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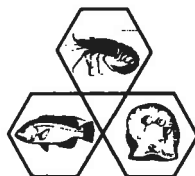
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Fisheries Management Plan

Management of the south-west inshore trawl fishery

Noel Moore

Fisheries management paper No. 23



Fisheries Department of Western Australia

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Contents

1.0 Executive summary	1
2.0 Management rules summary	2
3.0 Introduction	5
4.0 The south west inshore trawl fishery	6
4.1 Description	6
4.2 Management	7
5.0 Management rules for the south west inshore trawl fishery	7
5.1 Definition of the fishery	7
5.2 Boundaries of the Fishery	7
5.3 Status of fishery and licence transferability	8
5.4 Criteria for continued access	10
5.5 Boat replacement	12
5.6 Gear	12
5.7 Area and seasonal closures	14
5.8 Access fees	18
5.9 Ministerial discretion	18
5.10 Appeals	18
6.0 Submissions received	19
7.0 Acknowledgements	20
Appendices	
1 – Existing trawl restrictions - Moore River to Cape Leeuwin	20
2 – Unit formula for Exmouth Gulf and Shark Bay	21
3 – Media statements from the Minister for Fisheries	22
4 – The inshore trawl fishery (OCS 1988)	27
Maps	
1 – Trawl closures	29
2 – Scallop trawl area	30
Fisheries management papers	31

1.0 Executive summary

This report outlines the management plan for the south west inshore trawl fishery which already operates in coastal waters less than 200 metres deep between Guilderton (31°20'S) and Cape Leeuwin (115°08'E).

In April 1988, Western Australian State jurisdiction over inshore waters was extended from the three nautical mile limit out to the 200 metre isobath between longitude 125°E on the south coast to longitude 120°E on the north west coast. This allowed the Western Australian Government to set in place management rules for the trawl fishery that has operated for many years in this coastal area.

A draft management plan for the south west inshore trawl fishery (Fisheries Management Paper No. 16 by Mr Peter Millington) was released in January 1988 for public comment. Thirty submissions were received and where appropriate the draft plan was amended to incorporate the issues raised in these submissions. Four groups of submissions were reviewed: recreational fishing associations, commercial fishing interests, community groups and letters from concerned citizens. The main issues raised by these groups related to protection of the marine habitat and fish stocks, sharing of the marine resource between various user groups and the control of trawling operations.

This management plan takes into account these important concerns and has specifically set aside a strip of coastal area from Cape Bouvard to Cape Leeuwin for recreational usage and for protection of the benthic community, and closed the management zone north of Burns Beach to trawling.

Studies by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and the Fisheries Department have shown that sensitive benthic flora, such as seagrass meadows, are found within a three nautical mile strip along the coast in Geographe Bay. Given that a five nautical mile permanent closure has been applied in this area, the seagrass meadows and other benthic flora should be well protected.

The south west inshore trawl fishery is made up of two zones: northern zone from Cape Peron (32°16'S) to Guilderton/Moore River (31°20'S); and the southern zone from Cape Leeuwin (115°08'E) to Cape Peron (32°16'S). These two zones were chosen because of the historical nature of trawling in the management zone.

In the northern zone, because of the pressure of recreational fishing from the Perth metropolitan area, trawling will be eventually phased out. Therefore the northern zone has been declared a limited entry fishery with no transferability of the licence.

The southern zone has been declared a limited entry fishery with transferability of licences with controls placed on trawlers to accommodate ecological, recreational and tourist concerns. However, within the southern zone the small Mandurah trawl fishery will continue as a restricted entry fishery with no licence transferability.

Only trawlers with a history of trawling in the management zone prior to 10 November 1986 and still rigged and operating between 11 November 1986 and 30 June 1987 will be eligible for a limited entry licence.

In general, the management plan controls existing trawling activities through gear and boat limitations, area and seasonal closures and prohibits trawling in seagrass areas and other sensitive areas to minimise conflicts with other marine users.

2.0 Management rules summary

2.1 Definition of the fishery

All types of trawl activity on the continental shelf of the south west of Western Australia are subject to this management plan under a Notice.

2.2 Boundaries of the fishery

2.2.1 The northern boundary for this fishery is Moore River/Guilderton (31°20'S), the southern boundary is the Cape Leeuwin Light (115°08'E) and the western boundary corresponds to the 200 metre isobath as defined in the Offshore Constitutional Settlement.

2.2.2 The fishery is divided into two zones, one north of Cape Peron (32°16'S), and one south.

2.3 Status of fishery and licence transferability

2.3.1 The inshore trawl fishery north of Cape Peron (32°16'S) is a limited entry fishery without licence transferability.

2.3.2 The Mandurah trawl fishery is to remain a restricted entry fishery without licence transferability.

2.3.3 The inshore trawl fishery south of Cape Peron (32°16'S) is a limited entry fishery with licence transferability.

2.4 Criteria for continued access

2.4.1 Continued access to northern zone: A licensed boat or its replacement is eligible for access provided that:

- (a) the boat trawled in the northern zone at some time during a minimum of two calendar months in each of two of the three years prior to 10 November 1986; and
- (b) the boat has also been rigged and operating as a trawler during the period 11 November 1986 and 30 June 1987 inclusive within the northern zone.

2.4.2 Continued access to southern zone: A licensed boat or its replacement is eligible for access provided that:

- (a) the boat trawled in the southern zone for at least two months in the two years prior to 10 November 1986; and
- (b) the boat must have been also rigged and operating as a trawler during the period 11 November 1986 and 30 June 1987 inclusive within the southern zone.

2.4.3 Continued access to seasonal area (Castle Rock to Cape Naturaliste) in the southern zone: A licensed boat or its replacement is eligible for access provided that:

- (a) the boat trawled in statistical block 3315 in the southern zone for at least two months in the two years prior to 10 November 1986; and
- (b) the boat must have been also rigged and operating as a trawler during the period 11 November 1986 and 30 June 1987 inclusive within statistical block 3315 in the southern zone.

2.4.4 Continued access to the Mandurah restricted entry trawl fishery:

Only those boats currently endorsed to operate in this fishery are eligible for access to this fishery.

2.4.5 Limitations to access: Irrespective of 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 endorsements for this fishery will not be granted to boats already licensed for the following limited entry fisheries:

- Northern prawn fishery
- Shark Bay prawn fishery
- Exmouth Gulf prawn fishery
- Nickol Bay prawn fishery
- Shark Bay scallop fishery

If a licensed boat is replaced, the replacement boat becomes the licensed boat and the replaced boat loses all claims to access.

2.5 Boat replacement

2.5.1 Northern zone: Boat replacements are limited to boats with a fishing capacity no greater than 10 per cent more than the licensed boat's fishing capacity (based on formula in Appendix 2).

2.5.2 Southern zone: Boat replacements can occur up to a maximum of 375 boat units with a maximum of 60 hull units (Appendix 2).

2.6. Gear

2.6.1 Net size: Minimum net size to be 45 mm for cod ends and 51 mm for wings to be used throughout the management zone except that 100 mm cod ends and wings apply to the seasonal zone as described in 2.7.6 (map 2).

2.6.2 Headrope length: Maximum headrope length to be 29.25 metres (16 fathoms).

2.6.3 Otter board size: Maximum otter board size will be 2.29 m by 0.91 m with shoes not exceeding 150 mm by 38 mm with a single ground chain with links not exceeding 10 mm in diameter.

2.6.4 Measures 2.6.1 to 2.6.3 inclusive apply to both the northern and southern zones.

2.6.5 Boat currently endorsed to operate in the Mandurah trawl fishery are to operate under rule 2.6.1 using a total headrope length not exceeding 11 m (6 fathoms) in that fishery.

2.6.6 No beam trawling permitted within the management zone.

2.7 Area and seasonal closures

2.7.1 Existing permanent closures to trawling between Moore River and Cape Leeuwin to remain (Appendix 1).

2.7.2 A permanent closure to trawling to apply:

- (a) North of Cape Peron for the months November, December and January; and
- (b) South of Cape Peron to Cape Bouvard (33°S) from 15 November to 31 December each year.

2.7.3 A permanent prohibition of trawling to increase from 800 metres to three nautical miles off Rottnest Island.

2.7.4 A permanent prohibition of trawling to increase from 800 metres to three nautical miles off the coast between the Bunbury breakwater and Cape Bouvard.

2.7.5 A permanent prohibition to apply to all trawling between Burns Beach and the Moore River out to the 200 metre isobath.

2.7.6 A permanent prohibition of trawling to increase from 800 metres to five nautical miles off the coast between the Bunbury breakwater and Cape Naturaliste; except that an open season for trawling applies in the Cape Naturaliste to Castle Rock area to within 1.5 nautical miles of the coast from 1 July to 30 September each year for those boats endorsed to trawl in this area (see 2.4.3 and Map 2).

