

Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing

Minutes

36th MEETING (04/2005)
9:30am, Thursday 8 December 2005

**NSW Department of Primary Industries
Cronulla Fisheries Research Centre Conference Room
202 Nicholson Parade, Cronulla**

Attendance

Chair

Bruce Schumacher

Members

Elaine Garvey	Estuary, Offshore Fishing
Mel Brown	Underwater Fishing
Ann Lee	Freshwater Fishing
Rebecca Erichsen	Nature Conservation Council
Terry Maloney	Freshwater Fishing
Neil Ryan	Recreational Fishing Media
Jim Harnwell	Offshore Fishing
Ann Garard	Charter Boat Fishing
Graham Moore	Indigenous Fishing
Steven Scott	Estuary Fishing
Meri Peach	Marine Biology
Otto Volz	Offshore Fishing, Tackle Sales
John Clarke	Estuary Fishing
Nick James	Departmental nominee

Observers

John Diplock, Program Manager Recreational Fisheries
Bryan van der Walt, Senior Manager Recreational Fisheries

Business

Welcome by Chair

Apologies

John Dunphy, Graham Moore and Anthony Moore (NCC – Rebecca Erichsen attended)

Minutes of previous meeting

Recommendation

The minutes are a true and accurate record of discussions from the 35th ACoRF meeting, held 22 September 2005.

Moved: Elaine Garvey Seconded: Terry Maloney **Carried**

Business arising from the minutes

Nil.

Agenda Items

1. Update on the Review of NSW Recreational Freshwater and Saltwater Fishing Rules (DPI)
2. Recreational Fishing Trusts (Bryan van der Walt)
3. Recreational (freshwater) fishing update (Cameron Westaway)
4. Proposal to take mullet at Store Beach, Sydney Harbour (presentation by Ted Allan)
5. Fishcare Volunteer Program and Workshops update (Dee McElligott)
6. Announcement of Federal Government's commercial fishing licence buy-out (DPI)
7. An assessment of changes in the recreational fishery of Lake Macquarie following the establishment of a 'Recreational Fishing Haven' (Aldo Steffe)
8. Game Fish Tagging Program (Bryan van der Walt)
9. Mulloway tagging and Stocking (Matt Taylor)
10. Outcomes from SIAC and ACoRF working group (DPI)
11. Protection of Bluefish, *Girella cyanea*, (DPI)
12. Eastern Tuna & Billfish Fishery (ETBF) Resource Allocation Workshop (John Diplock)

Out of session items

Charter Fishing Trust Fund Expenditure (sent 22/11/05 – for recommendation in session)

Other Business

- Award for contribution to recreational fishing in NSW
- Representation on the Fisheries Research Advisory Body (FRAB)
- Council's view on the use of "crab claws"
- New Zealand Recreational Fishing Ministerial Advisory Committee

Correspondence received

- Letter from Ted Allan – addressed in agenda item 4
- Eurobodalla Shire Council's submission re: killing of sharks, marlin & other large species
- Eastern Freshwater Cod information –addressed in agenda item 3

Around the table

ACoRF meeting dates for 2006

- Meeting 37 proposed for Wednesday 12 April 2006 (01/2006).
- Meeting 38 proposed for Thursday 29 June 2006 (02/2006).
- Meeting 39 proposed for Thursday 21 September 2006 (03/2006).
- Meeting 40 proposed for Thursday 14 December 2006 (04/2006).

Issue

Update on the Review of NSW Recreational Freshwater and Saltwater Fishing Rules.

Background

On 29 July 2005 the Department released the Review of NSW Recreational Freshwater and Saltwater Fishing Rules Discussion paper. Recreational fishers in NSW were invited to have their say on proposals to change some recreational fishing rules, including modifications to size limits, bag limits, fishing methods and proposals for fishing competitions. Due to extensive community interest, the cut-off date for submissions was extended to 21 October 2005.

Outcomes

Over 3000 submissions had been received by the Department in response to the Discussion Paper. Many of the submissions had additional informative comments relating to the management of recreational and commercial fisheries in NSW. The Department is currently analysing the submissions.

It is envisaged that further discussions will be held with recreational consultative groups and commercial advisory committees (re: saltwater size limits) on the formulation of the final draft outcomes. The outcomes will be presented to ACoRF for final consultation prior to submission to the Minister.

For information.

Issue

Recreational Fishing Trusts

Background

Status of the Saltwater Trust

The total income from licence sales in 2004-05 was \$10 million. At previous meetings, the Expenditure Committees have supported budgets totalling \$10.5 million and nearly \$3 million from the Saltwater and Freshwater Trusts respectively, for a range of compliance, research, management and education programs to improve recreational fishing in 2005/06. The balance in the Saltwater Trust as at 30 June 2005 was \$4 million. This balance includes the remaining funding from the buyout loan and committed funding of \$600,000 for the Recreational Fishing Fisheries Management Strategy. Likewise, the balance in the Freshwater Trust at the end of the last financial year was \$0.8 million, which included committed funding of \$245,000 for the Recreational Fishing FMS.

Review of applications

On 1 and 6 December, the Saltwater and Freshwater Expenditure Committees reviewed applications for funding from the Recreational Fishing Trusts. A summary of all programs reviewed by the Committees is provided. The Committee's expenditure recommendations will be provided at the meeting.

Outcomes

The Saltwater and Freshwater Expenditure Committee's expenditure recommendations are provided in Table below. The Council discussed the benefits of each program to recreational fishing.

Recommendation

Motion: That expenditure from the Saltwater and Freshwater Trusts, as outlined in Table 1, be supported.

