

FISHING STORIES

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/10/31/2406589.htm>

 ABC News

Lobster fishers still awaiting buyback: MP

Posted 1 hour 40 minutes ago 31-10-08

Liberal MP Denis Napthine says south-west Victoria's rock lobster fishermen are struggling financially while they wait for State Government assistance.

In July, the Government announced a \$5 million licence buyback to help fishermen leave the industry, but the program is yet to get off the ground.

Dr Napthine says the Government's creation of marine parks has greatly reduced rock lobster quotas and cut the industry's profitability.

He says many people are desperate for the buyback to begin.

"I'm absolutely shocked and surprised and appalled the Government have offered an assistance package for the rock lobster industry, but simply haven't rolled out the details so fishermen are suffering, their families are suffering and they can't get access to this assistance package," he said.

Victorian Fisheries Minister Joe Helper was unavailable for comment.

<http://www.news.com.au/perthnow/story/0,21598,24575831-2761,00.html>


Powered by 

CCC report exposes Fisheries Department misconduct

Staff writers

October 30, 2008 04:00pm

A CORRUPTION probe has exposed serious misconduct in the WA Fisheries Department and recommended disciplinary action against its top officer.

If you have an interesting **Photo, Story, Issue or Report** that you would like included in Fishing Stories send it to:
fishing@cbgconsultants.com.au or Fax (03) 8660 2755

A Corruption and Crime Commission (CCC) report, tabled in Parliament today, details how Fisheries Acting Chief Executive Officer Peter Millington tipped-off a suspected illegal crab fisherman about a department investigation into the problem.

After reading the report, Fisheries Minister Norman Moore said he wanted Mr Millington stripped of his position.

"I have read the Corruption and Crime Commission's report and am concerned by the findings," he said.

"I take the report concerning Acting Chief Executive Officer Peter Millington seriously and, as recommended by the CCC, the matter will be dealt with by the Director General of the Department of Premier and Cabinet."

A CCC spokesman said the report found that Mr Millington made the disclosure to avoid embarrassment at not being able to answer questions from the fisherman, Kyran Littleton.

"In doing so he acted contrary to a warning and explicit advice given to him by senior staff," the spokesman said.

The report recommended disciplinary action be taken against Mr Millington, who is on leave, for serious misconduct and misconduct.

It also detailed how two departmental officers advised suspected illegal fishermen on how to frustrate inquiries by fisheries officers.

According to the report, former officer John Williams engaged in serious misconduct by advising a fisherman how one of his friends could offer a false explanation for having an illegal catch and to not take part in a recorded interview with fisheries officers.

The other former officer Peter Willey engaged in serious misconduct by offering the same advice to Mr Littleton, who was later convicted and fined more than \$20,000 for unlawfully selling crabs he had caught in the Swan River.

"However, as both fisheries officers have since left the department, no disciplinary action could be taken so the report recommended that they not be considered for future employment or contract work," the CCC spokesman said.

The department has co-operated with the investigation after being told about the officers' actions in March 2007.

<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24579326-5013404,00.html>

Fisheries officer in CCC net over crab catch

Nicolas Perpetch | *October 31, 2008*

A SENIOR West Australian fisheries officer faces disciplinary action after he was exposed during a phone-tap operation warning an illegal crab fisherman that he could be targeted in an investigation.

The conversation, between Fisheries Department acting chief executive Peter Millington and Kyran Littleton, was intercepted by the state's Corruption and Crime Commission.

Littleton, who was later fined \$20,611 for illegally selling blue swimmer crabs, had contacted Mr Millington to ask him whether he was being investigated as part of an inquiry into illegal crab fishing on Perth's Swan River. Soon after, in a telephone conversation, Mr Millington told Littleton there was an inquiry under way.

The CCC found Mr Millington had engaged in serious misconduct by leaking the confidential information. It said he had not acted for any benefit, but rather out of embarrassment at not being able to answer Littleton's questions.

The corruption watchdog recommended disciplinary action against Mr Millington, who is currently on leave, but did not recommend prosecution.

Mr Milligan released a statement saying the CCC report had found he did not compromise the investigation into Littleton and he was not aware the fisherman was the subject of an investigation when he spoke to him. "If my actions result in disciplinary proceedings, then I look forward to an opportunity to present my point of view and to clarify issues raised in this report," he said.

But Fisheries Minister Norman Moore said last night he would seek to have Mr Milligan's position "revoked".

Additional reporting: AAP

<http://www.fish.wa.gov.au/docs/media/index.php?0000&mr=591>



Media Releases

Limited season for West Coast Zone abalone fishery

Date: Friday, 31 October 2008

The sight of fishers, wading out in force onto reefs in the metropolitan area and other parts of the West Coast Zone* abalone fishery in search of the seafood delicacy, will be repeated again this Sunday.

