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FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PAPER

No. 6

THE KING GEORGE SOUND PURSE SEINE FISHERY WORKING GROUP

REPORT BY THE

CHAIRMAN MR R.S. BROWN

TO THE

MINISTER FOR FISHERIES, THE HON J. F. GRILL



**FISHERIES DEPARTMENT
PERTH WESTERN AUSTRALIA
108, Adelaide Terrace, Perth 6000.**

November 1986

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WORKING GROUP

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CONTENTS

	PAGE NUMBER
1. SUMMARY	1
2. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	4
3. INTRODUCTION	10
4. MEMBERSHIP OF THE WORKING GROUP	10
5. BIOLOGY	11
6. THE FISHERY	12
7. MANAGEMENT	15
8. MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS	17
8.1 Vessel Access	17
8.2 Development Fishing for Mulies	18
8.3 Definition of the Fishery	20
8.4 Boundaries of the Limited Area	21
8.5 The "Wharf" Fishery for Mulies	22
8.6 Season	22
8.7 Criteria for Entry	24
8.8 Vessel Replacement	27
8.9 Gear	29
8.10 Future Access Arrangements for Vessels Having a Category B Authorisation	30
8.11 Access Fees	30
8.12 Research and Data Collection	31
8.13 Ministerial Discretion	32
8.14 Appeals	32
8.15 Implementation	33
8.16 Legislation	33
8.17 Management Committee	33
9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	34

1. SUMMARY

The King George Sound Purse Seine Fishery Working Group was formed to investigate the purse seine (mainly mulie) fishery in King George Sound and advise the Minister for Fisheries on options for future management. Membership comprised six fishermen representatives drawn from the two local Fisherman's Associations and two Fisheries Department officers.

Since the advent of tuna quotas in 1983, which saw many tuna fishermen enter the King George Sound fishery and the expansion of the market for mulies to supply the pet food industry as well as the bait fish market, fishing effort and catch have risen some 120%.

The fishery in King George Sound is unlike most fisheries because the fish stock (pilchards) which is exploited is part of a very extensive stock located right around the south and north west coast of Western Australia. Only a relatively small portion of the total stock of pilchard enter King George Sound and comes under the very high exploitation there. The fishery in King George Sound itself is unlikely to threaten the biological stability of the total pilchard stock. However, it is recognised that purse seining for mulies right along the south and lower west coast is increasing and steps will need to be taken to ensure over exploitation does not occur because of the key role pilchards play in the food chain of many important commercial and recreational species in the region.

The fishery problem that exists in King George Sound does not, on our current understanding of the life cycle of the species, have a biological base. It is one of economic viability of individual fishermen. Therefore the Working Group has proposed to the Minister for Fisheries that the King George Sound Purse Seine Fishery be made a Limited Entry Fishery. Eligibility for entry

to the fishery should be two tiered and based on a history of purse seining for pilchards in King George Sound:-

- (a) prior to the benchmark date of 30 April 1985 and a minimum tonnage in the three previous years; and
- (b) after the 30 April 1985 benchmark date with a minimum tonnage.

Those fishermen meeting the first criteria should gain unrestricted access to the fishery, while those meeting the second criteria should have access limited to March-September when catch rates are highest and the majority of the catch goes to the pet food market.

Endorsements for fishermen with full access should be transferable whilst those for fishermen with restricted access should be non-transferable. However, during the first three years of the fishery endorsements should only be transferable from those fishermen with full access to those with restricted access, as at the end of the initial three year period a total review of the fishery should be held and if catch rates have declined "significantly" those fishermen with restricted access should not retain any access to the fishery.

A development purse seine fishing zone is also proposed around Albany to encourage those fishermen with restricted access to King George Sound to move out of that fishery and develop new areas. Priority should be given to these fishermen to develop this area. However, this priority should not be exclusive.

Measures proposed to further restrict the potential for fishing effort increases in King George Sound are a maximum size for boat replacements and a maximum net length.

The Working Group considered that the lift/drop net fishery for pilchards from the wharf in Princess Royal Harbour should not become part of the Limited Entry Fishery.

An appeal process for fishermen who wish to dispute their access approval is outlined along with a proposed Management Advisory Committee to provide advice to the Minister for Fisheries on the management of this fishery.

2. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the King George Sound Purse Seine Fishery be declared a Limited Entry Fishery.
2. (a) That an area be gazetted on the south coast of Western Australia between Cape Howe and Doubtful Island to develop an inshore purse seine fishery.

(b) That vessels (or their replacements) with a Category B access authorisation to King George Sound be given priority in the granting of rights to develop an inshore purse seine fishery for pelagic fish stocks in this area, along with other fishermen currently operating in the area, or fishermen who have made a significant commitment in preparation to operating in the area. The priority arrangement granted to Category B authorisations to be reviewed in three years (see Section 8.10).

(c) That all other areas along the Western Australian coast be defined by Notice as a development fishing area with access restricted to vessels having an appropriate licence endorsement to undertake purse seine fishing operations in that area (Figure 1).
3. That the Limited Entry Fishery relate to the taking of all pelagic fish stocks by purse seine.
4. That the limited entry purse seine fishery include all waters enclosed by a line drawn due east from Peak Head and intersecting with a line drawn due south from Cape Vancouver (Figure 2).
5. That the traditional "wharf" fishery should continue to operate under existing arrangements.