Moved: Neil Ryan

Seconded: Jim Harnwell

Carried

Table: Programs recommended for funding by the Saltwater and Freshwater Expenditure Committees

Program	Applicant	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Saltwater Trust				
1. All access fishing platform Iluka - involves building an open access fishing platform to provide fishers with safe direct access to the Clarence River. The design will include a fish measuring station with educational signage.	Clarence Valley Council	\$15,000		
2. Biology and Fishery of Estuary Perch in Coastal Catchments in NSW - DPI will form a partnership with a NSW university to undertake a PhD study on the biology and fishery of the estuary perch in a coastal river in the Sydney region, and will obtain baseline data from other estuaries.	NSW DPI	\$55,510	\$59,515	\$35,315
3. Provision of water to the fish cleaning tables at Broadwater boat ramp, South Pambula (<i>small grant</i>)- involves providing water to two fish cleaning tables. Water will be sourced from the roof and stored in a specially constructed concrete tank.	Pambula Fishing Club	\$7,660		
4. Catch N Cook (Indigenous Youth Fishing Program) (<i>small grant</i>) – involves a series of fishing workshops which will provide a “positive hands-on fun fishing experience” for Indigenous youths and youths at risk.	Koori Communications	\$5,000		
5. Merimbula fish cleaning pontoon/ table (<i>small grant</i>) – involves the installation of a pontoon/ fish-cleaning table inside the bar entrance to Merimbula Lake.	Merimbula Big Game and Lakes Angling Club Inc.	\$10,000		
6. Botany Bay Game Fishing Club pontoon and fish cleaning table – (<i>small grant</i>)- involves the erection of a fish cleaning and measuring station at the club site. The facilities provided will be available for use by all recreational fishers.	Botany Bay Game Fishing Club	\$5,000		
7. Mulloway education tanks (<i>small grant</i>) – involves the use of fish display tanks to educate students on the habits of mulloway and to promote conservation of the marine environment.	St Josephs Vocational College	\$1,000		
8. Biological links between NSW coastal habitats for Yellowfin Bream (<i>small grant</i>)- involves developing, testing and refining techniques that will be important in investigating linkages among different life history stages of bream in south-eastern Australia, ultimately providing greater understanding of dynamics of the species in the region	University of Technology, Sydney	\$10,000		
Freshwater Trust				
9. Travelling Stock Routes/ Fishing Access (additional funding) -involves researching and identifying reserves such as travelling stock routes which are important for recreational fishing access with a view to preserving this access in the long term.	NSW DPI	\$62,000		

Issue

Recreational (freshwater) fishing update.

Background

Cameron Westaway, Senior Fisheries Manager, Inland, will provide an update on a range of recreational fishing issues, including those raised by Ms Ann Lee, freshwater fishing representative.

Outcomes

Eastern Freshwater Cod Recovery Plan - information from the Eastern Freshwater Cod Recovery Plan, relating to genetic guidelines for the conservation stocking program, was distributed to members for information.

Prevention of the spread of the Didymo virus – the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) is responsible for addressing this problem. The Council will be advised if there are any major developments.

Compliance – operations over the past 12 months have resulted in a number of prosecutions, however, freshwater anglers are generally very compliant (92%) with the recreational fishing rules.

Signage – there has been an increased focus on information & advisory signs in remote areas. The Small Grants program, which is funded by the Recreational Fishing Trusts, has provided some financial support for this initiative.

Effects of Freshwater Stocking research program - it was confirmed that freshwater research issues, including the effects of stocking, would be discussed at a future meeting, when Mr John Pogonoski, Research Technician - Freshwater, is available.

Proposed closure at Stevens Weir, Edward River – to limit the targeting of aggregating stocks (e.g. yellowbelly) below weirs/barriers/fishways. Freshwater management are considering the introduction of a mandatory closure in the immediate vicinity of these types of structures. This issue will be formally discussed with the Council at the next meeting.

Travelling Stock Routes (TSRs) – to provide greater access to freshwater fishing locations. Important TSRs are currently being identified and mapped (as part of program 9 in agenda item 2).

For information.

Issue

Proposal to take mullet at Store Beach, Sydney Harbour.

Background

Mr Ted Allan, long-term commercial fisher, has written to ACoRF to request the Council's consideration of a proposed permit application to take mullet at Store Beach, Sydney Harbour, on Saturdays during the month of April. A copy of Mr Allan's proposal was sent to members on 23 November for review prior to the meeting.

Mr Allan has been invited to the meeting to discuss his proposal in greater detail.

Outcomes

The Committee was shown a short video of Mr Allan working alone and using a small (½ maximum length) general purpose hauling net to catch mullet. Mr Allan stated there is no by-catch from such a small scale operation and that no other commercial fishers haul in this manner (i.e. by themselves) or in that specific area. Mr Allan confirmed he would be requesting a 12 month permit from DPI which, if issued, would be reviewed annually. The Council was asked to provide support for this proposal. A copy of the NSW/QLD mullet (*Mugil cephalus*) research report was distributed to Mr Allan and Council members for information.

Mr Allan then left the meeting to enable the Council to discuss the proposal in greater detail. The Council agreed that this was a reasonable request and deserved thorough consideration. During discussions, some members expressed a reluctance to support any increases in commercial fishing activity, while others do not support the targeting of spawning aggregations. It was confirmed that while other commercial fishers may not currently conduct this type of activity in the area (as stated by Mr Allan), they have the opportunity to make similar requests. Concern was expressed about the precedent/future implications if this proposal was supported.

Recommendation

Motion: That Mr Allan's proposal be formally supported by the Council.

Moved: John Clarke Seconded: Ann Lee *Carried*

Motion supported. The Council then voted on the above motion. 4 members voted in favour of the motion; 8 voted against. *Motion lost*

The Council did not formally support Mr Allan's proposal.

Issue

Fishcare Volunteer Program and Workshops update.

Background

Fishcare Volunteers talk to anglers about fishing rules and responsible fishing and help in a range of activities, such as fishing clinics, catch surveys and community fishing events. Funded by the recreational fishing licence, the NSW Fishcare Volunteer Program (FVP) continues to expand, with volunteers in many inland and coastal areas around the State.

Every year the NSW Department of Primary Industries in conjunction with the Recreational Fishing Trust run fishing workshops around NSW, teaching responsible fishing practices to over 2,500 children and other specific community groups. The program is primarily supported by the Recreational Fishing Trusts through funds raised from the NSW recreational fishing licence.

Dee McElligott, State Coordinator Community Programs, will provide an overview of these programs at the meeting.