Licensed recreational fishers will be able to collect abalone between 7am and 8am only this Sunday (2 November 2008) and on the following five Sundays through to 7 December.

Department of Fisheries' Principal Policy Officer Nathan Harrison said thousands of people took the opportunity every year to collect abalone from popular reef spots along the Perth coast, which was why tight rules and access needed to apply to the fragile fishery.

"Perth is one of the few remaining capital cities in the world where people can enjoy catching abalone," Mr Harrison said. "However, abalone stocks are highly vulnerable to overfishing and require careful management.

"The six-hour fishing season for the West Coast Zone makes our abalone fishery one of the tightest managed recreational fisheries in the world."

In addition to the seasonal restrictions, a bag and possession limit of 20 Roe's abalone applies per person. The minimum legal length for Roe's abalone is 60mm.

Mr Harrison said research monitoring indicated the abalone stock was in a healthy state and good catches were expected, if

ideal weather conditions prevailed.

“Recreational fishers are reminded to be mindful of the weather and swell forecasts and not to place themselves in danger,” he said.

“We also remind recreational fishers that they must only collect abalone for themselves and not for other people who are not actively participating in fishing, as this has been an illegal practice picked up by Fisheries and Marine Officers in recent seasons.

“The majority of fishers do act responsibly and play their part in the community’s stewardship of this popular fishery, but anyone who breaches the rules faces potentially significant fines.”

Details on fishing for abalone in WA are available online at www.fish.wa.gov.au, where you can download a handy guide containing useful information, including safety tips and the rules that apply to the fishery. Licenses can be purchased online, or over the counter at Australia Post outlets.

** The West Coast Zone extends from the Busselton Jetty to the Greenough River Mouth.*

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Western Victoria Boating Coastal Action Plan

Project Information Bulletin #1



The Western Coastal Board has commenced the development of a Boating Coastal Action Plan for Western Victoria to put in place a strategic framework to guide the provision of improved and more sustainable boating facilities.

What is a Coastal Action Plan?

A Coastal Action Plan (CAP) is a strategic regional planning tool created under the *Coastal Management Act 1995*. CAPs enable the principles and priorities in the Victorian Coastal Strategy to be further developed and applied in the region, and provide the ability to focus on specific issues and coordinate the factors impacting on them. CAPs take a long term strategic view, clarify directions for future use and identify key actions.

This CAP will focus on recreational boating facilities.

What area does this Boating Coastal Action Plan apply to?

The Western Victoria Boating CAP will apply to the Western Coastal Region which extends from Breamlea in the east to the South Australian border, and to open coasts and estuaries with boating facilities.



The Western Coastal Region covers the following six municipalities:

- Surf Coast Shire
- Colac Otway Shire
- Corangamite Shire
- Moyne Shire
- City of Warrnambool
- Glenelg Shire

How will the Boating Coastal Action Plan be prepared?

The process to prepare a CAP is detailed in the Victorian Coastal Council's *Guidelines for Preparing, Implementing and Reviewing Coastal Action Plans*.

The project is broken up into **key stages** and includes a substantial amount of **consultation** with stakeholders. The Terms of Reference are available on the Board's website.

The project is being guided by a small Steering Committee supported by a larger Reference Group that includes all key stakeholders.

The **first stage** of the Boating CAP is the development of a draft Existing Conditions and Issues Paper, and the first round of public consultation commences in November 2008 on this draft Paper. A Summary Discussion Paper has also been prepared to assist understanding the Boating CAP in this first consultation opportunity. Feedback is being sought through a series of workshops around the region (see over) and by email and phone until Friday 28th November.

Once feedback has been received and considered, the development of the Boating CAP moves into stages dedicated to **strategic planning** and includes:

- Strategic Analysis
- Strategic Direction
- Boating Area Planning Precincts
- Implementation Strategy

The work undertaken in these stages will be brought together into a **draft Boating CAP** in April-May 2009, and further regional consultation will be undertaken through workshops, direct feedback and submissions.

The Board expects to provide the Victorian Coastal Council with a **final draft Boating CAP** for endorsement and provision to the Minister for the Environment and Climate Change in mid-late 2009.



What opportunities are there to get involved and have a say?

The details of the regional consultation workshops are listed below. These locations are spread across the whole region and give stakeholders in each local municipality an opportunity to participate. All six meetings have the same agenda and format regardless of their location.

