

Sustainable Fisheries Strategy

2017–2027

Results of consultation: Proposed management changes for gastropod and bivalve molluscs in Moreton Bay

Summary

A survey was released for public consultation in December 2018. The survey outlined the proposed changes to management of gastropod and bivalve molluscs in Moreton Bay.

Consultation was open for four weeks with 393 responses to the online survey across all fisheries sectors.

The detailed results of the consultation are provided in this report.

Background

Fishing pressure directed at gastropods and bivalve molluscs has increased significantly in recent years, particularly in the Moreton Bay region, resulting in concern about the sustainability of key species (mud ark, mud whelks and cockles). Gastropods and bivalve mollusc species are highly susceptible to localised depletion because of their sedentary nature and the ease of access to fishing grounds adjacent to urban centres.

Limited compliance with the current in-possession limit (50 per person) is a key issue, with large organised groups of people targeting these species excessively. Fisheries Queensland anticipates that fishing pressure and demand for these fisheries resources will continue and management action is required to protect gastropods and mollusc populations and support rebuilding of populations to more sustainable levels.

Fisheries Queensland sought feedback on the following management changes to the *Fisheries Regulation 2008*:

- Prohibit the take of gastropods and bivalve mollusc, excluding pipis, in Moreton Bay.
- Clarify the definition of mollusc to the following to assist compliance activities:
 - Gastropod means any invertebrate species belonging to the taxonomic Class Gastropoda
 - Bivalve Mollusc means any invertebrate species belonging to the taxonomic Class Bivalvia
 - Pipi means any invertebrate species belonging to the taxonomic Family Donacidae.
- Clarify that shell collecting (i.e. empty shells, no live organisms) is not a regulated activity.

Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the consultation and summarise feedback received on the proposed changes to management of gastropod and bivalve molluscs in Moreton Bay. It does not contain any final Government position on the proposals.

Consultation summary

A total of 393 responses to the online survey were received and no written submissions.

There were two types of responses to the consultation:

- Answers to questions in the online survey ('YES', 'NO')
- Comments provided in the comments field of the online surveys

The responses to the online survey questions are presented graphically.

General feedback

Stakeholders across all sectors (mostly recreational fishers, conservation representatives and general members of the public) had generally noticed and expressed concern about increasing pressure on gastropod and bivalve molluscs in Moreton Bay (>93%).

The majority of respondents across all sectors supported the proposed closure prohibiting the take of gastropods and bivalve mollusc, excluding pipis, in Moreton Bay (>89%).

Many comments suggested other arrangements which may be necessary to protect gastropod and bivalve molluscs in Moreton Bay and made other comments. These are summarised below.

Next steps

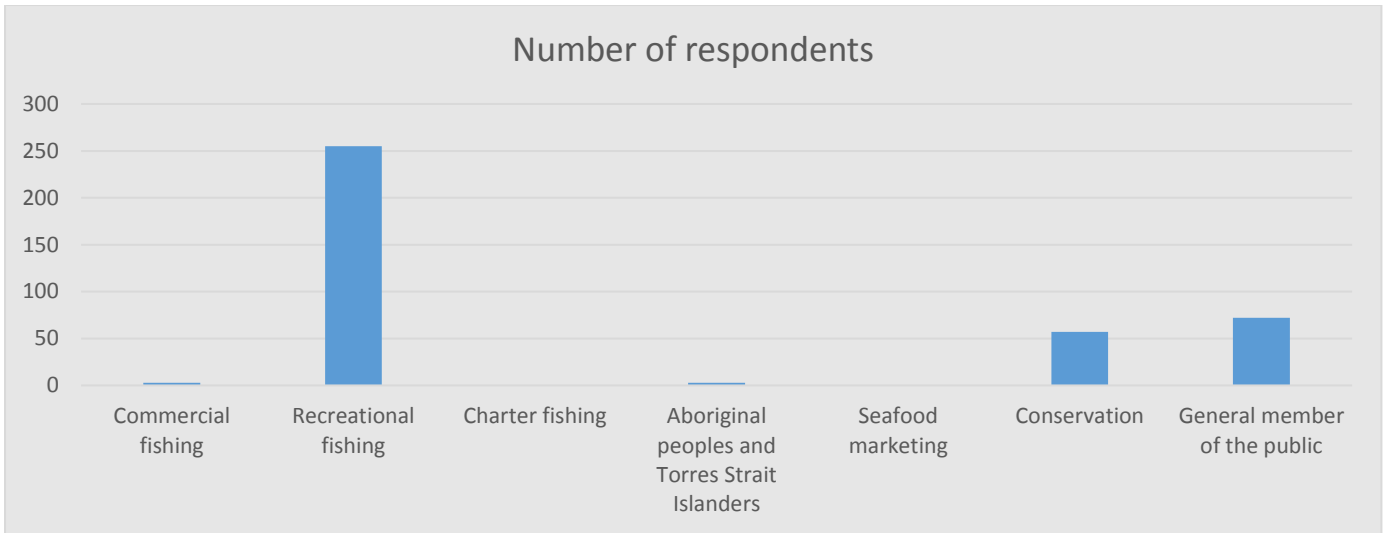
Views from all sectors were mostly consistent on the proposals to manage gastropods and molluscs in Moreton Bay. Feedback from the consultation will be considered by the relevant fishery working group and the Sustainable Fisheries Expert Panel.

