

I have watched over the last fifty plus years the depletion of fishing stocks due to over-fishing. Only when there were big marine sanctuaries in place to protect the spawning grounds and the growing areas have we seen a restoration of any kind of realistic fish stocks that we amateur anglers can target. Now the stupid government, of course at the behest of the richest segment of the top end of town, is hell bent on turning over prime habitat to the vultures. Why? Well, it seems that it's more important for a few multi-million dollar fish hauls to happen over a year or so than to have along-term sustainable fishery. What a disgrace!

Then we learn that it's not only the government's fish-stealing cronies who are behind this push to decimate our marine sanctuaries, it's also the usual suspects – the fossil fuel industry. What does the government think we are going to eat in the next decade or so? Once your mates have polluted all the fish nurseries and blasted the coal seam gas fields in our fertile valleys and dredged and burned the coal out of the pre-historic past to rain down all kinds of violent weather events on the Earth . . . what will we eat then? Well it's remarkable that no coalition politician can see that pandering to the present day capitalists is an investment in the past; the future, if we are to have one, lies with renewable energy and the protection of our natural resources, such as our marine sanctuaries.

There has been NO case made for decimating our marine sanctuaries. There has only been the persistent whinging and harrying of the extremely well paid lobbyists who work for the financially vested interests. I have no resources to continuously bend the ears of politicians . . . or to fill their party's election campaign coffers. I can only tell what I see to as many people who will listen. Are you one? Or are you a servant of the billionaires who are in reality driving Australian government policy in so many aspects, including the decimation of our marine sanctuaries.

As an angler and a voter, I abhor the idea that the common good or commonwealth will benefit from any aspect of the reduction of marine sanctuaries. The only benefit will be to the few friends of the government who believe that, by virtue of their donations to party coffers, they have the right to rape our citizen owned assets.

I have always told those involved with taking the country's natural resources that they have no right to them: if you've planted the old growth forest on your land, well, sure, you're entitled to chop it down for paper chips or any other purpose; if you've invested in a fish stock that you've bred and fed for years well of course you're entitled to harvest the mature product; and if you've bought a tract of land and found minerals or other valuable deposits on it then you are entitled to benefit from mining them. BUT the top end of town seems to have convinced generations of governments that they should hold an entitlement to claim OUR assets just because they happen to SEE them. How does that make any sense? it only makes sense from within the prism of entitlement – all the leaners think that they are

entitled to whatever they see. And our government appears to agree – because they rely on the cash donations received from those vested interests. Who cares what happens to the country as long as we get re-elected!

I have diverted, I fear. My central point is what evidence is there that the proposed reduction in the marine sanctuaries will be of any benefit to Australia? The economic benefit of commercial fishing will be brief and terminal, as it has been everywhere else it's happened. The discovery of more fossil fuel reserves is already an anachronistic event: if we found a hundred billion cubic metres of oil it would not matter – fossil fuels are the enemy of the survival of the biosphere . . . we just can't afford to burn them . . . and there's no point in mining them. But that won't stop some idiotic government from thinking that it might earn a few dollars in royalties before the catastrophic storms envelop Canberra and bring some sense of reality to our leaders.

So, if you do decide that the proposed reductions to OUR marine sanctuaries is to go ahead, you'd better have a far better rationale than we've seen so far. The biggest failing in this country's recent history has been the inability to define how our environment is going to be sustained in the face of increasingly violent evidence of global warming. Reducing the area of protected ocean and coastal seas cannot be for the common good – it's only for the good of the few, the rich vested interests. Is there any reason the successful implementation of marine sanctuaries should be disturbed? Everyone who has followed this issue knows it's been great for all fisheries and there's no reason to go away from it . . . except for the greed of the few.

Once the environment is destroyed it may never recover; and that's where we all live . . . for the present.

Brian Millane