Portland

6 – 8 pm Thursday 6 November 2008
The Arts Company
19-21 Julia Street

Port Fairy

6 – 8 pm Friday 7 November 2008
Port Fairy Yacht Club
Griffiths Street

Apollo Bay

6 - 8 pm Tuesday 11 November 2008
Apollo Bay Hotel (bottom pub)
95 Great Ocean Road

Warrnambool

6 – 8 pm Wednesday 12 November 2008
CFA Service Centre
Corner Welsh Rd and Raglan Parade

Port Campbell

6 – 8 pm Thursday 13 November 2008
Port Campbell Historical Society Hall
Lord Street

Torquay

6 - 8 pm Monday 17 November 2008
Torquay Angling Club
The Esplanade

If you wish to attend one of the forums, please RSVP by Wednesday 5th November by email to wcb.info@dse.vic.gov.au or by phone to Margot Harrison on 03 5226 4008.

Contact for more Information

To learn more about the Western Victoria Boating Coastal Action Plan please visit the Western Coastal Board's web site at www.wcb.vic.gov.au or contact us directly on telephone 03 5226 4008.



Port Fairy

What are the Key Questions the Western Boating Coastal Action Plan will resolve?

- What will be the network of boating facilities for Western Victoria in 2040?
- How will possible environmental impacts be considered and how will these influence the provision of boating facilities?
- How will possible social and cultural impacts be considered and how will these influence the provision of boating facilities?
- How will economic and financial impacts be considered and how will these influence the provision of boating facilities?
- Under what circumstances will the decommissioning and removal or downgrading of an existing boating facility be considered?

What further information is available?

The full copy of the *Western Victoria Boating Coastal Action Plan: Existing Conditions and Issues Report* can be found on the Western Coastal Board website at www.wcb.vic.gov.au. This is a working document that provides a basis for discussion during consultation.

In recognition that this is lengthy document to review, we have prepared a *Summary Discussion Paper for Consultation* which is also available on the website at www.wcb.vic.gov.au.

Hard copies of the documents are available at primary local council offices, at the Colac Otway Shire office in Apollo Bay, at Parks Victoria offices in Apollo Bay and Port Campbell, and at the Port Campbell Tourist Information Centre.

Richard Dalla-Riva MP

Shadow Minister for Industry and State Development
Shadow Minister for Major Projects
Freedom of Information



Liberal Nationals Coalition Media Release

Phone: 9803 0592 • Fax: 9803 0586
Email: richard.dalla-riva@parliament.vic.gov.au

Saturday 25 October 2008

FISH MARKET FLOUNDERS FROM LABOR'S INCOMPETENCE

Labor's incompetence has thrown the future of the iconic Melbourne Wholesale Fish Market into utter confusion, Shadow Minister for Major Projects, Richard Dalla-Riva, said today.

Meeting fish market stall holders this morning with Coalition Scrutiny of Government spokesman David Davis to discuss the future of the fish market, Mr Dalla-Riva said Labor had done nothing to ensure the future of the market despite a Melbourne City Council plan to close the market in March 2009.

"Labor claimed in 2000 that it was reviewing the decision by the former Liberal Government to redevelop the Melbourne Fish Market, but has done nothing since to plan for the future of the market.

"Instead, Labor's flaky approach has only created massive uncertainty amongst stall holders which could threaten the future of the market.

"The seafood and aquaculture industry are vital for Victoria and the fish market is integral to ensuring the timely delivery of fresh quality produce to Victorians and interstate markets.

"The Victorian seafood industry turns over \$1.5 billion a year and the Melbourne market is the largest seafood market in Australia, yet Labor's confusion means that time is running out with no solution in sight.

"The Agriculture Minister has previously claimed that traders had rejected the option of the market being relocated to Epping, yet only last week to the total surprise of the Fish Market stall holders three Labor MPs stated the Fish Market would move to Epping.

"Labor is floundering around and groping for solutions while concern grows amongst market stall-holders over the future of the market.

"This is typical of Labor's incompetent approach to major projects and is no way to ensure the long-term viability of either the fish market or this vital Victorian industry.

"If the market is closed, many jobs will be lost and Victorian fish prices will increase, putting seafood out of reach for many Victorian families," Mr Dalla-Riva said.

Media: Richard Dalla-Riva - Pager 9625 2187

Richard Dalla-Riva MP

Shadow Minister for Industry and State Development
Shadow Minister for Major Projects
Freedom of Information



Phone: 9803 0592 • Fax: 9803 0586
Email: richard.dalla-riva@parliament.vic.gov.au

Liberal Nationals Coalition Media Release

Monday 27 October 2008

LETTER TO THE EDITOR FISH PRICES SET TO RISE AS MELB FISH MARKET FLOUNDERS

The uncertainty surrounding the redevelopment of the iconic Melbourne Wholesale Fish Market should concern every Victorian.