This feedback will also be presented to the Queensland Government and taken into consideration in determining management action, anticipated to be implemented during 2019.

Online survey results

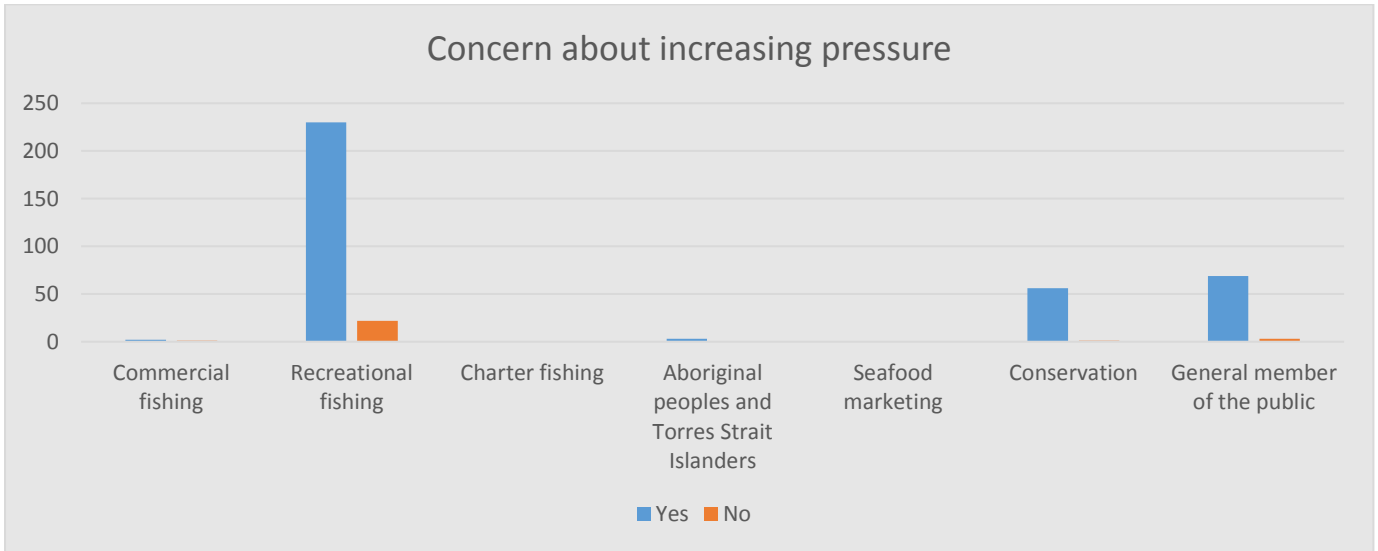
Question 1: Which of the following best describes your interest in Queensland's fisheries?

