

The “Wetline” Review

The Government is committed to introducing more effective management for all fisheries. This is essential if we are to provide a sustainable management framework, particularly for finfish stocks.

On this basis, a number of major fishery reviews have been undertaken in recent years. These have included the implementation of management for the aquatic charter sector, the Gascoyne and West Coast regional recreational reviews, a review of the commercial mackerel fishery, reviews of the South Coast and West Coast commercial estuarine fisheries and the development of an aboriginal fishing management strategy.

Each of these reviews is aimed toward putting management of each sector on a similar footing and to put in place the appropriate frameworks and controls in which spatial and allocation issues can proceed.

The final component of sectoral management required before we can shift towards an integrated system is the commercial wetline review. It is important to note at the outset that the wetline review is not aimed at resource allocation or reducing the commercial catch. The review is focussed toward implementing a more effective management framework for the commercial sector and to prevent further growth in this sector.

The review has commenced and two panels have been established to conduct the review:

A Commercial Access Panel (CAP) appointed to devise a fair and equitable method of determining who will have access to the fishery and their level of allocation; and

A Management Planning Panel (MPP) appointed to develop the specific management arrangements for the fishery.

This is the first time a two-panel system has been used in a review in WA. This was done to separate the task of determining the management arrangements for the fishery (which requires extensive input from commercial fishing members) from access and allocation (which may benefit from a more independent analysis of fairness and equity issues).

It is anticipated that the Panels will be in a position to release discussion papers in the early part of next year (2004) for public comment. Upon review of these comments, the two Panels will then provide the Minister for Fisheries with their final recommendations. Legislative changes will then be required to implement the new plans and, as with the introduction of most new management arrangements, an objections process will be required.

Call for preliminary Submissions

Members of the fishing industry and the public are invited to make initial written submissions on matters they believe the panels should consider as part of the review.

Submissions should be made here prior to 14 November. Alternatively, submissions should be sent to:

Wetline Review Panels
Locked Bag 39
Cloisters Square Post Office
Perth WA 6850

Terms of Reference

Commercial Access Panel

“To provide advice and recommendations to the Minister on matters related to the grant of access to each of the regional ‘wetline’ managed commercial fisheries in Western Australia and in particular by:

- Recommending a method for determining who should be eligible to access each of the fisheries; and
- Recommending a method to determine the degree and nature of access which should be granted to eligible persons

In providing these recommendations the panel should:

- Examine the West Coast and Gascoyne Regions first, followed by the other Regions
- liaise with the Management Planning Panels on relevant issues
- make such enquiries on ‘wetline’ fishing as the committee thinks necessary to properly carry out its function.
- take into account the spatial distribution of catch and effort
- take into account whether there should be any weighting given to key species
- take into account the various statements by the Minister regarding investment or activity in the wetline fishery after 3 November 1997 and any future allocation of access to the fishery
- take into account other issues related to access criteria which the panel consider relevant

Terms of Reference

West Coast/Gascoyne Management Planning Panel

“To provide advice and recommendations to the Minister for Fisheries on matters related to the future management of the ‘wetline’ commercial fisheries in the West Coast and Gascoyne Regions of Western Australia by:

- incorporating the decision by the Minister for Fisheries on access criteria for the West Coast and Gascoyne into the management planning process;
- providing recommendations on the most appropriate management arrangements for the ‘wetline’ commercial fisheries in the West Coast and Gascoyne Regions, including whether there should be sub-zones within either of the Regions;
- reviewing relevant data on ‘wetline’ fishing in Western Australia provided by the Executive Director of Fisheries, including biological parameters of key target species;
- reviewing models for the management of the West Coast and Gascoyne ‘wetline’ commercial fisheries put forward by the Executive Director of Fisheries and others;
- ensuring the management arrangements for the commercial sector are compatible with those of the recreational and charter sectors and capable of supporting the Integrated Fisheries Management Process.
- considering the proposed objectives of the fishery in the development of management arrangements and providing recommendations on objectives for management
- providing advice on resourcing requirements for the management of the fishery and potential fee charging arrangements for licence holders.