6. That there be no closed season for purse seining in King George Sound at this time.

7. A. Basic Criteria for Access

Vessels (or their replacements) which have been used for purse seining mulies in King George Sound during the last three years and have continued to operate there.

B. Specific Category Access

(a) Category A

Vessels (or their replacements) which have been used for purse seining mulies in King George Sound prior to 30 April 1985; caught a minimum of 50 tonnes of mulies in the three year period prior to 30 April 1985, and have continued to operate there.

(b) Category B

Vessels (or their replacements) which have been used in the capture of mulies in King George Sound prior to June 1986; caught a minimum of 50 tonnes of mulies; and have continued to operate there.

Under these arrangements the following restrictions will apply to each category:-

(a) Category A:

(i) Have access to the fishery for 12 months each year.

(ii) Can only transfer their licence (authorisation) to a vessel owner holding a Category B authorisation. This arrangement to be reviewed within three years (ie. by 31 December 1989).

(In this regard transfer of ownership will include any arrangement that results in a long term lease of vessel and licence and also any change in the directorship of companies that may own vessels).

- (iii) That each licensee must operate their vessel at all times while fishing within the King George Sound Purse Seine Fishery.

(In this regard it is recognised that some vessel owners had traditionally used skippers to operate their vessels or had traditionally leased their vessels. It was decided that the owners of these vessels should apply to the Fisheries Department to continue with those arrangements).

(b) Category B:

- (i) Access to the fishery to be restricted to the period 1 March to 30 September each year. This is the period when mulies are most abundant and catchable and the majority of fish are going to the pet food market.
- (ii) Access to be limited to three years ie. 1 January 1987 to 31 December 1989 during which time their continued access will be reviewed.
- (iii) Category B authorisations cannot be transferred (sold) during the above three year period.

(In this regard transfer of ownership will include any arrangement that

results in a long term lease of vessel and licence and also any change in the directorship of companies that may own vessels).

(iv) If a Category B authorisation holder obtains a Category A authorisation, then the Category B authorisation is automatically cancelled.

(v) That each licensee must operate their vessel at all times while operating within the King George Sound Purse Seine Fishery.

(In this regard it is recognised that some vessel owners had traditionally used skippers to operate their vessels . It was decided that the owners of these vessels should apply to the Fisheries Department to continue with these arrangements).

(vi) That there be no requirement for the licensee of a vessel fishing in the development fishery area to operate their vessel (ie. skippers and leasing arrangements will be permitted).

8. (a) King George Sound

That vessels endorsed to operate within the King George Sound Purse Seine Fishery can only be replaced by another vessel no greater than 12 metres in length.

(b) Development Fishing Area

That vessels endorsed to undertake development fishing in the area between Cape Howe and Doubtful Island, can only be replaced by another vessel no greater than 20 metres in

length. However, entry to the area should not be denied to a fisherman who had a vessel "slightly" in excess of 20 m.

9. (a) King George Sound

That three types of gear can be used in the fishery:-

(i) One purse seine net with a maximum length of 130 fathoms (237.9 m), but with unrestricted depth.

(ii) One drop net with unrestricted dimensions.

(iii) One lift net with unrestricted dimensions.

(b) Development Fishing Area

That there be no restrictions on the size of the purse seine net, lift net or drop net used while fishing in the development fishing area outlined in Section 8.2.

10. (a) That a review of the status of the fishery be undertaken by 31 December 1989.

(b) That vessels having Category B authorisations be excluded from the fishery if the review established that a reduction in fishing capacity was warranted.

11. (a) That the fee for a limited entry licence to operate in the fishery should equal three quarters of one percent of the gross total value of the catch from the fishery.

(b) That there be a two tiered fee for A and B authorisations calculated on the proportion of

the catch taken when they have access to the fishery.

12. (a) That a data collection system be established to enable daily catch, effort and location data to be recorded for each vessel.

(b) That Ministerial approval be sought for funds from the Fisheries Research and Development Fund to establish temperature recorder site(s).
13. That it be noted that the Minister has the authority to consider applications of a special nature on a case by case basis and to impose special conditions on boats holding authorisations.
14. That an appeal body of senior Departmental officers be established to consider and make recommendations to the Minister on appeals by fishermen who hold the view that their boat should have been granted an authorisation or a different authorisation to the one they received.
15. That the proposed management plan be implemented as soon as possible.
16. That subject to the recommendations being adopted they be incorporated in a Ministerial Notice to be made under Section 32 of the Fisheries Act.
17. That following implementation of the proposed management plan a Government/Industry management advisory committee be established.

3. INTRODUCTION

In July 1985 the Minister for Fisheries released a discussion paper titled "Arrangements for Entry to All Fisheries Off and Along the Western Australian Coast" for consideration by all members of the fishing industry.

The Australian Fishing Industry Council (WA Branch), now the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council (Inc), responded to the discussion paper in March 1986. The following were included in the Council's recommendations:-

1. The mulie fishery in King George Sound be a Limited Entry Fishery.
2. The benchmark date for determining access be 30 April 1985.
3. The Minister for Fisheries establish a representative Government/Industry Working Group to prepare a management plan for the fishery.
4. The Working Group as a matter of procedure submit draft proposals to the participating industry for its consideration prior to submitting a final report to the Minister for Fisheries.

In April 1986 the Minister for Fisheries responded to WAFIC and accepted the recommendations in principle.

