



ANSA - Australian National Sportfishing
Association Ltd
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It's been a little while since my last update on issues concerning ANSA at a National level but I will do my best to bring you up to date on a number of the more important issues.

Small Pelagic Fishery

As most of you would know the Geelong Star unexpectedly left Australian waters last November and is unlikely to ever return to fish for small pelagic species. The reasons for the Geelong Stars sudden departure from Australia are not clear and our best efforts to get sensible answers have drawn a blank. It is believed that the economics of the fishing operation and a disagreement between the Australian and Dutch partners on future operations of the vessel in Australian waters were influencing factors as was also the release of a Federal Senate report calling on the Federal Government to ban all factory freezer vessels from operating in the Commonwealth managed SPF Fishery and of course the ongoing National campaign by ANSA and other recreational fishing peak bodies under the umbrella of ARFF (Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation) to have the operations of the Geelong Star restricted so that its impact on recreational fishing and the bait fish food chain were minimised.

While it is unlikely that the Geelong Star or another similar sized factory freezer type vessel will again seek approval to operate in the SPF, there is now a new potential threat for this fishery to be exploited. Very recently AFMA (Australian Fisheries Management Authority) was approached by a NSW based business syndicate to give approval to what is termed Pair Trawling for small pelagic species in the south eastern fishery – this was to be a one off approval. As the name implies this style of fishing involves the use of two trawlers to haul a net much larger than would be possible for a single trawler. While such a style of trawling would not have an extraction impact on par with that of the Geelong Star, it is still concerning that the operations of this trawling activity would very likely be confined to inshore Commonwealth waters off the NSW south coast. Given the need to bring catch to port very quickly due the very perishable nature of target species such as Mackerel, most fishing will take place close to established ports and this potentially will lead to conflict with recreational fishers. The two trawlers intended to be used for this Pair Trawling fishing operation are significantly smaller than the Geelong Star with a combined fishing holding capacity of around 200 tonne (about 10% of the Geelong Stars capacity) and no on boat processing capacity. Needless to say ANSA and other recreational fishing peak bodies have formally objected to this new concept of fishing and you can view the ANSA submission on the National website at ansa.com.au

This week AFMA surprisingly announced that its Commissioners had decided to determine Pair Trawling as an approved method for fishing under the SPF management plan for an initial 18 month trial period. What this means is that not only will the syndicate that put the Pair Trawling proposal to AFMA be able to fish over the 18 month trial period on the NSW south coast, every SPF quota holder across the nation will also be able to use this fishing methodology throughout the entire SPF zone which runs from South Qld down and around to WA. While there will be restrictions and monitoring protocols imposed upon the fishery operation by AFMA there is potential for this type of trawling operation to extract even more

small pelagic bait fish than was the case for the Geelong Star. ANSA together with other peak bodies will do our collective utmost to ensure that adequate safeguards are in place to ensure that impacts on recreational fishing and the bait fish food chain are minimised.

This decision by AFMA creates a whole new dimension to the Pair Trawling proposition and it is disappointing that there was no prior consultation with the recreational sector. The decision also follows on from an announcement late April by AFMA that the TAC (Total Allowable Catch) for the SPF fishery over the 2017/18 season would be increased from 35100 to 48900 tonnes. Given that some 50% of the 2016/17 TAC was held by Seafish Tasmania, the operator of the Geelong Star, it was hoped that the TAC for the coming season might have been substantially reduced to factor in the exit of the Geelong Star. Rather the increase in TAC can be interpreted as a signal by AFMA to encourage other fishing enterprises to take up the slack created by the departure of the Geelong Star by using the Pair Trawling method. While the extent of actual SPF take over the 2016/17 season has not yet been made public it is believed that the bulk of the catch would have been made via the Geelong Star as there are only a handful of small commercial fishers working the SPF due to the poor economics of the fishery. AFMA's explanation for increasing the TAC and for determining Pair Trawling as an approved fishing method was supposedly based upon most recent science, risk to the SPF biomass being acceptable, risk for localised depletion being low and that predator species are not highly dependent on SPF species and have a capacity to switch prey and there will be no negative impact upon recreational fishing.

ANSA together with other recreational peak bodies will continue to question the wisdom of this latest round of decision outcomes by AFMA and will closely scrutinise operational regulations for the Pair Trawling process.

Commonwealth Marine Reserves

This continues to be a long and frustrating saga. After several rounds of public consultation since the Coalition government took office and review of a suite of management plans for each of the reserves, we are still at a stalemate in terms of coming up with a management plan that would be acceptable to recreational fishers.

ANSA together with other recreational fishing peak bodies has vigorously campaigned for no lockouts of recreational fishers within these new marine reserves given the absence of any justifiable science. Rather our campaign position has been for recreational fisher access within the reserves be locked into the management plans on the basis that recreational fishers are best placed to act as guardians and custodians of the reserves.

We have cited similar international approaches to marine park management where recreational fishing is permitted under a suite of sensible regulations having regard to species and seasonal influences etc and including some no take restrictions. The pragmatic approach used by the US government when recently establishing the world's two largest marine reserves in the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans have been cited as example of best practice for marine reserve management – regulated recreational fishing is allowed across almost the entire reserve system.