Despite the Kennett Government developing plans for an overhaul of the fish market in 1999, Labor has done nothing for nine long years to reassure stall-holders that it has a plan for this iconic market.

The government was told more than two years ago that the lease on the existing site would expire by March 2009, yet now it arrogantly tells stakeholders this important market will be forced to move to an isolated, vacant and windswept Epping site many kilometres from any port.

Labor knows this will mean an increase in fish prices and uncertainty for the fish industry, but it is so out of touch it doesn't care about the industry or consumers.

Labor has been caught floundering on this important issue and Victorians will suffer as a result.

Richard Dalla-Riva
Shadow Minister for Major Projects

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO0810/S00525.htm>



Crayfish Poacher Caught In Whangamata Estuary

Friday, 31 October 2008, 11:30 am

Press Release: Ministry of Fisheries

Suspected Crayfish Poacher Caught In Whangamata Estuary

A Whangamata man suspected of taking illegal quantities of rock lobster (crayfish) has been caught by fishery officers and is likely to face prosecution.

Local Ministry of Fisheries District Compliance Manager, Brendon Mikkelsen, says fishery officers had been observing the man and his activities in the Whangamata area for "about two weeks" before making their move.

"This man was leaving early in the morning, collecting rock lobster from 10 different pots (recreational fishers are only allowed to use a maximum of three) and then returning to the Whangamata estuary where he transferred his catch to a holding pot.

"While transferring the lobster, he took great pains to ensure his boat was positioned in such a way as to block his activities from the houses on the southern side of the estuary.

"We also saw him at an untended launch on a pole mooring in the estuary."

Fishery officers observed the man collecting rock lobster for four days in a row before confronting him last Friday. They then found 24 rock lobster in the man's holding pot in the estuary and a further three on the nearby launch.

"This man was obviously taking more than his daily recreational allowance of six rock lobster per day," says Mikkelsen. "What's more, some lobsters were undersized and another was in berry.

"This is the sort of greedy, indiscriminate behaviour that harms our valuable recreational fisheries. This man was basically stealing from other members of his community."

Mikkelsen says the man is likely to face a number of serious fisheries charges, with maximum fines of up to \$20,000. His 4.3m boat, engine and trailer have also been seized and these will likely be forfeited to the Crown if he is convicted.

Mikkelsen says he would like to thank those members of the Whangamata community who alerted them to the man's illegal activities.

"Fishery officers obviously cannot be everywhere on the coast all the time. Ordinary people in communities like Whangamata are our eyes and ears. The information they confidentially supply, often through the popular 0800 4 Poacher number (0800 4 76224) help us put the poachers out of business."

ENDS

<http://www.watoday.com.au/wa-news/new-limits-could-strangle-wa-crayfish-industry-20081030-5c06.html>



New limits could strangle WA crayfish industry

- **Joseph Sapienza**
- October 31, 2008 - 8:12AM

Commercial crayfishers are crying foul over the State Government's "knee-jerk" decision to reduce commercial lobster fishing pots by 15 per cent for the coming season.

They have also warned these new measures could bring the multi-million dollar industry to its knees in the next couple of years.

In response to last week's release of the monthly young lobsters – or puerulus - count, which showed numbers were virtually non-existent, Fisheries Minister Norman Moore has succeeded in getting Cabinet's support to approve controversial measures "to ensure the ongoing sustainability" of the state's western rock lobster stocks.

Not only will commercial fishermen be slugged a 15 per cent reduction in their lobster catch this season - which begins next month - but on top of that they face another 15 per cent reduction on unit entitlements for 2009-10.

Taking into account the previous government's terms of no Sunday fishing and an initial 8 per cent pot reduction, commercial crayfishers will not be able to touch almost 40 per cent of crayfish stocks in their zone when the 2009-10 season begins.

Two experienced commercial crayfishers - who attended meetings in Fremantle along with their peers in the past two days to voice their concerns - are outraged over the latest reductions being imposed by the Fisheries Department, claiming Mr Moore's decisions are "ill-informed" and a "knee-jerk reaction".

They also do not agree that by removing cray pots from the water, puerulus numbers will rise.

"Financially, (these new reductions) will see a lot of fishermen go down the gurgler," Fremantle fisherman Rob Fernandes said. "Some crew and skippers have handed their licences back already because fishing won't be feasible enough with these new rules.

"Expenses will still be the same, so they will lose money.

"What's needed here is flexibility and common sense, and would the Government subsidise the pots we won't be using because of these restrictions?"