2.7.7 The test trawling area in the northern zone off the metropolitan coast to remain except that fishing trials must be carried out with cod ends open.

2.7.8 A permanent prohibition of trawling applies in the area north of Moore River to the southern boundary of the Abrolhos Islands trawl fishery out to the 200 metre isobath.

2.8 Access fees

Fees for the limited entry fishery to be set according to appropriate fee regulations.

2.9 Ministerial discretion

The Minister for Fisheries has the authority to consider applications of a special nature on a case by case basis and can impose special conditions on boats granted licences.

2.10 Appeals

An appeal body is to be established to consider and make recommendations to the Minister on appeals by fishermen who feel their boat should have been granted a licence, but who have been initially refused such a licence.

3.0 Introduction

Until 1988 the Western Australian Government did not have jurisdiction over inshore trawl fisheries, hence could not control trawling outside the three nautical mile limit of State waters.

On 14 April 1988 final agreement was reached between the Commonwealth Government and the Government of Western Australia to confer on this State jurisdiction over all trawling activity inshore of the 200 metre isobath between the Recherche Archipelago and the north west shelf. This arrangement under the Offshore Constitutional Settlement (OCS) made it possible to put in place, under one jurisdiction, management measures for Western Australia's inshore trawl fisheries.

To control trawling effort during the OCS negotiation period complementary Commonwealth and State Notices were gazetted to prohibit any unauthorised trawling in inshore areas. As a general policy, trawling is not permitted on the inshore areas adjacent to the west coast of Western Australia except in specifically defined areas.

A development plan for inshore trawling east of Cape Leeuwin is outlined in a separate report, while the area for the limited entry Abrolhos Islands trawl fishery has been extended to include a portion of the adjacent coastal areas. Trawling in Shark Bay is already managed. This plan completes the control of all inshore trawl fisheries south of Carnarvon.

The management zone of this fishery is the area from Guilderton/Moore River ($31^{\circ}20'S$) to Cape Leeuwin ($115^{\circ}08'E$) and out to the 200 metre depth contour. In the past three fisheries operated in this area. The northerly area from Fremantle to about the Moore River has been sporadically trawled by Fremantle based trawlers. North of the Moore River to the Abrolhos Islands the bottom is largely unsuitable for trawling. It is planned to prohibit trawling between the Moore River and the southern boundary of the Abrolhos Islands trawl fishery out to the 200 metre isobath.

There is a restricted trawl fishery operating near Mandurah and in recent years a number of trawlers have been fishing around the Geographe Bay area.

The southern boundary of the fishery has been Cape Naturaliste, but because of the development of the south coast inshore trawl fishery the boundary of the west coast fishery has been drawn at Cape Leeuwin ($115^{\circ}08'E$).

With the gazettal of limited entry fisheries for most of the Western Australian fisheries, considerable fishing effort has been moved into the open access fisheries forcing management measures in some open access fisheries to be implemented.

Uncontrolled, open access trawling on inshore grounds close to metropolitan and urban areas does not have wide community support. This plan has been developed to ensure that no uncontrolled expansion of trawling will occur in the south west coast area. The trawlers already operating in the area will be controlled through area closures, seasonal closures, gear limitation and controls on boat replacement.

Trawlers licensed under this new management plan are encouraged to target on species such as prawns, scallops and finfish which cannot be taken by other commercial fishing methods or through recreational pursuits.

To reduce conflict with other types of fishing such as rock lobster, angling and diving, inshore trawling has been prohibited in various areas and at different times of the year.

To ensure that all users of the inshore coastal marine resource were given an opportunity to comment on the draft plan, submissions were called for, comments considered and where appropriate incorporated into this management plan.

The community response to the draft plan was wide ranging and constructive. Submissions were received from recreational fishing organisations, shire councils, tourist interests, concerned citizens and commercial fishermen. A list of submissions is found in Section 6. The main issues raised related to:

- (a) destruction of benthic habitat;
- (b) socially unacceptable fishing activities;
- (c) inequitable sharing of the marine resource;
- (d) forms of controls on trawling;
- (e) supply of fresh fish to local and tourist markets;
- (f) misunderstanding of the draft plan;
- (g) importance of recreational fishing to the south west region;
- (h) short term versus long term marine resource management.

This plan attempts to balance these demands so that the fishing industry is able to supply fresh fish for local markets and tourist industry demands whilst minimising local concerns about ecological impacts, tourism and recreational fishing. The plan has adopted a multiple-use approach to marine resource allocation in the management zone.

The plan takes into account that two of the major recreational fishing areas of the State are within the management zone: Geographe Bay and Direction Bank. In both of these areas the activities of trawlers has been limited by area closures and gear restrictions so that user conflicts have been reduced.

Although recreational fishing is an important use of inshore waters, there is a place for both commercial fishing and recreational fishing. Neither group has paramount rights over the other. The marine resource should be shared so that the whole of society benefits, not just commercial and amateur fishing interests.

4.0 The south west inshore trawl fishery

4.1 Description

The management zone of the south west inshore trawl fishery is shown on Map 1. The fishery is made up of three independent trawl areas:

- (a) Fremantle
- (b) Mandurah
- (c) Geographe Bay

Fremantle has been the base for a sporadic trawl fishery over many decades taking fresh fish for the Perth metropolitan markets. When the seasons are appropriate saucer scallops and prawns have been the target species along with whiting, sole, flounder and flathead. In recent years the number of trawlers working the area on a full time basis has been small. Also northern prawn trawlers having refits in Fremantle test their gear in defined areas off Fremantle. Occasionally trawlers from other Western Australian limited entry fisheries operate in the Fremantle area in their closed season. One of the major issues stemming from this metropolitan trawl fishery is the conflict over marine resource sharing as the growth of recreational fishing occurs. Direction Bank, for example, is one of the most important recreational fishing areas in the State.

The Mandurah restricted fishery was introduced in the early 1980s to control the activities of trawlers taking prawns migrating from the Peel Harvey estuary mouth and adjacent areas along with a bycatch of whiting. There are only three boats endorsed to fish in the Mandurah restricted entry fishery and the licence is not transferable.

In the Geographe Bay area a small number of trawlers began operating in the mid 1980's targeting on saucer scallops with finfish constituting about 20 per cent of the catch. With reported good catches and because of more boats entering this area from other fisheries (displaced through other management arrangements) the numbers rapidly increased to ten boats.

4.2 Management

In order to dissuade further entrants into the fishery the Minister for Fisheries issued a media statement on 10 November 1986 warning fishermen planning to enter the south west trawl fishery that their future access could not be assured. This date has been taken as the benchmark date for the purposes of this plan (Appendix 3). A further joint media statement on 4 May 1987 announced an interim freeze on inshore trawling south of Barrow Island off the Western Australian coast (Appendix 3).

The increase in new entrants to inshore trawling during 1985 and 1986 led to calls from the established trawler fishermen working the Geographe Bay area for a management plan for the South West area.

Under the OCS arrangements, which came into place on 14 April 1988, the State now has jurisdiction over inshore waters and this plan enables the south west inshore trawl fishery to be managed by Western Australia (Appendix 4).

The rules outlined in the following sections are the management plan for that fishery. To complement this management plan, the Commonwealth recently introduced a development plan for trawling off the west coast in deep waters outside the 200 metre isobath (Appendix 3).

5.0 Management rules

The final management rules set out in this section are based on the set of recommendations made in the draft management plan published for public comment in January 1988.

5.1 Definition of the fishery

5.1.1 All types of trawl activity on the continental shelf of the south west of Western Australia are subject to this management plan under a Notice.

Comments

A trawl net can be pulled both along the bottom for demersal fish (including scallops and prawns) or through the water column as a midwater trawl for pelagic fish. Whilst it is extremely difficult to distinguish between these activities unless the equipment can be closely inspected onboard the boat, separation of demersal and pelagic operations and the technology applied can be easily obtained by examining species catch composition. It is unlikely the small inshore trawlers will move to midwater pelagic trawl fishing.

This management plan aims to control all types of trawling on the continental shelf of the south west of Western Australia.

5.2 Boundaries of the Fishery

5.2.1 The northern boundary for this fishery is Moore River/Guilderton (31°20'S), the southern boundary is the Cape Leeuwin light (115°08'E) and the western boundary corresponds to the 200 metre isobath as defined in the Offshore Constitutional Settlement.

5.2.2 The fishery is divided into two zones, one north of Cape Peron (latitude 32°16'S) and one south.

Comments

In the draft plan the boundary separating the two zones was Becher Point (32°22'S). After consultation with fishermen and fisheries officers the boundary was shifted to Cape Peron (32°16'S). Leaving Becher Point as the boundary would have meant several of the southern zone boats may have been unable to fish in the then southern extremity of the northern zone where they have been historically taking scallops. It was also considered better for enforcement purposes to place the boundary at Cape Peron where there is a beacon which can act as a navigational aid. The Cape Peron boundary also closes off the area south of Cockburn Sound thus restricting the need for trawlers to move through the closed waters of Cockburn Sound.