4. MEMBERSHIP OF THE WORKING GROUP

The Western Australian Fishing Industry Council (WAFIC) and representatives of the Fisheries Department considered that an equitable method for formulating management arrangements for the King George Sound Purse Seine Fishery would be the establishment of an Government/Industry Working Group composed of:-

- (a) Chairman - Fisheries Department
- (b) Committee - Six representatives to be drawn from
the South Coast Licensed Fishermen's
Association and the Tuna Boat Owners
Association of WA
 - Local Senior Fisheries Officer
- (c) Observers - WAFIC representative
 - Research staff of the Fisheries
Department

A recommendation of the WAFIC Working Group held in Mandurah in February 1986 for the establishment of Government/Industry Working Groups was that "these bodies should be composed of members of industry representative of traditional fishermen as well as new entrants to the fishery". The composition of the King George Sound Purse Seine Working Group met this requirement (see Attachment 1 for details of Working Group membership).

The Working Group met on four occasions:-

30 May 1986
11 July 1986
27 August 1986
3 October 1986.

5. BIOLOGY

Notes on the biology of pilchard have been prepared using published results of research undertaken by CSIRO and Russian vessels which operated in waters off the south coast, including those of the Great Australian Bight. The species is distributed mostly in continental shelf waters to 90 m in depth along the southern Australian coast between the 21°C and 14°C isotherms (which is essentially from southern Queensland to the Exmouth Gulf/Shark Bay region of the west coast).

The distribution and abundance of this species appears to be influenced to a great extent by oceanic hydrological factors such as water temperature.

Surface schooling occurs at different times of the year depending on the location throughout their geographical range. In the Albany region the main spawning and mass surface inshore schooling activity occurs throughout winter. Here they feed on small crustaceans that are present in the surface waters at night. During the summer, school structure tends to break down somewhat and fish tend to disperse more widely throughout the continental shelf waters. In shelf waters they appear to be attracted to concentrations of zooplankton which forms in association with large cyclonic eddies which occur periodically in southern waters.

6. THE FISHERY

(a) A Brief History of Development

Pilchard fishing began in Albany when drop nets (or lift nets) were first used from the main wharf in Princess Royal Harbour during 1963/64 in response to a demand for this species as angling bait. Schools apparently used to come inshore close to the wharf in late afternoon/evening where they allegedly fed on effluent from Borthwicks meat works. Most drop net fishing in these early days was carried out at night.

The fishery began to expand slowly during the mid to late 1960's in response to the increasing demand for pilchard as angling bait, but also to satisfy a small but consistent demand for the species for use as rock lobster bait. An additional demand for pilchard as bait was established in the late 1960's with the advent of the pole fishery for southern bluefin tuna off Albany. During the early 1970's

drop net catches were maintained at levels generally less than 100 tonnes (Table 1).

In 1976 purse seining for pilchards commenced primarily in the waters of King George Sound. However, it was not until 1980/81, when 80% of the total annual catch of 1 186 tonnes was purse seined that this method became established as the principal means of capture of pilchard in the Albany region.

The introduction of individual transferable quotas (ITQ) into the tuna fishery in 1983 resulted in many quotas being sold or leased outside Western Australia. This, together with the establishment in 1984 of a substantial pet food market for pilchard, encouraged many of the ex tuna boats to enter the pilchard fishery. The number of boats operating in the pilchard fishery went from 13 in the beginning of 1984 to 25 at the end of 1985, generating a 120% increase in the total catch from 1 596 tonnes in 1983/84 to 3 517 tonnes in 1984/85 (Table 1). In order to maintain catch rates during this period, individual operators were forced to fish further away from port on the outer limits of King George Sound.

During 1986 while the King George Sound Pilchard Fishery Working Group was determining management arrangements, 26 vessels were allowed interim access to the fishery.

(b) Fishing Operations

Although the fishery does operate year round, the main fishing season is from March to September, corresponding generally to the period of maximum inshore distribution of the stock. During these months it is alleged by fishermen that greater numbers of large schools are present in King George Sound.

Most fishing is done in the early morning or late afternoon/early evening when fish tend to school in surface water. Fishermen initially locate schools either visually or with the aid of an echo sounder, then use pollard out of a dinghy to raise and concentrate fish so that schools are able to be pursued efficiently using a relatively small net and boat.

Because of the nature of their contractual supply obligations most operators fishing for angling bait catch a maximum of one school during each of the morning and evening trips. Under these circumstances storage capacity of their boats is nearly always underutilised. However, when fishing for the pet food market, operators can catch as many schools per trip (consistent with quality requirements) as it takes to fill the storage capacity of their boats. Because both the above markets require high quality fish the maximum distance fishermen without refrigerated storage facilities can travel from port is about 20 km. This is in part related to the fact that all fish have pollard in their stomachs which makes them more prone to decomposition if left unprocessed.

Waters outside the protected waters of King George Sound are mostly too rough for the successful operations of the above purse seining operation and too far from port to maintain the high standard of quality control demanded by the market. Currently (1986) prices paid for angling bait quality fish is \$0.50/kg, while pet food quality fish bring \$0.30/kg.

(c) Effects of Fishing

The total pilchard resource appears to be quite large and extensively distributed. It is believed that the fish that contribute to the King George Sound fishery are only part of a larger unfished

stock distributed in oceanic waters adjacent to Albany. From year to year a fluctuating (but over the long term relatively consistent) proportion of that stock is thought to be available for capture in King George Sound. Thus increases in the levels of fishing effort (ie. number of units) will result in a drop in the catch rates of individual units, but should maintain a relatively consistent total annual catch. Thus under the proposed exploitation regime, there is little danger of biological over exploitation of the stock. However, economic viability could become a problem in years of low availability (or abundance).

