

IFM - Integrated Fisheries Management Newsletter

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From the Minister for Fisheries



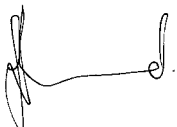
Welcome to the first edition of the Integrated Fisheries Management Newsletter, a new Department of Fisheries publication. This newsletter aims to inform the commercial and recreational fishing sectors, indigenous fishers and the public about Integrated Fisheries Management (IFM) and the Department's efforts to help ensure *Fish for the future*.

As the new Minister for Fisheries, I would like to acknowledge my predecessor, the Hon Kim Chance MLC, and the Department for the progress they have made in developing the IFM framework over the past several years. It is my privilege to be able to preside over the next stages of implementing IFM – a bold new direction in fisheries management that we believe is unique in the world.

Western Australia is endowed with healthy fish stocks and valuable fisheries that contribute significantly to the State's economy. However, this primary resource is not to be taken for granted. Fishing effort is increasing in all sectors and we cannot be complacent.

The Department of Fisheries released the first of a series of information reports: "Integrated Fisheries Management – Western Rock Lobster Resource." The release of this publication is an important milestone in the evolution of IFM. The report will provide information that will assist the Integrated Fisheries Allocation Advisory Committee (IFAAC) in their task of providing recommendations to me on catch allocations for western rock lobster.

This newsletter will provide updates on the allocation process for western rock lobster and report on future developments relating to IFM arrangements for the abalone and finfish fisheries as they are announced. I hope it will be a useful and informative publication for fishers, industry members and the public as we proceed down the path of IFM – an innovative approach to allocating catch shares for use by commercial, recreational and indigenous fishers in a responsible and sustainable manner.



Hon Jon Ford MLC
Minister for Fisheries

What is IFM?

IFM is a new initiative aimed at preserving Western Australia's fisheries for future generations.

Integrated Fisheries Management is about improving on good fisheries management.

It is a "work in progress" in the sense that all fisheries are not immediately subject to IFM processes – it will take more than 10 years before all fisheries have been considered.

IFM involves:

- setting the total sustainable harvest level for each resource that allows for an ecologically sustainable level of fishing;
- allocation of explicit catch shares for use by commercial, recreational and indigenous fishers;
- continual monitoring of each sector's harvested catch;
- managing each sector within its allocated catch share; and
- developing mechanisms to enable the reallocation of catch shares between sectors as the community's use of fish resources changes over time.

Who does the allocating?

The Minister for Fisheries is responsible for making the final decision on allocations after receiving advice from the IFAAC. The allocations are likely to be fixed for about five years.



Department of
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Fish for the future

IFAAC was established with the express purpose of providing advice to the Minister for Fisheries on catch allocation in particular fisheries. The committee includes an independent Chair, Mr Murray Jorgensen, and two members from the major fishing sectors with broad management experience. These two members are Mr Norman Halse and Professor George Kailis.

The Minister appointed IFAAC in October 2004 and it held its first meeting in November 2004.

The allocation process

1. Determining the need for an allocation process

The first step in the IFM process is determining the need for a formal allocation process in a fishery. The Minister for Fisheries has requested that IFAAC begins with the western rock lobster, abalone and the west coast demersal finfish resources.

In the future, IFAAC will consult broadly to identify fisheries that should be included in the IFM process and advise the Minister for Fisheries accordingly.

2. Development of an Integrated Fisheries Management Report (IFM Report)

Once the Minister announces that a resource will move through the IFM process, the Department of Fisheries will prepare an IFM Report for that resource.

The IFM reports will contain details such as:

- the current management practices within the fishery;
- historical catches taken by each sector;
- the biology of the fish species involved; and
- other relevant data, such as regional employment, economic and social/lifestyle issues.

Most significantly, the reports will also include a clear statement of the sustainable harvest level for the resource.

They will not establish the initial allocations of fish resources. Rather, they will be a statement of what is known about those resources and current patterns of usage.

The reports will become a primary, but not exclusive, resource for IFAAC when forming its recommendations to the Minister on initial allocations for each fish resource.

In developing these reports, the Department will consult with the key stakeholder groups.