It is our understanding that the Coalition government has once again referred the latest draft management plan back to its authors to take on board our locked in – not locked out philosophy and also the Coalitions pre election commitment to not unjustifiably lock recreational fishers out of the new reserve network.

It is expected that the next version of the revised draft management plans will be submitted to the government over July and if deemed politically acceptable, will be put out for another round of public consultation. Feedback from the public consultation process will then be considered by the government and a final plan then drafted and placed before the Parliament for determination. It is possible that the final plan will be legislated and come into effect towards the end of this year. We can only hope that our campaign over the past decade seeking a fair go for recreational fishers will deliver the right mixture of access outcomes for current and future generations of recreational fishers in our marine reserve networks. You can read ANSA submissions re the Commonwealth Marine Reserves on the National website.

Resource Sharing

This is becoming a hot topic especially now that the IOTC (Indian Ocean Tuna Commission) has set a 2018 deadline for the Australian government to establish a protocol for the sharing of the Australian Southern Bluefin Tuna quota between the commercial and recreational fishing sectors. The IOTC quota set for SBT Australia has historically never taken into consideration the take of SBT by the recreational sector as it was always reported as being insignificant. Recent capture data of SBT by the recreational sector has changed the status quo and the challenge now will be to see how much if any of the Australian SBT quota will be allocated to recreational fishers. A process will also need to be established on how to actually monitor SBT captures by the recreational sector and who will pay for this. Also there is the question of compensation for those current SBT quota holders who will see their allocations reduced to allow for the recreational sector allocation if this eventuates.

This is going to be a very complex issue for the government and already the commercial sector is promoting the argument that the easiest and most cost effective solution is for the entire quota allocation to be directed to the commercial sector. In a nutshell this would mean no more SBT for the recreational sector. Given the political ramifications it is unlikely that the government will follow that course. Whatever the final outcome and the model adopted to share the SBT resource, the reality is that for better or worse, going forward the SBT outcome may serve as a precedent for other Commonwealth managed fisheries where resource sharing is very likely to occur and the expectation that recreational fishers will somehow need to pay their way. Also a number of States are also considering a resource sharing protocol for State managed fisheries and will undoubtedly look to the Commonwealth model. It is imperative that we get the SBT process right.

Recreational Fishing Code of Practice

Nearly a decade ago ANSA adopted the COP developed by Recfish Australia. ANSA played a major stakeholder role in the development of that COP. While the COP has well served the recreational sector it was recognised last year that the COP needed to be reviewed and updated. With funding from the Federal government the Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation (ARFF) did undertake such a review and a new COP is ready for release. ANSA as a member of ARFF did engage in the review process and we are very happy with the final outcome. A national communication process for circulating the COP to all Australian recreational fishers is currently being developed. It is the intention of ANSA to adopt the new COP. This will be on the ANSA website shortly.

Legislative recognition of recreational fishing in the Commonwealth Fisheries Management Act.

The Federal government has finally taken heed of our campaign for recreational fishing to be included in the Commonwealth Fisheries Management Act. It is a matter of fact that while ever we are not officially included and recognised under the Fisheries Management Act we will never have an effective role and voice in the management of Commonwealth Fisheries as a statutory stakeholder. It is our hope that the legislation for recognition of recreational fishing under the Act will come before Parliament later this year. Such an outcome will open the door for recreational fishers to have a stronger and more representative voice on the many management committees (MAC's) already established for Commonwealth managed fisheries and to have more influence on the development of fishery policies and advancement of the interests of recreational fishing.

Establishment of National Recreational Fishing Council

The Coalition government is committed to the establishment of a National Recreational Fishing Council – this was a pre election commitment made some 4 years ago. Progress in establishing the right terms of reference for the establishment of this Council has been very drawn out. It is imperative that the structure and terms of reference for the Council embrace the right mix of people, skills and mandate to effectively and constructively represent the interests of recreational fishing to government and those agencies that have a nexus with fishing both recreational and commercial. What we do not want to see is the establishment of a superficial Council that pays lip service to the interests of the recreational sector as has often been the case with past Councils and the like. It is our goal to see ARFF provide the secretariat function to the Council and select who represents recreational fishers on the Council. Hopefully the Council will be formally established later this year

The role and future of ARFF (Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation)

ARFF was established some 4 years ago to serve as the government officially recognised ultimate peak body for all recreational fishers throughout Australia. ANSA is a foundation member of ARFF and occupies a Board position. Currently most major state and national peak recreational fishing bodies are either members or are in the process of becoming ARFF members. Since inception the ARFF has been financially supported by the Australian Fishing Trade Association (AFTA) which is also a member of ARFF. The advocacy and representative activities of ARFF are very demanding in terms of time and commitment but essential for the collective good of all recreational fishers including ANSA members. The ARFF Board and member bodies come together on a regular fortnightly basis (via conference phone or face to face meetings in Canberra) to discuss and determine strategies on a very broad and diverse range of issues relevant to recreational fishing across all national and state jurisdictions. Meetings with politicians from all spectres and persuasions of government occur regularly as it is paramount that the views and electoral significance of recreational fishing are well implanted into the minds and physic of our elected representatives.

