

Have Your Say In The Future Of Our Spanish Mackerel Fishery

The Spanish Mackerel Fishery Management Advisory Committee invites the public, industry groups, Government and non-Government organisations to provide comment on the revised Spanish Mackerel Management Plan. All public comments received will be considered in developing a new plan of management for the Spanish Mackerel Fishery.

What to do....

Individuals or organisations wishing to provide input to the process may prepare written submissions on any aspects of the proposed plan. All comments must be received by 4.00 pm Friday 6th August 2004

Posted to: **The Chairman
Spanish Mackerel Fishery Management Advisory Committee
GPO Box 3000
Darwin NT 0801
Attention: David Mckey**

Or

Fax to: **(08) 89992065
Attention: David Mckey**

Or

Hand deliver to: **Fisheries Group
Goff Letts Building
Berrimah Farm
Makagon road
Berrimah NT 0828**

Information to accompany the proposed

SPANISH MACKEREL MANAGEMENT PLAN. (2004)

The Fishery Management Advisory Committee, in consultation with its represented organisations, has overseen a review of the Spanish Mackerel Fishery Management Plan and recommended that the following be incorporated into a new fishery management plan:

- Continuance of the licence reduction scheme and recommendations for the reduction of the incidental “byproduct” of Spanish mackerel in NT commercial fisheries targeting other fisheries.

This is to ensure that the commercial Spanish mackerel fishery effort capacity is reduced and incidental landings from other commercial fisheries targeting other species does not rise.

A “Total Allowable Catch” (TAC) to be set as a reference point for the Spanish mackerel fishery.

This is necessary to reduce the risk of over-exploitation, overall landings of Spanish mackerel by recreational, charter, commercial, and indigenous sectors should not exceed a sustainable catch level.

- Establish relative catch shares by various stakeholders as a benchmark for future management arrangements.

The Fishery Management Advisory Committee members consulted with their respective stakeholder groups and recommended appropriate catch shares for each sector, which reflect current catch levels. In response to changing community needs and values, it will be necessary to make decisions about catch share arrangements amongst all stakeholder groups, both in terms of ensuring sustainability and altering sectorial allocations.

- Objectives to be included in the Management Plan are:

(a) To control the taking of Spanish mackerel from the fishery by commercial fishing licensees, Fishing Tour Operator licensees, and amateur fishers, whether taken as the principal catch or incidentally when taking fish from another fishery and whether the fisher releases the fish back into the water or not.

(b) To ensure that the fishery is not endangered, detrimentally affected or overexploited by managing the fishery in accordance with the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

(c) To encourage fishing in the fishery by maintaining the level and quality of the yield from the fishery and ensuring that Aborigines, commercial fishing licensees, Fishing Tour Operator licensees and amateur fishers have adequate access to the fishery.

To further strengthen the effectiveness of the current management arrangements for the Spanish Mackerel fishery and to contain environmental risks in the long term, a series of recommendations were developed and incorporated into the plan. These included trigger points that if exceeded, will initiate a review of the management arrangements of the fishery.

In February 2003, the Australian Government's Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH) (formerly Environment Australia) independently assessed the Spanish mackerel fishery against the *Guidelines for the Ecologically Sustainable Management of Fisheries*. The management arrangements for the fishery were determined by the DEH to be operating in an ecologically sustainable manner. With this assessment the fishery received export exemption from export permit requirements under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* (EPBC Act). The exemption will enable products from the fishery to be exported for a period of 5 years.

Parliamentary Counsel has drafted a revised Fishery Management Plan incorporating the recommendations outlined above. Following this public consultation process, the Fishery Management Advisory Committee will consider all comments received and will propose a revised Spanish Mackerel Fishery Management Plan to the Director of Fisheries.