

Submission
No 957

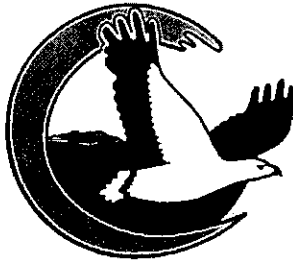
INQUIRY INTO RECREATIONAL FISHING

Organisation: Coastwatchers Association

Name: Ms Linda Chapman

Position: Secretary

Date received: 22/03/2010



Coastwatchers

Eurobodalla's environment group

16th March 2010

The Director
Select Committee on Recreational Fishing
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Email: fishinginquiry@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Director,

Coastwatchers Association is an environment group covering the whole of the Eurobodalla Shire. The association recognises that recreational fishing provides opportunities for the general public to commune with nature; however we reject the notion that this activity outweighs, in any sense, other recreational uses, such as diving, canoeing, swimming and surfing. In fact we are sure that the combined economic worth to coastal communities of the latter activities far out weighs the benefits of recreational fishing. Recreational fishing in NSW exists under the following legislative framework.

Marine Parks Act 1997

Objects

- a) To conserve marine biological diversity and marine habitats by declaring and providing for the management of a comprehensive system of Marine Parks,
- b) To maintain ecological processes in Marine Parks,
- c) Where consistent with the preceding objects:
 - i. To provide for ecological sustainable use of fish (including commercial and recreational fishing) and marine vegetation in Marine

Parks, and

- II. To provide opportunities for public appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of Marine Parks.

Fisheries Management Act 1994

- 1) The objects of this Act are to conserve, develop and share the fishery resources of the State for the benefit of present and future generations.
- (2) In particular, the objects of this Act include:
 - (a) to conserve fish stocks and key fish habitats, and
 - (b) to conserve threatened species, populations and ecological communities of fish and marine vegetation, and
 - (c) to promote ecologically sustainable development, including the conservation of biological diversity,
and, consistently with those objects:
 - (d) to promote viable commercial fishing and aquaculture industries, and
 - (e) to promote quality recreational fishing opportunities, and
 - (f) to appropriately share fisheries resources between the users of those resources, and
 - (g) to provide social and economic benefits for the wider community of New South Wales.

National Parks and Wildlife Act 1979

- (1) The objects of this Act are as follows:
 - (a) the conservation of nature, including, but not limited to, the conservation of:
 - (i) habitat, ecosystems and ecosystem processes, and
 - (ii) biological diversity at the community, species and genetic levels, and
 - (iii) landforms of significance, including geological features and processes, and
 - (iv) landscapes and natural features of significance including wilderness and wild rivers,
 - (b) the conservation of objects, places or features (including biological diversity) of cultural value within the landscape, including, but not limited to:
 - (i) places, objects and features of significance to Aboriginal people, and
 - (ii) places of social value to the people of New South Wales, and
 - (iii) places of historic, architectural or scientific significance,
 - (c) fostering public appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of nature and

cultural heritage and their conservation,

- (d) providing for the management of land reserved under this Act in accordance with the management principles applicable for each type of reservation.
- (2) The objects of this Act are to be achieved by applying the principles of ecologically sustainable development.
- (3) In carrying out functions under this Act, the Minister, the Director-General and the Service are to give effect to the following:
 - (a) the objects of this Act,
 - (b) the public interest in the protection of the values for which land is reserved under this Act and the appropriate management of those lands.

Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995

The objects of this Act are as follows:

- (a) to conserve biological diversity and promote ecologically sustainable development, and
- (b) to prevent the extinction and promote the recovery of threatened species, populations and ecological communities, and
- (c) to protect the critical habitat of those threatened species, populations and ecological communities that are endangered, and
- (d) to eliminate or manage certain processes that threaten the survival or evolutionary development of threatened species, populations and ecological communities, and
- (e) to ensure that the impact of any action affecting threatened species, populations and ecological communities is properly assessed, and
- (f) to encourage the conservation of threatened species, populations and ecological communities by the adoption of measures involving co-operative management.

Other relevant Acts deal with protection of the coastal environment, planning, heritage and native title.

All of the above Acts strongly relate to the conservation of the State's fisheries for the benefit of future generations. To be effective they need to monitor and evaluate the various human activities that impact on these resources. Recreational fishing has an unknown impact on the State's fisheries due to a lack of historical data and at

best patchy catch statistics. Well documented evidence of negative impacts via accidental hooking, of the Grey Nurse Shark (a threatened species) leads this association to recommend to this Inquiry that further protection of this species is required. Known habitat sites of the Grey Nurse Shark should be immediately placed in Marine Parks and exclude recreational and commercial fishing. Furthermore, an Environment Impact Statement should be written to establish the real impacts of recreational fishing.

NSW is also committed under international and national conventions to the conservation of the marine environment, its ecology and resources.

International and National Agreements

All State and Territory Governments, and in Coastwatchers's opinion Local Government, are bound by the international agreements signed by the Australian Government. In particular, the International Convention on Biological Diversity (93) Articles 8(a), (b), (c), and Article 13 (b) and the Strategic Plan of the World Commission on Protected Areas (96).

These agreements follow many others that deal with the conservation of the environment that have been negotiated over the latter half of the 20th century.

Accordingly, the State and Australian Governments have signed many Strategies and Agreements that bind all parties to conserving the marine environment. These include the Inter-Government Agreement on the Environment, National Biodiversity Strategy, National Oceans Policy and the National Representative System of Marine Protected Areas. A key component of these Strategies is to establish a comprehensive, adequate and representative (CAR) system of marine protected areas.

For the NSW Government to meet these international covenants and agreements and be consistent with contemporary research findings, the Marine Park network in NSW will need to be expanded. Research on the veracity of marine protected areas for the protection of the marine environment, positive economic outcomes for coastal communities and tourism industries is too extensive to cover in this submission;

however we recommend that this Inquiry seek expert advice from the many marine scientists that work in this field within the NSW government.

Mechanisms to achieve an expansion of the Marine Park network in NSW, and therefore meet the CAR responsibilities of governments, may include the present system of establishment of Marine Parks by bio-region. This process has resulted in a number of reserves being geographically disconnected from each other and reducing their effectiveness. Connectivity between marine reserves should be encouraged and under the present system this can only be achieved by establishing more marine reserves.

Another way to achieve connectivity would be to declare all NSW waters a Marine Park and then zone coastal waters for multiple uses. At the moment each Marine Park has its own advisory committee. By declaring NSW waters as a marine reserve the NSW government could establish one advisory committee, retain regional offices, and the bureaucracy could act like Catchment Management Committees and establish a direct relationship with the Australian government for the purpose of funding projects of mutual interest.

Coastwatchers Association Inc recommends:

- **An Environment Impact Statement into the impacts of recreational fishing**
- **Establishment of more marine reserves for the NSW government to meet its legislative responsibilities**
- **Further protection of marine endangered species**
- **The Inquiry seek expert advice from government officers into the veracity of contemporary research regarding marine reserves**

Yours Sincerely

Mark Fleming
(for Linda Chapman, Secretary)