Fishermen still pay for the pots they lease off investors, regardless of whether they use them or not.

Second-generation fisherman Pasquale Palmiotti said he was disappointed with the conduct of the Rock Lobster Industry Advisory Committee - a group which reports to the Fisheries Minister.

"The Association has gone to the Minister without consulting the fishermen and knocked off an extra 15 per cent," he said. "The price of fuel hasn't gone down whilst the price of bait has gone up. Are they trying to send us all broke?"

"This is absolutely ludicrous and it's going to bring the industry to its knees, while all these small coastal towns, such as Jurien Bay and Lancelin, won't survive with two or three boats (out in the water)."

He said his family has been fishing since 1958, and said "his children won't be taking over" from him because of this bleak forecast for the future.

"For the amount of money we're putting into it, we're not getting the return out of it," he said.

"You would think that if there was a (puerulus) problem in a certain zone, each zone would then be considered in own merits.

"I'm just sick and tired of Fisheries taking, taking, taking.

"The Minister has been in the job for the last five weeks or so. He hasn't been given enough time from all parties to

make an informed decision. He's only talked to the bureaucrats and has not been given a practical point of view from the fishermen.

"By leaving pots ashore, it isn't directly going to fix the puerulus problem."

Mr Moore said he was advised by the Rock Lobster Council, Rock Lobster Industry Advisory Committee and fisheries officers and processors at a roundtable conference, and said "a whole range of options were considered", before he decided on the "most appropriate" way to improve juvenile lobster numbers.

He said a "significant number of fishermen" as well as the Advisory Committee supported these measures, as "they believed it was about time something was being done about this".

"Last Friday I was given data about the puerulus count, and I found it disturbing," Mr Moore said yesterday.

"I took the decision to hold urgent meetings as I needed answers now. I don't have the luxury of dilly-dallying as there was strong evidence the fishery is under some threat."

When asked whether the Government could subsidise fishermen over unused pots, Mr Moore said he "would look at the consequences of this new measure and see what the Government can do".

"The fundamental issue is: Will there be any lobster to catch in the future?"

Also, Mr Moore could not give any guarantees over whether these extra restrictions will fix the puerulus problem.

"Scientists don't know why the count is low," he said. "People are blaming global warming, westerly winds and gales and the ocean current, while others are saying our waters are being overfished."

"I have influence over breeding stock, and the preservation of this fishery is paramount."

<http://www.thewest.com.au/default.aspx?MenuID=77&ContentID=105247>

thewest.com.au The West Australian

Amateurs to share the nip of lobster limits

30th October 2008, 6:00 WST



Recreational fishermen face tougher bag and boat limits for western rock lobster this season, Fisheries Minister Norman Moore will announce today.

It follows a growing backlash from commercial fishermen to restrictions announced earlier this week on lobster pots, including warnings that the changes would send some operators broke.

Official monthly surveys have revealed a dramatic fall in stocks of juvenile rock lobsters, known as puerulus, prompting the precautionary measures to protect the future of the \$300 million industry.

The daily bag limit will be cut from eight to six for amateurs and the catch limit per boat will be reduced from 16 to 12.

The unrestricted personal possession limit, or the number of rock lobsters allowed to be stockpiled, will be capped at 24 per licence holder.

From next season, recreational fishermen in zone C, from Jurien Bay to Augusta, will have their season opening delayed 10 days to coincide with the November 25 start for commercial fishermen.

Mr Moore said the commercial sector would take some "considerable financial pain" as a result of the restrictions on pot use announced this week and it was "entirely appropriate that recreational fishers shoulder their share of the burden".

Recfishwest executive director Frank Prokop said he understood recreational fishermen needed to play a part but they were already taking less than the 5 per cent of the total catch allocated under integrated fisheries management.

Commercial fishermen will have to reduce their pots by 15 per cent this season, with more cuts next season. The cuts follow pot reductions and Sunday closures introduced by the former Labor government in August.

More than 90 commercial fishermen who met in Fremantle yesterday called on the Minister to reverse his decision on pot reductions, claiming it would cause them immense financial damage.

Fremantle Fishermen's Association president Robert Merlino said fishermen were not consulted about the changes and it was ludicrous to introduce them a few weeks before the season when fishermen had pot leasing arrangements and casual staff organised.

Fishermen were concerned that the puerulus counts on which the changes were based were focused on set areas and did not measure settlement elsewhere.

Carl Dipane, who has fished for 50 years, said some fishermen would go broke because of the latest restrictions.

JODIE THOMSON

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/200810/s2404613.htm>

WA lobster fishers considering change to catch limits

Wednesday, 29/10/2008

The Western Australian rock lobster fishery is once again reconsidering moving from a pot to a quota system.

