

Rocky Reef Fin Fish Fishery Review – Port Meetings

Summary of key issues raised during consultation meeting

Location: Victoria Point
Number of attendees: 120

Not government policy

Fisheries Queensland is undertaking public consultation on the Rocky Reef Fin Fish Fishery with a focus on snapper. This summary consolidates the range of issues raised by individuals who attended the public meeting listed above to discuss the current and future management of the fishery.

These views will be considered by the government in reviewing the current Rocky Reef Fish Fishery management arrangements.

Fees

Issues raised include the following:

- What is the expected revenue from the recreational permit fees?
- How will the money collected from the fees be used?
- Recreational fishers are already bearing high costs of fuel, boat and vehicle registration – the permit would be a significant additional cost.
- Pensioners can not afford the permit fees. Would you consider a concession for pensioners?
- Are the figures used to calculate the \$90 permit fee available publicly?
- The RIS presents the permit fee as a disincentive to fish for snapper.
- If I own two vessels, do I need to pay for two permits?
- Will there be increased enforcement as a result of the permit fees?
- The \$90 fee is just a revenue raising exercise.

Closures

Issues raised include the following:

- The government has already made its decision by introducing the 2011 six-week closure.
- Was the interim six-week closure passed by parliament?
- Snapper will still be caught during the proposed closures and may not survive release.
- The proposed closure dates should occur during spawning around lunar cycles as in the coral reef fin fish fishery.
- Why are pearl perch and teraglin included in the closures, but not for the permit?
- Could the four month closures be introduced in 2011?
- If pearl perch and teraglin can't be taken during a snapper closure, this is a deterrent to go fishing.
- What are the penalties of non-compliance with the interim six-week closure? What if the snapper I catch is bit in half by a shark and I want to use the remaining parts for bait?

Impacts of RIS proposals

Issues raised include the following:

- Discussion around the bag limit of 15 rocky reef fin fish - what period of time does this limit apply to or is this an annual limit?
- The interim closure will result in extremely high economic impacts for local businesses on the back of recent disasters.
- The impact of the \$90 fee is a deterrent to go fishing. Need to understand that there will be flow-on effects on other fishing related businesses because of this.
- Would a permit be required to catch pearl perch and teraglin?

Alternative management strategies

Issues raised include the following:

- Why are restrictions to the fishery the only tool being considered to rebuild the snapper stock? Why not enhance recruitment by restocking?
- Increasing the size limit for snapper should improve recruitment.
- Discussion around increasing the size limit for snapper and limiting the take of large fish by decreasing the bag limit.
- None of the options are supported. Can hybrid options be developed?
- The breeding grounds have already been degraded. These areas need to be protected.
- Need to protect breeding areas and juvenile snapper from trawling.
- Why don't you use a system like the NSW recreational fishing licence?
- Concerns raised about fishermen from New Zealand fishing for snapper in Australian waters then selling it back.

Data and science

Issues raised include the following:

- What expertise has been used in assessing the status of snapper?
- Uncertainty in the recreational data has been questioned by the Australian Government report.
- How were the recreational catch estimates derived?
- Why did the department use a phone survey for recreational catch estimates rather than go direct to recreational fishers for information?
- To what level do you aim to rebuild the snapper fishery - what is the target?
- If recreational fishers provide logbook data, these will be used against us.
- Discussion around the snapper data – there was agreement that there is a problem with snapper but there is no support for the four options. Do not have a problem with the model but do have a problem with the data. To address this issue, there needs to be quality data to base decisions on, acceptable solutions and if a permit system is required there needs to be a lower fee with options to take up a permit for a short term.
- An alternative is to increase the PPV slightly to cover the costs of management. We need genuine solutions that people can comply with and an inexpensive system.

- Under options one and two, submission of data for the recreational reporting system needs to be simple.
- Why is the commercial catch rate considered hyperstable and Gold Coast charter catch rates not considered hypersensitive?
- How can we be sure that the bag and size limit changes for snapper have not worked?
- Need to be able to access the scientific information used in the assessment of the status of snapper to make an informed response.

Process

Issues raised include the following:

- Why is mahi mahi included in the review? They are a migratory fish and a fast growing species.
- Responses to issues raised at these meetings need to be included in the meeting records.
- Very concerned about the lack of enforcement.
- Meetings should also have been held in Ipswich - there are many fishers and boat owners here.
- What is the objective of the proposals in the RIS? What is Fisheries Queensland's preferred option?
- Why has no response been received to letters sent to government?
- Concerned about the transparency of process if the working group did not know about the interim closure.
- Better fish identification, bag limit and size limit information are required. NSW produces a very useful booklet.
- What is the opposition's view on the proposals?
- Problem with undersized snapper sold in fish shops in Queensland.
- Need to explore the management arrangements used to manage snapper in other states, specifically the slot limits.
- When will eligibility for charter quota be determined?
- Where are the artificial reefs that the government promised as a result of Moreton Bay rezoning?
- All attendees at the meeting tonight are urged to fill out the response forms. Don't leave it at just coming along to the meeting tonight. Go the next step and provide feedback in writing.

For further information on the review of the fishery, or for records of other individual meetings held along the east coast of Queensland, please visit www.fisheries.qld.gov.au