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Fisheries management report

The south west beach seine fishery draft management plan

by D. A. Hall

Fisheries management paper No. 50



Fisheries Department of Western Australia

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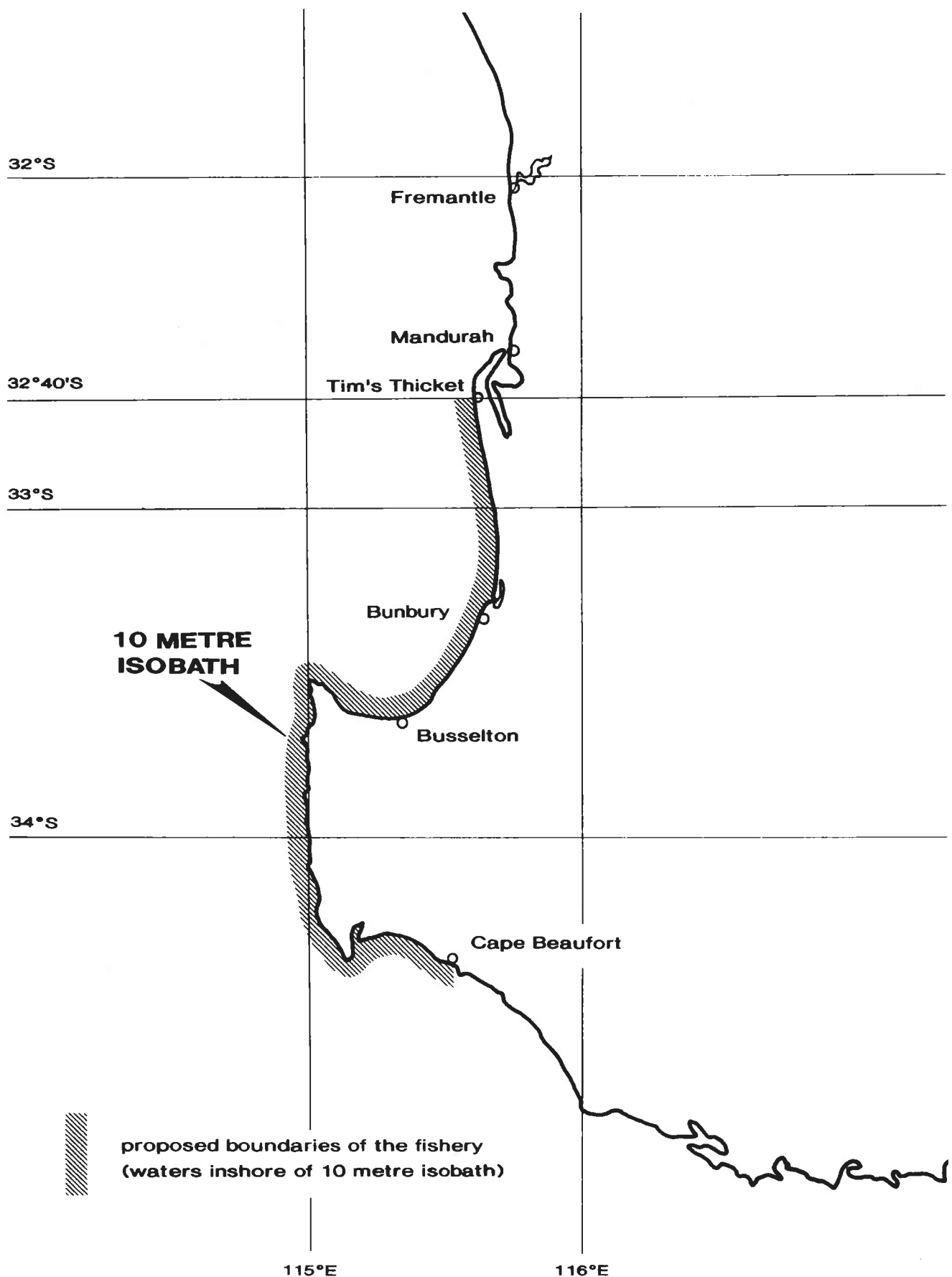
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- 2 Rights of Priority for Hauling Nets

MAP 1

SOUTH WEST BEACH SEINE FISHERY



1.0 SUMMARY

This paper describes the issues in and outlines a proposal for management of the beach seine fishery between Tim's Thicket and Cape Beaufort on the south coast (see map 1). It also proposes management measures for the fishery utilising small mesh gill nets and hand hauled seine nets in the area inside of the 10 metre depth contour.

Most fishing is centred on the Geographe Bay area during the summer months utilising beach seine nets set from dinghies which are normally carried or towed along the beach by four wheel drive vehicles.

The main management issues facing the fishery include the need to prevent over-exploitation of major fish species within the fishery including particularly whitebait and bluebait. In addition there is a need to prevent an escalation in conflict levels with the recreational fishing sector, particularly over species of recreational importance such as Australian herring. Four wheel drive access to beaches must also be controlled for non fishery-related environmental reasons.

The main emphasis of this paper is the need to restrict the number of beach seine licences and hence vehicles/vessels to a manageable level in terms of the sustainability of the fish stocks and the minimisation of conflict levels.

The paper develops a set of catch history criteria to determine eligibility for access to the fishery. It is considered that the beach seine fishery can support up to about 20 licences and this has been used to guide the formulation of entry criteria.

The entry criteria proposed for a general beach seine licence are a catch of at least 30 tonnes of species other than Australian salmon during the period 1985-1990 inclusive with a further requirement that at least five tonnes of fish have been taken in either 1990 or 1991 as evidence of an ongoing commitment to the fishery.

The paper also proposes to further limit access to the whitebait fishery by developing access criteria that result in approximately 8 beach seine licences obtaining endorsements to take whitebait. These criteria are a catch of whitebait during the criteria period of at least 20 tonnes with a further requirement that at least 3 tonnes of whitebait have been taken in either 1990 or 1991 as evidence of an ongoing commitment to the fishery.

The paper recommends that licences remain non-transferable in most circumstances until after the possible future implementation of a quota management scheme for whitebait. An owner-operator provision is included in the management plan. This ensures that each licence may be associated with only a single fishing operation.

2.0 MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The following represents a summary of the major recommendations made in the paper:

Recommendation 1

That the South West Beach Seine Fishery be defined as a limited entry fishery under Section 32 of the Fisheries Act (1905). The fishery to include the use of all manually hauled seine nets inshore of the 10 metre isobath between Tim's Thicket (32°40' South) and Cape Beaufort (115°32' East).

Recommendation 2

That all South West Salmon Limited Entry Fishery licence holders automatically acquire a limited entry licence for the South West Beach Seine Fishery.

Recommendation 3

That limited entry salmon licences can only be transferred together with the limited entry beach seine licence or from one limited entry beach seine licence to another.

Recommendation 4

That minimum performance criteria be developed to limit the number of south west beach seine licences to a maximum of about 20.

Recommendation 5

That minimum performance criteria be developed to limit the number of south west beach seine licences that are endorsed to take whitebait to a maximum of about 8.

Recommendation 6

That the period from 1 January 1985 to 31 December 1990 be used as the period against which criteria for gaining entry to the fishery are determined.