It was noted earlier that schools could only be caught if they could be concentrated at the surface with pollard. Thus the effort required to catch a school of fish may simply reflect the catchability of the species and bare little relation to the real abundance (mean density) of schools. Estimates of relative abundance must therefore incorporate effort required to locate and catch schools, irrespective of whether or not they were eventually caught.

7. MANAGEMENT

In the past the purse seine fishery (basically for mulies) in King George Sound has been managed as an open access fishery. However, the Working Group considered that while it was in the process of determining long term management measures, access should be restricted to those vessels that had purse seined in King George Sound during the last three years and were still operating there.

This was achieved by endorsement on vessel licences. Twenty six vessels received an endorsement to operate under these arrangements.

TABLE 1: ANNUAL CATCH OF PILCHARDS FROM KING GEORGE
SOUND AND PRINCESS ROYAL HARBOUR (BLOCK 9504)

Year	Drop Net	Purse Seine	Total
1964	(Not available)	(Not available)	
1965	28		28
1966	7		7
1967	14		14
1968	5		5
1969	56		56
1970	92		92
1971	20		20
1972	19		19
1973	< 1		< 1
1974	31		31
1975	135		135
1976/77	264	0.4	264.4
1977/78	671	8	679
1978/79	707	15	722
1979/80	382	92	474
1980/81	238	948	1 186
1981/82	207	1 077	1 284
1982/83	129	1 040	1 169
1983/84	102	1 492	1 594
1984/85	24	3 493	3 517

8. MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

8.1 Vessel Access

The Working Group was in agreement that its prime concern was to provide recommendations that would contain purse seine fishing effort, protect the fish stocks and ensure a commercially viable fishery.

Traditionally the fishery had developed on the basis of supplying the bait market.

In recent years, however, a number of changes had taken place. The implementation of a management plan for the Southern Bluefin Tuna Fishery had resulted in a number of fishermen being displaced from that fishery. Many of these fishermen had commenced purse seining for mulies in King George Sound. The advent of a major pet food manufacturer, Uncle Bens, into the market had resulted in further development of the fishery in recent years. Approximately half of the mulies taken from King George Sound in the current season would be destined for the pet food market. There was a need therefore to ensure the orderly development of the fishery as the estimated annual yield from King George Sound (approximately 3000-3500 tonnes) could not support an increase in the number of purse seine fishing vessels without affecting each unit's viability.

Consequently the Working Group supported the WAFIC recommendation that the number of vessels purse seine fishing in King George Sound should be limited.

Recommendation

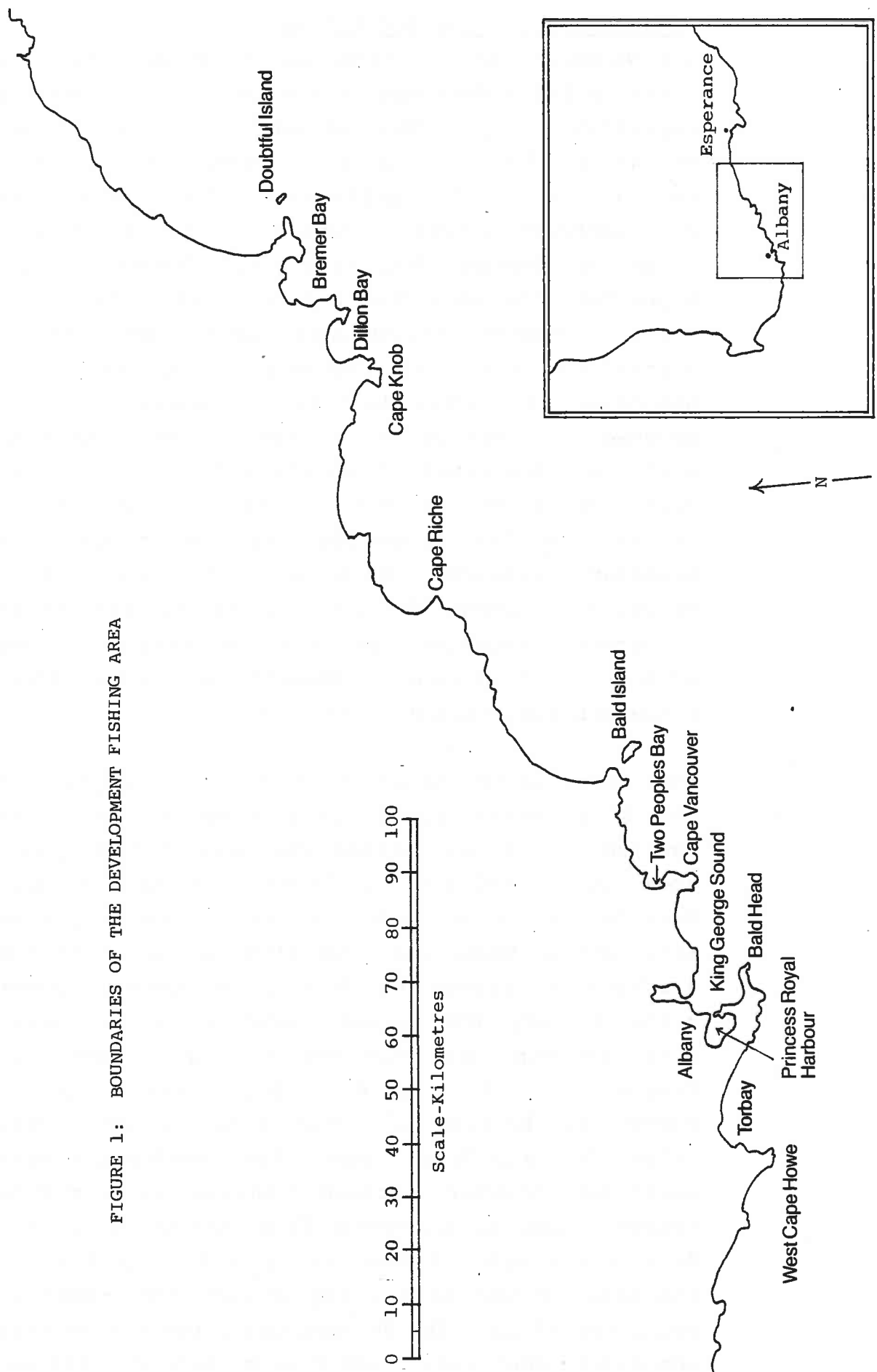
That the King George Sound Purse Seine Fishery be declared a Limited Entry Fishery.