Outcomes

The Fishcare volunteer program is now in its fifth year of operation and involves 318 volunteers spanning across 14 coastal and 10 inland locations throughout NSW. The program is funded by the Recreational Fishing Trust and forms a new communication link between NSW DPI and the general angling community, in particular "grass root fishers". Volunteers are part of a growing team of community members who are taking practical steps to increase awareness and the values of sustainable fishing practices. Trained and coordinated by NSW DPI the volunteers' primary tasks are to:

- provide information to anglers about fishing rules,
- educate anglers on environmentally sound fishing practices,
- conduct voluntary surveys of angler catch numbers, concerns and scientific data,
- participate at community events, and
- participate in local fishing workshops.

Five regional Education Officers manage the volunteers and network them into other agency community programs. A State Coordinator manages the statewide policy and sub programs associated with this diverse group of volunteers. Two-day induction training and 1 day field training is required to be undertaken prior to volunteers being active in the program. Volunteers are then held on a 3-month probationary period, whilst skills and commitment are assessed. After this time they are re-evaluated and, if appropriate, given a 12 month service term. Enhancement training is then provided over the course of their service to further enhance volunteer skills and networks.

The Council was advised that the Department is consolidating its approach with regards to the various fishing clinics/workshops. Members requested a calendar of events for the FVP.

Action item - Council members to be provided with an annual calendar of FVP clinic/workshop events.

The Council requested clarification of where the money raised by these events goes. It was confirmed that the fees collected from the fishing workshops go back into the Trust fishing workshops cost centre (Recreational Fishing Trust).

Members suggested that the new Australian Fishing Tackle Association (AFTA) "Learn to Fish" DVD could be supplied to children who pay to attend a fishing clinic.

It was discussed that it may be timely to conduct a review of the Fishcare program to ensure the benefits of the program to recreational fishers are maintained. The program has been funded since 2001 and receives substantial funding from the Recreational Fishing Trusts.

Recommendation

The Council supports a review of the Fishcare Volunteer program.

Issue

Announcement of Federal Government's commercial fishing licence buyouts.

Background

A copy of the press release by Senator Ian Macdonald, Australian Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation, on 23 November 2005 is provided below:

Federal Minister announces Commercial Buyouts

Today, I am announcing the largest structural adjustment package ever offered to the Australian fishing industry. It will help secure Commonwealth fish stocks and a profitable future for the fishing industry.

The Howard Government's \$220 million *Securing our Fishing Future* package follows concerns about the state of Australia's fish stocks, and the sustainability and profitability of the industry.

We have listened to industry, scientists and sensible environmentalists, and have looked closely at the future of our fisheries. The Government will provide a major package of one-off structural adjustment and improved management measures for those fisheries managed by the Australian Government.

It is a fact, well accepted by industry, that there are too many boats chasing too few fish in many of our fisheries. The Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) announcement today of further significant reductions in allowable catch levels and effort for 2006 and beyond in some fisheries addresses the sustainability of our fisheries.

The *Securing our Fishing Future* package addresses the profitability and the sustainable future of the industry. The centrepiece of the package is \$150 million for a one-off, capped fishing concession buyout focused on reducing the high level of fishing capacity in those Commonwealth fisheries that are subject to over-fishing - or at significant risk of over-fishing in the future.

This will also address the displaced fishing effort arising from the creation of Marine Protected Areas in the south east marine region, which the Environment Minister, Senator Ian Campbell, and I, will be working on in conjunction with industry in the next few months.

A further \$70m in complementary assistance will be available for other activities including:

- \$30 million to offset the impacts of reduced fishing activity on onshore businesses most directly linked to the fishing industry (e.g. fish processors, ships chandlers) as well as other targeted assistance including;
- grants of \$5,000 and \$3,000 respectively to skippers and crew who lose employment as a result of the catch cuts to offset the costs of job seeking, relocation and retraining;
- \$1,500 per fishing or directly related business to offset the costs of obtaining professional business advice on their best options under the package;

- \$20 million to establish a Fishing Communities Programme aimed at generating new economic and employment opportunities in vulnerable regional ports affected by reduced fishing activity;

- \$21 million to offset the cost of AFMA management levies and for improved science, compliance and data collection.

Today's announcement means the Government is responding to industry pleas and is stepping in as a circuit-breaker. We want all Commonwealth fisheries to be run sustainably and to ensure those remaining in the industry are able to earn a decent living.

I reaffirm that the Howard Government has not changed its policy of autonomous adjustment in Commonwealth fisheries. However, we recognise that, in the current economic climate, many Commonwealth fisheries are incapable of self adjusting.

The Government has decided to step in, as a once-off measure, to reduce fishing capacity in association with the necessary catch reductions in order to better position industry to be profitable and self adjust in future.

I am hopeful that we can also use this opportunity to accelerate our discussions with some of the State governments over sensible improvements to fisheries management in our respective jurisdictions, and I have today started discussions with my State colleagues to achieve this.

The other element of this major initiative is a range of actions to improve the management of Commonwealth-managed fisheries by doing things like adopting world's best-practice harvest strategies that will put an end to over-fishing of our domestic stocks, and to manage the broader impacts of fishing.

Commonwealth fisheries are generally those occurring between three and 200 nautical miles off the Australian coastline. The Australian Government will be working closely with the fishing industry and the communities likely to be affected, in the development and implementation of the overall package in the near future, and will make a more detailed announcement of the package shortly. This will include details of how and when the voluntary fishing concession buyouts will run in the various fisheries, draft boundaries for the marine protected areas in the south east, and details of the management actions being proposed.

This package is a major investment by the Commonwealth in the future of our fish stocks and the future of our fishing industry which is the lifeblood of many regional communities.

This is by far the largest and most comprehensive structural adjustment package ever offered to the fishing industry in Australia. The package adopted today means that we are avoiding the fisheries management mistakes made by the northern hemisphere and puts Australia at the forefront of fisheries management internationally.

Outcomes

The press release (outlined above) was provided to members for their information only at this stage. John Diplock provided a brief outline of the proposed scheme.

The Council did note, however, that 'real vs latent effort' should be considered during the buy-out process.

For information.

Issue

An assessment of changes in the recreational fishery of Lake Macquarie following the establishment of a Recreational Fishing Haven.

Background

Over the past 100 years, the ecosystem of Lake Macquarie has been placed under increasing stress by the combined effects of heavy industry, coal mining, the construction and operation of power stations, commercial and recreational fishing, tourism, non-extractive recreational usage, and a variety of agricultural and urban land uses within the catchment system of the Lake. These stresses have had negative impacts on the Lake Macquarie ecosystem and on the amenity and quality of the fishery.

