

DETERMINATION BY THE MINISTER FOR FISHERIES ON THE WEST COAST DEMERSAL SCALEFISH RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Matters that the Minister for Fisheries considers important in setting out his position on the West Coast Demersal Scalefish Resource

- The west coast demersal scalefish resource is a multi-user, multi-zonal and multi-species resource.
- The sectors targeting the west coast demersal scalefish resource have undergone significant management change since 2005/06 in order to reduce their catch by at least 50% of the 2005/06 catch level and are now largely meeting that objective.
- While the commercial and recreational sectors catch the whole suite of west coast demersal scalefish, the indicator species of Western Australian dhufish, pink snapper and baldchin groper are particularly important for both sectors.
- The commercial sector catches large quantities of species that are not generally targeted by the recreational sector, such as emperors or deep-water species such as hapuku. This means, that while the commercial sector's catch is larger than the recreational sector's catch, much of the fish caught is not readily available to all recreational sector participants because they are too far off-shore or species such as emperors are found in waters off less heavily populated areas of the State.
- The fish species that make up this resource are geographically distributed in such a way that, for example, baldchin groper is more common in the northern area of the west coast, and Western Australian dhufish is more common in the southern part of the west coast.
- The Integrated Fisheries Allocation Advisory Committee (the Allocation Committee) is required by the Integrated Fisheries Management policy to make its recommendations on the best available information. The absence of, or any uncertainty in, information should not be used as a reason for delaying or failing to make a decision.

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Integrated Fisheries Allocation Advisory Committee Recommendations	Minister for Fisheries' position
<p>Recommendation 1: The initial allocation for the west coast demersal scalefish resource be made for the entire area covered by the West Coast Demersal Scalefish Interim Managed Fishery, 26°30' South to 115°30' East (north of Kalbarri to east of Augusta).</p>	<p>Agree - Bioregional allocations are easier to manage than zonal allocations within bioregions. This is particularly the case for recreational fisheries, as recreational fishers are mobile and able to shift catch and effort between zones.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2: The total recorded commercial catch of all west coast demersal species and the estimated total recreational catch of all west coast demersal species should be used for allocating the west coast demersal scalefish resource.</p>	<p>Agree – The whole suite of species is the resource that is managed by the Department of Fisheries (Department). Monitoring of the commercial sector is comprehensive across the demersal suite. Monitoring of the recreational sector for the foreseeable future is likely to be restricted to representative species because the Department does not have weight-length relationships for all 200 species and issues of identification using a phone logbook survey methodology.</p> <p>Having the allocation apply to the whole suite, even if only a sub-component is monitored for the recreational sector, will guard against shifts in targeting of the resource by either sector. If necessary species, such as deep water species, may be added to the monitored component if they become significant in the catch.</p> <p>The Department will develop business rules around the use of a species subset (eg. the predominant 15 species), for which there is quantitative data as a basis for monitoring the allocation.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3: 2005/06 should be used as the reference year for the allocation of the west coast demersal scalefish resource.</p>	<p>Agree - When the Allocation Committee started its west coast demersal scalefish investigations and issued its draft Allocation Report, the 2005/06 creel survey was the most recent creel survey data available before substantial management changes.</p> <p>The catch information for the West Coast</p>

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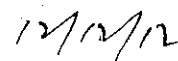
Integrated Fisheries Allocation Advisory Committee Recommendations	Minister for Fisheries' position
	<p>Demersal Scalefish Fishery in 2005/06 was the basis on which the Department determined that at least a 50% reduction in catch was required for sustainable management of the fishery. Two independent reviews of the science associated with this decision have confirmed that the 50% reduction is required.</p> <p>2005/06 was also the year before substantial management changes commenced for the commercial and recreational sectors.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4: No specific allocation to the Customary sector is required and Customary fishing can continue in accordance with existing Customary fishing arrangements.</p>	<p>Agree</p>
<p>Recommendation 5: The formal allocations in the fishery should be made to the recreational and commercial sectors.</p>	<p>Agree</p>
<p>Recommendation 6: The Department of Fisheries should manage the fishery so that the intra-sectoral catch shares remain approximately at their 2005/06 levels.</p>	<p>Agree</p>
<p>Recommendation 7: That for allocation purposes the recreational catch be considered to be 30% greater than the revised 2005/06 recreational creel survey catch.</p>	<p>Accept – It is the Allocation Committee's role to address the issues surrounding gaps and uncertainty with respect to the available data when ascertaining each sector's historical catch shares.</p>
<p>Recommendation 8: The estimate of the recreational catch for 2005/06 should be increased by 39 tonnes to take account of the Abrolhos Island's recreational catch.</p>	<p>See recommendation 7, above.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9: The 2005/06 commercial sector's catch in the metropolitan area should not be taken into account when determining the sectoral allocations for the west coast demersal scalefish resource.</p>	<p>Agree – The commercial licence and permit holders that fished in the metropolitan area were provided with <i>Act of Grace</i> or Voluntary Fisheries Adjustment Scheme payments to take account of the closure. It is the Allocation Committee's role to address</p>