8.2 Development Fishing for Mulies

The Working Group considered there was value in establishing a development strategy for the orderly exploitation by purse seining of pelagic fish stocks (including mulies) in waters outside King George Sound, in particular the closed and semi-enclosed waters of the south and south west coast of Western Australia (eg. Geographe Bay, Esperance, the area from Cape Leeuwin to Esperance etc). Members recommended that the Western Australian Fisheries Department approach the Australian Fisheries Service in Canberra with a proposal to jointly manage such a development in State and Commonwealth waters off the south and west coasts of Western Australia. This would ensure the best possible utilisation of this important resource which not only supports a commercial fishery in its own right, but is an important component in the maintenance (food source) of other major commercial and recreational fisheries (eg. salmon, herring etc).

When determining the access criteria for entry into the King George Sound Purse Seine Fishery (see Section 8.7) it was agreed that such a development area be established in waters around Albany. Vessels with a Category B access authorisation to King George Sound would be given priority in the granting of rights to develop an inshore purse seine fishery for pelagic species on the south coast between Cape Howe and Doubtful Island (see Figure 1). This would include areas such as Torbay, Two Peoples Bay, Cheynes Beach, Cape Riche, Dillon Bay and Bremer Bay. The development area would not, however, exclude fishermen without King George Sound endorsements from operating in the development area if they are already operating in the area or had made a significant commitment to begin operating. The Working Group considered that the development area (Cape Howe to Doubtful Island)

FIGURE 1: BOUNDARIES OF THE DEVELOPMENT FISHING AREA



around Albany could be more than adequately developed by the existing Albany purse seine fleet and other local fishermen who had expressed interest in the area (see also Section 8.7).

Recommendations

- (a) That an area be gazetted on the south coast of Western Australia between Cape Howe and Doubtful Island to develop an inshore purse seine fishery.
- (b) That vessels (or their replacements) with a Category B access authorisation to King George Sound be given priority in the granting of rights to develop an inshore purse seine fishery for pelagic fish stocks in this area, along with other fishermen currently operating in the area, or fishermen who have made a significant commitment in preparation to operating in the area. The priority arrangement granted to Category B authorisations to be reviewed in three years (see Section 8.10).
- (c) That all other areas along the Western Australian coast be defined by Notice as a development fishing area with access restricted to vessels having an appropriate licence endorsement to undertake purse seine fishing operations in that area.

8.3 Definition of the Fishery

The King George Sound Fishery and the developing fishery area outside King George Sound be defined as the purse seine fishery for pelagic fish stocks (including mulies).

The Working Group considered that it was necessary to define the fishery in terms of gear rather than species as it would be inappropriate and

impractical to have different purse seine vessels targeting on different pelagic species in the same fishery. Also it was considered that there was more than sufficient excess purse seine fishing capacity in the current King George Sound fleet to exploit any other pelagic fish stock that may be present (now or in the future) in King George Sound.

Recommendation

That the Limited Entry Fishery relate to the taking of all pelagic fish stocks by purse seine.

8.4 Boundaries of the Limited Area

The mulie fishing fleet in King George Sound had expanded its operation in recent years to Nanarup Beach and Isthmus Bay, and therefore these areas needed to be included in the limited entry area. It was also considered that the area of the fishery should be large enough to:-

- (a) clearly encompass all areas currently fished;
- (b) reduce any potential for conflict between the King George Sound fleet and operators outside the area; and
- (c) ensure the unhindered movement of fish into King George Sound by including the approaches to King George Sound in the limited entry area.

The Working Group considered that the operation of purse seine fishing vessels in Princess Royal Harbour should be reviewed on an annual basis to determine if it should continue as very little product was now taken in this area.

Recommendation

That the limited entry purse seine fishery include all waters enclosed by a line drawn due east from Peak Head and intersecting with a line drawn due south from Cape Vancouver (Figure 2).

8.5 The "Wharf" Fishery for Mulies

The "wharf" fishery for mulies was initially the method by which this species was taken to supply the bait market. The mulies were caught off the Albany Port Authority wharf in Princess Royal Harbour using lift/drop nets. However, since the advent of the purse seine fleet and the recent increases in fishing effort, virtually all mulies are now caught outside in King George Sound proper.

