

ALLOCATING THE METROPOLITAN ROE'S ABALONE RESOURCE

Matters that I, Hon Norman Moore, MLC, Minister for Fisheries, consider important in setting out my position on the Metropolitan Roe's Abalone Resource.

I have taken close note of a number of aspects of the metropolitan abalone resource that differ substantively from the western rock lobster resource, the other fishery in which an allocation decision has been made.

- There is already a high degree of spatial allocation in the access to the stock, with commercial fishers being prohibited from accessing the reef tops (currently between Cape Bouvard and Hillarys).
- The state of knowledge of the interdependence of the two components of the abalone resource (the reef-top and off reef-top) is limited and likely to remain so for at least five years. This lack of knowledge makes proceeding with proportional allocations undesirable at this time, but it should not be used as a reason not to proceed with an allocation and a pragmatic management arrangement while the state of knowledge is improved.
- Despite the limited state of knowledge of the relationship between the reef-top and the off reef-top components there are well established, practical measures of status of the stocks in the two components which can support robust management decision-making.
- Management measures employed for the two sectors have substantial differences (e.g. prohibition on the use of compressed air for recreational fishers; the reef top prohibition and different size limits for the commercials). Furthermore management arrangements are currently in place that can precisely control the take by the commercial sector and, within limits and through the process of using a five-year moving average, can adequately control the take by the recreational sector. Furthermore, possible future changes to the way in which the recreational sector is managed could see significant improvements in the ability to control the annual take by the recreational sector.
- The management objectives of the two sectors are also different, with the commercial sector focussed on under-exploiting the stock to have certainty of at least a 36 tonne quota focussed on larger animals, while the recreational sector's objective is the maximisation of their take within any year and the amenity of that take.
- An outcome of making a pragmatic, non-proportional allocation now and continuing to use existing measures of the status of the two components of the stock, means that the sectors can be managed independently in line with the status of the component of the stock to which they have primary access (while recognising that there are inter-relationships between the two components of the stock which are not fully understood). Once the state of knowledge of the inter-relationships of the two components of the stock is adequately developed, it may be possible to move a method of management that reflects proportional allocations.

IFAAC's Recommendations	Minister's position
<p>Recommendation 1: Allocations for abalone should only be considered for Roe's abalone within the Perth metropolitan region, that is the region between Moore River mouth and Cape Bouvard (currently Area 7 of the commercial fishery).</p>	<p>Agree. Given the nature of the metropolitan fishery, and the lack of information on regional stocks, the Department believes the Perth metropolitan Roe's abalone stock should be given priority. I may seek IFAAC's recommendations for the allocation of regional abalone stocks at a future date.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2: The metropolitan zone for the recreational fishery should be amended by extending the boundaries from Moore River to Cape Bouvard, so that the commercial and recreational sectors have common metropolitan region boundaries.</p>	<p>Agree. Currently, the west coast boundaries of the recreational abalone fishery are from Greenough River Mouth to Busselton Jetty and the commercial boundaries are from Moore River to Cape Bouvard. I believe aligning the boundaries from Moore River to Cape Bouvard will facilitate the integration of the customary, commercial and recreational abalone fisheries.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3: The ban on commercial fishers fishing on the reef top between Cape Bouvard and Hillarys Boat Harbour should be extended further north to Burns Beach. IFAAC recommends that the ban should proceed in conjunction with advancing the other issues covered in this report.</p>	<p>Agree. The area between Hillarys Boat Harbour and Burns Beach is a popular recreational fishing area. Extending the reef top ban on commercial fishing has the potential to reduce future interaction and conflict in the area as the population of Perth increases and spreads further along the coast. I note the commercial sector's concern about divers being washed onto reef tops by wave action and I believe this can be dealt with pragmatically by Department of Fisheries officers.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4: That management on the basis of keeping sectors to proportional allocations for Roe's abalone in the Perth metropolitan area should be deferred until:-</p> <p>(a) there is adequate information on the off-reef top recreational fishery so that its catch can be managed;</p> <p>(b) there is adequate understanding of the relationships between the reef top and off-reef top fisheries that it is possible to manage all of the components of the fishery equitably through proportional allocations; and</p> <p>(c) fishery managers have gained enough experience with managing the recreational sector to a total allowable recreational catch under new more flexible management arrangements as proposed in Recommendation 12.</p>	<p>Agree. Implementing management of proportional allocations would be inappropriate at this stage, although I acknowledge the recreational sector's concerns in this regard.</p> <p>I consider that the state of the management arrangements is sufficient to proceed with managing explicit, quantitative allocations of 36 tonnes for the commercial sector and 40 tonnes for the recreational sector as proposed by IFAAC under Recommendation 5. However, in the initial stages, it may be necessary to use a moving average framework for managing the take by the recreational sector.</p>
<p>Recommendation 5: Subject to sustainability constraints and until proportional allocations are introduced, sectors should be managed to ensure that the recreational catch is consistent with its average over the period 1999-2003 (40 tonnes) and the commercial sector has the opportunity to maintain its 36 tonne quota.</p>	<p>Agree. However, while I believe that allocations in the form of a total allowable commercial catch (TACC) and a total allowable recreational catch (TARC) can be implemented without further delay the TACC and TARC may need to be adjusted over time dependent upon changes in stock status of either of the components. However, any adjustments need to recognise that there are likely to be relationships between the two components of the stock and any changes in catch levels should be made with due recognition</p>

