

Indigenous fishing bulletin



Indigenous fishing in the news

April 2010

QLD: RSPCA wants dugong and turtle hunting revised

The RSPCA has labelled the indigenous hunting methods used to catch dugongs and green sea turtles inhumane and has called on the federal government to step in.

The timing of the RSPCA's concerns coincided with an announcement from the opposition that a Coalition government would take action by cracking down on cruel dugong and sea turtle hunting methods, poaching and commercial meat sales.

Native title holders can legally hunt dugongs and turtles for personal, domestic or non-commercial communal needs under the Native Title Act 1993.

RSPCA Queensland spokesman Michael Beatty advocated removing the exemption for traditional hunting to ensure the humane killing of animals by amending state laws.

Mr Beatty said that as part of hunting methods, live sea turtles often had their flippers cut off and were left in the sun. Dugongs were often tied to wharves alive so that flesh could be cut off intermittently to keep the meat fresh.

"In this day and age with refrigeration and freezing, you don't need to be as cruel as that," Mr Beatty said.

Source: *The Age*, p3, 15/04/2010

March 2010

WA: Shoreline anglers may need licence

Fisheries Minister Norman Moore has refused to rule out a licence fee for recreational fishers as an option to protect fish stocks in Western Australia.

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The bulletin is a collation of documents taken from the media and from other sources. It does not contain information provided by the National Native Title Tribunal, unless indicated.

“I don’t want to speculate on the future but if the fishery is under threat we will have to look at every option that relates to making sure that the fishery is sustained,” Mr Moore said.

A \$300,000 research program announced by the State Government in December last year is gathering data to assess the effects of shore-based fishing. The research is expected to be completed by the end of 2010.

Frank Prokop, executive director of Recfishwest said while he would not oppose a move by the Government to introduce a land-based fishing license, he preferred a general angler’s licence of \$20 to \$30 for all adults who wanted to fish from land and boat.

Source: *The West Australian*, p35, 10/03/2010

February 2010

QLD: Darumbal man appeals \$2,000 fine for fishing

Elwyn James Mann is appealing a \$2000 fine for using an industrial sized 80m gill net to fish at Moores Creek near the Fitzroy River in Rockhampton, Queensland.

Mr Mann is a member of the Darumbal People who have land rights across the Rockhampton area, which includes the right to fish with traditional methods for non-commercial purposes.

In his appeal against the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, Mr Mann said the Queensland Fisheries Act, Section 14, was inconsistent with section 211 of the Native Title Act and therefore invalid.

In response, the Fisheries department said that although the Fisheries Act protects traditional fishing rights, it prohibits the use of commercial apparatus, as in Mr Mann’s case.

The Fisheries department declined to make further comments while the case is before the courts.

Sources: *The Morning Bulletin*, p3, 12/02/2010

February 2010

QLD: Opposition aims to cut turtle kills by 90 per cent

The Federal Opposition has pledged to dramatically cut the number of turtles and dugong being hunted in Far North Queensland by cracking down on poaching and ‘non-traditional take’ by 90 per cent.

In October 2009, a research expedition led by the Environmental Protection Agency and James Cook University to one of the Great Barrier Reef’s popular ecotourism areas found an 80 per cent fall in green turtle numbers.

The Opposition’s environment spokesman Greg Hunt said immediate action was required to protect the dugong and turtle populations.

“Personally, I would like to see all of the take ended but will start by seeking a cooperative arrangement with local traditional elders.”

Warren Entsch, former member for the seat of Leichhardt in Queensland is putting together a series of meetings with indigenous leaders in the Far North when Mr Hunt visits in late March.

“Some of the elders are the ones most concerned about poaching. If we can prove there are bugger-all turtles left, they’re the ones who will seriously try to provide a solution,” Mr Entsch said.

Mr Entsch favoured a scientific approach to maintaining stable turtle populations through ecological surveys and a permit system controlled by elders’ groups.

Sources: *The Port Douglas & Mossman Gazette*, p1, 11/02/2010
The Cairns Post, p3, 13/10/2010

December 2009

NSW: Fisheries protection bill passed

The NSW Parliament passed the Fisheries Management Amendment Bill 2009 in a bid to protect the state’s fisheries resources and to recognise Indigenous people as the first custodians of the state’s marine environments.

NSW Minister for Primary Industries Tony Kelly said that as a result of the Bill’s passage through the Senate, the government had amended the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* to formally recognise the importance of cultural fishing to Indigenous people.

“Fishing is a historically important part of Indigenous culture and custom and the changes to the *Fisheries Management Act* will more adequately reflect that significance.”

“An important part of the process was seeking feedback from Indigenous communities themselves in order to most accurately identify and represent major cultural events, Indigenous laws and local issues,” Mr Kelly said.

The changes to the *Fisheries Act* allow permits for cultural fishing to be issued to Indigenous groups as well as individuals. All participants in cultural fishing for large ceremonies, such as weddings and birthdays can now be covered under one permit.

The amendments will also strengthen the penalties for illegal fishing activities, in particular the black market selling of fish that was brought to light in a 2004 report into illegal fishing for commercial gain.

The NSW Government, along with most state and Territory governments, is a party to the principles of Indigenous fishing, which establish a consistent framework to recognise Indigenous customary fishing rights and the goal of improved access to commercial fishing opportunities.

