



## **FISHERIES REEF ADVISORY COMMITTEE (FRAC)**

### **10<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

**25 and 26 March 2004 – Townsville**

## **SUMMARY DOCUMENT**

### **EAST COAST TRAWL FISHERY**

#### **Joint Audit/Assessment Update**

Members were advised that the Commonwealth's Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEH) was pleased with the progress of the assessment, given that the process involved trawling within a World Heritage Area. It was noted that there was broad agreement on the scope and intent of the process, and it was hoped that the new process would give some certainty to industry. The Queensland Fisheries Service (QFS) was also pleased with the progress of the process, and noted that it was currently working through the detail of the document.

In discussion, the following comments were noted:

- Combining the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's (GBRMPA's) audit and the DEH assessment had meant a degree of consolidation, with one set of recommendations.
- It was important that the process was streamlined and that fishery management agencies were complying with the EPBC Act.
- It was important that, as the management agency of the GBRMP, in which most of the fishery occurs, the GBRMPA's views were included in any assessment.

#### **General Effort Review**

Although a lot of good work had been done on performance indicators in the Trawl Plan, there needed to be better performance indicators in relation to warnings. It was noted that while most of the key target species appeared to have been fished at sustainable levels, some assessments had shown that others had not.

In concluding discussion, members agreed that the General Effort Review was a crucial process in terms of reviewing the arrangements for trawl, and it was important that the management agencies continue a collaborative approach, with effective consultation with stakeholders.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION BIODIVERSITY AND CONSERVATION (EPBC) ASSESSMENTS OF FISHERIES OCCURRING IN THE GBRMP**

Members were advised that the Commonwealth was keen to ensure that timelines were kept and that appropriate consultation occurred. It was noted that there would be a lot of work involved in the implementation process; and that discussions had already begun with the Australian Fisheries Management Forum (AFMF).

In discussion, the following comments were noted:

- The documentation was available for comment on the website.
- As some reports were quite lengthy, it was suggested that executive summaries could be made available.
- The final decisions and recommendations on the various fisheries assessments would be available on the DEH website.

### **PROGRESS IN DEVELOPING NEW COMMERCIAL CORAL COLLECTION ARRANGEMENTS**

Members were briefed on the development of the management arrangements, and it was suggested that a scientific advisory group be formed, as a sub-group of the Coral Fishery Working Group (QFS HarvestMAC), to assist with the process.

In discussion, the following comments were noted:

- On a global perspective, this was a large industry, with some 600 million visitors to aquaria around the world.
- The main interest was in live coral.
- In terms of export approval, Australia already had a good reputation for a high quality product for aquarium fish, and this would probably continue into the export of corals. Currently, most of the product comes from countries without any management in place, and has only a short lifespan.

### **FUTURE OF SEA CUCUMBER FISHERY IN THE GBRMP**

Members were briefed on the history of the fishery, and the current knowledge of sea cucumber fishing in the GBRMP.

In discussion, the following comments were noted:

- Internationally, sea cucumber fisheries were notoriously difficult to manage.
- The fishery was to be assessed by DEH under the EPBC Act. The QFS was preparing an ecological assessment report for submission to the DEH.
- Members agreed that there was a range of very serious concerns associated with this fishery, including gaps in the knowledge of the biology of several species, and the need to determine the role of these species in the reef's ecology.
- Whilst some members suggested that, based on the precautionary principles, the fishery should be shut down, other members flagged that there was also value in the fishery continuing at a reduced level with industry being

involved in a concerted research effort to provide data to better manage the fishery.

- It was proposed that a moratorium on the issue of permits by the GBRMPA should be introduced unless it could be demonstrated that the fishery can be managed in an ecologically sustainable way.

#### **QUEENSLAND FISHERIES SERVICE: UPDATE**

Members were briefed on issues being addressed by the QFS, including the following:

##### ***Reef Line Fishery***

- A general update was provided on progress towards implementation of the Coral Reef Fin Fish Management Plan approved in late 2003. The QFS was now undertaking formal processes to determine the individual transferable quotas, to be assigned to each of the Coral Reef and Spanish Mackerel symbol holders.
- A Quota Monitoring Unit had been established. Overall, QFS was attempting to develop a more sophisticated approach to quota monitoring.