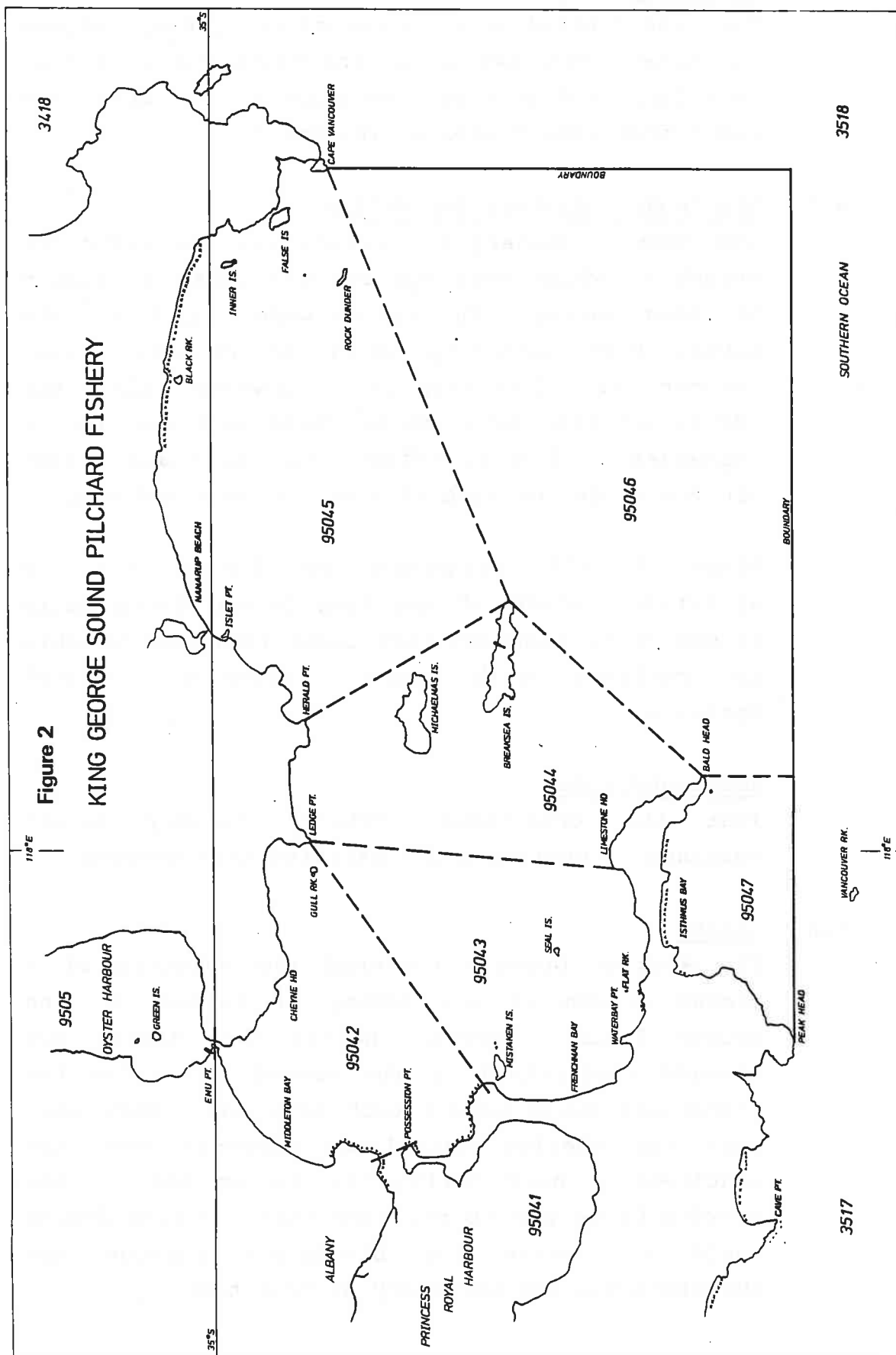
Since "wharf" fishermen no longer take a significant share of the King George Sound mulie stocks it is proposed that these fishermen be able to continue with their historical "wharf" operations.

Recommendation

That the traditional "wharf" fishery should continue to operate under existing arrangements.

8.6 Season

The Working Group considered the question of a closed season to the taking of mulies in King George Sound. However, noting that there were already constraints in the amount of mulies the processors could handle each day, and noting also that the species tended to disperse over the continental shelf during the summer months, the Working Group was of the view that a closed season would not serve any biological purpose and therefore was not necessary at this time.



Recommendation

That there be no closed season for purse seining in King George Sound at this time.

8.7 Criteria for Entry

The Working Group held the view that the criteria should clearly identify those fishing vessels (or their replacements) which had operated in the fishery prior to the benchmark date of 30 April 1985 and those vessels (or their replacements) that had entered the fishery after that date, as set out by the WAFIC Mandurah Working Group. It was considered that this date would provide the initial division of the fishery into the longer term fishermen and the more recent entrants.

Additionally, it was decided that only those vessels (or their replacements) which had shown a continuing commitment to operate up to the present time should be considered for access to the fishery.

It was noted that the pet food manufacturer, Uncle Bens, is most active in the market during the winter months when fishing intensity is greatest due to the high abundance and mass surface schooling of mulies at this time. It was noted that vessels which had entered the fishery around 30 April 1985 had played a major part in the development of this component of the industry. It was therefore decided that they should have access to the fishery during those months when, generally, mulies were being taken for the pet food market.