The most natural northern boundary for the Fremantle based trawlers is the Moore River. Waters of the Continental Shelf are virtually untrawlable between Moore River and the Abrolhos Islands.

The most natural southern boundary is Cape Leeuwin the present boundary of the south coast developing trawl fishery. The western boundary is the 200 metres isobath as defined in the Offshore Constitutional Settlement.

Within these broad boundaries there are essentially three areas of trawling activity:

(a) the Fremantle based trawlers fish mainly from just north of Rottnest Island to waters due west of the southern tip of Garden Island.

(b) the three boats with access to the Mandurah restricted entry trawl fishery operate locally and further offshore, but essentially between Cape Peron and Cape Bouvard.

(c) the Bunbury and Mandurah based boats which are involved in the southern areas generally fish south and west of Bunbury. Some trawl fishermen proposed that the boundary for this southern zone be at Cape Bouvard or 33°S, to ensure more of a buffer between southern trawlers and Fremantle based trawlers and sought the exclusion of the Mandurah restricted entry boats.

A boundary at 33°S would reduce the fishing grounds available to the boats fishing out of Bunbury. It would also not exclude all of the Mandurah based trawlers, as two have some history of fishing south of 33°S. Also, few, if any, Fremantle boats fished south of Garden Island. However, as most boats trawl seasonally or intermittently in this area there exists scope for a considerable increase in effort from these boats.

Given the previously expressed conservation concerns and perceived conflict with other marine user groups adjacent to Fremantle, any possible redirection of the Fremantle trawl fleet south is not considered desirable. Therefore a boundary at Cape Peron (32°16'S), which historically separates the area of activity for the two inshore trawl fleets, has been adopted to divide the area into two zones.

5.3 Status of fishery and licence transferability

5.3.1 The inshore trawl fishery north of Cape Peron (32°16'S) is a limited entry fishery without licence transferability.

5.3.2 The Mandurah trawl fishery is to remain a restricted entry fishery without licence transferability.

5.3.3 The inshore trawl fishery south of Cape Peron (32°16'S) is a limited entry fishery with licence transferability.

Comments

The three main ways in which the south west inshore trawl fishery could have been managed are:

(a) as a developing fishery;

(b) as a limited entry fishery having continuity by licence transfer;

(c) as a limited entry or a restricted entry fishery managed by licence condition where transfer of boat ownership results in loss of fishing access.

The concept of a development fishery was formulated by the Fisheries Department in 1985 to describe resources not currently exploited. However, fishermen were permitted to test fish to determine the commercial viability of these specific unexploited resources. Management of this type of fishery is restricted entry with no transferability during the development phase.

Because trawling had already begun in the south west area and there were new entrants in the fishery, the development approach was not appropriate.

Given the continual demands for fresh fish by local markets and seafood restaurants in the metropolitan and tourist areas the appropriate management strategy is a limited entry fishery which would ensure an ongoing supply of this seafood. Arrangements for licence transfers to ensure the long term viability of the fishery in the southern zone have been included in the plan.

Waters north of Cape Peron (northern zone)

Sporadic trawling and the high turnover of boats trawling off Fremantle indicates that unless there is a good recruitment of commercial scallops in any year, a full time trawl fishery cannot be maintained.

In the past the sporadic nature of the fishery was also linked to the alternative opportunities available to the licensees. However, recent trends point to the development of a seasonal fishery by a small number of boats. Unless the number of boats able to trawl in this area is controlled there may be an increase in conflict with anglers, especially in the Direction Bank area. A full time trawl fishery should not be permitted to develop or be sustained in this zone especially as there is significant overlap with the recreational fishing community and most of the species targetted.

The best long term management option for the northern zone is therefore a limited entry fishery with no transferability of licence endorsements. This will allow existing trawl operators meeting continuing access criteria (section 5.4.1) to continue in the fishery until such time as they leave the fishing industry.

There exists at the request of the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council (WAFIC) a voluntary buyback arrangement for the purchase of Fishing Boat Licences which is available to boat owners in this fishery.

Waters south of Cape Peron (southern zone)

The southern zone consists of the Mandurah restricted entry trawl fishery and all waters south of Cape Peron to Cape Leeuwin. Off Mandurah, a restricted entry trawl fishery for prawns has been in place for several years. Existing arrangements for this fishery will not be changed. Only boats currently endorsed for this fishery will have continued access to this fishery and licences are non transferable.

However, south of Cape Peron there exists a small trawl fishery, targetting for scallops and prawns, with incidental fish by-catch. Direct conflict with other user groups is largely confined to inshore waters, near public beaches and residential areas. To cater for the needs of other marine user groups such as anglers, divers and power boat operators, area and seasonal closures have been introduced to limit trawling and therefore minimise possible conflict that might arise.

There has been some concern, expressed by many user groups, about the effect of trawl gear on the seabed and fish habitat. However, there is little direct evidence to substantiate major impacts in the southern zone, especially with the small number of trawlers licensed to operate in this zone. As the total level of effort is constrained through area closures, season closures, gear limitations and controls on boat numbers any damage should be relatively minimal. Area closures close to the shore will reduce impact on benthic communities and minimise conflict with recreational fishing and tourist interests.

Studies by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and the Fisheries Department have shown that sensitive benthic flora, such as seagrass meadows, are found within a three nautical mile strip along the coast in Geographe Bay. Given that a five nautical

mile permanent closure has been applied in this area, the seagrass meadows and other benthic flora in the inshore area should be well protected. This plan has been developed on the basis that marine resources of the southern zone should be shared by the community with all user groups accepting responsibility for the conservation of these resources.

5.4 Criteria for continued access

5.4.1 Continued access to northern zone: A licensed boat or its replacement is eligible for access provided that:

- (a) the boat trawled in the northern zone at some time during a minimum of two calendar months in each of two of the three years prior to 10 November 1986; and
- (b) the boat has also been rigged and operating as a trawler during the period 11 November 1986 and 30 June 1987 inclusive within the northern zone.

5.4.2 Continued access to southern zone: A licensed boat or its replacement is eligible for access provided that:

- (a) the boat trawled in the southern zone for at least two months in the two years prior to 10 November 1986; and
- (b) the boat must have been also rigged and operating as a trawler during the period 11 November 1986 and 30 June 1987 inclusive within the southern zone.

5.4.3 Continued access to seasonal area (Castle Rock to Cape Naturaliste) in the southern zone: A licensed boat or its replacement is eligible for access provided that:

- (a) the boat trawled in statistical block 3315 in the southern zone for at least two months in the two years prior to 10 November 1986; and
- (b) the boat must have been also rigged and operating as a trawler during the period 11 November 1986 and 30 June 1987, inclusive within statistical block 3315 in the southern zone.

5.4.4 Continued access to the Mandurah restricted entry trawl fishery:

Only those boats currently endorsed to operate in this fishery are eligible for access to this fishery.

5.4.5 Limitations to access: Irrespective of 5.4.1 and 5.4.2, a licence for this fishery will not be granted to boats already licensed for the following limited entry fisheries:

- Northern prawn fishery
- Shark Bay prawn fishery
- Exmouth Gulf prawn fishery
- Nickol Bay prawn fishery
- Shark Bay scallop fishery

If a licensed boat is replaced, the replacement boat becomes the licensed boat and the replaced boat loses all claims to access.

Comments

Given the sporadic nature of the northern zone of the fishery, a reasonably long qualifying period must be used to determine eligibility for entry. A boat which is regarded by its operator as a "regular" in this zone, on a seasonal basis, may not have fished in a particular year.

In other fisheries the benchmark date of 30 April 1985 has been used, in agreement with the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council. However, unlike many other

fisheries the south west inshore trawl fishery was not a fishery deemed necessary to be managed under the Mandurah working group strategy. However, on 10 November 1986 the Minister for Fisheries warned the fishing industry that future access to the south west inshore trawl fishery could not be guaranteed.

There are also differing objectives for determining access to the two zones. Around Fremantle the objective is to maintain the status quo and allow for the gradual reduction of trawlers fishing the area. In the area south of Cape Peron the major objective is to provide for the long term continuity of highly controlled trawl fishing given the need for the supply of fresh seafood and for the protection and recreational usage of this important marine environment.

Northern zone

In the case of the northern zone the criteria for continued access depended on significant trawling activity during the three years prior to 10 November 1986, with an indication of continuing involvement in the fishery since that date. The criteria for continued access therefore includes a minimum period of fishing with a high level of economic dependence on this area.