##### ***Trawl Fishery***

- In February 2004, the QFS hosted a delegation from the USA to accredit the Queensland East Coast Trawl Fishery as having an effective sea turtle protection program. The delegation spoke to fishers and inspected the differing configurations of turtle excluder devices (TEDs) fishers were using at various centres along the Queensland coast. Accreditation for the fishery was necessary to enable the export of prawns to the US market; import restrictions on prawns from fisheries not using TEDs were put in place by the US government in 1996.
- The QFS was to bring two fishing gear specialists from the USA in April/May 2004 to participate in a series of workshops with Queensland trawl operators, net and TED makers and others.

##### ***Inshore Fishery***

An indicative work program and timetable for inshore and estuarine fisheries from February 2004 to December 2005 had been determined, and would be subject to resources, implementation of the Coral Reef Plan and government priorities. The program would cover -

- The development of future management arrangements for spotted mackerel under a total allowable catch;
- The removal of latent effort in inshore net fisheries; and
- The development of a management plan for inshore fin fish species.

##### ***Dive-based Harvest Fisheries***

- The QFS was assessing comments from the DEH on the draft assessment report for the tropical rock lobster fishery.
- The QFS proposed to develop a policy approach to address latent effort through the license removal process in 2004/2005.

#### **REPRESENTATIVE AREAS PROGRAM (RAP)**

Members were given an overview of:

- 1 Submissions received in the second stage of community consultation, and of the fisheries provisions in the new Zoning Plan; and

- 2 The implementation tasks for the new Zoning Plan, and the associated educational products that would be available.

In discussion, the following comments were noted:

- Electronic charting systems would be streamlined. There would be an update of Navman in October, available on a CD.
- Mapping information would be the same for commercial and recreational users. Latitude and longitude details would be included on hard-copy maps.
- On an international level, there had been a lot of focus on what had been happening over the last few years. People in the northern hemisphere have been very interested in the stakeholder-driven process; and may find the documentation of the RAP, including the methodology, very useful.

#### **TRADITIONAL USE OF MARINE RESOURCE AGREEMENTS (TUMRAs)**

Members were briefed on the development of TUMRAs. In discussion, the following comments were noted:

- TUMRAs would be a consistent process that would allow for things such as seasonal closures and the management of dugong and turtle hunting.
- Hunting rights for turtle and dugong were already included under the Native Title Act, and were only available to Indigenous people exercising their Native Title rights in accordance with S.211 of that Act.
- The GBRMPA would be developing a communication strategy for the implementation of the 5-year TUMRA work program.
- It was important that management agencies, such as the GBRMPA, the Environmental Protection Agency/ Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and the Department of Primary Industries (e.g., QFS and Boating and Fishing Patrol), consult with Indigenous communities as one group, rather than one by one, to ensure a consistent approach towards consultation. This would also allow a variety of issues to be addressed at the one time.
- There was an important need for wider community engagement in understanding the TUMRA process.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was scheduled for July 2004.

##### **CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE**

Mr David Bateman .....	Recreational Fishing
Dr Phil Cadwallader .....	GBRMPA
Mr Colin Creighton .....	Water Quality and Coastal Issues
Mr Ian Cresswell .....	Environment Australia
Mr James Gillespie .....	Queensland Fisheries Service
Mr Cliff Greenhalgh .....	Commercial Fishing
Mr Ray Joyce .....	Charter Boats
tba .....	Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
Ms Margaret Moore .....	Conservation
Mr John Olsen .....	Commercial Fishing
Mr Chris Roberts .....	Indigenous Community
Mr Lyle Squire .....	Commercial Harvest Fishing
Mr Rod Supple .....	Fisheries Enforcement and Compliance
Ms Diane Tarte (Chairperson) .....	Environment
Dr David Williams .....	Scientific Community