Recommendation 7

That, other than for South West Salmon Limited Entry licence holders, the minimum criteria for access to the South West Beach Seine Limited Entry Fishery should be a total catch within the boundaries of the fishery of all fish (excluding salmon) by the beach seine or manually hauled boat seine method of at least 30 tonnes between 1985 and 1990 inclusive with an ongoing commitment criteria of at least 5 tonnes of fish taken by the beach seine method in either 1990 or 1991.

Recommendation 8

That access to the whitebait fishery be restricted to those licence holders who have taken at least 20 tonnes of whitebait within the boundaries of the fishery during the criteria

period and demonstrated an ongoing commitment to the fishery by catching at least three tonnes of whitebait in either 1990 or 1991.

Recommendation 9

That south west beach seine licences initially be non-transferable subject to the possible implementation of a quota management scheme for whitebait unless they are transferred together with a limited entry salmon licence.

Recommendation 10

That a maximum boat size limitation of 6.5 metres overall continue to apply to this fishery.

Recommendation 11

That the owner of a licence must be present at all times during all stages of the fishing operation.

Recommendation 12

That deck hands searching for fish have no netting priority rights unless the licence holder is present.

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This draft management plan will deal primarily with the beach seine fishery for species other than Australian salmon. This fishery is based in Geographe Bay and most often targets on whitebait, although other species such as bluebait and Australian herring are also significant target species.

The waters off the south west of Western Australia and Geographe Bay in particular support a diversity of commercial netting methods. In this region, limited entry management plans currently cover the South West Trawl Fishery, the Southern Demersal Gillnet and Demersal Longline Fishery and the South West Salmon Fishery.

Although the beach seine fishery has been an important component of the local fishing industry for many years and management arrangements have been reviewed on at least two occasions previously (see Rogers et al 1983, Walker 1979, Walker unpubl.) there is no formal management plan for the fishery at this stage.

In October 1989 the Minister for Fisheries announced that there would be a freeze on the number of professional fishermen allowed to fish from south west beaches (Appendix 1). Fishermen who fished the beaches each year between 1 July 1986 and 30 June 1989 were to be granted an interim endorsement to fish the area. The Minister's statement recognised about 30 fishermen as being dependent on the fishery including the 13 licence holders in the salmon fishery.

4.0 PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVES

It is now considered that a total of 30 endorsements in this fishery will result in unacceptable levels of interaction with other sectors and between beach seine operators themselves. In addition there is a need to control the take of whitebait stocks in particular to prevent over-exploitation of these vulnerable stocks.

This paper aims to determine a more formal set of management arrangements by determining specific entry criteria for the fishery to reduce potential fishing effort and define the group of fishermen who are substantially dependent on continued access to the fishery.

The paper also aims to provide specific controls on the take of whitebait which are the major species by value in the fishery and the species for which scientists have the greatest concerns regarding the sustainability of exploitation levels.

5.0 FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

This paper primarily represents a draft management plan for the commercial beach seine fishery in Geographe Bay. It is intended to distribute the paper to the general commercial and recreational fishing communities for formal submissions on the major recommendations contained in the report. During this period formal consultations will be held with representatives of the commercial and recreational fishing industries in addition to the general community.

After the consultative period has been completed, a modified plan together with submissions made on this draft will be submitted to the Minister for Fisheries for his consideration.

6.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE FISHERY

A typical beach seine operation involves the licence holder driving along a beach in a four wheel drive vehicle with dinghy in tow while searching for schools of fish. When a school is sighted a decision is made whether the school is of a desirable species or of sufficient size to warrant making a "shot". A "shot" involves running the net off the dinghy in a semi-circle and enclosing the school of fish between net and shore.

Normally there are two or three persons involved in each operation. Fishing activity is highest in the summer months. On average there are generally only about eight or so units operating on a regular basis during the summer though it is considered that up to about twenty or so units have historically utilised this form of fishing to any significant degree (Walker unpubl.).

Although the emphasis of this plan is on the management of the beach seine fishery, it will also cover the use of seine nets operated from dinghies within the boundaries of the fishery.

A beach seine net is a surrounding net set from the shore which is hauled onto the beach immediately after setting the net. Use of this type of gear normally requires the use of a four wheel drive vehicle(s) and small vessel(s) or dinghies.

A boat seine net is a surrounding net set from a boat which is manually hauled onto the boat immediately after the net has been set. It may or may not include a purse rope along all or part of its length.

Both beach and boat seine nets used in the fishery are generally hauled manually and powered retrieval equipment is not utilised.

By far the most important of these net types in this fishery is the beach seine net and the management of the use of this gear type by commercial fishers in the Geographe Bay region will be the focus of this paper.

Whitebait are the major target species other than salmon for south west beach seine fishermen and, excluding salmon, accounted for about 40% of the total beach seine catch by weight and about double this figure in terms of value. Based on average annual catches, at current market prices the whitebait fishery (\$225,000) is comparable in value to the south west salmon fishery (\$192,000).

Other species are of less significance in terms of value and include Australian herring (\$75,000) and bluebait (\$15,000).

7.0 FISHERIES BIOLOGY - MAJOR SPECIES

7.1 WHITEBAIT

The distribution of this species (*Hyperlophus vittatus*) is principally in protected nearshore marine areas along the lower west coast of WA. However the distribution extends across the south coast to South Australia.

The adults spawn in ocean waters (or in the marine waters of estuaries). Juveniles are normally found in the estuaries such as the Leschenault Inlet, Peel-Harvey Estuary or the Swan Canning Rivers. The juveniles reach maturity within a single year life cycle and spawn. This species is short lived and does not usually live beyond two years of age.

The whitebait is known to have a low fecundity and is thought to be highly vulnerable to over-exploitation.

Whitebait are the principal species taken in the south west beach seine fishery (other than salmon) by weight and value. The total catch in the 1990 calendar year was an estimated 160 tonnes with a catch value of around \$350,000. This represented a significant increase on catches taken in previous years. The average catch during the period 1985-1990 inclusive was 89 tonnes per annum. It should be noted that these figures have not been validated, nor do they include catches recorded as having been taken between 33° South and the north boundary of the fishery, Tim's Thicket (32°40' South). It is considered that, although significant quantities of whitebait are sometimes taken just north of 33° South, catches are generally recorded as having been taken between latitudes 33° South and 34° South.

Although catches taken between latitudes 33° South and 32°40' South are available, it would be difficult at this stage to separate the limited catches recorded as having been taken north of Tim's Thicket by Cockburn Sound beach seine fishermen from those taken south of Tim's Thicket by Bunbury based fishers. As mentioned earlier, most Bunbury based fishers have recorded their catch as having been taken south of 33° South and it is likely that the amount of fish recorded as having been taken north of 33° South would be no more than 10% of the total.

A study into the fisheries biology of this species has been commenced by staff of the Western Australian Marine Research Laboratories.

7.2 BLUEBAIT

Bluebait, also known as blue spat or blue sardines (*Spratelloides robustus*) are a more widespread species than whitebait and are an important species in the surf zone, particularly in Geographe Bay (R Lenanton pers. comm.). Like the whitebait, they are a schooling fish and have a one to two year life cycle, spawning at the end of year one. Both juvenile and adult fish are found together in the surf zone and they are considered an opportunist estuarine fish, venturing into estuaries when conditions suit. The offshore limit of bluebait stocks is unknown and it is possible that different stocks exist offshore (R Lenanton pers. comm.).