Answer choices	Responses	
Commercial fishing	3	0.77%
Recreational fishing	255	65.38%
Charter fishing	0	0%
Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples	3	0.77%
Seafood marketing	0	0%
Conservation	57	14.62%
General member of the public	72	18.46%
TOTAL	390	100%



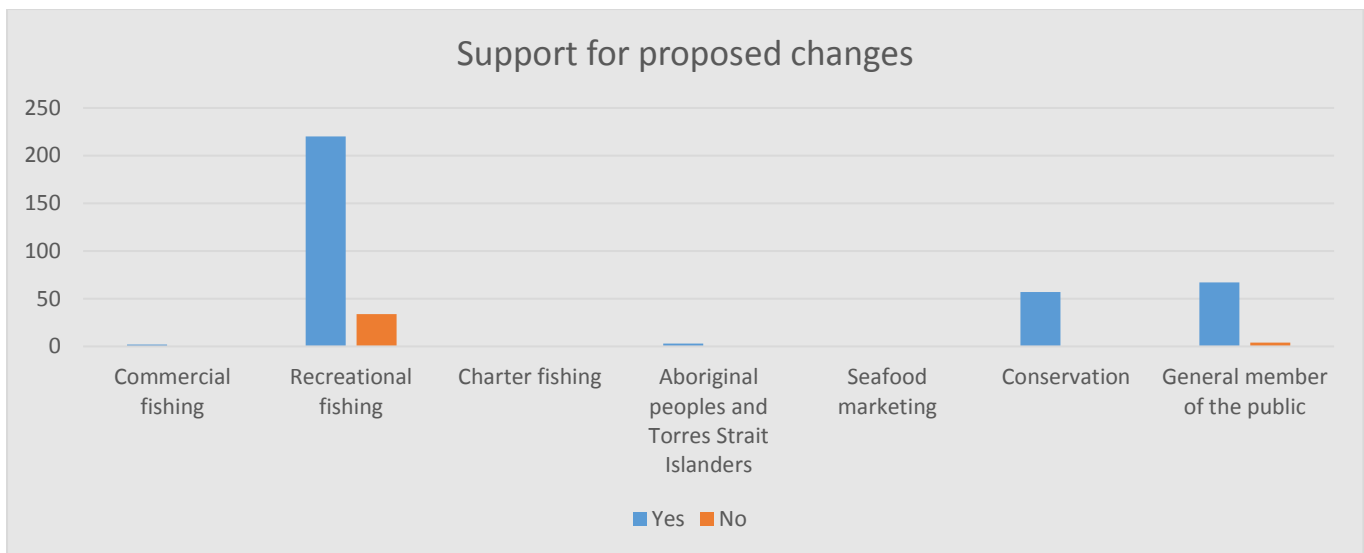
Question 2: Have you noticed and/or are concerned about increasing fishing pressure on gastropods and bivalve molluscs?

Answer choices	Responses	
Yes	363	93.08%
No	27	6.92%
TOTAL	390	100%



Question 3: Do you support the proposed management changes to prohibit the take of gastropods and bivalve mollusc, excluding pipis, in Moreton Bay to protect stocks?

Answer choices	Responses	
Yes	350	89.97%
No	39	10.03%
TOTAL	389	100%



Question 4: What other arrangements do you think may be necessary to protect gastropods and bivalve molluscs in Moreton Bay?

A total of 313 respondents suggested the following arrangements also be considered:

- Improved education and awareness through signage, community education, information in multiple languages
- Harsher penalties and stricter enforcement to deter non-compliant activity, including the use of cameras
- Stronger and targeted compliance in this area
- Seasonal closure in place of a full ban
- Include pipis in the management changes and/or reduce the current pipis possession limit
- Make it easier for constituents to report illegal activity
- Increased resourcing and presence of Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol
- Work with the community to train volunteer rangers to educate and manage non-compliance
- Implement a state-wide ban on the take of gastropods and bivalve molluscs to prevent this issue from spreading
- Allow the take of gastropods and bivalve molluscs if they are eaten on-the-spot
- Allow recreational take of shell (non-food species) to ensure shell collecting can continue

Question 5: Other feedback/comments?

A number of respondents provided additional feedback which have been collated into the following themes:

- The need to review any decision after a couple of years for effectiveness
- Support for urgent management action
- Easier reporting of illegal activity for constituents
- Support for the work and additional funding of Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol
- Support for recreational fishing licence and permits for any “shellfish” collection
- Review other recreational activity such as cast netting near jetties and other infrastructure
- Rehabilitation of fish habitats, land and waterways
- Need a committed education and awareness campaign

- Additional monitoring of stocks and biology is supported

Written submissions

No written submission were received.