



6-2006

Five year management strategy for the Recreational Marron Fishery. The Minister for Fisheries' decisions in response to the final report of the RFAC Recreational Freshwater Fisheries Stakeholder Sub-Committee (Fisheries Management Paper No. 213).

Jon Ford (Minister for Fisheries; the Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne)

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Recommended Citation

Ford (Minister for Fisheries; the Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne), J. (2006), *Five year management strategy for the Recreational Marron Fishery. The Minister for Fisheries' decisions in response to the final report of the RFAC Recreational Freshwater Fisheries Stakeholder Sub-Committee (Fisheries Management Paper No. 213)*. Department of Fisheries Western Australia, Perth. Report No. 217.

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A FIVE-YEAR MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR THE RECREATIONAL MARRON FISHERY

**The Minister for Fisheries' decisions
in response to the final report of the
RFAC Recreational Freshwater Fisheries
Stakeholder Sub-Committee
(Fisheries Management Paper No. 213)**

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PAPER No. 217

**The Honorable Jon Ford, JP MLC
Minister for Fisheries**

June 2006

ISSN 0819 4327



Department of
Fisheries



*A Five-Year Management Strategy for the
Recreational Marron Fishery*

The Minister for Fisheries' Decisions
In Response to the Final Report of the
RFAC Recreational Freshwater Fisheries Stakeholder Sub-Committee

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FOREWORD

The review of the Recreational Marron Fishery is now complete and I would like to thank all members of the RFAC Recreational Freshwater Fisheries Stakeholder Sub-Committee (RFFSS) for their efforts in what has been a challenging task. I would also like to thank those members of the community who made submissions on the draft discussion paper.

After careful consideration of the Recreational Freshwater Fisheries Stakeholder Sub-Committee's recommendations and the wide range of issues raised in submissions, I have made my decisions in respect to the future management arrangements for recreational marron fishing.

The RFFSS recognised that the majority of comments in submissions supported a conservative approach in the future management of the marron fishery, rather than putting the fishery at any unnecessary risk.

The RFFSS also noted the strong level of public concern over the loss of access to popular marroning waters in the past and the threat of additional water bodies being closed to the fishery in the future, as they are brought into use as drinking water supply dams.

The RFFSS acknowledged these concerns in their final report and made a number of recommendations to ensure recreational marron fishers have a sustainable share of the region's marron resources. These are essential to ensure that the requirements of the broader community with regard to the use of marron stocks are recognised.

I believe the new management arrangements, which will be implemented in January 2007, represents a significant step in protecting the quality of the recreational marron fishery and meeting the long-term needs for the sustainable management of recreational fishing for marron.

I believe recreational marron fishers in Western Australia should be proud of their involvement in the development of responsible fisheries management strategies. Without question, WA leads the country in its progressive approach to fisheries management.

The Honorable Jon Ford, JP MLC

Minister for Fisheries; the Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne

RFAC RECREATIONAL FRESHWATER FISHERIES STAKEHOLDER SUB-COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS	MINISTER'S DECISION
<p>Recommendation 1 – Priorities for Research <i>The Working Group recommended four research priority areas:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>continued logbook and phone surveys;</i> • <i>abundance estimations;</i> • <i>size at maturity; and</i> • <i>water volume monitoring.</i> 	<p>Agree in principle. The level of research during the term of the plan will be subject to state-wide priorities and availability of resources.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2 – Target Catch Range <i>The Sub-Committee recommended a target catch range of between 12 and 17 tonnes.</i></p>	<p>Agree in principle. The sustainable management of marron stocks should take priority.</p> <p>The RFFSS should develop a matrix that outlines recommended management actions in the event that the estimated catch exceeds 17 tonnes or falls below 12 tonnes.</p> <p>An estimate of the total catch for a season must be available for assessment and possible management action prior to the following season.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3 – Length of the Marron Season <i>The Sub-Committee recommended an increase in the season from 16 to 23 days.</i></p>	<p>Agree. The length of the marron season is to be increased to 23 days.</p> <p>This is a medium risk strategy that is designed to give recreational fishers a greater opportunity to fish while containing catches to a sustainable level.</p> <p>If the estimated catch exceeds 17 tonnes, this will be a ‘trigger’ for immediate management action that may include a reduction in the season length.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4 – Start of the Marron Season <i>The Sub-Committee recommended that the marron season start in January following the New Year holiday.</i></p>	<p>Agree. The marron season should commence at midday on the first Friday in January that is on, or is closest in time to, the first last-quarter moon in that year.</p> <p>The season dates should be clearly advertised prior to the start of the season as part of the annual communications strategy.</p>
<p>Recommendation 5 – Marron Possession Limit <i>The Sub-Committee recommended a possession limit of 20 marron per licence, except in ‘Trophy Waters’ where a separate possession limit of five already applies.</i></p>	<p>Agree. A possession limit of 20 marron to apply to all areas outside of a person’s permanent place of residence, with the exception of ‘Trophy Waters’ where a separate possession limit of five marron already applies.</p> <p>I do not agree that a person must be the holder of a recreational marron licence to be in possession of marron.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6 - Minimum Legal Size <i>The Sub-Committee recommended the minimum legal size be increased from 76mm to 80mm carapace length.</i></p>	<p>Agree. The minimum legal size limit for marron is to be increased to 80mm, noting that a minimum size limit of 90mm will continue to apply in all ‘Trophy Waters’.</p>

