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Ms Ellen Smith
Regional Policy Officer
Recfishwest

Good Afternoon Ellen'

SUBJECT: Request for Information relating to demersal fishery reviews

Here are some comments and information relating to your request for information regarding a review of the demersal fishing. This has been developed after a review of materials in the public arena and from Association records.

The concept of a review of the rules for West Coast Demersal fishing was raised among the many discussions about the West Coast demersal arrangements before they were introduced in 2009. Many of these discussions were confidential, or not publicly reported, or were summarised down to the main or immediate points.

The "review" needed to be in two parts

1. A review of the effectiveness of the rules to achieve the planned catch reduction.
2. A review in the longer term of the continued need or otherwise for tight restrictions.

The attached 2010 update of "Fishing for demersal fish species in the West Coast region" published October 2010 delivers the promise that a review of the effectiveness of the changes in reducing the catch would be carried out in 12 months. We are still waiting.

The March 2011 version of the West Coast Guide mentions this review of the effectiveness.

New management changes for the recreational sector include:

- Two-month demersal scalefish closure – 15 October to 15 December (inclusive). See page 14.
- New daily bag limit of two *High Risk* demersal scalefish and two pelagic fish. See page 5.
- Boat limit of two dhufish (six for charter boats).
- Compulsory possession of a 'release weight' when fishing for demersal scalefish. See page 10.
- Introduction of a Recreational Fishing from Boat Licence from 2 March, 2010. See page 12.

A review of the effectiveness of these measures was undertaken in late 2010.



However, the update doc also clearly says

"Recreational fishing rules for demersal (bottom-dwelling) scalefish on the West Coast (Kalbarri to Augusta) will remain unchanged until the next catch survey is analysed in 2012." and "the rules that were introduced last year will remain in place for the next two years before they are reviewed." We are still waiting for this review.

This update represented a slippage of the times for the review 2 as had been previously discussed, but maybe because the two parts to the review hadn't been clearly defined.

However taking these two statements together, it is clear that some analysis of the catch survey and review of the rules should have happened or been in progress by Oct/Nov 2012. The Department of Fisheries has not yet provided any information relating to the progress of this review

This organization believes that Fisheries Research programs in 2009 and subsequent years should include this West Coast catch survey (and their progress).

This organization also believes that Fisheries Research have an unfortunate (but proven) history of gathering data, but then taking some considerable time - years in several cases - to prepare the analysis report, so that the report becomes an historical document of little value about what is happening now when the management decisions need to be made.

In a similar vein, Fisheries Research also have an unfortunate history of keeping information to themselves, and slipping even on promised delivery dates, although this has improved in recent times.

For such a critical and important topic, this Association feels that the Peak Recreational Fishing Body Recfishwest should be given (or demand from Fisheries Research if necessary) regular updates on how the data gathering is going, the drafts of the analysis report and any management recommendations and when the final reports would be available, so that Recfishwest can make sure the proposed or needed timetable for acting on the data is followed, and not allow Fisheries Research to take more time than necessary with their part of the work.

In this case a State wide review of the rules was in progress during 2012 and anybody could see that it would be much better if the West Coast review could have been done and included before the State wide rules changes were published.

The result now is that West Coast review has slipped, Fisheries has made a statement that the State wide rules will not change for some time, so there are plenty of excuses for not moving quickly.

Additional Information Relating to Recreational Review

From page 8 of FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS MODIFIED RECREATIONAL FISHING ARRANGEMENTS file FAQMinistersReleaseSept2009.pdf dated 16 September 2009

Is there going to be a review of the new arrangements?

Yes. A review will be completed 12 months after implementation, which may result in further changes. The Department's monitoring of all WA fisheries is ongoing.

And page 4 of earlier superseded arrangements from FAQ dated 30 June 2009 (file FAQ-30June2009.pdf)

limit size for tailor has been reduced to 500mm.

Is there going to be a review of the new arrangements? Yes. A review will be completed 12 months after implementation, which may result in further changes.

Also from page 4 of earlier superseded arrangements from FAQ dated 29 July 2009 (file FAQ-29July2009.pdf)

slot limit size for tailor has been reduced to 500mm.

Is there going to be a review of the new arrangements?
Yes. A review will be completed 12 months after implementation, which may result in further changes.

PDF copies of these documents are attached in the email.

I trust that this is the information you were seeking and is of assistance to you.

Kind Regards



John C Curtis
President, AAA(WA Division) Inc