NEW RecFAC COMMITTEE

The new Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee (RecFAC) held their first meeting in March and has been briefed on their responsibilities, issues facing our fishery and the role and function of Fishery Advisory Committees.

RecFAC plays an essential role in the management of fisheries by providing the Minister with specialist advice on key fisheries. RecFAC is made up of representatives from the major fishing sectors as well as community groups and key advisers on resource management policy, compliance and research.

RecFAC plays a central role in the development of fisheries policy and its involvement in policy development has improved consultation and contribution to better fisheries management over the last decade. RecFAC discusses issues and provides the Minister with possible solutions but ultimately it is the Minister who is responsible for the final management decision.

TARFish have representation on RecFAC and the major focus for the immediate future is the Rock Lobster Rules Review.

ROCK LOBSTER REVIEW

The Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE) have commenced the process for a review of the Rock Lobster Rules which expire in 2011. DPIPWE will be holding public meetings commencing in April to hear people’s views, concerns and ideas on how to address the broad range of issues facing the industry. The rock lobster fishery has continued to show worrying signs that it faces a number of challenges which are expected to have a detrimental effect on future rock lobster stocks and sustainability of the fishery unless measures are taken to address the range of issues.

Keep an eye on the Public Notices section of your paper for when the public meetings will be held and as soon as they are available they will be posted on our website. TARFish representatives will be attending the state wide meetings.

FISHWISE GRANTS

Part of the annual licence fees paid by recreational marine fishers each year are allocated to a community grants scheme by the government. There were 7 projects approved for funding through the 2009/10 Fishwise Community Grant Program.

1. Recreational gillnetting in Tasmania - an evaluation of fishing practices and catch and effort $50,600.
2. Recreational rock lobster catch estimation peer review $17,500.
3. Studying the spawning dynamics of striped trumpeter $31,000.
5. Fishing is fun for all the family booklet $11,842.
6. Redmap community awareness $10,337.
7. TARFish quarterly bulletin $20,000.

$158,269 in total has been allocated to projects in the current community grants program. These projects are intended to provide benefits to the recreational marine fishing community.
MAKO SHARK BAN
The federal government implemented a ban on the taking of Mako and Porbeagle Sharks from commonwealth waters from 29 January this year. The ban came about through an international listing of Mako and Porbeagle sharks which are under threat in the northern hemisphere. The federal government accepted that Mako and Porbeagle sharks were not under threat in Australian commonwealth waters.

Following a concerted and sustained effort by the recreational fishing community, organisations and Senator Richard Colbeck, the federal government agreed to amend the legislation to exempt Mako and Porbeagle sharks.

Legislative amendments have been drafted and should be debated in parliament in May. In the meantime it is illegal to take Mako and Porbeagle sharks in commonwealth waters unless an exemption has been granted. The Tasmanian Game Fishing Association has received an exemption from the federal government that covers its sanctioned fishing events.

STRIPED TRUMPETER
During the Scalefish Rules Review in 2009 TARFish were critical of the government’s decision to reduce the bag limit on Striped Trumpeter without appropriate research to substantiate the 50% reduction in bag limits for recreational marine fishers.

To the credit of the Labor government they have approved a Fishwise Community Grant to fund a research tagging program on Striped Trumpeter which is to be conducted by TAFI. The research project will provide relevant information on the spawning dynamics of striped trumpeter and the direct implications for fisheries management. This project should provide important information that will lead to improved understanding and management of this iconic recreational fish species.

SCALEFISH RULES 2009
Following the Scalefish Rules Review in 2009 the government prepared new legislation to enact a range of changes that it decided were required to manage the fishery.

When the legislation was placed before parliament the Liberal Party had a number of concerns with the process and placed a motion to disallow the legislation. The Liberal Party want to:

Striped Trumpeter
Striped trumpeter are being tagged and released around the coast of Tasmania for research.

Tagged fish will have a RED external t-bar tag, located adjacent to the dorsal fin.

If you catch a tagged fish:
• Record the tag number, fish length (from tip of snout to fork in the tail), date of capture and location.
• Try to keep the fish frame for us to collect. It can be frozen.
• Contact TAFI as soon as possible on 62 277 254 with the recorded details.

Tel: 62 277 254
“Ensure that all stakeholders have had sufficient time to consider the proposed changes, given that the Rules did not appear on the Department’s website for an extended period, as well as a delay between gazetted and tabling of the rules.

Review any scientific advice which informed the formulation of the rules.

Consider any equity issues between the recreational fishing sector and the commercial fishing sector in their joint duty of care to the scalefish fishery.”

The effect of the disallowance motion is that the new Rules will be effective from 1st November 2009 until the first day of the new Parliament, sometime in April.

Rene Hidding stated that “In effect, the Scalefish Rules, as a result of my disallowance motion are now in the nature of Temporary Rules, to be confirmed or altered following some further, genuine, consultation...”

RECREATIONAL MARINE FISHING WISH LIST

TARFish approached all three political parties in the lead up to the state election requesting their response to a range of issues which the TARFish Committee considered need to be addressed by the government following the state election. The 13 issues TARFish requested responses to included:

1. Base marine fisheries management on ecosystem based fisheries management.
2. Structure marine fisheries management on co-management.
3. Develop a recreational marine fishing policy.
4. Implement long term core funding for the peak body.
5. Publish an annual licence fee trust fund expenditure report.
6. Licence fee trust fund be used for the benefit of recreational marine fishers.
7. Increase funding for recreational marine fishing research.
8. Support the reinstatement of the legislative council recreational marine fishing inquiry.
10. Investigate feasibility of implementing artificial reefs to enhance recreational fishing.
11. Undertake state wide social and economic study into recreational marine fishing.
12. Appoint recreational representation to marine farming planning review panel.
13. Guarantee current quarantining of boat registration fees will be maintained.

The Labor and Liberal Parties provided responses to all 13 issues and these are available on our website or by contacting us. The Greens Party did not respond to our request for comment.

**RECORD FINE**

A West Australian commercial fisherman was recently fined a record amount after pleading guilty to killing 11 Australian Fur Seals on the North West Coast in 2006. The fisherman was fined $5,000 for taking an action which led to the death of a wholly protected marine species in commonwealth waters. The magistrate took into account the fisherman was no longer in business and did not impose a jail term. The maximum penalty was 12 months’ jail or a $6,600 fine or both.

**RESPONSIBLE FISHING**

Responsible and sustainable fishing practices will ensure fish for the future. To find out more about responsible fishing practices pick up your free copy of the TARFish Recreational Marine Fishing Code of Practice from all leading marine retailers or by contacting TARFish.

**JOIN TARFish FOR FREE**

TARFish continues to grow and mature as an association and remains committed and flexible to the needs of Tasmania’s recreational marine fishing community. Membership rules were changed in February 2009 to allow individuals to join TARFish as an Associate Member thereby allowing individual recreational fishers to directly support the only government recognised, independent peak body set up to look after the interests of recreational marine fishers.

Our associate membership now totals over 900 individuals and sees members drawn from all areas of Tasmania and from all demographics. It is particularly encouraging to see the number of families who have joined TARFish. Associate membership is FREE and there are no ongoing fees. Simply contact us, and we will post you a membership application or you can download from our website, complete the details and mail back.

**CONTACTING TARFish**

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