the Australian Reef ball representative.

Outcomes

The Department advised the Committee about the progress with the FADs and artificial reefs programs. The Department plans to redeploy the new, smaller and cheaper FADs along the North Coast followed by the South Coast by the end of October (weather permitting). Heath Folpp gave an update on the work carried out on the artificial reefs in Lake Macquarie and in other estuaries. Stakeholder meetings have been held at Lake Macquarie to determine appropriate sites for reef deployment and there has been strong support for the program. Before reefs can be deployed in the Lake, a Development Application (DA) is required to be lodged with Lake Macquarie Council (the consenting authority under the provisions of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*).

Agenda Item 12

Dr Alistair McIlgorm

Issue

Economic survey of two coastal towns

Background

The Saltwater Trust is funding a survey of the importance of recreational fishing expenditure to the economies of two coastal towns in northern and southern New South Wales: Port Macquarie and Narooma/Bermagui. An independent consultant is carrying out this research. The towns are popular tourist and retirement areas, with approximately a quarter of residents being 65 years or over. A telephone survey of licence holders and a face-to-face survey of people in the towns was conducted. The Department has received a draft report and a summary of results will be provided at the meeting.

Outcomes

The Committee were advised that the aims of the report were to:

- estimate the total expenditure by recreational fishers in communities on the north coast and south coast of NSW;
- measure the importance of recreational fishing contribution to local economies in coastal towns; and
- estimate the importance and satisfaction ratings of recreational facilities and services.

The towns chosen were at a distance from the influence of Sydney and away from either the Victorian or Queensland borders. The towns are popular tourist and retirement areas, with approximately a quarter of residents being 65 years or over. The research involved 400 telephone interviews with fishing licence holders who purchased their licence in the two towns and 500 face-to-face interviews of people in the towns. The Department advised that the final report will be released later this year.

Agenda Item 13

Bryan van der Walt

Issue

Other programs – Milestone Reports

Background

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

Reward posters for the return of tagged black bream and luderick (blackfish) have been developed and distributed. Copies of the posters will be provided at the meeting.

Outcomes

For information.

14. Action items from previous meeting

The Committee noted that all of the action items from previous meetings were either completed or being progressed.

15. General business

The Department advised that a recreational fisheries news page had been drafted and submitted to the NSW Fishing Monthly magazine. This will be drafted and submitted on a monthly basis. The Newscast monthly newsletter for anglers and licence agents is continuing and the Committee was advised that clubs, individuals and other organisations are able to add their email address to the Newscast distribution list. The NSW Waterways Authority is undertaking a round of meetings to visit councils on the NSW coast to identify potential programs such as boat ramps for funding. The Department has been invited to these meetings and the Committee requested that the appropriate region member also attend the meetings.

The Committee noted that the Striped Marlin Economic Survey had not been released. The Department advised that the Minister was reviewing the report and that it would be released soon.

Action item: Chair of Committee to write to the Minister requesting the release of the Striped Marlin Economic Survey report.

Correspondence Received

Email received by Department on 6 September 2004 regarding a telephone call from Penny Papadimas from Port Kembla Coast Guard regarding rock fishing safety. Penny has witnessed an increasing number of anglers fishing a local rock platform at night where there are two life rings, but no light. Penny suggests the installation of a 4-5 meter pole with solar powered light with the life rings attached to the pole.

Email received by Department on 12 July 2004 regarding reduction of urban rubbish from Andrew Smith. Andrew has noted that since the buy back of commercial fishing licences, the Botany Bay Trawlers have sat idle in Cooks River. Andrew proposes that the trawlers be used to remove rubbish from Botany Bay and Port Hacking. Andrew also suggests the installation of boom nets to stop movement of rubbish in Cooks and George's River.

The Committee discussed the correspondence received.

Action Item: The Department and Malcolm Poole to contact Penny Papadimas from Port Kembla Coast Guard and provide advice on potential funding from the Saltwater Trust.

Next Meeting

Proposed date: 2 December 2004.

Meeting ended 3pm.