

Fisheries should follow Korea's lead

Maintaining a sustainable level of fish stocks in our oceans has rightly been a priority of governments of both persuasions in Western Australia, policies that are strongly supported by the recreational fishing fraternity.

However, the latest suggestion by the McGowan Government to allow recreational fishers just two months a year to catch demersal fish — a reduction of eight months on current limits — is ludicrous.

Such a severe catch reduction in what now delivers sustainable and well-managed access to dhufish and snapper along the State's south-west coastline will have a devastating impact on recreational fishing and the \$2.4 billion it annually creates for the WA economy.

The current catch limit on two species has proved to be a fair and workable compromise that has ensured sustainability.

This significant economic benefit to tourism, retail, boating and countless other areas is just one aspect of the benefits that will be lost if the Government goes ahead with a policy that is both unnecessary and unworkable because it will have no impact on fish populations.

Of even more consequence is the impact on the lifestyle and wellbeing of many thousands of Western Australians and their families who make recreational fishing arguably the State's biggest participation sport at a time when this level of activity is even more crucial in terms of mental and other health issues.

Politicians, in their efforts to use environmental issues as a means of justifying their positions, would do well to adopt long-term visionary solutions such as following the lead of South Korea which annually releases 4.85 billion



Fishing is good for mental health.

seedlings of various marine species into Korean waters, as opposed to the token 45,000 snapper seedlings released into Cockburn Sound by WA Fisheries each year.

The benefit to tourism, the economy and the broader community would be significant, more than justifying the cost of breeding programs.

I would suggest the WA minister for fisheries should closely study the working papers produced by South Korean expert Sang-Go Lee on sustaining fishing stocks and then travel to that country and learn first-hand how best to manage our fish stocks.

Robert Stork, Cottesloe

Tackle issue fairly

Recreational fishers in our bioregion (Kalbarri-Augusta) deserve an explanation from either the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development or Premier Mark McGowan after recently making ill-informed and embarrassing statements, such as "there won't be any fish", regarding the stock levels of key demersal indicator species such as dhufish, pink snapper and baldchin groper.

Recreational and commercial fishers have done their part to help ensure sustainability of this fishery by following rules and closures implemented by

DPIRD (Fisheries) to achieve a 50 per cent catch reduction.

After 10 years, science says that dhufish, pink snapper and baldchin groper stocks are all officially recovering, albeit slightly slower than what was planned.

To go from a two-month closed season currently to a proposed nine-month closed season is unreasonable in many ways.

No one wants to have an unsustainable resource, and I believe that recreational fishers are happy once again to step up to the plate and play our part in this issue, but the proposals put forward by DPIRD represent a gross failure in public consultation and fisheries management.

I am an extremely passionate recreational fisher and have volunteered a lot of time to be part of Recfishwest's working group on this matter, where, along with 6000 survey respondents, we were tasked to present possible management options to DPIRD.

We did this, and I'm proud of the outcomes that we achieved, but am extremely disappointed by DPIRD choosing an easy way out rather than tackling the issue properly and fairly.

Brody Laroux, Kingsley

Not this man's best friend

Why do all dog owners feel that all people are dog lovers?

Recently, a dog owner with her dog on a leash let her pet come right up to me from behind, allowing it to sniff my legs, then suddenly jump up and in doing so it scratched my legs. Needless to say I responded with a few choice words before they scurried off.

Seriously, owners, keep your dogs away from other people who may for whatever reasons not share the love for your animal.

Bruce Strang, Subiaco