The introduction of a general recreational fishing fee in March 2001 generated considerable funding that was used to undertake significant changes in the management of fisheries in NSW. Lake Macquarie was zoned as a 'Recreational Fishing Haven' (RFH) following extensive community consultation. This management initiative changed the allocation of fisheries resources in this waterway between the recreational and commercial sectors. This major re-allocation of access to the estuarine fisheries resources in Lake Macquarie has undoubtedly created additional recreational fishing opportunities. Thus, there was an important need to assess whether the recreational fisheries in this 'Recreational Fishing Haven' were improving and providing better quality recreational fishing. This report focuses on comparisons made between two separate daytime recreational fishing surveys of Lake Macquarie (including Swansea Channel). The first annual survey was done during the pre-RFH period (March 1999 to February 2000) and the second annual survey was done during the post-RFH period (December 2003 to November 2004). These annual surveys provide a snapshot of the recreational fishery of Lake Macquarie before RFH implementation and after RFH implementation. The same complemented, on-site, survey design was used to assess the recreational fisheries prior to and after the implementation of the Recreational Fishing Haven in Lake Macquarie. The shore-based fishery was assessed by using a roving (effort)-roving (harvest) design combination and the boat-based fishery was assessed by using a roving (effort)-access (harvest) design combination. Stratified random sampling methods were used.

Aldo Steffe, Senior Manager Sustainable Fisheries, will provide a presentation and discuss this study in greater detail at the meeting.

Outcomes

The two recreational fishing surveys provide evidence of a relatively productive recreational fishery in Lake Macquarie and Swansea Channel. Comparisons made between the two separate daytime recreational fishing surveys indicate that the post-RFH recreational fishery was very different to the fishery that had existed prior to the implementation of the RFH. Statistically significant increases in recreational harvest were recorded for some key recreational species and also some significant decreases for some other important recreational species. Overall, the indicators of recreational fishing quality that were examined indicated that the post-RFH fishery had improved in many ways since the pre-RFH survey period. A summary of the evidence provided in the report is that:

(a) the recreational harvest in both survey years was dominated by a relatively small number of taxa, however, the composition and relative contribution of these dominant taxa changed markedly between survey years. These changes occurred even though there was no significant difference between survey years in the total annual harvest, by number or weight, for the whole fishery;

(b) the recreational harvest of dusky flathead, tailor, sand whiting and trumpeter whiting (number and weight) and large-toothed flounder (weight only) had increased significantly during the post-RFH survey year;

(c) the recreational harvest of common squid, yellow-finned leatherjacket and sand mullet, by number and weight, had decreased significantly during the post-RFH survey year;

(d) total fishing effort (boat and shore combined) showed little change (about 2%), however, different trends were evident in the boat-based and shore-based fisheries. Fishing effort in the larger boat-based fishery increased by about 13% but this change was not statistically significant. In contrast, there was a statistically significant reduction of about 22% in the level of shore-based fishing;

(e) seasonal harvest rate comparisons between survey years tended to confirm the increasing or decreasing trends found in the annual recreational harvest estimates for the main species;

(f) comparisons of length frequency information, mean and median lengths between survey years indicated that most species were harvested at larger sizes during the post-RFH survey year. The mean and median sizes of dusky flathead, sand whiting, tailor, common squid, yellowfin bream, blue swimmer crab, large-toothed flounder and sand mullet were all larger during the second survey year.

Council members noted that some results obtained from the Tuross study were similar to the Lake Macquarie project. It was noted that a couple of stark differences are apparent, which is quite likely due to the Tuross entrance being partly closed for a while. It was also noted that each lake is unique and they may not be suitable for management by one method only. The Council agreed that this was invaluable research and should be repeated every 3-5 years.

For information.

Issue

Gamefish Tagging Program.

Background

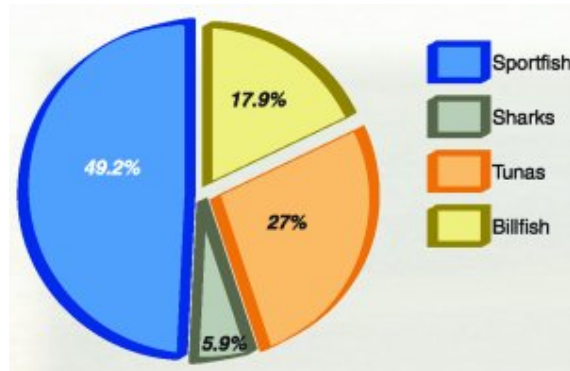
The Gamefish Tagging Program has been in operation since 1973 and is recognised as one of the largest programs of its type in the world.

The objectives of this program are to obtain information on the biology (distribution, movement, growth, exploitation) of billfish, tunas, sharks and sportfish and to encourage gamefish anglers to participate in fisheries management and research.



This program is valuable in assisting anglers to share the resource, is helping change the emphasis from exploitation to conservation and provides a link between the Department and the angling public.

Since the program commenced 240,000 tag cards have been returned with a total of 4,294 recaptures reported and verified, 36,000 anglers have participated in the program. In 1996/97 season 13,000 fish were tagged. 12,018 fish were tagged in the 1997/98 season and 14,739 in the 1998/99 season.



A total of 49.2% of all fish tagged are sportfish, which includes common pelagic species such as kingfish, mackerels and mahi mahi.

The gamefish tagging program provides the only tag/recapture data on species such as black marlin, sailfish, albacore, dolphin fish and sharks.

Bryan van der Walt, Senior Manager, Recreational Fisheries, will provide a presentation on the outcomes from the 4th International Billfish Symposium.

Outcomes*4th International Billfish Symposium*

The Council was updated on outcomes of the 4th International Billfish Symposium. The main aim of the symposium was to strengthen linkages between marine science and fisheries management.

