

Rocky Reef Fin Fish Fishery 2009

Progress against DEWHA Conditions and Recommendations



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Progress in implementing Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) conditions and recommendations for the Rocky Reef Fin Fish Fishery.

DEWHA made a range of recommendations to QPIF during its initial assessment of the Rocky Reef Fin Fish Fishery (RRFFF) in 2005, in order to address perceived risks or uncertainties. DEWHA's assessment of progress against these recommendations can be found at www.environment.gov.au/coasts/fisheries/qld/rocky-reef-finfish/pubs/report08.pdf

In 2008 the fishery was reassessed and a new two year WTO was granted, along with a new set of conditions and recommendations. Details of the progress QPIF has made in relation to the current recommendations are outlined in this document.

Condition 1:

Operation of the fishery will be carried out in accordance with the RRFFF management regime in force under the Queensland *Fisheries Act* 1995 and the Queensland Fisheries Regulation 2008.

Progress: Ongoing
All operations in 2008 were carried out under the appropriate legislation.

Condition 2:

Queensland Primary Industries & Fisheries (QPIF) to inform the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) of any intended changes to management arrangements that may affect the assessment of the fishery against the criteria on which EPBC Act decisions are based.

Progress: Ongoing
No changes to management arrangements were made in 2008 that negatively impacted on resource sustainability.

Condition 3:

QPIF to produce and present reports to DEWHA annually as per Appendix B to the *Guidelines for the Ecologically Sustainable Management of Fisheries – 2nd Edition*.

Progress: Ongoing
QPIF continue to provide annual reports.

Condition 4:

QPIF to develop a recovery strategy for snapper, which outlines clear timeframes for implementation, by 31 October 2009. The recovery strategy will incorporate latest stock assessment data, will be applicable to all sectors and will actively promote the recovery of snapper to ecologically viable stock levels.

Progress:

The status of the snapper stock, based on recent assessments, is likely to be fully fished to overfished. In 2008, QPIF initiated the formation of a Stakeholder Network Working Group (SNWG) to develop new management arrangements for the fishery in partnership with QPIF. Membership of the SNWG comprised of commercial fishers, recreational fishers, charter operators, tackle retail trade, seafood marketing sector, fisheries scientists, fisheries managers and NSW Fisheries. Media and conservation sectors were also involved in the process. Subcommittees of the SNWG also included the broader marine sector. The SNWG was tasked with identifying and prioritising fishery issues, facilitating consultation with the broader community and making recommendations for the management of the fishery. Management options developed by the SNWG were put out for consultation in September and October 2008 and followed up through a series of port meetings between the Gold Coast and Mackay. Responses from the community consultation process and outcomes of the 2008 snapper stock assessment were considered by the SNWG in making management recommendations to QPIF. These recommendations are currently being considered by QPIF before submission to the Minister for consideration.

Recommendation 1:

QPIF to implement the RRFFF Performance Measurement System (PMS) in sufficient time to be reported upon within the 2008 Annual Status Report. Once implemented, QPIF to monitor the status of the RRFFF in relation to the PMS. Within 3 months of becoming aware that a performance measure has been triggered, QPIF are to finalise a clear timetable for the implementation of appropriate management responses.

Progress: Completed

QPIF reported against the PMS in the 2008 annual status report for this fishery.

Recommendation 2:

QPIF to continue to pursue collaborative management of shared rocky reef stocks, with priority to be given to snapper, with the Australian Fisheries Management Authority and the New South Wales DPI.

Progress: Ongoing

QPIF meet with NSW DPI biannually as a part of an ongoing collaboration with respect to managing shared rocky reef stocks. NSW DPI is also a member of the Stakeholder Network Working Group reviewing management arrangements for the fishery. Collaboration between the departments ensures management arrangements in place benefit the shared stocks.

Recommendation 3:

QPIF to

- Continue to improve estimates of harvest of key target species from all sectors; and
- Factor this data into stock assessments (or other assessment method) to determine suitably precautionary estimates of ecologically sustainable harvest levels.

Progress: In progress

Improvements to recreational, commercial and charter harvest estimates are part of the key discussions on potential changes to management arrangements that the SNWG are consulting on. Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries are also currently planning a state-wide recreational survey that will provide more accurate and up to date recreational catch estimates.

Recommendation 4:

QPIF to continue to improve systems used to validate commercial logbook catch and effort data and protected species reporting, including a review of the level of observer coverage in the RRRFF.

Progress: In progress

QPIF's logbook validation project for this fishery was completed in October 2006, with a high level of accuracy of logbook reporting found. The next round of validation activities will commence in mid 2010. Validation of logbook information provides confidence in the level of reporting accuracy by commercial fishers. QPIF continue to work towards improvement through validation using fishery independent observers to record catch, effort, and protected species interactions. The Fisheries Observer Program was recently reviewed, with the east coast line fisheries due for onboard observers in 2011.

Recommendation 5:

QPIF to continue to monitor temporal and spatial changes in catch and effort data for key target species.

Progress: Completed and Ongoing

QPIF closely monitor catch and effort trends through the annual status reporting, the performance measurement system, and the annual stock status assessment. Results are available annually through the status report.

Recommendation 6:

QPIF to continue the development and implementation of improved management arrangements for the RRRFF to limit the cumulative harvest by all sectors, of all target species to ecologically sustainable levels.

Progress: In progress

Improvements to recreational, commercial and charter management arrangements for the fishery are part of the key discussions of the SNWG.