Although bluebait are not a major species in the fishery by weight (average catch 6 000 kg pa) or value (\$15,000 pa), they are considered to be an important species in the

food chain and are a major food item for predatory seabirds such as terns and penguins and for predatory fish such as tailor and herring.

Despite the lack of stock assessment data, there is a need to control exploitation levels of bluebait given the apparent vulnerability and ecological importance of the species.

7.3 HERRING

An endemic Australian species, Australian herring (*Arripis georgianus*) are abundant in coastal waters of southern Australia, from Shark Bay to Port Phillip bay. They are found mainly inshore, in waters around offshore islands and in southern estuaries such as Wilson Inlet and Oyster Harbour.

The herring is the second most valuable fish species in the south west beach seine fishery with an average catch of around 100 tonnes per annum (catch value approx \$75,000) during the period 1985-1990 inclusive.

Adult Australian herring migrate westward along the south coast and northward along the west coast in large schools during late summer and autumn to spawn in waters off the Western Australian coast (mainly between Cape Leeuwin and Rottnest).

Tagging experiments have shown that some fish travel up to 2 190 kilometres (1 360 miles) from nursery areas in South Australia to breeding areas in Western Australia. There is also a significant local recruitment to this fishery. The fish are believed to spawn in the turbulent marine waters immediately beyond the coastal reefs, over a period of about five weeks in May-June. Each female releases about 100 000 eggs.

After spawning the adult fish stay mainly in Western Australian waters, feeding inshore on small fish such as whitebait, blue sardines (sprat), juvenile fish and small crustacea. Some move as far north as Shark Bay, and a number enter estuaries around the south coast.

The eggs and post-larval fish are believed to be carried in the Leeuwin current along the lower west and south coasts of Western Australia from May to July. Juveniles feed in protected embayments on small crustacea (mainly amphipods) associated with driftweed and over seagrass beds. The young grow to maturity in nursery areas along the lower west and southern Australian coast as far east as Victoria before they return to Western Australia to spawn.

Some mature fish enter south coast estuaries where they take advantage of the abundant food supply, such as shrimp, to grow larger and fatter than their coastal relatives. Many remain there throughout their lives, apparently without breeding.

The Australian herring is recognised as the most popular target species for recreational fishers in Western Australia. Analyses of catch and effort data for the commercial fishery do not indicate that the species is over-exploited at the present time. There is a need, however, for more stock assessment work to be conducted on this species in the future. There is a particular need for an assessment of the size and distribution of the recreational catch.

Other species taken in the fishery include mullet (yellow-eye and sea), garfish, whiting, blue mackerel and pilchard, although these species are not a substantial component of the beach seine catch and will not be discussed in detail here.

8.0 MAJOR ISSUES FOR MANAGEMENT

The main factors influencing the management of this fishery are the following:

1. the status of fish stocks, particularly whitebait and the conservation of exploited species;
2. the optimum resource sharing arrangements between the commercial and recreational sectors and major predators (eg. seabirds, predatory fish, seals etc);
3. interactions between the commercial fishery and other sectors of the community; and
4. the economic viability of the industry.

Each of these issues are discussed briefly in the following text-

8.1 STATUS OF FISH STOCKS

The biology of the major fish stocks has been covered in Section 3 above.

Whitebait are considered to be fully exploited and possibly over-exploited and there is a need for restrictions to be placed on the take of this species to prevent a possible future increase in fishing effort. Catch figures since 1985 are given in **Figure 1**. These show that, despite lower catches in 1988 due to seasonal variations between years, total catches have been increasing. The levels of fishing effort expended in target fishing for whitebait over this period is not available. However, there are indications that effort levels have increased to a greater degree than catches.

Australian herring are considered to be fully exploited though probably not over-exploited. The catch decline shown in **Figure 2** in recent years is, however, of some concern (Rod Lenanton pers.comm). Catch figures since 1985 are provided in **Figure 2**. This plan considers only general controls on the take of this species.

8.2 RESOURCE SHARING

The most appropriate resource sharing arrangements are difficult to gauge at this stage due particularly to the lack of data on the recreational fishery. It would seem a reasonable approach, given this lack of knowledge, to provide for a management policy which maintains the current resource shares. In the recreational sector this is achieved through gear, size and particularly catch restrictions eg. bag limits. The commercial sector requires a ceiling to be placed on effort levels by removing considerable latent effort from the fishery.

The recent review of recreational fishing in Western Australia recognised Australian salmon as a species that should be given priority as a recreational fishery and recently a

report commissioned by the Fisheries Department (Monaghan 1991) assessed the feasibility of a voluntary buy-back scheme for commercial salmon licences using funds provided by the recreational fishery. This process potentially provides adequate compensation to the commercial fishery and allows resource shares to be shifted to the mutual satisfaction of both sectors. The scheme could also be applied to other species such as herring which are currently of importance to both sectors.

8.3 OTHER INTERACTIONS

In addition to the question of resource sharing with the recreational fishing sector, there are other areas of interaction. These include interactions with Shire Councils over access arrangements, with environmental agencies over impact to beaches and sand dunes and with seabirds, seals and the like etc. All of these factors support the need for limiting access to this fishery.

8.4 FISHERY ECONOMICS

The economic viability of the fishery relates (amongst other things) to the profit margins of individual fishing operations. Fishing effort needs to be harnessed to maximise the profit extracted by the fishery as a whole and provide reasonable profits to individual licence holders.

Theoretically, the economic viability of the South West Beach Seine Fishery could be maximised through catch quota controls but this requires enforcement capabilities and costs to be weighed up against potential gains before a quota scheme can be considered further.

The concept of managing the whitebait fishery by quota is discussed later in this paper.

The next section deals with specific options for the future management of the fishery.

9.0 MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

9.1 FISHERY BOUNDARY AND STATUS

The most natural boundaries for the fishery are Tim's Thicket to the north (32° 40' South) which is the southern boundary of the Cockburn Sound Beach Seine Fishery and Cape Beaufort to the south (115° 32' East) which is the western boundary of the South Coast Estuarine Fishery.

Although the fishery is principally a beach seine fishery, it is recommended that the fishery be bounded offshore by the 10 metre isobath which represents the offshore limit of most hand hauled seine nets, whether they be set from a boat or from the shore.

Recommendation 1

That the South West Beach Seine Fishery be defined as a limited entry fishery under Section 32 of the Fisheries Act (1905). The fishery to include the use of all manually hauled seine nets inshore of the 10 metre isobath between Tim's Thicket (32° 40' South) and Cape Beaufort (115° 32' east).

9.2 INTERACTION WITH THE SALMON FISHERY

The South West Salmon Fishery is managed as a limited entry fishery between Cape Beaufort and the Northern Territory border and 13 licences currently are authorised to catch and sell salmon using a beach seine net through this area. In addition, 3 other licence holders have a non-transferable endorsement to take salmon using beach seine nets north of the Busselton Jetty.