The latest billfish research is currently focussed on Pop-up Satellite tag (PSAT) technology rather than conventional tags. These tags cost approximately US\$3-4,000 each. PSATs are attached to fish like a normal tag and are able to provide continuous movement data. They electronically record position, water temperature and depth at frequent intervals (e.g. every 30 min). The tag detaches from the fish after a designated period, pops up to the surface, and transmits stored data to a satellite. Actual tag retrieval (by beachcombers on the shore) allows more detailed archival data to be downloaded from the tag. Approximately 80% of tags deployed in the U.S. are retrieved from beaches and sent back to the program operators. Water temperature was reported to be the primary factor affecting billfish movement. For example, the PSAT study has found that striped marlin stocks consistently follow water temperatures of 21-24°C.

A number of studies have investigated survival of billfish caught on J hooks compared with circle hooks. A major study involved the tagging of 40 white marlin off the Atlantic coast of the U.S. 20 white marlin were caught by trolling dead baits using J hooks and 20 using circle hooks. 7 out of 40 marlin died within 10 days of capture and all of these fish were captured on J hooks. All fish captured on circle hooks survived for 10 days or more after tagging. Generally it was found that J hooks had a higher incidence of deep hooking and bleeding resulting in death (although not all fish that were bleeding when released died). Zero or reduced deep hooking was recorded in studies with circle hook captures and equal or improved hook-up rates were noted. The use of circle hooks is now fully embraced by anglers in the U.S. and they are being used successfully with an increasing range of species.

The Council was advised that the use of circle hooks has been made mandatory by the NSW Game Fish Association (NSW GFA), for all competitors using live baits, at the 2006 Port Stephens Interclub Tournament.

For information.

Issue

Mulloway tagging and stocking.

Background

Fish stocking supports some of the most important inland fisheries enhancing the recreational catch of anglers in Australia. A small marine trial of mulloway fingerlings stocking undertaken in 1997 proved successful. However, there is little information on the environmental aspects of marine stocking, such as predatory impact on small forage fish and prawns and the growth and survival of the stocked fish. These aspects are being investigated through experimental stockings of mulloway into Botany Bay, Georges River and Smiths Lake, prior to any large-scale marine stocking being considered.

Matt Taylor from the University of New South Wales will present an update on the final results of the study.

Outcomes

The aim of the project was to measure the predatory impact of hatchery-reared mulloway fingerlings in NSW estuaries and to determine appropriate stocking rates for any future extensive stocking campaigns.

Approximately 80,000 mulloway were released into the Georges River in 2003 and 2004. Following sampling of fish and analysis, the fish were found to achieve high growth rates and reached an increase in body length of up to 1mm per day. A Predatory Impact Model has been developed to measure the environmental impacts of stocking. The model required estimates of habitat and production and a 15km stretch of the Georges River was mapped and sampled. This allowed estimation of a maximum daily rate of consumption of a single mulloway (within a range of size classes) which was used to estimate the number of stocked fish of a certain size that the habitat can support, keeping within the bounds of production estimates.

The next phase of the program will involve restocking the Georges River with reduced numbers of large fingerlings. The Tweed, Richmond and Manning estuaries will also be stocked. It is envisaged that refined stocking techniques developed in the initial study will result in a better survival rate than earlier stockings.

The Council believes that it would be beneficial to develop a Predatory Impact Model for various other important recreational species.

For information.

Issue

Outcomes from SIAC and ACoRF working group.

Background

The Minister has established the SIAC and ACORF working group to discuss matters of mutual interest between the commercial and recreational sectors. Any outcomes from this working group will remain subject to consideration by ACoRF and SIAC. The Group plans to meet quarterly.

The first working group meeting was held on 7 October 2005. Issues raised at the meeting included the development of a joint voluntary buyout process of commercial fishing entitlements using funding contributions from both sectors. Outcomes from this meeting will be presented to the Committee at the meeting.

Outcomes

A handout with all the outcomes from the SIAC/ACoRF Working Group meeting 1 was distributed to members, which was noted by Council. The second meeting was scheduled for 9/12/05 and it was agreed that the outcomes would come back to ACoRF before any issue was acted upon.

For information.

Issue

Protection of Bluefish (*Girella cyanea*).

Background

A proposal to protect the coastal population of Bluefish (not including the population within the Lord Howe Island Marine Park) is currently being considered by the DPI. ACORF and the Fisheries Scientific Committee agreed to a closure in 2002 however, this did not proceed. Recent requests from the Australian Underwater Federation and the Newcastle Neptunes has prompted the Bluefish issue to be revisited. It is proposed to implement a closure on the taking of Bluefish for a 5 year period commencing in early 2006. Given that the protection for Bluefish has been requested several times over the past five years by the spearfishing association, and line fish captures are rare, it is envisaged that there will be no impact from this closure on fishing.

NSW DPI is requesting comments from ACORF on the protection of Bluefish.

Outcomes

The Council reiterated its support for the general protection of Bluefish and expressed support for the proposed protection period (5 year closure), commencing early 2006.

Recommendation

The Council supports the proposed closure to protect Bluefish, as proposed.

Moved: Jim Harnwell Seconded: Mel Brown *Carried*

Issue

Eastern Tuna & Billfish Fishery (ETBF) Resource Allocation Workshop.

Background

The NSW Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing, through the Saltwater Licence Expenditure Trust and in conjunction with Recfish Australia, recently arranged a workshop to discuss resource sharing issues and the allocation process for the ETBF. This workshop was seen as essential to enable all key stakeholders the opportunity to develop a recreational sector position on allocation/resource sharing and, to also develop management objectives for our sector of this fishery. The workshop objectives were designed to:

- coordinate input from the recreational and sport fishing organisations and state fisheries agencies on the allocation process for the ETBF;
- develop a set of principles that will be used for the allocation process for the fish managed under the ETBF;
- develop recreational fishing sector objectives for the management of the recreational sector in the ETBF to present to the relevant Ministers in the States and Australian governments;
- develop mechanisms for future changes to the allocation to allow for adjustments in allocation, tradeable rights, etc.

The workshop was held on Sunday 20 November and facilitated by Professor Alistair McIlgorm. Key participants were selected based on their ability to contribute to the issues addressed by the workshop.

An overview of discussions will be provided at the meeting.

