



## **Sunfish notes from Redlands Snapper meeting, 14 February 2011**

Approx. 200 persons attended and several officers from Fisheries Qld. Recreation, commercial and charter were well represented. The Fisheries Qld presentation was given by Brigid Kerrigan and John Kung. Selena Ham chaired the meeting and managed the questions from the floor, and responses. Jim Groves the Managing Director, Fisheries Queensland attended.

The following elected representatives also attended:

Ray Hopper LNP Shadow Fisheries Minister

Mark Robinson LNP Cleveland

Peter Dowling LNP Redlands

### **Overall Observations**

The meeting was critical over the contents of the RIS, the interim closure commencing 15 February 2011, and the way Fisheries Qld had dealt with the Snapper review. The Chair was able to control the meeting and provide participants the opportunity to ask questions and make statements. Interjections were not tolerated by the chair, and the chair provided the staff of Fisheries Queensland an adequate opportunity to respond to all questions/statements. The number of outbursts was low in comparison to those at the meetings at Wynnum and Redcliffe. Discussion threads however were disjointed.

### **Issues raised and Fisheries Qld responses.**

- ◇ Minutes – *minutes will be posted on the Fisheries Qld website*
- ◇ Question on the interim closure – *Chair said raise it later in discussion*
- ◇ Why is mahi mahi to be a Rocky Reef species? – *caught in conjunction with Snapper*
- ◇ Will responses to questions be kept in the minutes – *yes*
- ◇ The RIS proposals are about restrictions, why not look at enhancing stocks/stocking – *Snapper recruitment is not the problem, small snapper abundant in the nursery areas. Stocking with small snapper unlikely to improve stocks*
- ◇ Did the 2003 size increases improve recruitment – *there was an initial benefit but stocks declined*
- ◇ Where does the FQ information on snapper catches come from – *Fisheries Qld surveys and from the SNWG(Snapper Working Group)*
- ◇ Snapper poaching by NZ boats off the Gold Coast – *This is being dealt with*
- ◇ Why no snapper meetings at Ipswich and other western areas – *Fisheries Qld apologises and will meet if necessary*
- ◇ What does rebuild mean – *increasing the snapper stock from the present 35% to 45% virgin stock*
- ◇ The changing environment may be having an impact on Snapper
- ◇ The RIS is contradictory and lacks scientific back-up – *there are uncertainties with the snapper stock assessment. Extrapolation was necessary due to limited data.*
- ◇ No one in the room believes the Fisheries Qld data.
- ◇ Which is the best of the 4 options – *all options are equally viable*

- ◇ The interim closure indicates that decisions are already being made – *the interim closure is in regulation. The final management adopted will overtake the need for interim closures*
- ◇ How much will the fee of \$90 bring in and how will it be used – *Used for more compliance, surveys, education and information. Budgetary figures for calculations will be available to public.*
- ◇ Hardship caused by the interim closure – *the Government did consider impacts. There are other species that can be taken*
- ◇ There are major uncertainties in the stock assessment – *the ABARE review noted the uncertainties but concluded that it supported the findings of overfishing*
- ◇ Logistical problems of having meeting on Valentine's Day and microphones NOT working – *apologies*
- ◇ Concerns about the accuracy of the data, SNWG not listened to, the rec surveys are questioned, no transparency in the process to date – *The SNWG contributed but it is the role of Government to consider issues like fees*
- ◇ Anglers cannot identify fish. What education will come out of the review?
- ◇ The data on rec catches collected via telephone. Why not go direct to anglers – *A diary was kept. Better data can be collected via the proposed permit system*
- ◇ Costs. Anglers already pay boat and trailer registration. – *the new permit fee would cover fisheries costs*
- ◇ The marine park rezoning process ignored public consultation. – *there should be honesty in the consultation process*
- ◇ Consultation is a joke. Little experience in FQ in snapper fishing at particular locations
- ◇ Why not limit the number of large snapper taken e.g. 2 over a certain size– *snapper die if caught in deep water*
- ◇ No one in favour of the 4 options – *alternatives will be considered*
- ◇ Loss of habitat – *recruitment surveys show strong recruitment in more open waters. There is plenty of habitat with minor losses*
- ◇ Fees for disadvantaged, e.g. pensioners – *FQ will look at concessions*
- ◇ Will new data be used against fishers – *special data collected on very broad scales so that particular fishing locations not identified*
- ◇ Why not snapper spawning closures – *snapper have protracted and variable spawning over wide areas*
- ◇ Comments by rec rep on SNWG. No support for the 4 options. Good data needed from snapper anglers. Need to go back to the drawing board.
- ◇ Unacceptable that the \$90 fee is used as a disincentive. Fisheries Qld has no right to stop people from going rec fishing.
- ◇ Undersize snapper are common at retail outlets
- ◇ Problems with FQ boat ramp surveys and need for computer to provide rec data. – *FQ trying to act responsibly*
- ◇ FQ have done research for 30 years, this should be enough
- ◇ Snapper bycatch by trawlers – *Trawler bycatch reduces the amount of snapper taken in the fishery by about 5 tonnes*
- ◇ Commercial log data shows catches are stable – *commercial data is hyperstable, commercial fishers are moving north to maintain catches*
- ◇ Statement by Mark Robinson MP Cleveland. Here to listen to concerns. Concerned about the science and its validity. Why have the 2003 size and bag limits not worked. Could a 4 month closure be introduced this year? – *Issues like a 4 month closure are the responsibility of Government and cannot be discounted.*

- ◇ Anglers with two boats – *need a snapper permit for each boat*
- ◇ What's wrong with NSW approach to permits and snapper management – *general rec permit in NSW is \$35 and covers all species*
- ◇ Why not do a general licence for all species – *Qld Govt. is not in favour of a general fishing licence for anglers*
- ◇ Other States have different methods for managing snapper – *agreed and gave a few examples*
- ◇ Slot limit encourages high grading
- ◇ Charter sector. Who qualifies for quota? Difficulties in business planning due to uncertainties – *discussions occurring in the charter sector. No decisions made at this time.*
- ◇ All stakeholders encouraged to complete the response form.
- ◇ What are the fines for breaching bag and size limits and fishing during closures - *\$200-400. Boats confiscated in serious offences.*

**The Chair summarised all the main issues as recorded above.**