The principles of Indigenous fishing evolved over a number of years following a national Indigenous fisheries conference convened by the National Native Title Tribunal in 2003.

Sources: NSW Government media release, 3/12/2009

<http://www.gordonmoyes.com/2009/12/03/fisheries-management-amendment-bill-2009/>
<http://www.smh.com.au/national/theres-a-big-catch-law-change-nets-aboriginal-fishers-20090920-fwsz.html>

December 2009

NT: Shipping containers to boost fishing at artificial reef complex

Five large ex-shipping containers have been placed at the Rick Mills artificial reef complex near Darwin in the Northern Territory.

Fisheries Minister Kon Vatskalis announced that \$1 million from the Territory Government's Recreational Fishing Access and Infrastructure Fund was used to expand the existing site.

The popular artificial reef will provide increased habitat for many species of fish targeted by recreational anglers. The common catches at the existing artificial reef systems are jewfish, golden snapper, estuary cod and stripies.

Mr Vatskalis reminded anglers that from January 2010, the Northern Territory introduced new fish possession limits which included the reduction in limits for black jewfish and Spanish mackerel from five to two.

Recreational fishing is an important part of the Territory lifestyle and tourism industry, contributing significantly to the economy.

Sources: Northern Territory Government media release, 01/12/2009

For more information on the possession limit changes – <http://www.nt.gov.au/d/Fisheries>

Issues in brief

October 2009

WA: Marine Park to be established north of Broome

Premier Colin Barnett and Environment Minister Donna Faragher announced the WA State Government would establish a marine park to protect humpback whales at Camden Sound, 400km north of Broome.

Mrs Faragher said Camden Sound, rich in coral reefs and mangrove forests, was the biggest calving area for humpback whales in the southern hemisphere.

“More than 1000 humpback whales can be found in the Camden Sound ‘maternity ward’ during the calving season.”

“The proposed marine park will be created in consultation with the local indigenous community, meeting the requirements of native title, and in consultation with all stakeholders with an interest in the area,” Mrs Faragher said.

The Chairman of the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority Eric Streitberg has strongly endorsed the marine park initiative.

“Western Australia has some of the few relatively untouched environments left in the world with many areas of unique conservation value and international significance,” he said.

Sources: *The Sunday Times* and *Perth Now* <http://www.perthnow.com.au/news/western-australia/marine-park-provides-whale-sanctuary/story-e6frg14u-1225782385466>

Other useful links

Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority: <http://www.afma.gov.au/>

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies: <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/>

Australian Institute of Marine Science: <http://www.aims.gov.au/>

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry: <http://www.daff.gov.au/>

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts: <http://www.environment.gov.au/>

Indigenous Business Australia: <http://www.iba.gov.au/>

National Native Title Tribunal: <http://www.nntt.gov.au/>

Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority: <http://www.pzja.gov.au/>

Wet Tropics World Heritage Area: <http://wettropics.gov.au/>

State and Territory Government

Department of Primary Industries and Resources South Australia: <http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/home>

Department of Primary Industries and Water Tasmania:

<http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/Home/1?Open>

Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries:

http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/cps/rde/dpi/hs.xsl/home_ENA_HTML.htm

Northern Territory Fisheries: <http://www.fisheries.nt.gov.au/>

NSW Department of Primary Industries - Fisheries: <http://www.fisheries.nsw.gov.au/>

Victoria Department of Primary Industries: <http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/dpi/index.htm>

WA Department of Fisheries: <http://www.fish.wa.gov.au/>

Native Title Representative Bodies

Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement: <http://www.alrm.org.au/>

Cape York Land Council: <http://www.cylc.org.au/>

Central Land Council: <http://www.clc.org.au/>

Goldfields Land and Sea Council: <http://www.glc.com.au/>

Queensland South Native Title Services: <http://www.qsnts.com.au/>
Kimberley Land Council: <http://www.klc.org.au/>
Native Title Representative Bodies: <http://www.ntrb.net/>
Native Title Services Victoria: <http://www.nts.vic.gov.au/>
Northern Land Council: <http://www.nlc.org.au/>
South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council: <http://www.noongar.org.au/>

Online publications

Hi ika - Indigenous fisheries magazine issued in New Zealand: <http://www.fish.govt.nz/en-nz/Publications/Hi+Ika+newsletter/default.htm>
Kantri Laif (coun-try li-fe) - twice-yearly newsletter produced by NAILSMA: http://savanna.ntu.edu.au/publications/kantri_laif.html
CRC Reef Newsletter: <http://www.reef.crc.org.au/publications/news/>

Education

Australian Maritime College: <http://www.amc.edu.au/>
Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (ANU): <http://www.anu.edu.au/caepr/index.php>
Desert Knowledge: <http://www.desertknowledge.com.au/>
Marine Education Society of Australasia: <http://www.mesa.edu.au/>
Reef Ed: <http://www.reefed.edu.au/>
Torres News: <http://www.torresnews.com.au/>

International

Fisheries and Oceans Canada: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/index-eng.htm>
New Zealand Ministry of Fisheries: <http://www.fish.govt.nz/>

Tribunal website offers more native title news

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