Outcomes

The ETBF workshop hosted by Recfish Australia and ACoRF was held on 20 Nov 2005 at Sydney Game Fishing Club. The workshop had good attendance with 29 delegates from all major recreational fishing organisations and other recreational stakeholder representatives from NSW as well as relevant gamefishing representatives from Victoria, Tasmania and Queensland. The Saltwater Trust provided funding for the workshop. Recreational management objectives and principles for resource sharing in the ETBF fishery were developed to establish a position for the NSW recreational sector which could be forwarded to the NSW and Commonwealth Ministers.

The workshop proposed the following action items be presented to the State and Commonwealth Ministers for fisheries. The entire meeting (except the GFAA) supported the following proposals:

- Longlining be banned in all waters of the Australian Fishing Zone.
- All billfish to be recreational-only species.
- A ban on taking inshore baitfish species for longlining (interim measure as longline fleet is removed.)
- Any fishers restricted from future access to the fishery must be fairly compensated.

A record of proceedings is attached. The Council was advised that Mr Bill Heaton is now the NSW representative on Recfish Australia.

It was confirmed that the Commonwealth *has not* accepted the Ernst and Young Study on Striped Marlin as an accurate snapshot of the relative value of the commercial and recreational sectors. Negotiations between NSW DPI, Recfish, GFAA and the Federal Government are on-going.

Recommendation

The Council endorses the 4 policy positions of Recfish/recreational stakeholders.

Moved: Jim Harnwell

Seconded: Elaine Garvey

Carried

Out of Session items

- Charter Fishing Trust Fund expenditure proposal, for recommendation. A copy of the out of session information is attached.

Recommendation

The Council supports expenditure from the Charter Fishing Trust Fund (2005/06 – 2007/08), as recommended by the Marine and Estuarine Recreational Charter Management Advisory Committee.

Moved: Jim Harnwell

Seconded: Neil Ryan

Carried

Other Business

- *Award for contribution to recreational fishing in NSW*

At previous meetings, the Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust Expenditure Committee has discussed a proposal for the Department and recreational fishing stakeholder committees to recognise an individual or organisation's contribution to recreational fishing in NSW through annual awards. The Department plans to advertise an expression of interest and application form, which was previously approved by RFSTEC. A copy of this information will be distributed at the meeting.

- *Representation on the Fisheries Research Advisory Body (FRAB)*

The Council nominated Mr Terry Maloney as the 2nd recreational fishing representative on the FRAB.

- *"Crab claws"*

NSW DPI received a submission from a fisher on the Far North Coast regarding the use of a 6-pronged device connected to a 1-metre long handle. The device is intended to cover a crab (prongs/"claws" not sharpened) so that it does not damage the shell but could hold the crab to the bottom.

NSW DPI advice states "It would appear that this instrument is not a spear within the normal meaning of that word and from my understanding, its use would not be contrary to the legislation that prevents the use of spear guns, spears or similar devices."

The Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries has confirmed that the use of this type of device is illegal in Queensland waters. NSW DPI is seeking the advisory council's views on this issue. If there are concerns about the impacts of the use of this type of device then a fishing closure or regulation could be introduced.

The Council requested further information regarding the reasoning behind the Queensland ban, prior to considering this issue further.

- *New Zealand Recreational Fishing Ministerial Advisory Committee, for information.*

A new group made up of recreational fishing experts will have a direct line to New Zealand Fisheries Minister David Benson-Pope. The Recreational Fishing Ministerial Advisory Committee was appointed in July 2005. The Committee, which has been drawn from around the country, will help advise the Minister as progress is made on a number of strategic issues facing the recreational fishing sector. These include:

- consideration of how the sector's long-term interests are best managed;
- issues concerning the representation of recreational fishing sector; and
- the development of capacity to participate more fully in fisheries management.

A copy of the minutes from the 1st meeting of the NZ RFMAC was distributed to Council members at the meeting, for information.

Correspondence received

- Letter from Ted Allan – addressed in agenda item 4.
- Eurobodalla Shire Council's (ESC) submission re: killing of sharks, marlin & other large species, for information.

The Council confirmed that the ESC's proposals are consistent with NSW DPI Fisheries/the recreational fishing sectors approach (tag and release etc).

Action item: NSW DPI to advise the ESC of Councils view regarding the killing of sharks, marlin & other large species.

- *Manning River RFH (proposal from Taree Fishermen's Co-op)*

The Chairman circulated a proposal from Taree Fishermen's Co-Op for changes in the boundary of the Manning River recreational fishing haven, which had been presented to RFSTEC on 1 December 2005. The proposals included shifting the upstream boundary of the RFH to 3.2 km downstream of Ghinni Ghinni creek in exchange for extending the haven from Cedar Party Creek to 3 km downstream. Letters of support for the proposal had been provided from Taree RSL and Golf Club Fishing Club (provided the new area is not opened up for meshing of fish) and Wingham Anglers Club.

However, letters against the proposal had been forwarded from Manning River Sustainable Fishing and Tourism Inc, Taree West Bowling Club and Fishing Club, Coopernook Hotel Fishing Club, Old Bar Beach Bowling Club Fishing Club and Riverside Caravan Park, Croki. The Council noted that there was no local consensus.

The Council did not support any variation to the Manning River recreational fishing haven.

Moved: Neil Ryan Seconded: Jim Harnwell *Carried*

Around the table – General Business

Business cards for Council members - provide name and email contact details only.

RFHs and Marine Parks

Recommendation

Council recommended that a letter be sent to the Minister to advise that no existing RFH areas should be included in any proposed Marine Park Sanctuary zones.

Moved: Elaine Garvey Seconded: Jim Harnwell *Carried*

Mulloway (Shoalhaven) – The level of commercial harvest is still of concern. The Council would like to see research on the following:

- local populations;
- movement (UNSW currently undertaking a project on this subject);
- life history; and
- targeting spawning stocks.

Australian salmon - possible research (distribution range is greater than historically). In principle support for a research program has been provided by RFSTEC pending a funding contribution from FRDC.

Marine Parks - vacant positions on the Advisory Councils have been advertised. Members are encouraged to apply. The closing date is 22 December 2005.

ACoRF members' contact details

Email updated ACoRF contact list to existing members.

ACoRF meeting dates for 2006

- Meeting 37 - Wednesday 12 April 2006 (01/2006).

