



*Fishing for the Future*

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The Director  
Sustainable Fisheries Section  
Commonwealth DSEWPC  
Canberra ACT

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This is the submission by Sunfish Queensland on the proposal to extend approval, including export approval, for the Qld East Coast Inshore Finfish Fishery. The membership of Sunfish opposes further extension of this approval. Our specific concerns are:

**1. The new commercial Small Mesh Net endorsement N11.**

This new endorsement replaces the N6 Bait Net endorsement and legitimizes the take of all species except Barramundi in these small mesh nets. A huge number of endorsements were issued (360). This was all done without proper consultation with stakeholders, and without any assessment of the impacts of these nets especially on bycatch.

Small mesh nets have mesh size of 12-45mm and may be up to 600m long north of Baffle Creek and 400m long south of Baffle Creek.

Many species are taken in these new small mesh nets. Two examples of concern are garfish which have low fecundity and are vulnerable to overfishing (eg NSW ban on netting for garfish), and Sand Whiting which are taken well below the size of maturity (min size of 23cm - when the relevant MAC advised in 2008 that the min size should be 25cm).

It is the view of Sunfish that export approval of all species except barramundi be withheld until such time as the impact of commercial small mesh nets is properly assessed.

**2. Concern over Sand Whiting.**

The relevant MAC in 2008 recommended that the minimum size of Sand Whiting should be increased to 25cm on the grounds of sustainability which enable stocks to reach spawning size before they may be kept. This recommendation was not accepted and hence these stocks are vulnerable to overfishing/depletion.

The export of Sand Whiting should be stopped until such time as the sustainability of these fish is properly addressed.

**3. The widespread use of larger-mesh gill nets is of major concern.**

These nets continue to take bycatch of marine mammals, sea turtles and large sharks. This places all inshore fisheries including recreational fishing in a bad light. In places of heavy use local depletion of some fish stocks is occurring - small mackerel, barramundi, and other species of recreational fishing significance.

Some members of Sunfish are making additional submissions opposing continuation of the approval.

Sincerely,  
Judy Lynne  
*Executive Officer*  
SUNFISH Queensland Inc

*Representing the interests of Recreational Fishing*