Those vessels (or their replacements) that had operated in the fishery prior to 30 April 1985 should have unrestricted access over twelve months of the year.

It was also considered that a vessel (or its replacement) should have been used to catch a minimum of 50 tonnes of mulies to be eligible for any type of access to the fishery. A 50 tonne minimum catch was considered to be a necessary part of the access criteria as at least 50 tonnes of mulies would have to have been taken by any fisherman to be considered a commercial mulie fishing operation.

Recommendations

A. Basic Criteria for Access

Vessels (or their replacements) which have been used for purse seining mulies in King George Sound during the last three years and have continued to operate there.

B. Specific Category Access

(a) Category A

Vessels (or their replacements) which have been used for purse seining mulies in King George Sound prior to 30 April 1985; caught a minimum of 50 tonnes of mulies in the three year period prior to 30 April 1985; and have continued to operate there.

(b) Category B

Vessels (or their replacements) which have been used in the capture of mulies in King George Sound prior to June 1986; caught a minimum of 50 tonnes of mulies; and have continued to operate there.

Under these arrangements the following restrictions will apply to each category:-

(a) Category A:

- (i) Have access to the fishery for 12 months each year.

- (ii) Can only transfer their licence (authorisation) to a vessel owner holding a Category B authorisation. This arrangement to be reviewed within three years (ie. by 31 December 1989).

(In this regard transfer of ownership will include any arrangement that results in a long term lease of vessel and licence and also any change in the directorship of companies that may own vessels).

- (iii) That each licensee must operate their vessel at all times while fishing within the King George Sound Purse Seine Fishery.

(In this regard it is recognised that some vessel owners had traditionally used skippers to operate their vessels or had traditionally leased their vessels. It was decided that the owners of these vessels should apply to the Fisheries Department to continue with those arrangements).

(b) Category B:

- (i) Access to the fishery to be restricted to the period 1 March to 30 September each year. This is the period when mulies are most abundant and catchable and the majority of fish are going to the pet food market.
- (ii) Access to be limited to three years ie. 1 January 1987 to 31 December 1989 during which time their continued access will be reviewed.

- (iii) Category B authorisations cannot be transferred (sold) during the above three year period.

(In this regard transfer of ownership will include any arrangement that results in a long term lease of vessel and licence and also any change in the directorship of companies that may own vessels).

- (iv) If a Category B authorisation holder obtains a Category A authorisation, then the Category B authorisation is automatically cancelled.

- (v) That each licensee must operate their vessel at all times while operating within the King George Sound Purse Seine Fishery.

(In this regard it is recognised that some vessel owners had traditionally used skippers to operate their vessels or had traditionally leased their vessels. It was decided that the owners of these vessels should apply to the Fisheries Department to continue with these arrangements).

- (vi) That there be no requirement for the licensee of a vessel fishing in the development fishery area to operate their vessel (ie. skippers and leasing arrangements will be permitted).

8.8 Vessel Replacement

The Working Group agreed there was a need to restrict the potential for fishing effort to escalate in the fishery due to larger and more

efficient vessels being used. It was resolved that the size of replacement vessels should be controlled. The Working Group gave consideration to limiting the size of the replacement vessel within King George Sound to the exact size of the vessel being replaced, however, as most fishermen purchased second hand boats for their operation, having a strict replacement size would severely limit their ability to obtain a second hand replacement vessel. A 12 m vessel maximum was considered a reasonable size unit for operating in King George Sound and should not lead to a significant increase in fishing efficiency.

It was recognised that vessels would need to be larger if they were to be used within the development fishing area outlined in Section 2. Therefore it was decided that a maximum vessel length of 20 m would be desirable for the developing fishery area. However, Working Group members did not want to see the strict application of this rule preventing a fisherman who had a vessel "slightly" larger than 20 m from entering the fishery.

Recommendations

(a) King George Sound

That vessels endorsed to operate within the King George Sound Purse Seine Fishery can only be replaced by another vessel no greater than 12 metres in length.

(b) Development Fishing Area

That vessels endorsed to undertake development fishing in the area between Cape Howe and Doubtful Island, can only be replaced by another vessel no greater than 20 metres in length. However, entry to the area should not be denied to a fisherman who had a vessel "slightly" in excess of 20 m.

8.9 Gear

Under current regulations applying to the King George Sound fishery a fishing unit consists of one "mother" vessel and one dinghy. The Working Group considered that this definition of a fishing unit should remain and that it should also apply to the developing fishery area.

Historically mulies have been taken in the Albany region by a lift net operated from the wharf or by a purse seine net. The Working Group agreed that to contain fishing effort it was appropriate to define a maximum length of purse seine net able to be used in the fishery.

The Working Group considered that 130 fathoms (237.9 m) of net of unrestricted depth would be adequate for the King George Sound fishery. This length was arrived at because most (if not all) fishermen currently operated a net of this size or smaller, therefore no inconvenience or expense would be imposed on anyone. Fishing effort would be unlikely to increase significantly with this maximum net length.

Members also agreed that for vessels with approval to operate in the development fishing area outside King George Sound, there was no need to define gear requirements besides what constituted a fishing unit. This decision should be reviewed within three years.

Recommendations

(a) King George Sound

That three types of gear can be used in the fishery:-

- (i) One purse seine net with a maximum length of 130 fathoms (237.9 m), but with unrestricted depth.