The issue has been raised and dismissed in the past, but with lobster numbers predicted to fall over the next few years, many fishermen say it's time to revisit the idea.

Pot numbers have been cut by almost a third, following research which indicates the annual lobster catch is predicted to fall from around 11,000 tonnes to just over 5000 tonnes within three years.

Opponents of the quota system say it will lead to an increase in the price per pot, making it too expensive for smaller fishers to buy more pots.

But those in favour of the system say quotas allow smaller fishers to remain viable.

<http://www.media.tas.gov.au/release.php?id=25123>



David Llewellyn, MP

Minister for Primary Industries and Water

Wednesday, 29 October 2008

Bruny Bioregion Fishing Activities

The Minister for Primary Industries and Water, David Llewellyn, today corrected misinformation about fishing activities in the Bruny Bioregion.

“The Government recently announced its decision regarding the creation of marine protected areas or MPAs in the Bruny Bioregion,” Mr Llewellyn said.

“Sixteen MPAs will be created in the Bruny Bioregion, two of these being significant extensions of existing no-take MPAs. No-take areas are those areas where no finfish, shellfish or crustacean can be caught by any sector using any means.

“The remaining fourteen areas will be proclaimed as ‘multiple use’ areas where all the existing restrictions to fishing that currently apply over the Bruny Bioregion will remain in force.

“I have consistently argued that fishing should be and indeed is properly managed through the Living Marine Resources Management Act by imposing the range of fishery management plans and restrictions available under that Act.

“Tasmania has been pro-active in this regard and there is now a complex array of limitations to fishing activities applying in those areas. A wide range of limitations do apply in those areas that might be analogous, or even more stringent, than those in ‘multiple use’ MPAs in other jurisdictions or countries.”

Mr Llewellyn said it was a deliberate distortion of the truth to say that there is “open slather” fishing in these areas.

“An understanding of the controls currently in place shows that these restrictions do provide significant protection to fish, shellfish and crustacean stocks and do impose restrictions on Tasmanian fishers.

“In particular, gear types such as mullet nets, grab-all nets, long lines and drop lines are heavily regulated. In many areas only low impact fishing gear is allowed.

“For example, significant sheltered waters have been declared as shark refuge areas. These areas include the D’Entrecasteaux Channel, River Derwent, and Frederick Henry and Norfolk Bay. These are significant pieces of water for the Bruny Bioregion.

“The new Lime Bay MPA is already a shark refuge area where no shark, skate or ray can be taken.

"In addition, scallop dredging, board trawling and Danish seining are all banned, as are set lines, drop lines, longlines and mullet nets.

"Commercial gillnets are being grand-fathered out of the area, and recreational and commercial gillnets are limited to areas away from deeper waters where school sharks pup.

"These areas now constitute a complex framework for managing our resources into the future.

"However, fisheries management is not static but a changing system with new measures evolving.

"For example, the Scalefish fishery is currently under review and may see additional management tools put in place across that fishery.

"All measures will face full scrutiny from all stakeholders across the range of views, before final decisions are made," Mr Llewellyn said.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/200810/s2404351.htm>

Fisherman campaign against Moreton Bay restrictions

Wednesday, 29/10/2008

Queensland fishermen have agreed to establish an emergency fighting fund to help their colleagues based in Moreton Bay, off Brisbane.

The President of the Queensland Seafood Industry Association, Neil Green, says they hope to raise \$50,000 to fund a campaign against the State Government's plan to cut back the amount of commercial fishing in the Bay.

The government proposes buying back about 40 of the 140 active fishing licences, and halving the amount of fishing.

The fishery is worth about \$70 million, and Mr Green says the \$15 million dollars for the buyback is inadequate.

"Its time to make a stand, it's time that primary industry stood up to this government and said enough is enough," he says.

"You don't treat our families the way that you are.they have thrown these families out on the scrap heap.

"They have offered them tuppence for their licence, theyv'e given them nothing for their intellectual knowledge, and we are saying it's far bigger than Moreton Bay.

"This is about Queensland and we want something done."

<http://www.news.com.au/perthnow/story/0,21598,24563971-5005399,00.html>



Crab bag limits reminder

Article from: PerthNow

October 28, 2008 08:42am

FISHERS can still catch crabs in the Peel-Harvey Estuary in November after the end of the closure period, but Cockburn Sound is still out of bounds.

Department of Fisheries' principal policy officer Nathan Harrison said the spring fishing closure protected breeding stocks and allowed female crabs to spawn.

The two-month seasonal closure during September and October was part of a number of interim measures, introduced last year, following concerns over the status of blue swimmer crab stocks.

