

## Fisheries Enquiry March 2016 questionnaire

Question 1. What is the impact on recreational fishers of controls such as size and bag limits, restrictions on fishing equipment and seasonal closures?:

A Most controls are considered reasonably fair and necessary. There is room for improvement however, but the changes needed are thought to be minor.

Question 2. How effective are current regulations on recreational fishing in managing Australia's fisheries to ensure their longer term sustainability? Are there alternative, better controls that would still preserve marine fish stocks and their habitat?:

A In Qld the regs are mostly working, particularly as observed more recently, larger penalties have been handed down by magistrates to serious or repeat offenders. Still some will never comply it seems, but they are fewer it seems.

Question 3. Are current licencing requirements an effective means of ensuring the sustainable use of Australia's marine fisheries by recreational fishers? If not, how might licensing arrangements be improved? For example, should all recreational fishers be licenced, or should there be species-specific licencing requirements?:

A There is no formal salt water fishing license in Qld. There is however a pseudo fishing license introduced in the late 90's called PPV more recently renamed RUV which is a levy designed by the Burns Enquiry (1992/3) to be applied to recreational boat/fisher sector to improve their lot. This levy started at around \$7.50 and is still collected now at around \$19.00 per private boat rego per annum. It is estimated to have collected well over \$50m to date. The original structure of the purpose of the money has been interfered with since the first dollar was collected, and now bears no resemblance to its correct purpose, instead entirely funding internal fisheries business. This is considered a rort by just about any who know the details including the surviving members of the Burns Committee, of whom I have contacted. Consequently the state is not trusted to collect recreational fishing license fees if a license was to be introduced, and a political campaign against it would be certain.

Question 4. How well are fishing rules enforced? In what ways could the enforcement of the fishing rules for marine fisheries be improved? Are there particular areas or species to which more attention needs to be paid by fisheries officers?:

A The regs are reasonable clear and self enforcement is thought to have come a long way. In Cairns, we go through periods when patrol officers are more visible. Frustratingly, when illegal activities are reported, the activity is not always checked

[Redacted with the author's consent]. A check was done in Cairns some years back by Cairns Post reporter and QBFP reported that out of some 600+ reports of illegal gill net activity only 16 were prosecuted. Many now don't

bother to report any more.

Question 5. Do bans on recreational fishing in certain locations (such as marine reserves) work? On what basis should decisions on locations available to recreational fishers be made?:

A In the GBR region, it is vital the Green Zone system be left in place. Most rec fishers respect them now but the zones were resented in the past. Compliance figures show that of the non-compliant rec fishers, almost all are new and inexperienced and first time offenders. This is not so in the commercial fishery, and a high level of repeat offence is noted. We see closed areas as necessary, more to keep the commercial fishing out. The notion of pelagic recruitment is more understood, unfortunately GBRMPA did a terrible job of communicating this in the 2003/4 RAP period, and so lost a lot of support.

Question 6. What is the best way to collect data on recreational fishers' marine catch? Aside from catch data, are there other ways recreational fishers can contribute data and information to inform fisheries research?:

A Phone surveys are OK but recreational fishers are ego driven. They rarely tell the truth when it comes to how many fish they caught, or how big. I've done surveys and I find it difficult to supply correct answers when it comes to fishing success or otherwise. I also own an offshore hire boat business and the first place I look when the boats returns is in the esky. What I see in there is ALWAYS very different to how many the fishers have just told me they caught. It is ALWAYS a lot less in the esky. This is very important to Fisheries Management. Poor data in = poor data out, even worse when it is multiplied. We have done boat ramp surveys and found large discrepancies to FQ surveys.

**To count rec fisher harvest, you HAVE to look in eskys.**

Trend establishes very quickly, and is obvious. QBFP officers already look in eskys, but refuse to contribute to the data, and this should be the most reliable and accessible data imaginable.

Question 7. Are there any other aspects of recreational fishing in marine waters that you would like to comment on?:

A Aust pats itself on the back as having a wonderfully sustainable wild catch harvest fishery. Many, if not most, of these relate to various State and Commonwealth fisheries departments claiming that their management is world leading. Although it is apparent that these claims are self-awarded and without any actual criteria or comparison, an independent global assessment of fisheries management does in fact exist.

It presents a quite different and somewhat surprising picture and I refer you to...  
*Fisheries Centre, University of British Columbia, Canada. A COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF BIODIVERSITY, FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE IN 53 COUNTRIES' EXCLUSIVE*

Page 20 shows that Australia ranks 32nd out of 53 fishing countries, and this list was put together by at least one of the world's foremost and respected fisheries experts.

Australia may have some sustainable fisheries, but to be truthful it is still a fair way off, and most noticeably in Qld, which is known to be well behind the other states and NT.

In the GBR region, the lion's share of harvest is commercial, and that affects recreational and social values. The commercial harvest model of MSY is a tonnes and taxes model and definitely not a wise one, running stocks down as far as to 20% of estimated virgin biomass. The MRAG fisheries investigation into QLD management practices blasted away at the antiquated regime. MRAG proposed the model be modernised to MEY, which would leave more fish in the water, more likely a minimum of 40%. We see that as risky as well both for recreational and commercial interest and suggest OSY which run closer to 60%+. Simple maths dictate that a certain yield (say 100 tonnes) is more sustainable, and with a better CPUE, from a higher biomass than from a lower (or more depleted) one. Qld has very few TACCs and Quotas. Most are set way too high.

**Ranking maritime countries in terms of the sustainability of their fisheries, Mondoux, Pitcher & Pauly**  
**Country average score & position**

1	Peru	6.42	29	Pakistan	3.81
2	Namibia	5.10	30	Indonesia	3.80
3	USA	5.10	31	Japan	3.78
4	Germany	4.90	32	Australia	3.78
5	Poland	4.82	33	Spain	3.77
6	Norway	4.71	34	Taiwan	3.75
7	Senegal	4.70	35	Thailand	3.74
8	Chile	4.67	36	Viet Nam	3.70
9	South Africa	4.64	37	Russia	3.67
10	Ghana	4.59	38	Turkey	3.60
11	Netherlands	4.56	39	Iceland	3.58
12	New Zealand	4.54	40	India	3.57
13	Nigeria	4.45	41	Sri Lanka	3.57
14	UK	4.40	42	Mexico	3.56
15	Malaysia	4.34	43	France	3.50
16	South Korea	4.31	44	Yemen	3.49
17	Latvia	4.30	45	North Korea	3.46
18	Philippines	4.28	46	Portugal	3.39
19	Angola	4.27	47	Denmark	3.34
20	Myanmar	4.25	48	Brazil	3.27
21	Canada	4.23	49	Iran	3.12
22	Ireland	4.13	50	Ecuador	3.00
23	Italy	4.03	51	Bangladesh	2.81
24	China	3.96	52	Argentina	2.55
25	Morocco	3.93	53	Faroese	2.29
26	Egypt	3.92			

27	Ukraine	3.90			
28	Sweden	3.82			