The management of the salmon fishery should be largely unaffected by the management measures proposed for the beach seine fishery although the implications of some of the recommendations with respect to the licensing and transferability of beach seine licences may need to be considered.

It is recommended that all South West Salmon Limited Entry Fishery licence holders automatically acquire a limited entry licence for the South West Beach Seine Fishery (**Recommendation 2**).

In order to prevent a possible future increase in the number of beach seine fishing operations in the south west it is recommended that limited entry salmon licences can only be transferred together with the limited entry beach seine licence or from one limited entry beach seine licence to another (**Recommendation 3**).

Recommendation 2

That all South West Salmon Limited Entry Fishery licence holders automatically acquire a limited entry licence for the South West Beach Seine Fishery.

Recommendation 3

That limited entry salmon licences can only be transferred together with the limited entry beach seine licence or from one limited entry beach seine licence to another.

9.3 CRITERIA FOR CONTINUED ACCESS

9.3.1 Discussion

It is considered that providing access to a maximum of about 20 licences would result in acceptable levels of interaction between operators and minimise conflict levels with the recreational sector (**Recommendation 4**).

Although 20 licences may be acceptable in terms of conflict levels, the potential for effort increase on the whitebait stocks is not acceptable given the apparent vulnerability of this species.

It is considered that the whitebait fishery may be able to support up to a maximum of about eight operators at any time. Even this figure could result in exploitation levels that are non-sustainable. It is therefore recommended that entry criteria for the whitebait fishery be determined that result in access initially being provided to about eight operators (**Recommendation 5**). It is also recommended that an assessment be made of the value of managing this fishery by quota controls in the future.

Recommendation 4

The minimum performance criteria be developed to limit the number of south west beach seine licences to a maximum of about 20.

Recommendation 5

That minimum performance criteria be developed to limit the number of South West Beach Seine licences that are endorsed to take whitebait to a maximum of about 8.

9.3.2 Criteria Period

Discussions have been held with Industry on the criteria period that should be used to determine access to the fishery.

It is recommended that the period from 1 January 1985 to 31 December 1990 be used as the period against which entry criteria are developed (**Recommendation 6**). Industry has previously expressed general support for this option. This takes account of catch history from approximately a year before to a year after the initial criteria period announced by the Minister for Fisheries in his 6 October 1989 media statement (**Appendix 1**).

It is further recommended that the criteria include an ongoing commitment to the fishery since the criteria period. This is developed further in the next section.

Most consultations over management arrangements in this fishery were held during 1991 and 1992 and it is considered that no account should be taken of catch history during this period (other than for a determination of ongoing commitment) as fishermen were generally aware that new management arrangements were being formulated for the fishery during this period. In discussions with industry this was generally understood and accepted.

Recommendation 6

That the period from 1 January 1985 to 31 December 1990 be used as the period against which criteria for gaining entry to the fishery are determined.

9.3.3 Catch History Criteria

A survey of individual catches recorded in the proposed fishery shows that 35 licence holders recorded taking species other than salmon by the method of beach seine during the proposed criteria period (**Figure 3**).

It is recommended that the minimum criteria for access to the South West Beach Seine Limited Entry Fishery should be a total catch of all fish (excluding salmon) by the beach seine method of at least 30 tonnes during the criteria period with an ongoing commitment criteria of at least five tonnes of fish taken in either 1990 or 1991 (**Recommendation 7**). South West Salmon Limited Entry Fishery Licence holders are to be exempt from this requirement and are to obtain a licence automatically.

This would provide an initial upper limit of just over twenty licences and a level of access that the general industry considers would represent a significant dependency on the fishery.

Figure 4 shows the distribution of whitebait catches amongst licence holders in the fishery during the criteria period.

To enable an access figure of around eight as previously recommended, access to the whitebait fishery would need to be restricted to those licence holders who have taken at least 20 tonnes of whitebait within the boundaries of the fishery during the criteria period. In addition, it is also recommended that access be dependent on the demonstration of an ongoing commitment to the fishery by catching at least 3 tonnes in either 1990 or 1991 (**Recommendation 8**).

Catches of less than a total of 20 tonnes during the criteria period would not amount to more than a superficial dependency on the whitebait fishery. This figure does not take account of any successful appeals for access.

A cautionary note is that the recorded catch history data may need to be viewed with some scepticism given the high likelihood of misreporting etc. Despite this, the onus is on the licence holder to complete forms accurately at the time. In addition, all those who obtain access to the fishery may be requested to verify the recorded catch data through the provisions of sales receipts etc. It is recognised that some licence holders may have recorded taking fish in other blocks, particularly in the block north of 33 degrees South. This data will also be viewed by the Senior District Fisheries Officer in Bunbury as an extra means of verification.

Recommendation 7

That, other than for South West Limited Entry Salmon licence holders, the minimum criteria for access to the South West Beach Seine Limited Entry Fishery should be a total catch of all fish (excluding salmon) by the beach seine method of at least 30 tonnes during the criteria period with an ongoing commitment criteria of at least 5 tonnes of fish taken by the beach seine method in either 1990 or 1991.

Recommendation 8

That access to the whitebait fishery be restricted to those licence holders, including South West Salmon Limited Entry licence holders, who have taken at least 20 tonnes of whitebait within the boundaries of the fishery during the criteria period and demonstrated an ongoing commitment to the fishery by catching at least 3 tonnes of whitebait in either 1990 or 1991.

9.4 TRANSFERABILITY OF LICENCES

The introduction of transferability into the general beach seine fishery may cause an increase in fishing effort unless the fishery is managed by output controls (ie quota) or there is a scheme for compensatory effort reductions on the transfer of a licence.

Given that south west salmon licences are currently transferable, it is recommended that the salmon licence always remain attached to a beach seine licence ie the south west

beach seine licence can be transferred with the salmon licence but not separated from it unless the salmon licence is transferred to another beach seine licence.

Unless attached to a limited entry salmon licence, it is considered that general beach seine licences should be non-transferable subject to the possible future implementation of a quota management scheme for whitebait (**Recommendation 9**).

Recommendation 9

That south west beach seine licences initially be non-transferable subject to the implementation of a quota management scheme for whitebait unless they are transferred together with a limited entry salmon licence.

9.5 FISHING GEAR RESTRICTIONS

Boats or "dinghies" used in the fishery are by definition generally smaller than 6.5 metres in length.

A maximum boat replacement size of 6.5 metres would limit the extent to which individual boats can increase their fishing power. It is recommended that a maximum boat size limitation of 6.5 metres overall continue to apply to this fishery (**Recommendation 10**). This is in accordance with overall licensing guidelines (Fisheries Department 1989).

This would negate the need to impose specific gear restrictions on the length of net that can be used etc.

Recommendation 10

That a maximum boat size limitation of 6.5 metres overall continue to apply to this fishery.

9.6 AREA AND SEASONAL CLOSURES

Current seasonal and area closures to netting within the boundaries of the fishery relate to the following areas -

Preston Beach
Binningup Beach
Hungry Hollow
Peppermint Grove Beach
Myalup Beach
Wonnerup Inlet and the "Deadwater"
Busselton Jetty
Geographe Bay, Dunsborough
Cape Naturaliste
Yallingup Bay
Canal Rocks
Cowaramup Bay

More detailed information on areas closed to netting is available in a regularly updated Fisheries Department publication and hence is not repeated here (Fisheries Department 1992).

