



## - Position Statement -

### Wilderness Conservation Areas

*Recfishwest believes there can be benefits for recreational fishers and the wider community from establishing some of Western Australia's coastal areas and/or rivers as Wilderness Conservation Areas. A Wilderness Conservation Area is a specified area which aims to protect wilderness values while allowing low impact recreational fishing. Fish may not be removed from a Wilderness Conservation Area however they may be caught and consumed within the area.*

#### Background

Wilderness Conservation Areas should focus on the preservation of the areas' natural condition and biodiversity value, while allowing for a low level of recreational fishing. Wilderness Conservation Areas should be virtually free of human development and without significant and permanent habitation.

Regulations should prevent the accumulation of fish and their removal from the area. Retained catch must only be for personal consumption while within a Wilderness Conservation Area. Any catch over this must be released following best practice techniques.

Recfishwest views Wilderness Conservation Areas as important management tools in the suite of marine conservation measures. Wilderness Conservation Areas are Marine Protected Areas that offer an extensive level of protection whilst still retaining all recreational amenity value. Wilderness Conservation Areas offer a complementary zoning tool that aims to meet conservation objectives while maintaining recreational fishing values in a given area.

#### Definitions

*Catch* – refers to any aquatic animals taken as a result of the act of fishing that that have been retained.

*Consume*- refers to the ingestion of any aquatic organism.