

Submission
No 79

INQUIRY INTO RECREATIONAL FISHING

Name: Mr Rod Peterlin

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Recreational Fishing Submission

I have been fishing Jervis Bay for over 20 years, long before Jervis Bay Marine Park was established.

I have witnessed the decline of fishing over many of those years, and I was concerned at loss of solid fishing grounds when JBMP was first declared.

I fish mainly for Snapper and Kingfish, but also for Flathead and Bream. I dive for lobsters and am a spear fisher as well.

I must say that I am surprised to see the level of improvement that the marine park has brought about. Snapper are now being caught in more abundance and in more locations than they were back in the 90's. My mates are catching huge Snapper, bigger than ever (upwards of 9kg).

The Flathead grounds fluctuate, but this has always been the case.

Kingfish are now bouncing back (seasonally), but I suspect that may have more to do with the recovery of the species from the banning of Kingfish traps – which decimated the Kingfish along the entire NSW coast. This may also be partially attributed to the improved conditions for bait fish within JBMP, as a result of the protection zones.

Spearing has become a lot better in some areas, with no noticeable change in others. The inner confines of Jervis Bay provide much better spearing for Bream and Blackfish, as these fish occur in numbers higher than I have ever noticed in all my years spearing Jervis Bay. I just can't get these fish to take a hook, despite their numbers, so it's probably only the spearos that have noticed this.

While the marine park has resulted in fish being more abundant at many locations away from the 'traditional' places, fishing these new locations is often crowded and very competitive.

Some of the outer locations are now more difficult to spear because the marine park zoning has forced a lot of fishing boats into fewer areas, where spear fishermen cannot safely enter the water without upsetting boat fishermen.

I cannot spear for Snapper in my favourite Snapper grounds, although I can still fish within 100m of the shore in this part of the bay. The best spots are further out, and these are now inaccessible due to zoning, but I'm now catching Snapper closer in, so it almost evens out. I just wish I could still spear there.

One of the most significant changes since the marine park was brought in, is the increased number of Red Morwong- which are not suitable for eating. I don't know if this is a good thing, as I consider them a rubbish fish and I'm not sure if anything else eats them.

Lobsters are now much more difficult to take, as the best grounds are fully protected. They are, however, much easier to find within those same grounds that are now protected, and in some areas immediately adjacent. That doesn't put lobster on my dinner pate though.

Fishing within St Georges Basin is now much, much better than it ever was previously. The marine park was the catalyst for moving all the professional fishermen out of the basin, and this has resulted in massive improvements in fishing throughout the entire basin and connected estuaries. I

can't emphasize this enough – the marine park has been a remarkable success here, in terms of providing better recreational fishing, at the cost of the pros.

The biggest hindrance to my fishing is the crowds from outsiders coming down to fish, and they all seem to have boats. I don't know what is bringing them – perhaps it's the fact that Jervis Bay is a Marine Protected area, perhaps it's just because the fishing is good and getting better, despite the crowds.

With the increase in fishermen, there is a corresponding increase in litter. They are leaving behind plastic bait bags, spent line, beer bottles and cigarette butts. I find this particularly annoying. I am always bringing home other peoples rubbish, and spent line poses an expensive/dangerous threat to my outboard gearbox.

Jervis Bay now has all these additional boats fishing here (because of the marine park) but the Marine Park Authority has not provided any additional boat launching facilities. Jervis Bay does not have one single all-weather, public boat ramp. Boating facilities have not kept up with demand.

I have to say that the marine park has had the following effects on my recreational fishing in and around Jervis Bay:

1. I have lost many of my favourite fishing spots, but others have presented themselves and more continue to do so as the fishing improves across the park in general.
2. I have seen some fishing opportunities increase while others remaining unchanged.
3. I have (overall) reduced fishing ability in terms of diving for lobsters.
4. The biggest hindrance to my fishing is the increasing number of people fishing.
5. The boat ramps are now more crowded.
6. Jervis Bay is now more littered.

Rod Peterlin