No changes to existing seasonal and area closure are recommended in this paper although it is recommended that these be reviewed at regular intervals to assess the appropriateness of existing controls and hence the need for amendment.

9.7 OWNER-OPERATOR PROVISION

The beach seine fishery has historically been conducted as an "owner operator" fishery ie the licence owner must be present during all stages of a fishing operation.

It is important that this restriction be formalised to prevent a potential increase in fishing effort through the deployment of more than one fishing unit and the leasing of licences.

It is therefore recommended that the owner of a licence must be present at all times during all stages of the fishing operation (**Recommendation 11**). In principle, this will include searching for fish from an individual licensed fishing unit. A fishing unit is a vehicle towing a licensed boat(s) and fishing gear. While it is recognised that it would be impractical to prevent persons from searching for schools of fish, the practise of driving along the beach separate to the main fishing unit in search of fish could be discouraged through the application of "Priority of Netting" Regulations under the Fisheries Act (1905) (Regulation 13 - **Appendix 2**). This gives "priority rights" over the taking of a school of fish to that person who spots a school first. It is recommended that "priority rights" only apply to searching operations where the licence owner is present (**Recommendation 12**).

Recommendation 11

That the owner of a licence must be present at all times during all stages of the fishing operation including the practise of searching from a "licensed fishing unit".

Recommendation 12

That rights of priority for hauling nets as described in Regulation 13 of the Fisheries Act (1905) only apply to searching operations where the licence owner is present.

9.8 ACCESS FEES

Fees for the limited entry fishery licence would be set according to appropriate fee regulations.

9.9 APPEALS

Under Section 17 of the Fisheries Act (1905) licence holders who feel they should have been granted a licence but who are initially refused such a licence may appeal for access to the Minister for Fisheries.

9.10 REFERENCES

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9.11 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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FIGURE 1: ANNUAL CATCHES OF WHITEBAIT 1985-1990
SOUTH WEST BEACH SEINE FISHERY
 (*1991 Figures incomplete)