"To provide a better understanding of the Peel-Harvey crab fishery, a dedicated three-year research program commenced last year that includes an assessment of recruitment and spawning stock levels and a 12-month recreational fishing (creel) survey," Mr Harrison said.

"The outcomes of these research projects will be extremely valuable in adding to our understanding of the Peel-Harvey crab stock. Last summer, there were anecdotal reports from recreational fishers of better catch rates, following several seasons of smaller catches that lead to the precautionary step being implemented.

"From Saturday, crab fishing opens again in the Peel-Harvey and we will continue our research programs to monitor the sustainability of Mandurah's iconic fishery."

Revised limits, introduced last year for the West Coast Bioregion, include a bag limit of 10 blue swimmer crabs per day and a daily boat limit of 20 when two or more people are on the vessel. A handy one-page guide to crabbing on the West Coast is available (in both English and Vietnamese) from the Department's website at www.fish.wa.gov.au.

Cockburn Sound

Meanwhile, the current closure of the Cockburn Sound crab fishery has been extended, for another 12 months, to continue rebuilding blue swimmer stocks in the popular waterway.

Mr Harrison said Cockburn Sound was closed to crab fishing, in November 2006, following several years of poor recruitment and high fishing pressure, which had impacted on breeding stock levels.

"Since the closure was implemented an extensive research program had been undertaken to monitor recruitment and breeding stock levels," he said.

"This research shows the Cockburn Sound crab stock has responded positively to the closure and has been improving gradually, however, breeding stocks are still below acceptable sustainability levels.

"Maintaining the closure for a further year will be the best way to strengthen the spawning stock."

<http://www.thewest.com.au/default.aspx?MenuID=77&ContentID=105047>

thewest.com.au The West Australian

Cockburn crab ban extended by a year

29th October 2008, 6:00 WST

Bans on fishing for blue swimmer crabs in Cockburn Sound would be extended for a year because population recovery was not as fast as scientists had hoped, Fisheries Department principal policy officer Nathan Harrison said yesterday.



The crab population in the area, which was closed to commercial and recreational fishing in November 2006, were still vulnerable and further closures were the best way to protect spawning stock, he said.

He said an extensive research program had shown a gradual improvement in crab stocks.

“We were hoping stocks would have recovered a little bit quicker, because they are fecund, they produce a huge number of eggs,” Mr Harrison said. “What they are finding now is the fishery was reduced to such a low level that there were so few breeding animals there when the closure was put in place that it is taking a little bit longer to recover than was thought initially.”

He said it was a borderline decision as to whether to reopen Cockburn Sound but allowing fishing would have put stocks at higher risk if there were poor environmental conditions, such as low water temperatures.

At its peak, the annual crab catch from the Cockburn Sound fishery was more than 300 tonnes. He expected the current manageable catch would be about a tenth of that.

Recfishwest executive director Frank Prokop said recreational fishermen were disappointed at the decision to extend the closure. He said they had called for the area, which was popular with locals, to be opened temporarily during the school summer holidays.

Mr Prokop said the catch over that period, estimated at less than five tonnes, would have been sustainable.

Fishermen will be able to catch blue swimmer crabs in the Peel-Harvey Estuary from Saturday after an annual two-month seasonal closure.

Mr Harrison said that last summer there were anecdotal reports of better catches following several seasons of smaller catches which led to the seasonal closure last year.

Revised limits, introduced last year for the West Coast Bioregion, include a bag limit of 10 blue swimmer crabs a day and a daily boat limit of 20 when two or more people are on the vessel. Prawn drag nets have been banned in the Peel-Harvey Estuary.

JODIE THOMSON

<http://www.thewest.com.au/default.aspx?MenuID=77&ContentID=104876>

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Tougher lobster laws to lift prices

28th October 2008, 6:00 WST

Lobster fishermen have warned the price of western rock lobsters must rise if the industry is to remain viable after the State Government imposed tough restrictions for the next two years in response to a worrying decline in juvenile stocks.

Fisheries Minister Norman Moore said yesterday a cut in the number of pots would reduce the catch to 7000 tonnes by the 2009-10 season, well below the State's average annual haul of 11,000 tonnes.

Concerns about a crisis came after official monthly survey results showed almost no larval-stage lobsters, known as puerulus, in areas expected to have abundant juvenile stocks at this time of year.

Commercial fishermen will have to reduce their number of pots 15 per cent this season, though the changes will not come into effect until December 1, about two weeks after the season starts.

A further 15 per cent reduction in the number of pots allowed will come into effect for the 2009-10 season. These additional restrictions follow pot reductions and Sunday closures introduced by the Labor government in August, which were designed to cut the overall catch by more than 20 per cent.