There exists a number of major trawl fisheries off Western Australia and elsewhere in Australia where the gross earnings are high, and the boats involved are extremely efficient with a large fishing capacity. It is not desirable to give these boats the opportunity to operate in the northern zone noting that they have no economic dependence on a resource which is incidental to their major field of operations.

Therefore boats already holding endorsements for the northern prawn fishery, the Shark Bay prawn fishery, the Exmouth Gulf prawn fishery, the Nickol Bay prawn fishery and the Shark Bay scallop fishery are not eligible for an endorsement for this fishery. The inclusion of this requirement in the access criteria will substantially reduce the number of qualifying boats having a small history of trawling in this northern zone.

This will leave the northern zone to be fished by a small number of trawlers providing the local markets with fresh seafood and the marine resource in the area with considerable protection. A reduction in friction between recreational and commercial users of the resource will also be a desirable outcome.

Southern zone

The Mandurah restricted entry trawl fishery was originally set up to control the number of boats fishing around the Mandurah area. To ensure that these controls are not affected by this plan, the management of the Mandurah trawl fishery is not changed. No new entrants are allowed into this fishery under this plan. Mandurah boats with a history of trawling in the southern zone are eligible for the limited entry licence but must satisfy the existing controls of the Mandurah trawl fishery if they wish to continue operating in that fishery.

Determining the eligibility of boats for continued access to the fishery south of Cape Peron posed serious problems as it is difficult to set criteria for marginal cases. For example, some fishermen spent considerable amounts of money, time and energy to rig their boats for trawling in the area, but had not commenced trawl fishing by 10 November 1986, the date of the announcement by the Minister for Fisheries. Others merely indicated their intention to trawl or spent nominal funds to acquire appropriate gear. Eligibility of boats wanting access on the basis of funds committed or announced intention to fish is difficult to determine without detailed information. All of these types of cases are better judged individually on the basis of equity by the Minister through the appeals mechanism. For this reason the criteria for continued access was based on both the catch history during the qualifying period and a commitment to the fishery after 10 November 1986.

In response to community concerns the inshore area between Cape Naturaliste and Castle Rock has been limited to those boats having a history of fishing in the area. This limitation ensures that no expansion of trawling effort can occur through boats which

have fished in the southern zone, but have not historically fished in statistical block 3315, moving into the Eagle Bay and Bunker Bay areas.

The Cape Naturaliste to Castle Rock area is a popular tourist and recreational area. Limiting the number of trawlers operating in the area reduces possible conflict between all users of this important marine resource by catering for the growing needs of tourism and urban development.

5.5 Boat replacement

5.5.1 Northern zone: Boat replacements are limited to boats with a fishing capacity no greater than 10 per cent more than the licensed boat's fishing capacity (based on formula in Appendix 2)

5.5.2 Southern zone: Boat replacements can occur up to a maximum of 375 boat units with a maximum of 60 hull units (Appendix 2).

Comments

The majority of the boats which will qualify for entry to this fishery are small wooden trawlers averaging about 16 metres in total length. In general, any policy which allows an unchecked increase in boat size will directly increase fishing capacity (ie. the boat's ability to catch fish).

Managed fisheries generally have a boat replacement criterion which helps to limit fishing capacity. This policy can be based on hull units or boat units or engine capacity as per the formula given in Appendix 2.

Northern zone

Because of the objective to reduce fishing capacity in the long term, a boat can only be replaced by one of similar size ie. up to 10 per cent more than the licensed boat's fishing capacity as measured by the hull and boat unit formula.

Southern zone

Fishing capacity in the southern zone is controlled mainly through gear restrictions, seasonal closures and area closures rather than by boat replacement.

However, given that a licence to fish in this zone is transferable, the boat replacement policy for this zone needs to be consistent with other Western Australian inshore trawl fisheries. That is, a policy allowing replacements of up to 375 units.

In practical terms, however, boat size will be determined to a large degree by economic viability and the cost of trawler replacement.

A change from 120 hull units, as suggested in the draft management plan, to 60 hull units is proposed because it means a significant reduction in the potential fishing capacity of replacement boats. Trawl fishermen already fishing in the southern zone recommended this change. The 60 hull unit limitation still allows a high degree of fishing capacity and is equivalent to the average size boat used in the Abrolhos Islands and Shark Bay scallop fisheries.

It is not anticipated that boat size will alter dramatically unless fishermen seek to fish the area on a seasonal basis and operate in other fisheries for the remainder of the year. This would be likely if fishermen plan to enter the offshore fisheries in the future.

5.6 Gear

5.6.1 Net size Minimum net size to be 45 mm for cod ends and 51 mm for wings to be used throughout the management zone except that 100 mm cod end and wings apply to the seasonal zone as described in 5.7.6.

5.6.2 Headrope length Maximum headrope length to be 29.25 metres (16 fathoms).

5.6.3 Otter board size Maximum otter board size to be 2.29 m by 0.91 m with shoes not exceeding 150 mm by 38 mm with a single ground chain with links not exceeding 10 mm in diameter.

5.6.4 Measures 5.6.1 to 5.6.3 inclusive apply to both zones of the fishery.

5.6.5 Boats currently endorsed to operate in the Mandurah Trawl Fishery are to operate under criterion 5.6.1 using a total headrope length not exceeding 11 metres (six fathoms) in that fishery.

5.6.6 No beam trawling permitted within the management zone.

Comments

Trawlers operating in the management zone, including the Mandurah fishery, have historically used mesh size of approximately 51 mm (two inches) with 45 mm cod ends for catching fish, scallops and prawns. In addition these Mandurah boats are restricted to a maximum headrope length of six fathoms to control effort.

There are three gear types used for trawling in Western Australian inshore waters:

(a) Prawn or scallop trawls where the gear sweeps small areas containing smooth sediment with limited "soft" benthic flora. These nets are easily destroyed/damaged by any rock or hard coral as the ground rope is in direct contact with the bottom and the net is generally only a small distance off the bottom.

(b) Fish trawls where the gear sweeps large areas and is fitted with ground rope devices (rollers or bobbins) which allow it to pass over low/small reefs without damage to the net. This gear will also knock down soft benthic flora without damage to the net.

(c) Dredge trawls where the gear sweeps very small areas and is designed to "cultivate" the substrate and catch relatively immobile bottom living species (such as pecten scallops).

Both fish trawls and dredging are not appropriate to the South West Inshore Trawl Fishery, especially dredging. Dredging has been prohibited in many areas in Western Australia and is not an accepted method of fishing. Damage to the bottom in Geographe Bay was caused by dredging in the early years of fishing in that area. Dredging is prohibited under this management plan.

Mesh size

In the draft management plan it was recommended that mesh size of 100 mm be used throughout the southern zone as a measure to reduce the by-catch of fish and to conserve the benthic flora. It was suggested that for a resource such as scallops, a bigger mesh size of about 100mm would be more appropriate because it would result in less smaller scallops being caught and hence better future catches.

However, the use of 100 mm mesh must be balanced against the possible loss of fish by-catch needed to supply local seafood markets and restaurants which is an integral part of the tourist trade. The by-catch is potentially able to impact on recreational fishing, therefore two aspects of the by-catch issue need to be considered: resource sharing and food web modification. This management plan is designed to facilitate both of these aspects through gear controls, area and season closures.

Trawling is not permitted within five nautical miles of the coast in Geographe Bay and in the close inshore area between Cape Naturaliste and Castle Rock only 100 mm mesh is allowed in the scallop season, 1 July to 30 September each year.

The draft management plan's recommendation of 100 mm mesh size is thus amended to 51 mm with 45 mm cod ends; a size currently used throughout the fishery and which is considered essential for catching prawns.

Headrope length

To ensure there is not a tendency to expand fishing effort through increases in trawl headrope length, it is usual to impose an upper limit on this length. The maximum headrope length which should be permitted in this fishery is difficult to determine precisely, especially as there is a wide variety of target species, operating depths and boat design.

Given the relatively generous boat replacement policy, headrope length is one area where fishing capacity cannot be allowed to increase unchecked. The largest total headrope length permitted in any Western Australian trawl fishery is 32.9 metres (18 fathoms) on the south coast. In the Abrolhos Islands trawl fishery boats are only permitted a maximum of 25.6 m (14 fathoms).

In the draft management plan it was recommended that headrope be limited to 14 fathoms. However, because of the nature of short trawls in the Geographe Bay area a 16 fathom headrope is important to allow the nets and boards to move quickly to the bottom and to therefore more easily access the small sandy trawlable areas. The 14 fathom rule of the draft plan was altered to 16 fathoms to meet this requirement. The way in which the net is configured is to be left to the discretion of the fishermen.