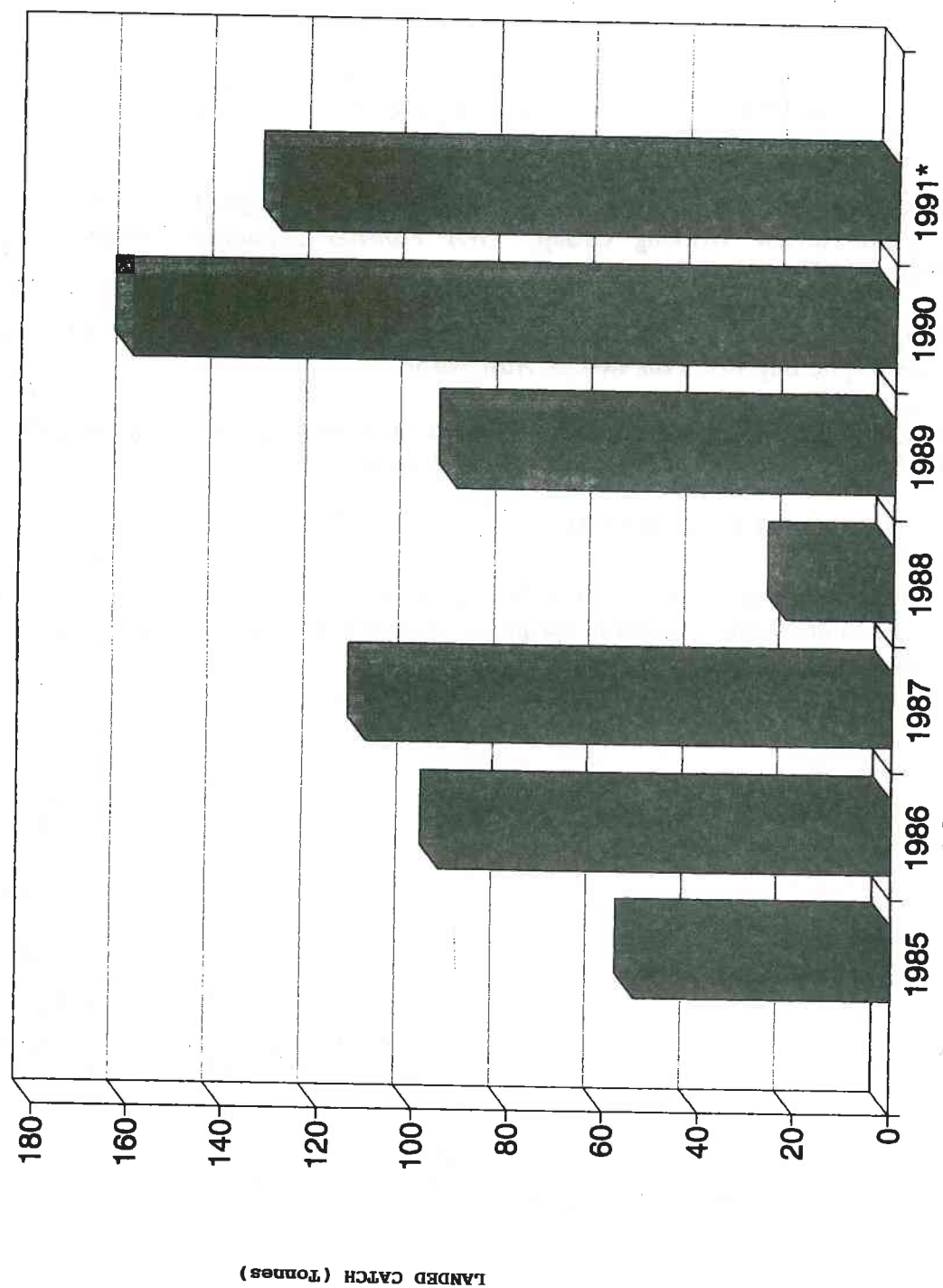


FIGURE 2: ANNUAL CATCHES OF AUSTRALIAN HERRING 1985-1990
SOUTH WEST BEACH SEINE FISHERY

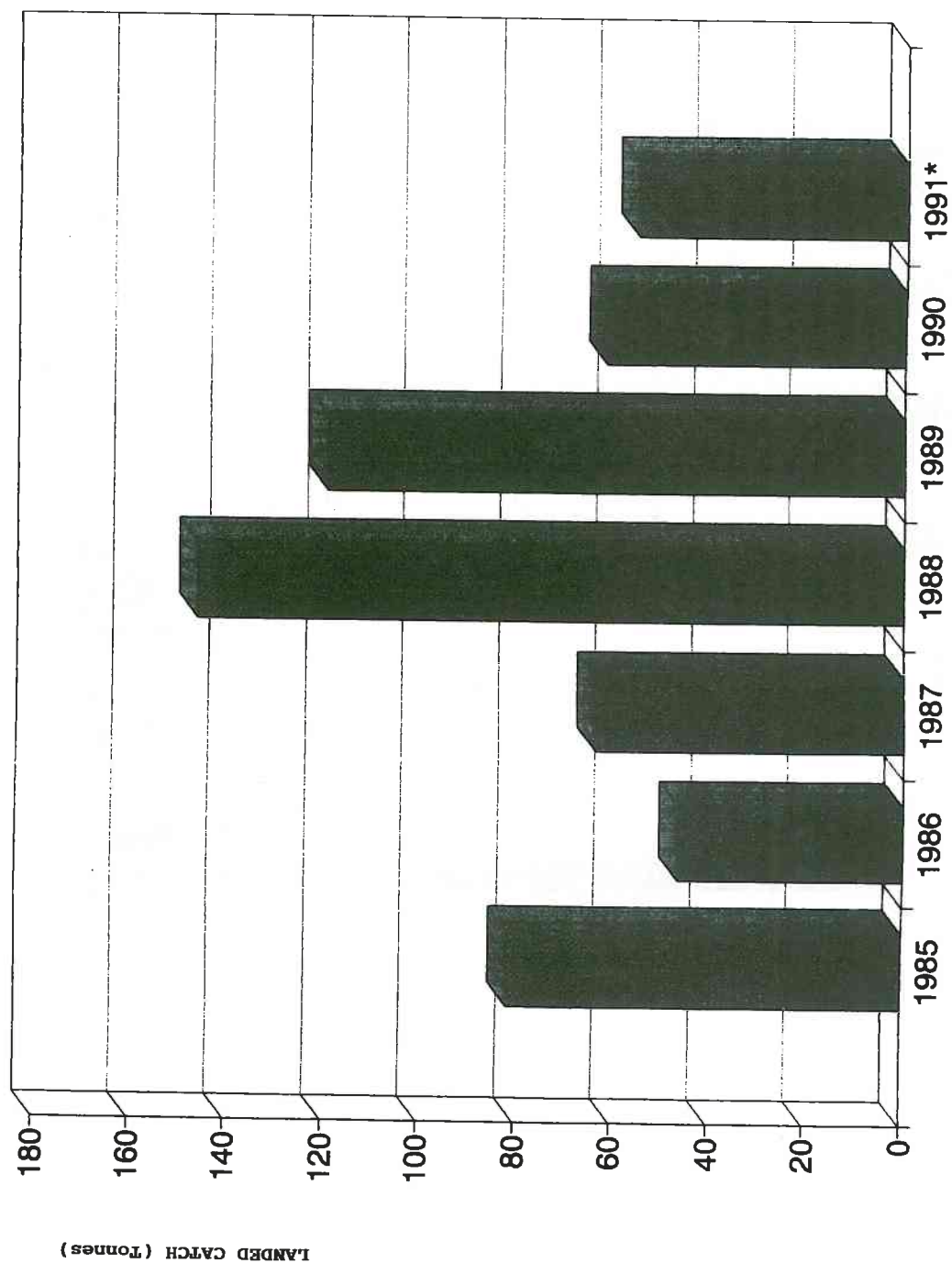


FIGURE 3: CATCH DISTRIBUTION (all species except salmon) 1985-1990 INCLUSIVE
 (catch figures represent upper bounds of class intervals)
 SOUTH WEST BEACH SEINE FISHERY

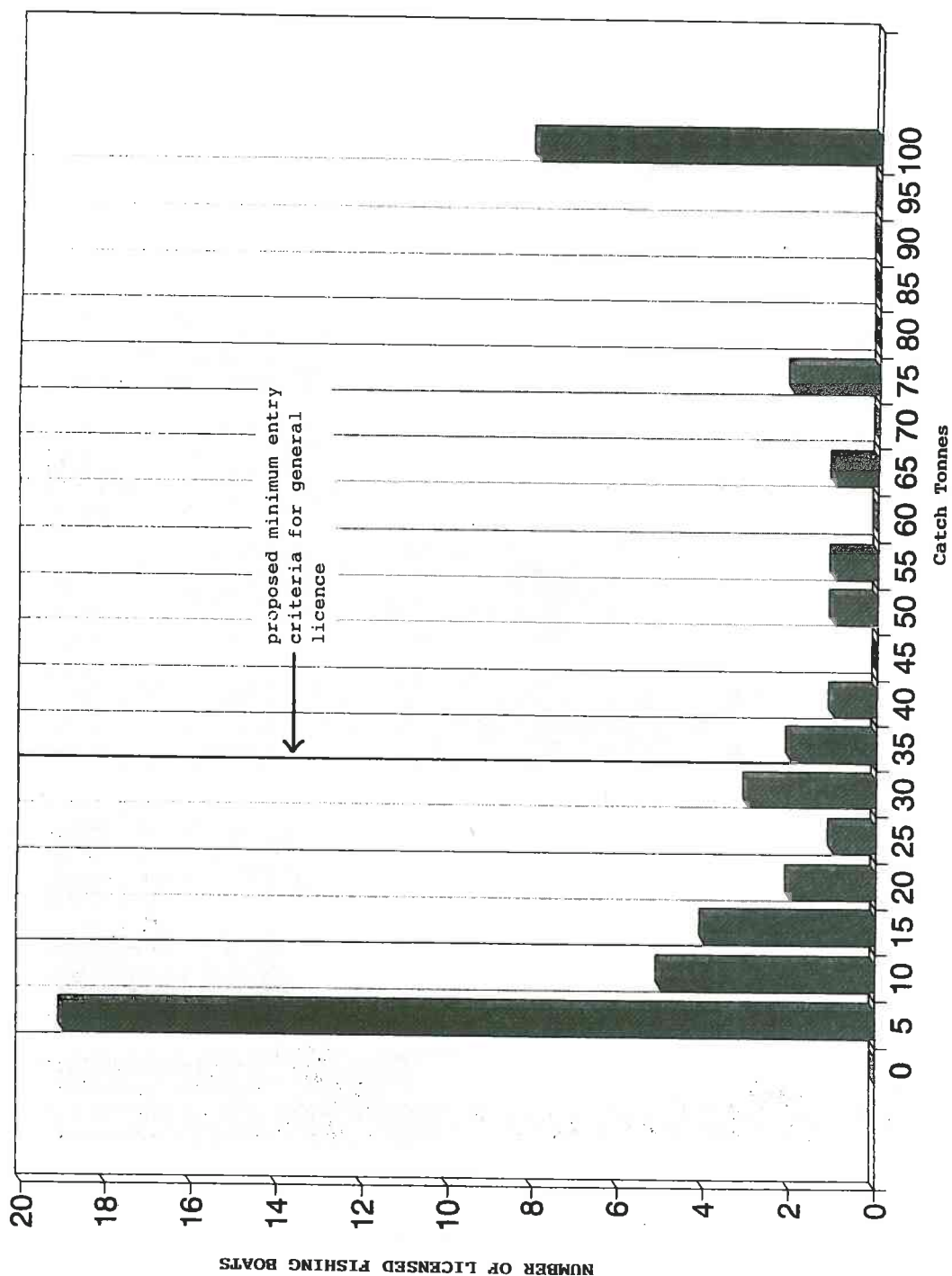
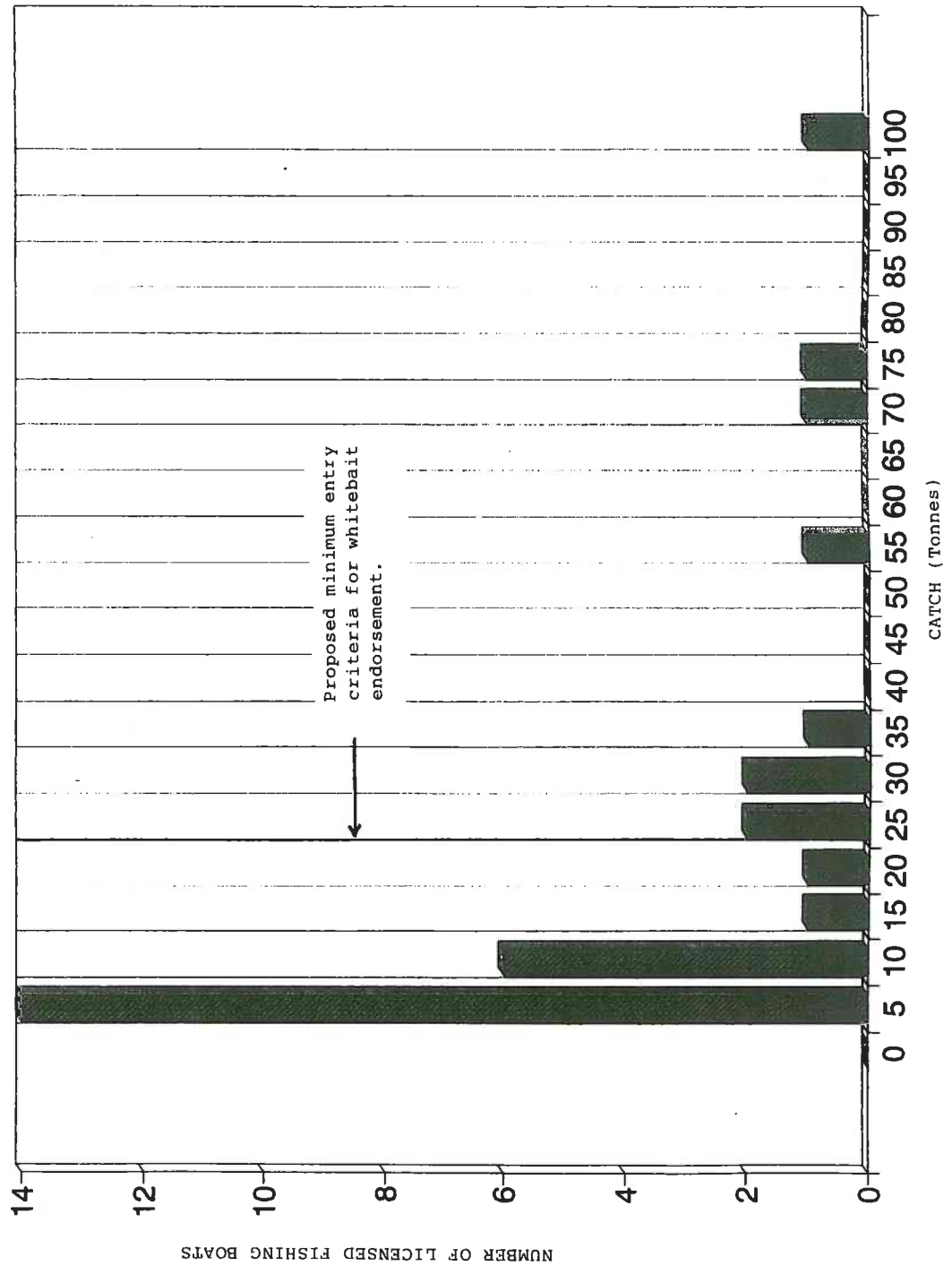