- Meeting 38 - Thursday 29 June 2006 (02/2006).
- Meeting 39 - Thursday 21 September 2006 (03/2006).
- Meeting 40 - Thursday 14 December 2006 (04/2006).



RECFISH AUSTRALIA

A record of proceedings.

**Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF) Resource Sharing Workshop
For
Recreational Fishers
Sydney Game Fishing Club Watsons Bay
20th November, 2005.**

Background

In response to initiatives by DAFF, Recfish Australia and the NSW Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing convened a workshop for key national and east coast state sport-fishing representatives, charter boat operators and government representatives to discuss resource sharing in the ETBF. In recognition of the agreement between the Commonwealth and State Ministers (Ministerial MOU) of December 2004 seeking agreed principles on resource sharing, the workshop was designed to provide considered advice to Ministers from the recreational sector.

The workshop objectives were to:

- coordinate input from the recreational and sport fishing organizations and state fisheries agencies on the allocation process for the ETBF
- develop a set of principles that should be used for the allocation process for the fish managed under the ETBF
- develop recreational fishing sector objectives for the management of the ETBF to present to the relevant Ministers in the States and Australian governments

The workshop considered the objectives of Commonwealth and State legislation, noting the need for optimization of economic benefits, the commitments to ESD, and the requirements for application of the Precautionary Principle. It was noted that these objectives are not being met under the current management arrangements.

Those present at the workshop were concerned at the detrimental impact the commercial East Coast Tuna and Billfish fishery has had on yellowfin tuna and billfish stocks off the East Coast, and the impact that continued commercial fishing would have on future recreational fishing and the economic benefits that it generates.

Western Australia

The workshop considered that the outcome of small temporary spatial closures implemented in Western Australia inadequate. They considered that consultation had been selective and poor, and that the outcome maintaining the status quo was a sham.

Consultation

The workshop expressed concern that the Commonwealth Minister had "signed away" the rights of recreational fishers, in haste to give statutory fishing rights to the commercial sector. They also considered the proposed allocation of a TAE (hooks) to be unworkable for intersectoral allocation, and would result in sequential overfishing of stocks. The critically low profitability and poor resource stewardship

record of the commercial fishing sector was noted. The management plan process has had inadequate consultation with recreational fishers and has been rushed through by the Commonwealth fisheries administration to protect an ailing commercial fishing industry and deliver an unsustainable level of fishing effort.

The workshop expressed concern at the failure of DAFF to consult the recreational sector on resource sharing. Consultation to date was considered to be “token” and inadequate. A number of those involved in the current round of negotiations considered the consultation to have failed to adequately represent the recreational sector’s views or to have too narrow a focus. The workshop supported more broad based consultation involving regional meetings of stakeholders to involve genuine “grassroots” recreational fishers.

Fishery Status

The status of fish stocks, and the current operation of both sectors was discussed in detail. Particular concern was expressed at increased targeting of striped marlin by longliners in recent years and the adverse impacts on the recreational fishery. Data was presented indicating that commercial overfishing has depleted broadbill swordfish stocks, and that yellowfin tuna are suffering locally depletions. The longline fishery is responsible for the mortality of large numbers of blue and black marlin through targeting striped marlin. It also has adverse impacts on sharks, sea birds and turtles. Much of the fish landed are exported and are not available to the Australian market. The commercial fishery currently has approximately 100 active operators although there is sufficient latent fishing effort, or overcapacity, to seriously damage the remaining pelagic fish stocks if activated.

The recreational sector of the EFBF releases more than 90% of all marlin landed. The fishery is very targeted and has very little impact on non-target species. The fishery raises a large amount of revenue for regional towns and any fish landed feed Australian families. The fishery has many thousands of participants and supports a huge number of local jobs. The recreational sector was considered to be capable of expansion with minimal impacts on fish stocks. This would result in increased economic benefits. This information was based on a thorough, independent economic analysis.

Legal Options

The workshop considered the current resource allocation between the recreational and commercial sectors is inequitable, unjustifiable and inconsistent with the statutory objectives of both the Commonwealth and State fisheries management acts. The workshop also considered that the failure to address statutory objectives and the flawed consultative process may provide opportunities for legal and/or administrative appeal challenges to any resource allocation decisions.

Fair Allocation Principles

The workshop considered the “Revised General Principles of Resource Sharing” provided in the RidgePartners Discussion Paper and dismissed them as inadequate. Consequently the following resource allocation principles were proposed:

- Allocation for resource sharing must be consistent with the objectives of State and Commonwealth legislation.
- Resource sharing arrangements between the States and the Commonwealth must be consistent with State resource sharing policies.
- Resource sharing allocations must be species based.
- No allocation will be made until independent stock assessment has been conducted on key species.

- Where a stock is overfished, or where stock status is uncertain, the Precautionary Principle must apply and allocation must favour the sector that minimizes fishing mortality.
- No allocation will be made until an independent assessment of the social and economic benefits derived from the fishery is completed.
- The level of sustainability must be defined before allocation.
- Allocations will be made to maximize the social and economic benefits to Australia.
- Allocations will be made in accord with ESD Principles (particularly intergenerational equity) to rebuild fish stocks by decreasing fishing mortality,
- No allocations will be made until revised ESD Principles have been agreed.
- Catch history will not be the basis for allocation between sectors.
- Resource sharing allocation will recognize the long-term objectives of relevant sectors.
- Lines on the water are not resource sharing allocations.
- Resource sharing allocation cannot be achieved through area and temporal closures alone without explicit catch restrictions (TACs) being applied.
- When the government re-allocates resources from one sector to another fair compensation should be paid.

Management Objectives

In the next five years the recreational sector operating in the ETBF will develop measurable, cost effective, readily understood and equitable objectives that will deliver :

Increased tag and release of all sport fish and reduced numbers of fish killed by the sector

Increased strike rates, numbers of trophy fish caught and species diversity, better bait availability, reduced gear conflict with other sectors and recreational only fishing areas.

These objectives however will only be achievable by fair resource allocation, improved education and effective enforcement.

Further discussion throughout the day focused on what the recreational sector would like to see presented to the relevant Ministers for the future management of the ETBF. Full consideration should be given to the economic and social value of the recreational fishery, the long-term sustainability and limited environmental impact of the recreational fishery.