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<p>Recommendation 6: That should proportional allocations be made to the recreational and commercial sectors that firstly a priority allocation of 500 kg for Roe's abalone be made to the Customary sector in the Perth metropolitan region.</p>	<p>of this issue. Disagree. The customary fishing sector should be granted an allocation of 500 kg for Roe's abalone in the Perth metropolitan area, but this should not be a priority allocation.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7: A regular estimate should be made of the amount of recreational fishing in the 'off reef top' component of the fishery. If this changes significantly, a review of the current arrangements will be necessary to separately manage each of the two components of the recreational fishery.</p>	<p>Agree. Being in a position to track changes in the use of the off reef-top component by the recreational sector is desirable, as they are not explicitly prohibited from exploiting this component of the resource. However, given the practical limitations on the recreational sector's ability to access the off reef-top component (through the compressed air prohibition) I do not believe that there is a large risk of changes in the their level of usage of the off reef-top component.</p>
<p>Recommendation 8: When at a future time it becomes appropriate to manage the recreational and commercial sectors on a fully integrated basis the starting point for any future proportional allocations in the Perth metropolitan region should be an allocation of 53 percent for the recreational sector and 47 percent for the commercial sector.</p>	<p>Agree.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9: Access to Roe's abalone in the Perth metropolitan region for aquaculture purposes should only be by Ministerial exemption. Should there be a regular and ongoing need to access the resource, then the aquaculture sector should make appropriate arrangements with the participants in the existing commercial fishing sector for access to broodstock.</p>	<p>Agree.</p>
<p>Recommendation 10: When at a future time it becomes appropriate to manage the recreational and commercial sectors on a fully integrated basis, a reallocation mechanism should be introduced.</p>	<p>Agree.</p>
<p>Recommendation 11: The Department of Fisheries work with the recreational sector to develop a management regime which will reduce incidental mortality and catch variability between years, provide the opportunity for the sector to take its allocation and improve the social and economic benefits from recreational fishing.</p>	<p>Agree. I have asked the Department to establish a working group to make recommendations on the future management of the recreational abalone fishery within the context of its catch allocation. The Department would expect the working group to report to the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Fisheries by June 2009 and any new management arrangements to be implemented in the 2009 season.</p>
<p>Recommendation 12: The Department of Fisheries should initiate and facilitate negotiations between the commercial and</p>	<p>Agree. Recent population growth, particularly on the State's south coast, has caused some inter-sectoral conflict. However, the I do not believe</p>

231

IFAAC's Recommendations	Minister's position
recreational sectors aimed at resolving their conflicts outside the metropolitan region.	that it can effectively facilitate negotiations between the commercial and recreational sectors until such time as it has adequate information on the sectoral catch shares.
Recommendation 13: Major abalone resource sharing conflicts, outside the Perth metropolitan region, that remain unresolved three years after the date of decision on the recommendations in this report should be referred to the IFAAC to make recommendations for resolution.	Agree in principle. IFAAC has a role to play in the resolution of inter-sectoral conflict, but the recommended timeframes may not be realistic. It will require at least 5 years of phone-diary data to adequately estimate recreational catch and discuss resource sharing outside the metropolitan area.
Recommendation 14: The Department of Fisheries progressively develop, in consultation with stakeholders, the necessary regulatory and consultative structures that account for: (a) the need to include people of all backgrounds who access the resource; (b) the reconstitution of the abalone management advisory committee to deal equitably with Customary, recreational and commercial issues, and enable negotiations within and between the sectors; and (c) the need to give effect to the Government's IFM policies contained in Guiding principles (vii) and (x).	Agree in principle. However, the proposed abalone consultation process should be in line with any new proposals that may eventuate from the current review of the Department's consultation processes.