Size of otter boards

The size of otter boards also determines fishing capacity. There is a tendency for boards to become larger with increasing boat or engine size. The gazetted maximum otter board size in other Western Australian limited entry trawl fisheries is 2.29 m by 0.9 m with shoes 150 mm by 38 mm and ground chains with links no more than 10 mm in diameter. These measures have been adopted in this fishery.

Mandurah trawl fishery

Although rules for the Mandurah trawl fishery are not being changed, they are incorporated in this plan for community information. Mandurah endorsed boats must meet the above criteria for the south west inshore trawl fishery if they want to hold a licence for that fishery as well.

Beam trawling

Because beam trawling is very detrimental to benthic communities it is not a recommended method of catching fish and is therefore prohibited in this plan.

5.7 Area and seasonal closures

5.7.1 Existing permanent closures to trawling between Moore River and Cape Leeuwin to remain.

5.7.2 A permanent closure to trawling to apply:

- (a) north of Cape Peron for the months November, December and January; and
- (b) south of Cape Peron to Cape Bouvard (33°S) from 15 November to 31 December each year.

5.7.3 A permanent prohibition of trawling to increase from 800 metres to three nautical miles off Rottnest Island.

5.7.4 A permanent prohibition of trawling to increase from 800 metres to three nautical miles off the coast between the Bunbury breakwater and Cape Bouvard.

5.7.5 A permanent prohibition to apply to all trawling between Burns Beach and the Moore River out to the 200 metre isobath.

5.7.6 A permanent prohibition of trawling to increase from 800 metres to five nautical miles off the coast between the Bunbury breakwater and Cape Naturaliste; except that an open season for trawling applies in the Cape Naturaliste to Castle Rock

area to within 1.5 nautical miles of the coast from 1 July to 30 September each year for those boats endorsed to trawl in this area (see 5.4.3; Area defined in Map 2).

5.7.7 The test trawling area in the northern zone off the metropolitan coast to remain except that fishing trials must be carried out with cod ends open.

5.7.8 A permanent prohibition of trawling applies in the area north of Moore River to the southern boundary of the Abrolhos Islands trawl fishery out to the 200 metre isobath.

Comments

This management plan, through various types of area and seasonal closures, provides for a balanced use of the management zone's marine resources by tourists, anglers, divers and trawl fishing taking into account the conservation of those resources.

Area and seasonal closures provide a buffer zone between various users and protect marine flora and fauna. These closures are based upon community and scientific concerns expressed in the submissions. Fisheries management involves balancing these concerns. Therefore the draft management plan was amended.

The major changes to the draft management plan which relate to area and seasonal closures are:

(a) a three nautical mile closure between the Bunbury breakwater and Cape Bouvard, and between Cape Naturaliste and Cape Leeuwin;

(b) a permanent five nautical mile closure between the Bunbury breakwater and Cape Naturaliste; with

(c) an open season between Castle Rock to Cape Naturaliste to within 1.5 nautical miles of the coast from 1 July to 30 September each year;

(d) trawling gear to be tested with cod ends open in the metropolitan test trawling area;

(e) a seasonal closure north of Cape Peron for the months November, December and January but south of Cape Peron to Cape Bouvard a seasonal closure from 15 November to 31 December;

(f) a permanent closure to trawling between Burns Beach and the Moore River out to the 200 metre isobath; and

(g) the area north of Moore River to the Abrolhos Islands otter trawl fishery out to the 200 metre isobath is closed to trawling.

Geographe Bay is an important recreational and tourist area which is sensitive to uncontrolled trawling. The major concerns raised by submissions from recreational fishing groups, community groups, local citizens and fishermen and covered in this plan were:

- Inshore benthic communities;
- Impact of trawling on soft coralline area;
- Artificial reef;
- Area and seasonal closures.

Benthic communities

The main concern raised about benthic communities by the submissions was the possible destruction of the seagrass beds which are the nursery and breeding areas for both recreational and commercial species. Food web modification through uncontrolled trawling was also pointed out as being not acceptable.

These seagrass communities exist within a three nautical mile inshore coastal strip between Bunbury and Dunsborough according to the EPA report "Impacts of Proposed Developments on the Benthic Marine Communities of Geographe Bay", Walker D I,

Lukatelich R J and McComb A J, Environmental Protection Authority, Technical Series No. 20 December 1987.

The recommendation of a three nautical mile buffer strip in the draft management plan was therefore increased to a five nautical mile strip leaving the sensitive benthic communities, such as seagrass meadows, well protected.

Impact of trawling on soft corals

Geographe Bay contains many areas of soft corals which act as fisheries habitat. Many submissions expressed concern that these coralline structures may be damaged by trawling thus destroying fisheries habitat and changing the composition of fish stocks. Some comments mentioned the trawl marks found by divers in these coralline areas. These marks were probably made by trawlers using dredges many years ago. Because of this dredging destruction has been prohibited in many waters off Western Australia.

The impact of trawling on soft corals is minimised by the gear permitted and the fact that fishermen will not deliberately trawl in the area as nets are either destroyed or become full of these soft corals.

Artificial reef

One of the concerns raised by local residents was the potential effect of trawling on the artificial reef. Even though trawlers do not trawl near the reef because of damage to their nets this management plan has protected the artificial reef. The five nautical mile prohibition zone covers the artificial reef area leaving local fish stocks and benthic communities protected from the activities of trawling. Now that the reef is protected it is hoped that the recreational divers and anglers will also be responsible and not overfish the area.

Area and seasonal closures

The coast from Moore River to Cape Peron, including the offshore waters of Direction Bank and around Rottnest Island, has the highest level of recreational fishing in Western Australia. Anglers and divers are also sensitive about trawlers operating close inshore near Mandurah, and Eagle and Bunker Bays in the Geographe Bay area. Besides concern over competition for fish, complaints have been received by the Fisheries Department about noise from trawlers operating close inshore and habitat damage from trawl gear, especially to the soft corals and seagrass beds of Geographe Bay.

There are two compelling reasons for area closures in the south west inshore trawl fishery: minimising conflicts or interactions with other user groups and maximising the yield from the exploited fish stocks. The first is usually resolved through permanent closure of particular areas; the second is more commonly resolved through seasonal closures and gear controls.

Closures are in place at present which prohibit inshore trawling between Moore River and Cape Naturaliste, and in various embayments such as Cockburn and Warnbro Sounds. These restrictions are summarised in Appendix 1 and illustrated on Map 1.

Each of the following closures have been introduced to ensure that the interests of recreational pursuits, tourists and the protection of seabed flora and fauna have been balanced against the need for continuance of trawling activities necessary to supply fresh seafood to local markets and seafood restaurants.

Rottnest closure

The coast of Rottnest Island and its surrounding waters is a special focus for recreational fishing and boating. Habitat conservation objectives are also assuming greater importance in the management of this marine area. Thus a prohibition on trawling to complement the existing 800 metre prohibition on all netting is considered appropriate, and this trawling restriction now extends to three nautical miles (5.6 km) offshore around the island.

Cape Bouvard to Bunbury closure

There are few known trawling grounds of any importance near the shoreline, with the exception of the grounds near Mandurah. The existing 800 metre restriction appears inadequate for the area north of Bunbury to Cape Bouvard. This area has a high profile of recreational fishing. Therefore a permanent prohibition of trawling to three nautical miles off the coast has been implemented leaving the areas inside the reef available for recreational fishing.

Rock lobster season closure

During the offshore migration of recruits in the summer months (the whites season) rock lobster are potentially vulnerable to trawling. A Fisheries Notice was therefore gazetted some years ago prohibiting trawling within the area of the rock lobster fishery between 1 November and 30 January inclusive.

The Rock Lobster Industry Advisory Committee has agreed that a closure south of Cape Peron will apply between 15 November and 30 December each year. This will enable the trawlers to operate more freely after the major "whites" run has finished. The southern boundary of the closure will be Cape Bouvard because south of this area there are few "whites". The taking of rock lobsters by trawling is prohibited in the management zone.

Seasonal scallop closure

The draft management plan suggested a seasonal closure for scallops during the summer months for biological reasons and to minimise conflict with recreational user groups. However, Fisheries Department biologists recommend that because of the five nautical mile closure during the summer season, most of the scallop stock will be protected. The season will open in the Bunker Bay and Eagle Bay area on 1 July and close 30 September each year. This measure protects the stock during the breeding season. The economic value of the catch is also highest during this period.

The area around Dunsborough, Bunker Bay and Eagle Bay is a growing urban centre and holiday destination thereby generating an increasing demand for the use of inshore marine resources. However, because of the proximity of scallop trawling grounds near this area it is important for the trawling operation to be compatible with current and future use of this inshore marine area by tourist and recreational interests.