The workshop proposed the following action items to be presented to the State and Commonwealth Ministers for fisheries. Generally the entire meeting supported this proposal

Action Items

- Longlining be banned in all waters of the Australian Fishing Zone.
- All billfish to be recreational-only species.
- A ban on taking inshore baitfish species for longlining (interim measure as longline fleet is removed.)
- Any fishers restricted from future access to the fishery must be fairly compensated.

* Grahame Williams and Bill Edwards abstained from vote. Mr Williams stated that he could not agree with proposals as this might compromise his position on various international committees, the ET & BF Mac and is not the GFAA policy.

APPENDIX: Attendees present at ETBF resource sharing workshop, 20th November 2005.

Attendee	Organisation
David Bateman	SUNFISH QLD
Doug Joyner	Aust. Fishing Tackle Ass. (AFTA)
Bill Heaton	AFTA
John Burgess	ANSA NSW
Jim Harnwell	Journalist, Game Fisher
John Newbery	Journalist - Fishing World
Grahame Williams	President GFAA
John Harrison	Recfish Australia
Bill Edwards	GFAA/ RECFISH
Otto Volz	NSW GFA President
Rob Henderson	NSW GFA Central Zone
Ross Hunter	NSW Charter boat fishermen
Malcolm Poole	NSW RFA/ Recfish
Bruce Schumacher	NSW ACoRF/Recfish
Ray Joyce	Qld Charter
Terry Healy	Qld Fisheries (Observer)
Julian Pepperell	Scientist – Pepperell Consulting
Brett Cleary	TARFish
Howel Williams	Tas Fisheries
Phil Ingram	AAG
Bob Danckert	Sydney GFC
Neil Ryan	Sportsfish Australia; Game Fisher
Colin Tinker	NSWGFA
Simon Stevens	Wollongong GFC
Martin Crowe	Wollongong GFC
Corrie Banks	VRFish, GFAV
Alistair McIlgorm	Facilitator
John Diplock	NSW DPI
Phil Bolton	DPI Fisheries
Bryan VanDerWalt	DPI Fisheries

**Out of Session Agenda Item
Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing
November 2005**

Agenda item 10

NSW DPI

Issue

Charter Fishing Trust Fund.

Background

Trust fund

The *Fisheries Management Act 1994* (the Act) provides for the management of recreational charter fishing boat activities by the issuance of a recreational charter fishing boat licence. NSW operators are required to pay an annual fee for their charter fishing boat licence, which is required by law to be paid into the Charter Fishing Trust Fund (the Trust). Section 236A of the Act outlines the procedure for expenditure of funds from the Trust. By law, the Minister is required to consult any relevant Advisory Council about policies and priorities for expenditure. ACoRF is the relevant Council.

Section 236A(1)(a) of the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* states that all fees and charges paid by charter fishing boat operators are to be paid into the Trust. S.236A(2) states that there may be paid out of that Fund:

- (a) the costs of taking measures to enhance charter fishing, and
- (b) the costs of carrying out research into charter boat fishing, and
- (c) the costs of management and administration of charter fishing boat operations, and
- (d) the costs of ensuring compliance with charter fishing boat regulatory controls, and
- (e) the costs of consultative arrangements with owners and operators of charter fishing boats.

The Minister previously approved expenditure of \$905,000 from the Trust for the 2003/04-2007/08 financial years, based on the recommendation of the Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing and Marine and Estuarine Recreational Charter Management Advisory Committee (MERCMAC), in 2003.

Service delivery/staff resources

MERCMAC members have sought an additional MAC meeting each year and improved service delivery to the committee and charter industry. It is proposed to create an ongoing, temporary Clerk grade 3/4 (Fisheries Management Officer) position, funded by the Charter Trust. The position would be dedicated to the NSW charter fishing industry and allow the Department to improve services to the industry.

Charter Fishing Trust Fund budget information is outlined below.

Outcomes

Table 1: Predicted revenue, proposed expenditure and projected Charter Fishing Trust Fund balance (2005/06 – 2007/08).

<i>Financial Year</i>	<i>Predicted Revenue</i>	<i>Proposed Expenditure</i>	<i>Projected Balance</i>
2004/05	\$117,000	\$105,000	\$93,000*
2005/06	\$160,000#	\$155,008	\$97,992
2006/07	\$160,000#	\$154,761	\$103,231
2007/08	\$160,000#	\$161,268	\$101,963

* \$93,000 - actual balance of the CFTF as at 30 June 2005. # Predicted revenue of \$160,000 is based on an estimated 250 licence renewals each year (i.e. approximately 85% of total fees - this factors in licence abeyance payment flexibility provisions).

At the meeting on Tuesday 18 October 2005, the Marine and Estuarine Recreational Charter Management Advisory Committee supported expenditure from the Charter Trust (2005/06 – 2007/08), as outlined in Table 1 (above). This includes formal support from the Committee to create and fund an ongoing CFB Fisheries Management Officer position. A breakdown of the supported annual expenditure is outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Breakdown of proposed annual expenditure from the Trust (2005/06 – 2007/08).

<i>Expenditure</i>	<i>Total</i>
Logbook/monitoring program	\$20,000
MERCMAC meetings	\$15,000
Program Management	\$30,000
CFB FMO position (based on 2005/06 salary)	\$90,008
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$155,008</i>

The Committee also discussed the potential to use remaining funding in the Trust (Table 1 – Projected Balance) to conduct various programs that would benefit the NSW charter fishing industry. The Committee indicated in-principle support for the allocation of funds from the Trust (with a matching dollar for dollar contribution from the Recreational Saltwater Trust) to a project, or projects, which would benefit the NSW charter fishing industry (e.g. an economic survey of the industry). Please note that any proposed studies/projects would need to be formally considered/supported by MERCMAC and subject to the Recreational Fishing Trust Fund application process involving RFSTEC and ACoRF.

Recommendation

The Department is seeking the Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing's support for the:

- a) Charter Fishing Trust Fund budget (2005/06-2007/08), as outlined in Table 1; and
- b) proposal to allocate remaining funding from the CFTF (on a dollar for dollar basis with the Recreational Trust) to a project, or projects, which would benefit the NSW charter fishing industry, following consideration by MERCMAC, RFSTEC and ACoRF.