FIGURE 4: WHITEBAIT CATCH DISTRIBUTION 1985-1990 INCLUSIVE
 (Catch figures represent upper bounds of class intervals)
 SOUTH WEST BEACH SEINE FISHERY





MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT;
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MEDIA RELEASE

6 October 1989

FREEZE ON NUMBER OF PROFESSIONAL FISHERMEN ALLOWED TO
FISH FROM SOUTH WEST BEACHES

Fisheries Minister Gordon Hill today announced a freeze on the number of professional fishermen allowed to fish from South West beaches.

The freeze will cover beach seine fishing for species such as Australian salmon, Australian herring, whitebait and mullet.

Mr Hill said a review of the fishery would be undertaken and commercial and recreational fishermen would be consulted to work out new management guidelines.

"There are about 30 fishermen who appear to have a history of fishing in the area between Timms Thicket, south of Mandurah, and Windy Harbour," he said.

"It is important to first identify the professional fishermen who are dependent on fishing this area before any decision on future management of the fishery is made.

"Fishermen who have fished these beaches each year between 1 July 1986 and 30 June 1989 will be granted an interim endorsement to fish the area.

"Decisions on long-term access will be made after consultation with fishermen" Mr Hill said.

Interim endorsements or licences for the South West Salmon Fishery will not be transferable during the review, but consideration will be given to transfers within families.

Salmon licensees will be able to offer their licences for sale to the Fishing Industry Adjustment Scheme.

The freeze will not apply to existing managed fisheries like abalone diving, estuary fishing or gillnet fishing.

[Regulation 12G. Added by GG 27/6/86, pp.2180-3. Amended in Gazette 27/2/87, pp. 503-4; 20/5/88, pp.1675-7; 22/11/91, p.5896.]

RIGHTS OF PRIORITY FOR HAULING NETS

13. The rights of priority for hauling nets, as between fishermen netting in the same ground, are hereby determined as follows:-

- (1) Where netting operations include the use of a beach -
 - (a) the first turn shall belong to the licensed fisherman who first arrives on the ground with a *bona fide* crew of licensed fishermen, with a licensed fishing boat marked in accordance with regulation 2, with a lawful net ready for shooting and hauling;
 - (b) the next turn shall belong to the licensed fisherman who next arrives as above, and so on;
 - (c) a turn shall come to an end when a licensed fisherman has shot and hauled his net and it shall in no case last more than 24 hours as against any other licensed fisherman who is on the ground waiting for a haul;
 - (d) during his turn a licensed fisherman shall have exclusive right to the ground where he remains with his crew on portion of the ground in readiness to "shoot" with one end of his hauling line ashore;
 - (e) no licensed fisherman shall have a second turn until all other licensed fishermen on the ground have had their first turn;
 - (f) no unlicensed fisherman or licensed fisherman in an unlicensed boat shall have any claim to a ground as against a licensed fisherman and crew in a licensed boat, marked in accordance with regulation 2.

For the purpose of this paragraph "ground" means any portion of a beach not longer than 800 metres and includes the adjacent water to a distance of 800 metres measured rectangularly from the beach

- (2) Where netting operations do not include the use of a beach -
 - (a) the first turn shall belong to the licensed fisherman who first arrives on the ground with a *bona fide* crew of licensed fishermen in a licensed fishing boat marked in accordance with regulation 2, with a lawful net ready for shooting and hauling;
 - (b) the next turn shall belong to the licensed fisherman who next arrives as above, and so on;
 - (c) a turn shall come to an end when a licensed fisherman has shot and hauled and the turn shall in no case last more than 12 hours;
 - (d) during his turn a licensed fisherman shall have exclusive right to the ground where he remains with his crew on portion of the ground in readiness to "shoot";
 - (e) no licensed fisherman shall have a second turn until all the other licensed fisherman on the ground have had their first turn;

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- (f) no unlicensed fisherman or licensed fisherman in an unlicensed boat shall have any claim to a ground as against a licensed fisherman and crew in a licensed boat, marked in accordance with regulation 2.