It is necessary to balance the need to harvest the scallops for the seafood market against the use of the area by tourists and local residents. Consequently trawling will be permitted in this area to within one and a half nautical miles of the shore for the period 1 July to 30 September each year. In effect the five nautical mile closure from Cape Naturaliste to Bunbury is relaxed between Cape Naturaliste and Castle Rock for this period.

However, to ensure that the by-catch is minimised during this period the cod end net mesh size has been increased from 45 mm to 100 mm. This measure will minimise both the impact of trawling on the seabed and on the food web by allowing small fish to escape through the larger cod ends.

Burns Beach to Moore River closure

Direction Bank is one of the most important recreational fishing areas for residents of metropolitan Perth. Many submissions suggested that this area be protected from trawling. Given the small numbers of trawlers likely to operate north of Burns Beach and the growing demand for the use of areas adjacent to the Marmion Marine Park, the area north of Burns Beach to Moore River has now been closed to trawling.

Testing area

An area off Fremantle will continue to be set aside to allow boat and gear testing following construction or refits for boats not having access to the fishery. Vessels must test their gear with the cod ends open to provide protection to fish stocks in the metropolitan area. Cod ends do not require to be closed for valid testing to occur.

Moore River to Abrolhos Islands closure

Now that the south west inshore trawl fishery management plan will control the activity of trawlers from Cape Leeuwin to Moore River, the only inshore coastal area left unmanaged on the central and southern west coast is the coastal area between Moore River and the southern boundary of the Abrolhos Islands trawl fishery.

To protect this area from trawling the area will be closed.

5.8 Access fees

Fees for the limited entry licence to be set according to appropriate fee regulations.

Comments

None.

5.9 Ministerial discretion

The Minister for Fisheries has the authority to consider applications of a special nature on a case by case basis and can impose special conditions on boats granted licences.

Comments

Whenever limited entry or restricted entry fisheries are introduced, entry criteria must be established. There are always some boats which do not meet the criteria, but may be considered as a special case by the Minister for Fisheries. The Minister may also impose special conditions where a licence is granted outside the entry criteria.

To meet these circumstances the Minister has broad discretionary powers under the Fisheries Act 1905.

5.10 Appeals

An appeal body is to be established to consider and make recommendations to the Minister on appeals by fishermen who feel their boat should have been granted a licence but who have been initially refused such a licence.

Comments

In cases put before the Minister for Fisheries for special consideration there would be considerable advantage in constituting an appeal body to ensure the Minister has all the relevant information before him.

An appeal body, independent of the fishery, will therefore review each case and make recommendations for the Minister's final decision.

6.0 Submissions received

6.1 Recreational fishing associations

WA Recreational and Sportfishing Council Inc
Australian Underwater Federation (WA Branch)
Australian Anglers Association (WA Division) Inc
Naturaliste Game Fishing Club
Bunbury and Districts Power Boat Club (Inc)
Mandurah Offshore Fishing Club (Inc)
Southwest Recreational Diving and Fishing Association

6.2 Commercial Fishermen

Cucow Fishing Co Pty Ltd
Mr R Stone
Mr S J & L J Reilly
Mr R Mews

6.3 Community groups

Holiday Tourist Group (Mr P A Tickle, Spokesperson)
Shire of Rockingham
Pinjarra Branch of Liberal Party of Australia
Dunsborough Branch of Liberal Party of Australia
Dunsborough Concerned Residents Association

6.4 Concerned citizens

Mr J L & R C Wise
Mrs P Hainge
Mr H Carmichael Smith
Mr W Napier
Mr P Tickle
Mr D Grace
Mr R A Steele
Mr E Christiansen
Mr B Batterly
Mr L Blythe
Mr M H Johansen
Mr G W Hewton
Mr R Bell

and 523 signatures on a petition requesting the curtailment of trawling in the Geographe Bay from citizens in the Geographe Bay area.

7.0 Acknowledgements

The author wishes to acknowledge that this report is based upon the draft management plan for the south west coastal trawl fishery by Mr P Millington. This report was modified to meet the concerns of the community, recreational and commercial fishing interests raised in the public review of the draft plan.

Appendix 1 – Existing trawl restrictions (Moore River to Cape Leeuwin)

Permanent trawling restrictions

Marmion Marine Park

Metropolitan Beaches

Cockburn Sound

Warnbro Sound

Mandurah (Restricted Entry)

Cape Naturaliste to Moore River, and around Rottnest Island: Closed within 800 m of the shore.

(see Map 1 for more details)

Appendix 2 – Unit formula (Exmouth Gulf and Shark Bay)

(see Fisheries Notices 213 and 215, 20/2/86, for more details)

The formula as set out in the relevant notices is:

$$\text{Boat units} = \frac{L \times B \times D \times 0.6^* + \text{IEP}}{2.83}$$

where in brief:

L = overall length.

B = maximum breadth.

D = moulded depth.

IEP = installed engine power.

* This is commonly called the "block coefficient", and is the correction factor used to make allowance for the shape of the hull when determining volume.

All units are metric. However, the conversion factor 2.83 brings the measurement back to nautical tons, a unit for which there is no metric equivalent.

Thus, for a typical boat:

$$\frac{21 \text{ m long} \times 7 \text{ m wide} \times 4 \text{ m deep} \times 0.6 + 250 \text{ kW}}{2.83} = 375 \text{ units}$$

It is proposed to use this formula for all inshore trawl fisheries.

Appendix 3 – Media statements by the Minister for Fisheries



MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE; FISHERIES; AND THE SOUTH WEST

MINISTERIAL RELEASE

P86/15

10 November 1986

SOUTH WEST COAST TRAWL FISHERY MAY BE LIMITED

Access to the newly discovered South West coast trawl fishery may be limited, Fisheries Minister Julian Grill warned today.

Mr. Grill said he was concerned that fishermen were considering entering the fishery and warned that their continued access could not be assured.

"There are already three or four boats exploiting the scallop beds in Geographe Bay and I understand that three more are gearing up to enter the fishery," he said.

"As well, other fishermen have expressed an interest in fishing the area."

Mr. Grill said that if access was restricted, then only those fishermen with a history of full-time fishing in the area might be eligible for entry.

"Fisheries Department officers and the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council currently are discussing whether or not to declare the resource a developing fishery, thus limiting access to a small number of fishermen until its size and potential can be assessed," he said.

"Whether it can support more boats or not is unknown."

Mr. Grill said Fisheries Department officers also would initiate discussions with the Australian Fisheries Service in Canberra about the possible introduction of a development plan for all fish species in State and Commonwealth waters, from Cape Leeuwin to at least off the Moore River.



MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE;
FISHERIES; AND THE SOUTH WEST

MEDIA STATEMENT

P87/23

4 May 1987

TRAWLING TO BE CURTAILED

There will be a major curtailment on trawling in waters on the Continental Shelf south of Barrow Island off the Western Australian coast.

In future, no trawling will be allowed except for some fishermen such as those licensed to trawl in the Abrolhos Island Scallop Fishery or with a history of trawling south of the Moore River.

The closure was announced today by Federal Primary Industry Minister John Kerin and Western Australian Fisheries Minister Julian Grill.

It follows approaches by Mr. Grill to Mr. Kerin late last month and is part of the Governments' overall strategy of responsible fisheries and fish habitat management.

The Ministers said the Western Australian Fisheries Department last year had become concerned about the effects of trawling operations on the sea bed and wet-line fishery off the Kalbarri coast.

The sea bed in the region was regarded as fragile and trawling could result in severe damage to coral reefs.

Local wet-line fishermen also were concerned that the trawl vessels would increase the fishing pressure on the resource.

Trawling also was not compatible with the Western rock lobster fishery.

The Ministers said licence endorsements to trawl south of the Moore River (31 degrees 20 minutes south) would be given to fishermen who had a substantial history of trawling in the region.

9TH FLOOR GRAIN POOL BUILDING 172 ST GEORGE'S TERRACE PERTH TEL 481 1331

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The endorsements would be granted on the advice of the Western Australian Government.

The State Government also has sought control of all trawling in Commonwealth waters off the W.A. coast up to 200 metres deep under the new Offshore Constitutional Settlement Arrangements.

This would give the State direct control over all inshore trawling operations along its coast and would overcome the difficulties associated with multiple endorsements for prawns, scallops and fish.



MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE;
FISHERIES; AND THE SOUTH WEST

MEDIA STATEMENT

30 June 1987

P87/40

WESTERN DEEP-WATER TRAWL FISHERY

A three-year development plan for the deep-water trawl fishery off Western Australia was announced today by the Federal Minister for Primary Industry, Mr. John Kerin, and the Western Australian Minister for Fisheries, Mr. Julian Grill.

The plan will come into effect on 1 July 1987.

The fishery will extend from due north of North West Cape (114°E), south to Cape Leeuwin ($115^{\circ}08'\text{E}$) and from a depth of 200 metres (100 fathoms) to the edge of the 200 nautical mile Australian Fishing Zone.

