

Australian Marine Parks Management Planning  
Comments  
Department of the Environment and Energy  
Canberra ACT 2601  
managementplanning.marine@environment.gov.au



PO Box 40694,  
Casuarina NT 0811  
ABN: 47 665 738 318  
Phone: 08 89456  
eo@afant.com.au

Attention,

**Re: 2017 Australian Marine Parks, North Marine Park – Northern Territory**

The Amateur Fishermen's Association of the Northern Territory (AFANT) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission on the latest proposal for the North Marine Park. We thank the Australian Government for the ongoing engagement on this issue, both directly and through our national peak body the Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation. AFANT are of the view that the management plan as currently presented, is the best outcome for NT recreational fishers since the first plans were revealed in 2012.

AFANT and the recreational fishing community in the Northern Territory generally maintain the position of not supporting the locking out of recreational fishers from areas unless it is to protect ecological values from a specific and scientifically identified threat, posed by recreational fishing activity. As such, we still contend that the Australian Government could choose to distinguish between types of recreational fishing activities (eg catch and release v catch and retain, or surface fishing for pelagic fish vs demersal fishing for reef fish) and that some forms of recreational fishing may therefore be compatible with the IUCN II category. Nonetheless, in recognition of the improvements in the current plan, the long process to date, and need for the government to balance the views of diverse stakeholders, we can accept North Marine Park (NT areas) management plans as released for consultation.

AFANT commends the Government's increased use of Habitat Protection Zones (IUCN IV) to achieve conservation objectives in the Oceanic Shoals, Limmen and Wessel Parks. We believe this strikes a good balance and we support the list of permitted activities as outlined for Habitat Protection Zones in the public consultation documents. Please note that any change to the activities permitted in this category has the potential to change our support for the plans. As such, we urge the Government not to deviate from the plans as released for comment.

The North Marine Park hosts some of Australia's most significant marine life and habitats. Thanks to limited onshore development, lower population pressures and sound fisheries management, the health of the northern marine ecosystems is generally good. The North Marine Park plan offers the potential to further safeguard the health and biodiversity of marine ecosystems in a way that balances opportunities for recreational fishing and other community activities into the future.

We look forward to being included as a key stakeholder in the development of the implementation plans and in the monitoring of the park's performance in the future. Should you require any further information from AFANT, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Ciaravolo". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue horizontal line.

David Ciaravolo  
Executive Officer  
20/09/2017