



PERTH GAME FISHING CLUB (INC)

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Australian Marine Parks Management Planning Comments
Department of Environment and Energy
Reply Paid 787
Canberra ACT 2601

Re: Commonwealth Marine Parks

I would like to start by thanking you for the opportunity to comment on the latest proposal regarding the Commonwealth Marine Parks plans. Members and Committee of Perth Game Fishing Club have long been involved with these reviews through our representation on various steering groups, Recfishwest and the Western Australian Game Fishing Association.

Perth Game Fishing Club (PGFC) was formed in 1949 by a group of some 20 individuals who enjoyed a common interest in game fishing and had boats which could venture to Rottnest Island and beyond. Pelagic fish such as Spanish mackerel were abundant in those days and marlin were the pinnacle species for capture. Originally known as the Western Australian Game Fishing Association (WAGFA), the club changed its name to PGFC allowing the WAGFA name to be used by the peak state body representing game fishing. The club is affiliated with WAGFA, Game Fishing Association of Australia (GFAA) and International Game Fish Association (IGFA).

PGFC has also been responsible for running the metropolitan FAD program since 1997. Six FADs are positioned well offshore attracting game fish species including tuna, mahi mahi and marlin. The FADs are deployed in November and recovered in May each year using club volunteers build, deploy, recover and maintain the FADs. With a strong focus on sustainability and citizen science these FAD's allow club members to participate in the NSW tagging program and any recaptured fish add to the data collected on fish migration, numbers and seasonal patterns.

While PGFC members primarily call the waters west of Fremantle and out to the Rottnest Trench our home waters our members frequent waters up and down our coast and around the country every year. It is due to this widespread exposure to the proposed plan that we felt compelled to respond.

When the original plan was announced by the then Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke our members were concerned that they were facing a potentially severe impact via lockouts and restrictions on the areas that they would normally access. The proposal also had the potential to severely impact on the long standing metropolitan FAD program which is accessed by thousands of anglers every year.

PGFC is pleased to acknowledge that the current Commonwealth Marine Parks plan appears to be a much more considered approach that addresses the balance between anglers (recreational and commercial), tourism and the need for a conservation plan to

preserve our unique marine ecosystem for future generations. We would however request that consideration be given to the southernmost Marine Park Zone (IUCN II) in the Perth Canyon MP proposal being changed to a Habitat Protection Zone (IUCN IV). This is an area that is in very deep water and is used by game fishing anglers when chasing marlin and other game fish from Perth and surrounding areas. When chasing these species typically only the top 10m of the water column is accessed as the most common method used is trolling – towing a bait or lure behind a boat at a relatively slow speed (typically around 6 knots). We believe that this change would not result in any environmental impact while still allowing recreational anglers access to historically significant fishery.

PGFC would suggest that our peak bodies in both WAGFA and GFAA can assist greatly with the future planning of marine parks and would welcome their involvement. With a large number of anglers on the water at any time these associations are able to harness this effort and contribute historical data as well as making use of future citizen science research to both monitor or target specific knowledge gaps or activity.

Again I will thank you for the opportunity to comment and hope you consider our comments in regards to the Rottneest Trench area as well as considering the involvement of both WAGFA and GFAA in future discussions.

Yours sincerely,



Tim Carson
President
PGFC