

Submission
No 958

INQUIRY INTO RECREATIONAL FISHING

Name: Mr Ian H Smith

Date received: 18/03/2010

Ian H Smith

18/3/10

Batemans Marine Park Advisory Committee Recreational Fishing Representative.
Member of Narooma Sporting & Services Fishing Club
Member of Narooma Sport & Gamefishing Club
Member of Australian National Sportfishing Association
Member of Far South Coast Bass Stocking Association

Attention Members of the Select Parliamentary Recreational Fishing Inquiry

Dear Members

Thank you for the invitation to express some of the concerns of recreational anglers of the Far South Coast

Items for your consideration:

Marine Parks

There is a small but vocal group of anti marine park activists who would not be happy with any restrictions. They have been promoting doom and gloom which certainly has not been an outcome of the BMP.

The anti park people say with some accuracy that the science was rushed during the zoning process for the BMP. This would generally be the view of the previous committee. However most anglers can live with the present zoning, in particular the removal of trawlers from the park is a wonderful achievement which even the "anti parkers" claim to have had some input to this success.

They also state that the marine parks have been "given to the Greens" in return for electoral preferences. I do not know if this is true but unfortunately no one stands up to counter this attack on the Marine Park.

Zoning Review

Marine Park Zoning reviews should be done in a non political environment, with accurate science behind any proposed change. It is well known the extreme conservation groups wish to have the Sanctuary Zones greatly expanded. This would be detrimental to both anglers and the environment as anglers will be compressed into smaller areas with greater intensity of fishing effort. If as being promoted by the extremists a 1500M Sanctuary Zone was placed around Montague Island I think this could have dire effects on our local community.

Most anglers are conservationists and conscious of the need to limit their catch but as with society in general there are some who will always tend to maximise their personal agenda. I have no doubt you will receive many submissions with similar threads, but I would like to remind you of the decisions taken to promote Catch and Release plus Tagging of gamefish species. The banning of taking Grey Nurse sharks was a voluntary decision taken by the fishing fraternity without governmental prompting.

There were many offers during the original Zoning Process to allow fishing with measures being introduced to protect the environment such as the use of non powered craft, use of barbless hooks only, no anchoring, lure or flyfishing only areas . These offers were declined. Unfortunately at this early stage of the BMP, anglers appear to be the only people restricted.

Most people realise the major threats to the BMP are land based activities.

High Water Mark

An unexpected problem has arisen regarding properties being surveyed in the 1800's with the high water mark now being more than 600mm under water it is obvious global warming was not too

much of an issue then, today?

Estuary Management

This has been a contentious issue lately, after 10 years of drought in this area many of the lakes were under severe stress with low water levels high salinity, fish kills and rotting vegetation. Then floods with inundation of properties and buildings, this is not an easy task but one which must have policy's developed after community consultation. The community has a right to know what to expect in given situations.

There has to be a single authority to manage these ICOL's and lakes instead of the numerous bodies as present such as Marine Park Authority, Estuary Management Committees, NSW Fisheries, National Parks & Wildlife Services, NSW Lands Dept., Maritime and Councils with possibly more of whom I have no knowledge.

Future Marine Parks

I think that you can see from my submission so far, that scientific research has to be a bit more rigorous, transparent and without preconceived territorial size of, in particular the Sanctuary Zones.

Bag and Size Limits

Again there should be similar size limits between State & Federal Agency's as this can and does create loopholes for undersized fish, to be sold in fishmongers, with State Fisheries Officers being unable to prevent this. I understand that each State may have different limits and that it may be difficult to have State/Federal agreements to encompass all State and Territories however that should not prevent attempts being made to progress this idea.

Possession Limits

I also believe there should be Possession Limits which are also current in other State / Territories I feel there should be a "Commercial Quantity" which recreational anglers are not permitted to be in excess of. I have no suggestion as to what that "Commercial Quantity" should be. However it is not in the spirit to be taking away freezer loads of fish, particularly interstate where they may be sold on the black market.

I note that last week a licensed commercial fisherman was found to have hundreds of kilos of undersized fish at the Sydney Fish Market, congratulations are deserved to the I & I officers, also for their achievements targeting Abalone thieves.

Fishing Competitions

I personally believe that at every fishing competition the fish presented for weighing should be in a condition fit for human consumption and should be gilled gutted and kept on ice. This would avoid fish being killed for points and then discarded. The only exceptions being where large fish are weighed direct from the boat to the Weigh Station or live fish which are to be released after the weigh-in.

I feel that an excellent tool for fish research has been missed. As fishing competitions require permission from MarineParks it would be simple for each Club to send all data collected to Fisheries Research, this is one of the missing links of recreational catch data . This would not require a great deal of extra work for the fishing clubs as the data is recorded anyway.

Recreational Fishing Havens

Rec fishing havens should be enshrined in legislation as I believe at present they can be changed at the whim of the current, or any future Minister.

I ask this committee propose the Wagonga Inlet also be included in the RFH Group.

Angel Ring Program

Congratulations are due to all concerned with this program which is credited with saving over 30 lives.

Seniors

NSW Seniors aged between 60 up to Pension age 65 are required to pay full fishing license fees whilst in Victoria all Australian Seniors are not required to have a license.

As we are all Australians it would be beneficial if we had similar fishing laws throughout Australia. I note that finally after more than 100 years of Federation we are having a National School Syllabus.

Fish Stocking Program

Fishing clubs can buy fish for stocking public waters on a dollar for dollar basis, as fish breeding/stocking is paid for out of fishing license revenue, this amounts to double dipping into fishers funds.

The Far South Coast Bass Stocking Association wanted to purchase \$5000 worth of fish stock being Bass, were however restricted to only \$4000 worth of stock. As the FSCBA has been buying fish to be released in Brogo dam for years why should they be denied the opportunity to assist both the environment and non affiliated anglers. FSCBSA anglers practice catch and release with all data being submitted to the Anglers Catch Research Program.

Thanks

I thank you for your patience in reading my submission, if you require any further explanation please do not hesitate to call me or if required I can attend personally.

Yours Sincerely
Ian H Smith