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	issues surrounding how specific sector catches should be allocated.
Recommendation 10: That the allocation of shares in the total suite of species in the WCDSF should be 64% to the commercial sector and 36% to the recreational sector.	Agree
<p>Recommendation 11: Within each sector's allocation, the proportions of the five indicator species, be monitored and managed so that as far as practicable, they remain with their relative catch share of:</p> <p>Western Australian dhufish – recreational sector 62%, commercial sector 38%, Pink snapper – recreational sector 21%, commercial sector 79%, Baldchin groper – recreational sector 65%, commercial sector 35%, Emperors – recreational sector 9%, commercial sector 91%, Bight redfish – recreational sector 14%, commercial sector 86%.</p>	<p>Agree in principle – Multispecies fish resources are dynamic and variable over time. To allow for practical management, catch proportions of indicator species to be adopted as guidelines, rather than as specific fixed proportional shares, as follows:</p> <p>Western Australian dhufish – recreational sector 60%, commercial sector 40%, Pink snapper – recreational sector 20%, commercial sector 80%, Baldchin groper – recreational sector 65%, commercial sector 35%, Emperors – recreational sector 10%, commercial sector 90%, Bight redfish – recreational sector 15%, commercial sector 85%.</p> <p>The Department will manage and monitor the catch within these guidelines. This will allow for issues such as individual species recruitment pulses to flow through the sectoral catches without separate management measures for each species necessarily having to be taken.</p>
Recommendation 12: A system of monitoring and managing the sectoral catches, based on the principles set out in the document " <i>Considerations for the Implementation of Western Rock Lobster Sectoral Allocations</i> " should be established to manage allocations in the West Coast Demersal Scalefish Fishery.	Agree – While the principles contained in " <i>Considerations for the Implementation of Western Rock Lobster Sectoral Allocations</i> " can be followed the west coast demersal scalefish resource is a significantly more complex resource and a more adaptive approach to management needs to be taken (see Recommendations 2 and 11 above).

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Recommendation 13: Monitoring of boat fishing for silver trevally, King George whiting and other nearshore fish stocks should take place to ensure transfer of effort does not result in overfishing nearshore species.	Agree – The Department is to ensure that effort is not transferred to shore-based fishing.
Recommendation 14: That the initial management changes to enable the sectors to meet their allocation be taken at the same time as any changes to the sustainability management arrangements are made by the Minister for Fisheries as a result of the 2012 review of management arrangements.	Agree – It is expected that the review of management arrangements will occur in 2013/2014.
Recommendation 15: That a moving five-year average be used when determining if sectoral catches have remained within their allocation.	Accept - This is in line with the arrangements in the rock lobster and abalone resources. However, the responsiveness of the five year average for this resource will require further consideration.
Recommendation 16: A reallocation mechanism should be implemented for the west coast demersal scalefish resource as soon as practicable.	Agree
Recommendation 17: The Department should continue to improve its collection methodology for recreational fishing data and improve its community education strategies on the status and management of the west coast demersal scalefish resource.	Agree – The Department has introduced the new Western Australian Recreational Boat Fishing Survey. The Department is also updating its information brochures on the west coast demersal scalefish resource. The Department is also taking steps to improve its collection of commercial data with the development of an entitlement management system.



NORMAN MOORE MLC
MINISTER FOR FISHERIES



Date