While the commercial sector has borne the brunt of changes, recreational fishers were told yesterday to brace for restrictions.

Lobster fisherman Anthony Pirrottina, who is president of the Geraldton Professional Fishermen's Association, said the changes were tougher than he expected but he accepted action was needed to ensure the future of the fishery.

"At least the Minister has made a decision and it's probably fair across the industry," he said. "Really, everyone has copped it. You cop it if you've got 20 pots or if you've got 200."

He said prices this season would need to improve dramatically on the 2007-08 season, when the average beach price was about \$24/kg.

Fishermen also faced higher fuel and bait costs. "There already is some pain. If we don't get some sort of price rise, we are pretty much bugged," he said.

Mr Pirrottina said the critical next step was reining in the catch by recreational fishermen.

"We don't fish on Sundays and we don't fish in January and the recreational fishers do," he said. "A lot of pros get the feeling that the recreation fishers aren't contributing to this."

Mr Moore acknowledged the changes would be tough for fishermen but were necessary given the puerulus count was so low. "We are looking at some short-term serious pain for long-term gain," he said.

He said the weak dollar might help fishermen, who were highly dependent on export markets, and market fundamentals indicated a lower supply could push up prices.

The estimated harvest in 2008-2009 is expected to be 7700 tonnes, compared with 8300 tonnes before the latest restrictions.

"This figure needs to come down to about 7000 tonnes in the 2009-2010 season," Mr Moore said.

JODIE THOMSON

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/10/28/2403213.htm?site=southwestwa>

Rock lobster industry accepts new restrictions

Posted October 28, 2008 11:25:00

The rock lobster industry says it acknowledges that harsh new restrictions on the industry are necessary to preserve Western Australia's stocks.

State Cabinet has approved the measures which will see a 15 per cent reduction in commercial fishing entitlements this season, with further restrictions next season.

The move may potentially lead to an increase in rock lobster prices.

The chairman of the Western Rock Lobster Council, Dexter Davies, says the new regulations are warranted, but will hurt fishers.

"I think everybody will be very disappointed that such action is seen to have to be taken," he said.

"But there's an acceptance, at least from the meeting I attended in Geraldton a week ago that if the count continued to be low, further action would need to be taken."

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/200810/s2403179.htm>

WA rock lobster quotas cut

Tuesday, 28/10/2008

Western Australian's rock lobster fishermen face a 30 per cent cut in their allowable catch over the next two years.

State Fisheries Minister Norman Moore has announced the measures, following reports that the number of young lobsters have declined to almost zero in areas where traditionally there were many.

The reduction will bring the state's annual rock lobster catch down from 11,000 to 7000 tonnes.

President of the Geraldton Professional Fisherman's Association, Anthony Pirrottina, says the cuts were more severe than expected.

"I guess action had to be taken with the low count and he's made a definite decision which is good," he says.

"I think it's going to hurt, but I think deep down there's going to be hurt to achieve this result of leaving product in the water."



Media Release

From the Department of Primary Industries

Monday October 27, 2008

ILLEGAL NETS THREATEN BREAM BREEDING IN THE HOPKINS

Fisheries Officers are concerned a large, illegal netting operation in the Hopkins River, near Warrnambool, may have an adverse local impact on the breeding cycle of Black bream.

More than 300 bream and Estuary perch were caught in gill nets early on Sunday morning and despite the efforts of both Police and Fisheries staff, only about 40 fish were released alive. 195 Black bream and 50 Estuary perch died.

Fisheries Victoria Acting Director of Field Services, Peter Courtney, says the breeding season for bream runs from August to January and the removal of so many broodstock at one time could have a negative impact on future stocks.

“Bream don’t successfully recruit every year and the majority of the fish caught in the illegal nets would have been part of the breeding population,” Mr Courtney said.

“They are a slow-growing fish that take nine years to reach the minimum legal length for anglers and some of the fish that died were undersized.

“Two men and a woman were interviewed over the incident and further investigations are continuing.”

The Hopkins River is one of the waterways that are the focus of the Brumby Government’s Premier River program, under two major regional strategies, *Go Fishing Victoria* and *Growing Provincial Victoria*.

More than \$200,000 has already been allocated for projects like fishing platforms and access tracks.

“We are grateful to two anglers who discovered the gill nets when they became tangled in their boat’s propeller,” Mr Courtney said.

“I would urge all members of the public to report any suspect fishing activities to the 24 hour reporting line 13-FISH (13 3474).”

Please note images are available on request

Media Contact: Alan Everett 9658 4092