3. The Integrated Fisheries Allocation Process

After receiving the IFM Report, IFAAC will investigate the allocation issue. It will do this through consultation with key stakeholders (including seeking written submissions), drawing on all available data, and by identifying areas of agreement and disagreement between the different parties.

Once IFAAC has come to an initial position on allocation, this will be documented along with the reasons for its conclusions. IFAAC will recommend to the Minister that the report be released as a “draft allocation paper” for public comment inviting submissions.

Once the public comment period has closed, and IFAAC has considered the submissions received, it will finalise its position and submit a final allocation report to the Minister for his decision.

4. Processes for reallocation

Given that community expectations and demands over the use of fish resources will change over time, the Minister has asked IFAAC to investigate the development of a market-based system to achieve reallocations.

Rock lobster – ‘first cab off the rank’

The introduction of IFM in Western Australia has begun: WA’s benchmark resource, western rock lobster (WRL), will be the first to undergo the IFM process.

The WRL IFM Report was released in April 2005. It is the first in a series of reports that will be released as IFM continues to be implemented.

For more information and copies of the reports as they are published, visit the Department’s website at www.fish.wa.gov.au

Research projects

Good management is underpinned by good science. Extensive research and catch monitoring in the western rock lobster fishery have enabled the Department to manage this fishery so effectively that it is recognised internationally as one of the best managed commercial fisheries in the world.

Similarly, the abalone fishery is backed by strong research and monitoring to enable sustainable commercial quotas to be set each year.

Annual recreational mail surveys have provided scientists with long-term data sets on the estimated levels of recreational fishing for western rock lobster. Recreational fishing for abalone is also monitored in the Perth Metropolitan region. Reef surveys are undertaken at the end of each season to determine the sustainability of the fishery under existing management rules.

Monitoring of catches at beaches also occurs throughout the season, providing estimates of total catches.

Further detailed research on finfish will be undertaken. Commercial fishers are required to submit catch and effort returns each month, which has provided some commercial data. Dedicated research on some key indicator species, such as dhufish, has been undertaken and further research and catch monitoring of both sectors will be done in 2005/06. Updates will be provided in future newsletters.

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Who is IFAAC?



*Murray Jorgensen
IFAAC Chairman*

As Chairman of the Forest Products Commission for the past

four years, Mr Jorgensen has demonstrated a strong background in natural resource management. He has a proven background in various business ventures as a chairman and consultant and has extensive experience in local government including five years as Shire Clerk at the Shire of Manjimup and 10 years as CEO of the Town of Albany.



*George Kailis
IFAAC Member*

George Kailis is Professor of Management at the University of Notre Dame

in Fremantle and is a Director of the MG Kailis Group. He has had extensive experience on government, science and industry bodies at a state, national and international level. Prof Kailis is currently Chair of the Cockburn Sound Management Council, Chair of the Australian Seafood Industry Council Native Title Working Group, and a member of the Pearling Industry Advisory Committee. He has previously been Director of both the Australian Fisheries Management Authority, and the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation.



*Norman Halse
IFAAC Member*

A keen recreational fisher, conservationist and researcher,

Mr Halse worked for WA's Department of Agriculture for 40 years, his career culminating as that Department's Director General. His conservation interests included serving as past president of the Conservation Council of WA, as Chairman of the National Parks and Conservation Authority and a member of the Environmental Protection Authority. Mr Halse has a strong interest in recreational fishing which is demonstrated by his service as a past Chairman, and current board member, of peak body Recfishwest.

The Department's Vision:

"World class management of fisheries, marine and aquatic resources."

The Department's Purpose:

"To conserve, develop and share the fish and aquatic resources of Western Australia for the benefit of present and future generations"

The Department's commitment:

Fish for the future

Further reading

For more information visit the Department's website at www.fish.wa.gov.au

IFM Government Policy 2004 is available on the website as are the following papers:

Fisheries Management Paper No. 165

Report to the Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries by the Integrated Fisheries Management Review Committee (November 2002).

Fisheries Management Paper No. 135

Protecting and Sharing Western Australia's Coastal Fish Resources: The path to integrated management. Issues and proposals for community discussion (March 2000).

Protecting and Sharing Western Australia's Coastal Fish Resources: The Path to Integrated Management.
(Brochure, February 2000).

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