"The area is likely to contain exploitable resources of deep-water prawns as well as fish and squid, but there has been little if any fishing activity there in the past," the Ministers said.

"Development will be encouraged by limiting access to the area to vessels with appropriate licence endorsement and by requiring those vessels to demonstrate a significant level of activity in the fishery in order to maintain their endorsement.

"In this way only those operators who are seriously interested in developing the resources will remain in the fishery."

The Ministers said that the creation of this developmental fishery was part of an overall strategy to manage all fisheries within the Australian Fishing Zone that were being progressively implemented by the Commonwealth, State and Northern Territory Governments in close consultation with the industry.

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The western deep-water trawl development plan would help to substantially improve knowledge of the nature, size and distribution of commercially exploitable resources in the area which hitherto has been scanty.

"Fishermen who gain access to the fishery and who co-operate by providing accurate catch data will contribute significantly to the developmental plan and the formulation of a longer term management plan," the Ministers said.

Fishermen interested in participating in the western deep-water trawl fishery would need to apply for a licence endorsement to fish the area. They would also be required to meet entry criteria specified on the application form and to submit proposed plans for the operation of their boats over the next 12 months.

Application forms are available from the Australian Fisheries Service, Department of Primary Industry, Canberra ACT 2600 and from fisheries authorities in each State and the Northern Territory. Applications should be lodged with the Australian Fisheries Service no later than 31 August 1987.

Appendix 4 – The inshore trawl fishery

The inshore trawl fishery targets species such as prawns and scallops using demersal (bottom-set) trawl nets or dredges.

By an OCS arrangement State jurisdiction over trawl fisheries has been extended from longitude 125°E on the south coast to longitude 120°E on the north-west coast, and seaward to the 200 m isobath (Map 3).

Outside these boundaries previous management arrangements apply. On the south, west and north-west coasts the Commonwealth has jurisdiction seaward from the 200 m isobath to the outer limit of the Australian fishing zone. In the Australian Bight and north-east of longitude 120°E (Cape Keraudren) State laws apply within the three nautical mile limit of State waters, and Commonwealth laws outside.

Within the area of State jurisdiction W.A. is in the process of introducing a series of management measures. These include a development zone for inshore trawling from Cape Leeuwin to longitude 125°E on the south coast. Fisheries Management Paper No.13 "A Development Plan for the South Coast Inshore Trawl Fishery" outlines measures proposed in this area.

Proposed management for inshore trawl fishing between Cape Leeuwin and Guilderton is outlined in Management Paper No.16, "The South West Trawl Fishery Draft Management Plan".

Under present management policy no inshore trawling will be permitted between Guilderton and Geraldton. At the Abrolhos Islands a limited entry otter trawl fishery targetting scallops and prawns has been in place for some years, and management measures now extend east to the W.A. coast. Waters between Kalbarri and North-West Cape are also closed to trawling at this stage, except for two limited entry fisheries within Shark Bay, and the Exmouth Gulf prawn fishery.

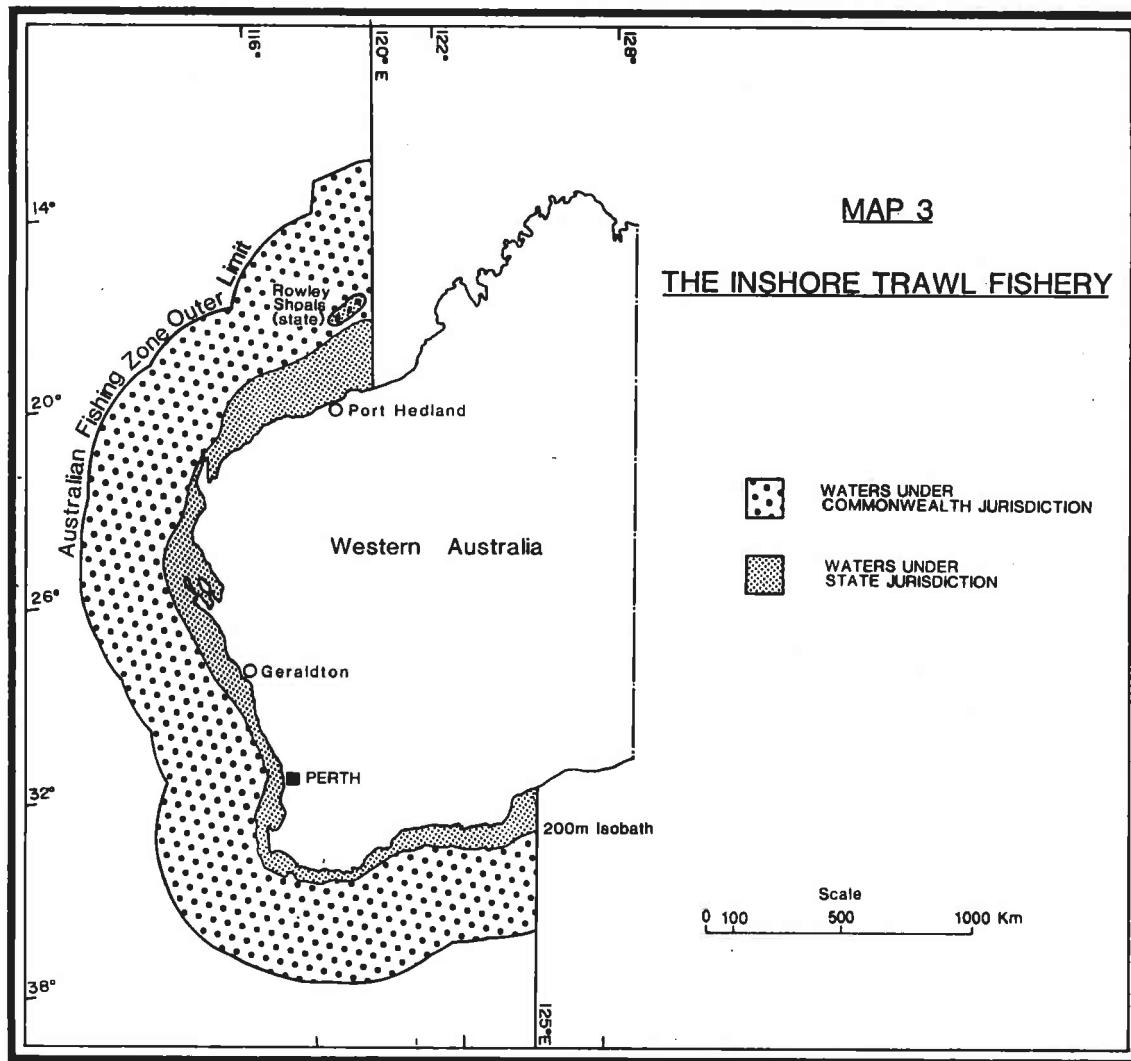
Interim measures have been announced for prawn trawling between the Exmouth Gulf and Nickol Bay limited entry fisheries. Some restrictions on fish trawling near the coast also apply, and more comprehensive management is under discussion with industry.