RFAC RECREATIONAL FRESHWATER FISHERIES STAKEHOLDER SUB-COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS	MINISTER'S DECISION
<p>Recommendation 7 – Hutt River <i>The Sub-Committee recommended Hutt River be managed as a ‘Trophy Water’ with a minimum size limit of 90mm and a bag and possession limit of five marron per licence.</i></p>	<p>Agree. Hutt River is to be managed as a ‘Trophy Water’, with a minimum size limit of 90mm and a bag and possession limit of five marron per licensed fisher to apply to all areas within 500m of the Hutt River high water mark.</p>
<p>Recommendation 8 – Warren River <i>The Sub-Committee recommended that the requirement for snare-only be removed from the section of the river in Warren National Park.</i></p>	<p>Agree. The snare only requirement is to be removed from the areas of the Warren River situated within the Warren River National Park.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9 – Donnelly River <i>The Sub-Committee recommended that fishers be permitted to carry marron drop and scoop nets by boat down stream of ‘Boat Landing’.</i></p>	<p>Agree. The transportation of marron drop nets and marron scoop nets by boat is to be permitted in the Donnelly River down stream of ‘Boat Landing’ on a five-year trial basis. Fishers must not use the boat to fish.</p> <p>The Department of Fisheries will monitor this area during the marron season and if non-compliance is observed, this privilege will be revoked.</p>
<p>Recommendation 10 – Shannon River <i>The Sub-Committee recommended that Shannon River be closed to all fishing.</i></p>	<p>Agree. The Shannon River should to be closed to all fishing for an initial five-year period. This closure will provide an unfished river system for inclusion in the Department of Fisheries marron research-monitoring program. The closure should be re-evaluated with the possibility of re-opening the river after five years.</p> <p>This closure is not to fulfil the role of a ‘sanctuary area’ rather to provide a system that can be utilised to assess the impact of environmental factors on marron and native fish stocks in the absence of fishing pressure and predation from introduced fish.</p>
<p>Recommendation 11 – Management of Dams <i>The Sub-Committee recommended a formal Memorandum of Understanding be developed between the Department of Fisheries and relevant water authorities.</i></p>	<p>Agree in principle. The Department of Fisheries should enter into dialog with the relevant water management authorities in an attempt to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on water management practices that will benefit the recreational fishery for marron.</p> <p>The recommendation to develop a MOU does not apply to dams that are already closed to recreational fishing for marron.</p>
<p>Recommendation 12 – Restocking Marron as a Stock Enhancement Strategy <i>The Sub-Committee recommended restocking should be considered to assist with stock recovery.</i></p>	<p>Agree in principle. Restocking of marron should only be considered as a strategy to assist with the recovery of a stock where it can be identified that the stock has been significantly depleted, and its recovery is endangered or will be prolonged.</p> <p>Restocking for the purpose of enhancing a healthy marron population should only be considered if surplus marron become available, such as during the draining of dams.</p> <p>All restocking proposals should be thoroughly evaluated against disease risk, biodiversity and genetic diversity criteria.</p>

RFAC RECREATIONAL FRESHWATER FISHERIES STAKEHOLDER SUB-COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS	MINISTER'S DECISION
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<p>Recommendation 13 –Artificial Habitats <i>The Sub-Committee recommended the installation, monitoring and evaluation of artificial habitats to rehabilitate public dams.</i></p>	<p>Agree in principle. The installation of artificial habitat will be subject to state-wide priorities, availability of resourcing and the endorsement of the relevant water management authorities.</p>
<p>Recommendation 14 – State Freshwater Emblem <i>The Sub-Committee recommended marron be nominated as a State freshwater faunal emblem.</i></p>	<p>Agree in principle. The listing of marron as a State freshwater faunal emblem would give this iconic species an increased profile on a national and international level.</p> <p>The Department of Fisheries should investigate the implications of listing marron as a State emblem to ensure that this does not have the potential to impact negatively with the recreational fishery prior to progressing this recommendation.</p>
<p>Recommendation 15 – Community Education Plan for the Recreational Marron Fishery <i>The Sub-Committee recommended a community education plan to inform the public on important issues and contain:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>marron fishing guide;</i> • <i>marron gauge and educational material;</i> • <i>annual media campaign; and</i> • <i>volunteer involvement.</i> 	<p>I agree with the elements of the community education campaign.</p>
<p>Recommendation 16 – Field Management and Compliance <i>To maximise the effectiveness of the five-year management plan for the recreational marron fishery, it is recommended that the Department of Fisheries aim to deliver at least 2,500 hours towards field compliance and education, both during and outside of the marron season.</i></p>	<p>Agree in principle. Needs to be considered in the context of state-wide priorities around compliance risks and available resourcing.</p>