For the purpose of this paragraph "ground" means that area of water to be fished within the limits of 400 metres by 400 metres.

(3) Where netting operations are by means of set nets -

- (a) the first turn shall belong to the licensed fisherman who first arrives on the ground with a *bona fide* crew of licensed fishermen in a licensed fishing boat marked in accordance with regulation 2, with a lawful net ready for setting;
- (b) the next turn shall belong to the licensed fisherman who next arrives as above, and so on;
- (c) a turn shall come to an end when a licensed fisherman has hauled his net and the turn shall in no case last more than 24 hours;
- (d) no licensed fisherman shall have a second turn until all the other licensed fishermen on the ground have had their first turn;
- (e) no unlicensed fisherman or licensed fisherman in an unlicensed boat shall have any claim to set a net as against a licensed fisherman and crew in a licensed boat, marked in accordance with regulation 2.

For the purpose of this paragraph "set" means to place a net in the water with the cork line at or beneath the surface. "Ground" means that area of water to be fished within the limits of an area 91.5 metres by the length of a lawful net.

(4) It shall be unlawful to wilfully disturb or frighten fish on or in the vicinity of a haul, or in any manner to obstruct a licensed fisherman during his turn.

(5) When a licensed fisherman is lawfully in possession of a haul, no person shall impede him by the process known as "blocking" whereby another person sets or places his net as to prevent or attempt to prevent fish getting to the haul.

(6) Any licensed fisherman who suffers any loss from a breach of this regulation may be authorised by the Minister to take legal proceedings at his own expense.

Fisheries management papers

- No.1 The Report of the Southern Western Australian Shark Working Group. (1986) (Chairman P. Millington)
- No.2 The report of the Fish Farming Legislative Review Committee. (1986) (Chairman P. Rogers)
- No.3 Management Measures for the Shark Bay Snapper 1987 Season. (1986) (P. Millington)
- No.4 The Esperance Rock Lobster Working Group. (1986) (Chairman A. Pallot)
- No.5 The Windy Harbour - Augusta Rock Lobster Working Group. (1986) (Interim Report by the Chairman A. Pallot)
- No.6 The King George Sound Purse Seine Fishery Working Group. (1986) (Chairman R. Brown)
- No.7 Management Measures for the Cockburn Sound Mussel Fishery. (1986) (H. Brayford)
- No.8 Report of the Rock Lobster Industry Advisory meeting of 27 January 1987 (1987). (Chairman B. Bowen)
- No.9 Western Rock Lobster Industry Compensation Study. (1987) (Arthur Young Services)
- No.10 Further Options for Management of the Shark Bay Snapper Fishery. (1987) (P. Millington)
- No.11 The Shark Bay Scallop Fishery. (1987) (L. Joll)
- No.12 Report of the Rock Lobster Industry Advisory Committee to the Hon Minister for Fisheries 24 September 1987. (1987)
- No.13 A Development Plan for the South Coast Inshore Trawl Fishery. (1987)
- No.14 Draft Management Plan for the Perth Metropolitan Purse Seine Fishery. (1987) (P. Millington)
- No.15 Draft management plan, Control of barramundi gillnet fishing in the Kimberley. (1988) (R. S. Brown)
- No.16 The South West Trawl Fishery Draft Management Plan. (1988) (P. Millington)
- No.17 The final report of the pearling industry review committee. (1988) (F.J. Malone, D.A. Hancock, B. Jeffriess)
- No.18 Policy for Freshwater Aquaculture in Western Australia. (1988)
- No.19 Sport Fishing for Marron in Western Australia - Management for the Future. (1988)
- No.20 The Offshore Constitutional Settlement, Western Australia 1988.
- No.21 Commercial fishing licensing in Western Australia. (1989)
- No.22 Economics and marketing of Western Australian pilchards. (1988) (SCP Fisheries Consultants Pty Ltd)
- No.23 Management of the south-west inshore trawl fishery. (1989) (N. Moore)
- No.24 Management of the Perth metropolitan purse-seine fishery. (1989). (Noel Moore)
- No.25 Rock Lobster Industry Advisory Committee report to the Minister for Fisheries November 1988. (1989)
- No.26 A report on marron fishing in Western Australia. (1989) (Chairman Doug Wenn MLC)

- No.27 A review of the Shark Bay pearling industry. (1989) (Dr. D.A.Hancock, Ph.D, D.Sc)
- No.28 Southern demersal gillnet and longline fishery. (1989)
- No.29 Distribution and marketing of Western Australian rock lobster. (P. Monaghan) (1989)
- No.30 Foreign investment in the rock lobster industry. (1989)
- No.31 Rock Lobster Industry Advisory Committee report to the Hon Minister for Fisheries September 1989. (1989)
- No.32 Fishing Licences as security for loans. (P. Rogers) (1989)
- No.33 Guidelines for by-laws for those Abrolhos Islands set aside for fisheries purposes. (Noel Moore) (1989)
- No.34 The future for recreational fishing - issues for community discussion. (Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee) (1990)
- No.35 Future policy for charter fishing operations in Western Australia. (P. Millington) 1990.
- No. 36 Long term management measures for the Cockburn Sound restricted entry fishery. (Peter Millington) (1990)
- No.37 Western rock lobster industry marketing report 1989/90 season. (MAREC Pty Ltd - July 1990)
- No. 38 The economic impact of recreational fishing in Western Australia. (R.K. Lindner, P.B. McLeod)(1991)
- No.39 Establishment of a registry to record charges against fishing licences when used as security for loans. (P. Rogers) (1991)
- No.40 The future for Recreational Fishing - Forum Proceedings. (Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee) (1991)
- No.41 The future for Recreational Fishing - The Final Report of the Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee. (Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee) (1991)
- No. 42 Appendix to the final report of the Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee. (1991)
- No.43 A discussion of options for effort reduction. Southern Gillnet and Demersal Longline Fishery Management Advisory Committee. (1991)
- No. 44 A study into the feasibility of establishing a system for the buy-back of salmon fishing authorisations and related endorsements. (1991)
- No. 45 Draft Management Plan, Kimberley Prawn Fishery.
- No. 46 Rock Lobster Industry Advisory Committee, Chairman's report to the Minister. 1992
- No. 47 Long term management measures for the Cockburn Sound restricted entry fishery. Summary of submissions and final recommendations for management. Peter Millington (October 1992)
- No. 48 Pearl oyster fishery policy guidelines (Western Australian Pearling Act 1990). Western Australian Fisheries Joint Authority. (November 1992)
- No. 49 Management Plan, Kimberley Prawn Fishery (December 1992)
- No. 50 Draft Management Plan, South West Beach Seine Fishery. (February 1993)