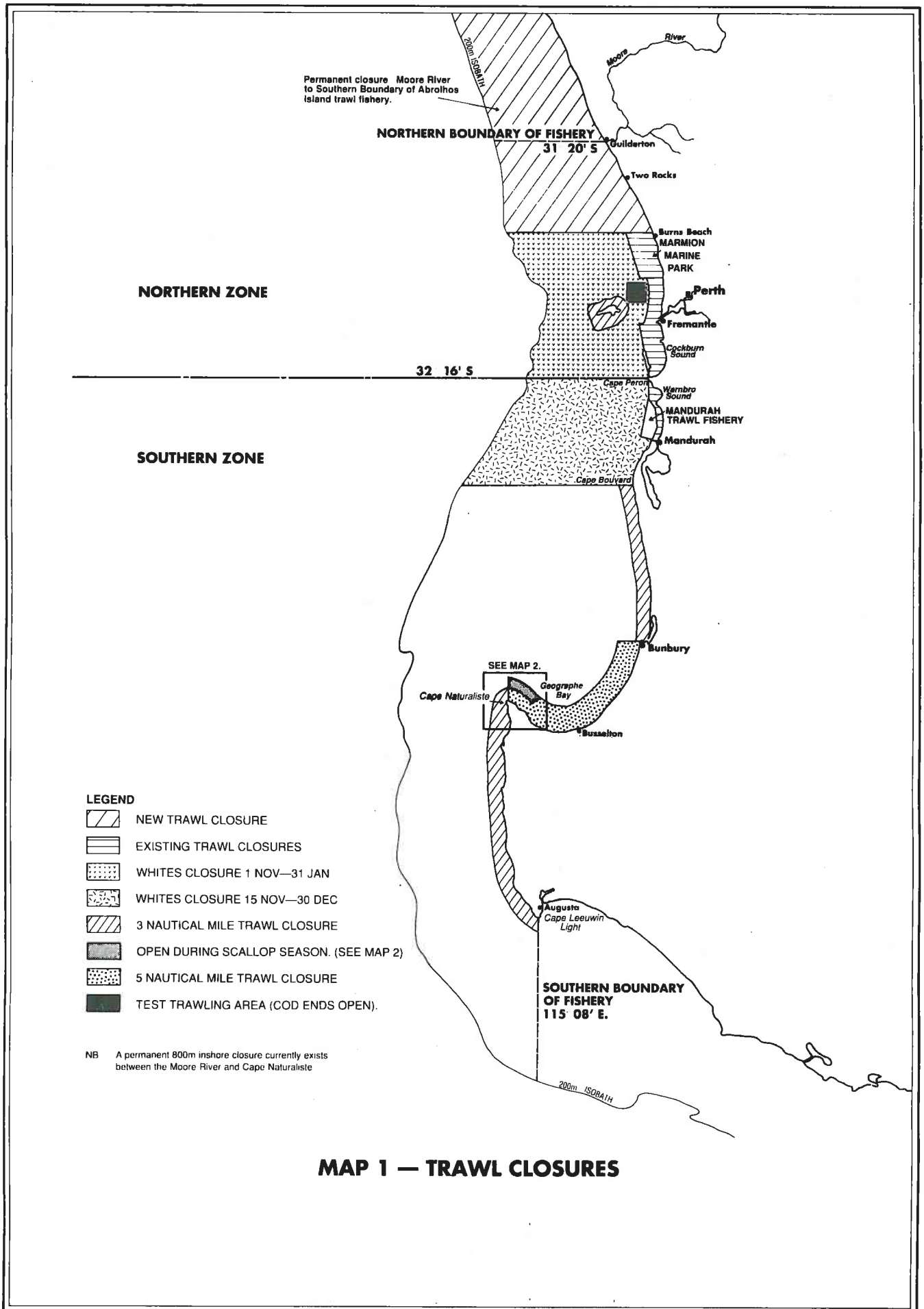
The Nickol Bay prawn fishery covers a limited area between longitude 116°E and longitude 120°E. Management outside this limited entry area, north to the 200 m isobath, is currently under discussion with industry.

The Commonwealth also has in place management measures for the offshore deep-water trawl fisheries off the south, north and west coasts of the State.

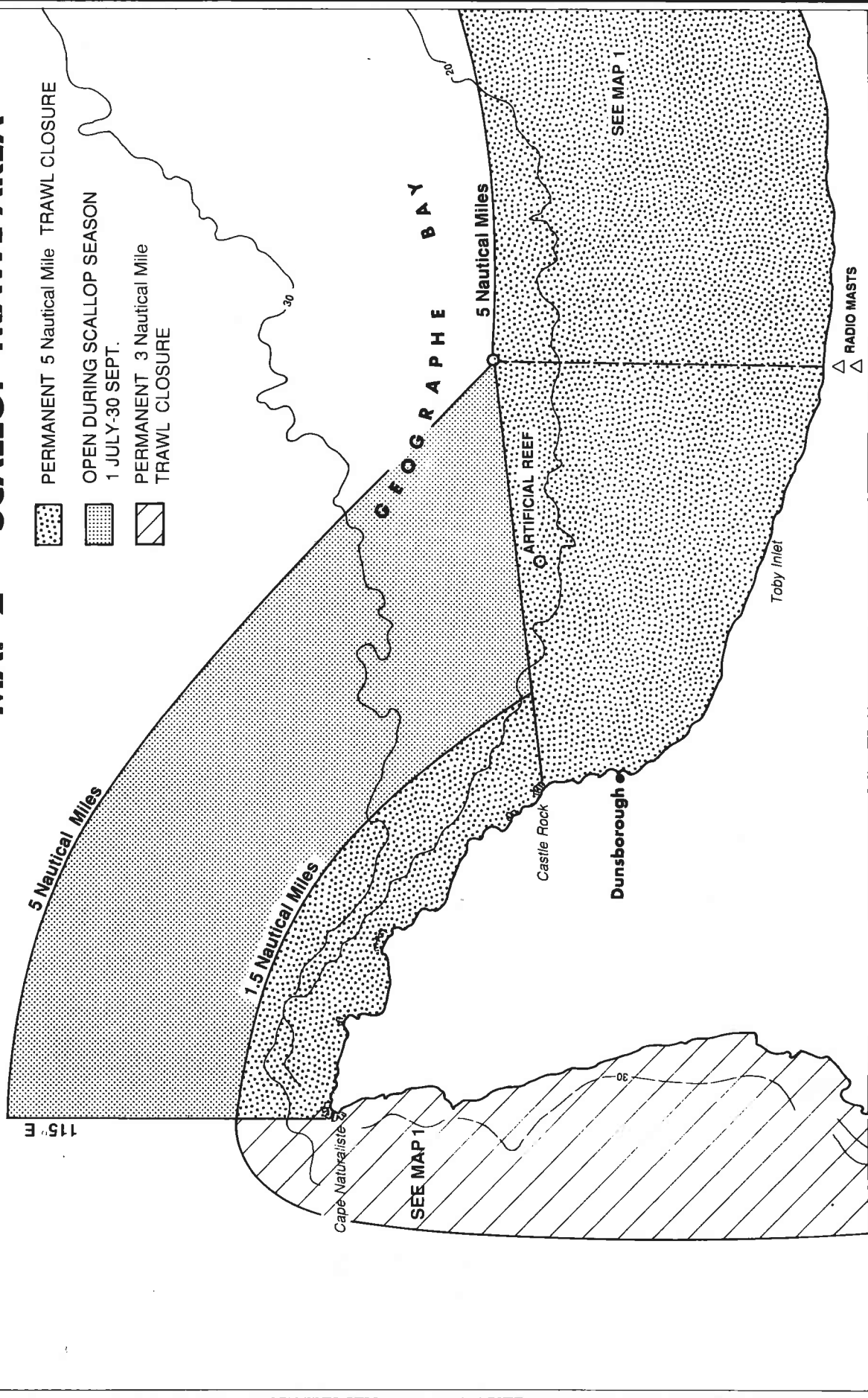
(from Fisheries management paper 20, "The offshore constitutional settlement, Western Australia, 1988.)

Appendix 4 continued





MAP 2 — SCALLOP TRAWL AREA



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Fisheries management papers

- No.1 The Report of the Southern Western Australian Shark Working Group. (1986) (Chairman P. Millington.)
- No.2 The report of the Fish Farming Legislative Review Committee. (1986) (Chairman P. Rogers)
- No.3 Management Measures for the Shark Bay Snapper 1987 Season. (1986) (P. Millington)
- No.4 The Esperance Rock Lobster Working Group. (1986) (Chairman A. Pallot)
- No.5 The Windy Harbour - Augusta Rock Lobster Working Group. (1986) (Interim Report by the Chairman A. Pallot)
- No.6 The King George Sound Purse Seine Fishery Working Group (1986). (Chairman R. Brown)
- No.7 Management Measures for the Cockburn Sound Mussel Fishery (1986). (H. Brayford)
- No.8 Report of the Rock Lobster Industry Advisory meeting of 27 January 1987 (1987). (Chairman B. Bowen)
- No.9 Western Rock Lobster Industry Compensation Study. (1987) (Arthur Young Services)
- No.10 Further Options for Management of the Shark Bay Snapper Fishery. (1987) (P. Millington)
- No.11 The Shark Bay Scallop Fishery. (1987) (L Joll)
- No.12 Report of the Rock Lobster Industry Advisory Committee to the Hon Minister for Fisheries 24 September 1987. (1987)
- No.13 A Development Plan for the South Coast Inshore Trawl Fishery. (1987)
- No.14 Draft Management Plan for the Perth Metropolitan Purse Seine Fishery. (1987) (P Millington)
- No.15 Draft management plan, Control of barramundi gillnet fishing in the Kimberley. (1988) (R. S. Brown)
- No.16 The South West Trawl Fishery Draft Management Plan. (1988) (P. Millington)
- No.17 The final report of the pearling industry review committee (1988) (F.J. Malone, D.A. Hancock, B. Jeffriess)
- No.18 Policy for Freshwater Aquaculture in Western Australia. (1988)
- No.19 Sport Fishing for Marron in Western Australia - Management for the Future (1988).
- No.20 The Offshore Constitutional Settlement, Western Australia 1988
- No.21 Commercial fishing licensing in Western Australia (1989).
- No.22 Economics and marketing of Western Australian pilchards (1988) (SCP Fisheries Consultants Pty Ltd).