(ii) One drop net with unrestricted dimensions.

(iii) One lift net with unrestricted dimensions.

(b) Development Fishing Area

That there be no restrictions on the size of the purse seine net, lift net or drop net used while fishing in the development fishing area outlined in Section 8.2.

8.10 Future Access Arrangements for Vessels Having a Category B Authorisation

The Working Group considered that a review of the status of the fishery should take place by 31 December 1989. If the review established that catch rates have declined "significantly" due to fishing effort, or if the biological stability of the stock is threatened, then vessels having Category B authorisations should be excluded from the fishery.

Recommendations

(a) That a review of the status of the fishery be undertaken by 31 December 1989.

(b) That vessels having Category B authorisations be excluded from the fishery if the review established that a reduction in fishing capacity was warranted.

8.11 Access Fees

Currently licence fees for access to a Limited Entry Fishery are equal to approximately three quarters of one percent of the gross total value of the catch from the fishery. It was agreed that licence fees for this fishery should be similarly calculated. The fee will be calculated from the proportion of the catch taken during the period 1

March to 30 September for B authorisations and for the entire year for A authorisations.

Recommendations

- (a) That the fee for a limited entry licence to operate in the fishery should equal three quarters of one percent of the gross total value of the catch from the fishery.
- (b) That there be a two tiered fee for A and B authorisations calculated on the proportion of the catch taken when they have access to the fishery.

8.12 Research and Data Collection

The Working Group considered that it was necessary that a data collection system be established to enable daily catch, effort and location data to be recorded for each vessel in the fishery.

It was also agreed that funds should be requested from the Fisheries Research and Development Fund to establish temperature recorder(s) at suitable site(s) to enable the effect of this important environmental parameter on the abundance of fish to be monitored. This information would assist in the review of the fishery outlined in Section 8.10.

Recommendations

- (a) That a data collection system be established to enable daily catch, effort and location data to be recorded for each vessel.
- (b) That Ministerial approval be sought for funds from the Fisheries Research and Development Fund to establish temperature recorder site(s).

8.13 Ministerial Discretion

In establishing a Limited Entry Fishery with entry criteria there are bound to be some boats which do not meet that criteria, but which should be considered as a special case by the Minister. Similarly there may be instances where, although meeting the criteria, the boat should not receive an authorisation.

It may also be necessary for the Minister to impose special conditions where an authorisation may be granted outside the established entry criteria.

To meet the unusual or exceptional circumstance the Minister has broad discretionary powers.

Recommendation

That it be noted that the Minister has the authority to consider applications of a special nature on a case by case basis and to impose special conditions on boats holding authorisations.

8.14 Appeals

The Working Group recognised that appeals may be lodged by fishermen who held the view that their vessel should have been granted an authorisation or a different authorisation to the one they received.

An appeal body of senior Departmental officers would be required to report to the Minister setting out its recommendations for the Minister's final determination.

Recommendation

That an appeal body of senior Departmental officers be established to consider and make recommendations to the Minister on appeals by fishermen who hold the view that their boat should have been granted

an authorisation or a different authorisation to the one they received.

8.15 Implementation

The Working Group considered that the proposed management plan should be implemented as soon as possible.

Recommendation

That the proposed management plan be implemented as soon as possible.

8.16 Legislation

Subject to adoption of the Working Group's recommendation that the fishery be a Limited Entry Fishery a Ministerial Notice under Section 32 of the Fisheries Act will be drafted and published in the Government Gazette declaring the King George Sound Purse Seine Fishery to be a Limited Entry Fishery.

Section 32(2) sets out the details required to be addressed in any Notice and it is these matters which have been given attention in this report.

Recommendation

That subject to the recommendations being adopted they be incorporated in a Ministerial Notice to be made under Section 32 of the Fisheries Act.

8.17 Management Committee

The Working Group considered that a Government/Industry management advisory committee be established for the purpose of providing ongoing management advice. This Committee should comprise four representatives from the catching sector (two from each of the Albany based Fishermen's Associations) and one representative from the processing sector. Nominations for the Committee would be made through the Associations to WAFIC.

Invited observers from WAFIC, Fisheries Research etc would also be able to attend. In addition, the Fisheries Department would have two representatives; one to act as Chairman and the other to be the local Senior Fisheries Officer.

Recommendation

That following implementation of the proposed management plan a Government/Industry management advisory committee be established.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Chairman gratefully acknowledges the input by members of the Working Group, Messrs M C Grasby and C J Ryan for secretarial work, Ms H Brayford for co-ordination and distribution, and other Departmental officers.

ATTACHMENT 1

Chairman: Mr P P Rogers

Mr R S Brown took over as Chairman on 27 August
1986

Members: Messrs N T Bevan (Nominated by the South
Coast Licensed Fishermen's
Association)
W Cagnana (Nominated by the South
Coast Licensed Fishermen's
Association)
J T Kelly (Senior Fisheries Officer,
Albany)
P W Kerr (Nominated by the Tuna Boat
Owners Association of WA)
L H Michael (Nominated by the Tuna Boat
Owners Association of WA)
G J Peters (Nominated by the Tuna Boat
Owners Association of WA)
T Westerberg (Nominated by the South
Coast Licensed Fishermen's
Association)

Observers: Messrs R J Lenanton (Research Officer,
Fisheries Department)
G Leyland (WAFIC)

Secretaries: Messrs M C Grasby (Fisheries Department)
C J Ryan (Fisheries Department)

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