While the financial support provided by AFTA is very welcomed and appreciated the reality is that for ARFF to continue to effectively represent the interest of recreational fishers we need to source a more substantive and assured means of running the organisation. While the government has been supportive of many of projects and issues that ARFF has engaged in, the challenge is for ARFF to be financially independent of government for its advocacy activities. The government has also made it very clear that it wants ARFF to focus attention towards establishing a sustainable funding model for the recreational sector. This will be a

major challenge for ARFF and its members over the coming year. You can learn more about ARFF by going to the website recreationalfishing.com.au .

2016 AGM and Branch Delegates Meeting

This event was held in Sydney late October and was well attended by delegates from State Branches across the ANSA Branch, Club and Member networks. A wide and comprehensive range of views on issues and challenges concerning the role of ANSA at a National and State level were constructively exchanged over the two days of the meeting. The entire range of issues and topics covered at the meeting were far too comprehensive to summarise here but this news bulletin will give members some insight into the major issues confronting ANSA at a National and State level.

If you want to know more about what is happening at ANSA at a National and State Branch level, then have a read of the 2016 ANSA Annual report which can be viewed on the National website.

Meritorious Capture Awards

One of the more enjoyable challenges for those attending the 2016 AGM and Delegates was choosing the winner of the 2015/16 Meritorious Capture Award. It finally came down to 2 nominations, both from South Australia – a 128.63 kg Southern Bluefin Tuna on 37kg (Blue water) capture by Paul Wolfdale and a 4.99kg Mulloway on 1kg (Land Based) capture by Shane Evans. The story behind both these captures was amazing and it was impossible for the delegates to select a clear winner. Ultimately it was unanimously agreed that the award be shared by both Paul Wolfdale and Shane Evans. Congratulations are extended to both award winners. If you want to read and know more about these great capture stories go to the ANSA website - Meritorious Captures.

Recognition of the late Geoff Hawkins

As a fitting gesture to recognise the lifetime contribution to ANSA by the late Geoff Hawkins, the Delegates unanimously agreed that the Meritorious Capture awards now be renamed the Geoff Hawkins Meritorious Capture Awards. You can be sure Geoff would be thrilled by this gesture.

Membership Fees for the coming 2017/18 Year.

It has been agreed that the fees payable to ANSA National for the coming membership year will remain at the current level, namely;

Family Membership	\$12
Senior Members	\$8
Student Members	\$3
Junior Members	Free

Branches should now be able to set their own fees for the coming 2017/18 membership year.

ANSA Merchandise.

A fresh stock of 1.2m ANSA Capture and Release Bragmats has now arrived and available to members at the same price of \$13 per unit plus postage \$5. These Brag Mats were sourced from the same supplier as previous stock and are of a superior quality. Orders for Brag Mats and other ANSA Merchandise can be ordered online via the ANSA website – ANSA Shop link.

2016 ANSA Rule Books

Should your Branch or club require additional stocks of the latest 2016 ANSA Rule Book (with all the latest rule changes) then drop a line to John Burgess (abtrap@yahoo.com.au) detailing how many you need and a mailing address. There is no charge for Rule Books.

ANSA 50th Year Anniversary

ANSA will be celebrating its 50th anniversary this year with a special event to be held in Cairns, where the ANSA story began in 1967. The event will embrace a National Conference on Sportfishing featuring an expo of historic ANSA memorabilia, a fishing competition and a fishing expedition – all designed to bring together like minded young and old ANSA sportfishers and their families from across Australia to celebrate and reflect on the past and contemplate the future of sportfishing.

The event will kick off with an informal BBQ on Friday 22 September at the Figtree Tanks Art Centre – 46 Collins Ave Edge Hill. This will be followed on Saturday and Sunday by a 2 day Conference and Sportfishing expo also at the Tanks Art Centre. A formal dinner will be held on the Saturday evening.

On Monday conference attendees can stay on and join in a fishing competition with locals in the Cairns Net Free Zone encompassing Trinity Inlet and the Barwon River. If one days fishing isn't enough to satisfy your appetite then you will have the opportunity to join in a 4 day fishing expedition to the Hinchinbrook channel from Tuesday through to Friday 26 - 29 September.

If you are contemplating a trip to Cairns for this celebratory event then it is advisable you get in early to arrange flights and accommodation. Also if you have any historic ANSA material that could be featured at the expo then please get in touch with Nathan Johnston (president@ansaqld.com.au) or John Burgess (abtrap@yahoo.com.au).

Registration fees are \$34 for ANSA Members and \$99 for others – this includes the Friday BBQ, Conference and Expo attendance and Saturday evening dinner. If you want to know more about the event or to register on line go to ansaqld.com.au/ansa-50th/.

Sorry for this update being so lengthy but there were so many issues that warranted being brought to members notice. I hope you enjoy the read.

Regards
John Burgess
Executive Officer/ Director
ANSA National Ltd