

Submissions on the draft: Benwenerup, a management plan for Stokes Inlet

Presented to the Stokes Inlet Steering Group 12<sup>th</sup> December 2007

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### Table of Submissions

Number	From	Summary of Issues	Comments	Proposed Changes to Plan
1	Community member	1.1 Happy with the proposed plan.	Noted	No change
2	Community member	2.1 Considers it an excellent plan and is looking forward to implementation.	Noted	No change
3	Esperance Bird Observers Group	3.1 Liked the plan and would be happy to assist with surveys and bird hides.	The Esperance Bird Observers Group is listed as one of the leads for Action W2 to assist in the completion of a bird survey.	No change
4	Community member	4.1 Pleasantly surprised with the plan and hopes that water skiing is not going to become the 'norm' for the inlet.	The plan does not support the gazettal of a water-ski area as covered by Action A5.	No change
		4.2 Hopes litter disposal and building a composting toilet is covered in Strategy 6.	While these are important points litter disposal and the provision of facilities are already actively managed by the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC). A copy of this submission will be forwarded to DEC for their consideration.	No change
5	Community member	5.1 Thinks there should be more campsites in the park and that the fire management controls need to be upgraded.	The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) are presently preparing a management plan that will cover Stokes Inlet National Park. Their plan will consider campsites and fire management. For this reason they are not covered in the inlet management plan. A copy of this submission will be forwarded to DEC for their consideration.	No change

		5.2 Does not support an increase in rangers at Stokes Inlet (as suggested in Recommendation A2).	The social survey revealed support for the existing level or increased level of ranger presence, to reflect this view, the plan supports retention of this service.	No change
		5.3 Would not like to see a change in vesting of the inlet (as suggested in Recommendation A1).	Currently the inlet not vested in any management authority which is not acceptable to the steering group as no one group currently takes responsibility for its management. The plan does not identify how the vesting should change and states that any change should involve public consultation.	Recommendation A1 to be changed to include the Stokes Inlet Management Group as a lead in the review of vesting.
		5.4 Believes the current resource sharing of fish is acceptable.	See 7.2 below	See 7.2 below
6	Community member	6.1 Noted that one of the outcomes of the recent study by Murdoch <u>is</u> to recommend methods for future monitoring of fish stocks (Action F4).	Noted and supported. Action F4 identifies that Murdoch is currently undertaking a study.  The plan needs to make it clear that continued monitoring will be on a much smaller scale than the present study using methodology identified by the present study.	Action F4 to be changed so that it is clear that continued monitoring uses methodology identified by the present Murdoch study.
		6.2 Considers that Action F2 is not necessary as after implementing Action F1 there may not be an issue.	See 7.2 below	See 7.2 below
7	WA Fishing Industry Council	7.1 Strongly support Action F1 and offer their assistance in improving	Noted and supported.	Add WAFIC into the explanation section of Action F1 as a provider of information and assistance.

	(WAFIC)	understanding of the South Coast Estuarine Fishery.		
	7.2	Do not support Action F2. They recognise there is a resource sharing issue but a number of matters need to be considered before action is taken, such as the source of the conflict. Suggest using a resource sharing process between local commercial and recreational fishing representatives with assistance from the Department of Fisheries and the steering group. They noted that the “Guidelines for Voluntary Resource Sharing” outline a process for this.	<p>This is a significant issue and has been highlighted in a number of the submissions.</p> <p>Community input into the plan to date has identified a strong community concern with commercial fishing and net fishing at the inlet. It would not be appropriate to ignore this issue within the plan.</p> <p>Additionally, submissions received from recreational fishing bodies have called for no net fishing in the inlet. Submission number 13 suggested that the buyback of commercial licences was supposed to result in a shift of fish resources from commercial to recreational sectors.</p> <p>Other submissions have highlighted that resource sharing should consider both recreational and commercial sectors.</p>	Change the action so that the Stokes Inlet Management Group is writing to the Minister for Fisheries and the Department of Fisheries providing information (including submissions) and supporting the use of a voluntary resource sharing process for the Black Bream fishery at the inlet.
	7.3	Support Action F3 and suggest that a resource sharing agreement would be a beneficial option until IFM is applied to the fishery.	Noted and supported.	Change of Action F2 so that the explanation section mentions that IFM is a longer term solution and may not take place within the life of this plan.
	7.4	Support Action F4, F6 and F7	Noted	No change

		<p>7.5 Support Action F5 and consider that the initial focus should be on ascertaining an accurate estimate of the recreational catch effort in the inlet and secondly on catch and release survival rates.</p>	<p>Noted  Submissions 13 and 15 identify that a lot of information already exists on the survival rates of released Black Bream.</p>	<p>Change Action F5 so that the focus is on determining recreational catch and includes a literature review of completed research on the survival rates of released Black Bream.</p>
		<p>7.6 Considers Recommendation A1 vague in intent. Do not support the vesting of the inlet in the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) as they expect it to result in reduced access to the estuarine fishery. Any change that effects fishing access should include proper consultation with licence holders.</p>	<p>See 5.3 above</p>	<p>See 5.3 above</p>
8	Commercial fisher	<p>8.1 Suggests that there is a need to carefully monitor nutrients coming from the catchment and revegetate rivers. Good inlet condition is required for good fish stocks.</p>	<p>Noted. This supports actions that are within the plan relating to increased monitoring and river restoration.</p>	<p>No change</p>
		<p>8.2 Thinks the inlet should be left open for all commercial estuarine fishers.</p>	<p>See 7.2 above</p>	<p>See 7.2 above</p>
		<p>8.3 Considers that closing the rivers and creating a refuge zone should have the desired effect in maintaining healthy fish stocks; and will give the recreational sector a large area to line fish in the rivers.</p>	<p>Noted. Supports one option listed in the explanation of Action F2.</p>	<p>See 7.2 above</p>

9	Commercial fisher	9.1 Considers that all problems (with fish) are perceived so the status quo should remain. And the 25 licensed fishermen will drop to 15 before long resulting in cuts in effort.	See 7.2 above	See 7.2 above
10	Commercial fisher	10.1 Thinks current fisheries management regulations are adequate. Resource sharing should not automatically result in moving resources from the commercial to recreational sectors. The closure of Young River to commercial fishers would result in a lot of fish dying and wasted when the river dries up.	See 7.2 above	See 7.2 above
		10.2 Opposes any change to vesting of the inlet. Best managed by Fisheries Department and other relevant governing bodies.	See 5.3 above	See 5.3 above
11	Commercial fisher	11.1 Agrees that the Black Bream fishery is sustainable and considers Action F1 is vitally important.	Noted	No change
		11.2 Considers the current fish resource sharing fair. Opposed to further restrictions on commercial fishing as they would cause great hardship to the fishery. Does not support the exclusion of the rivers as does not see any conflict in the use of those areas.	See 7.2 above	See 7.2 above

		<p>11.3 Recommendation A1 – believes all inland waters to high water mark should be controlled by the Department of Fisheries leaving Department of Environment and Conservation to manage the land.</p>	See 5.3 above	See 5.3 above
12	Commercial fisher	<p>12.1 Thinks the commercial fishery is sustainable and that increased salt and nutrient loading are the biggest threats to Black Bream and all effort should go into reducing this.</p>	<p>See 7.2 regarding commercial fishery.</p> <p>There are actions already in the plan looking at salt and nutrient loading and reduction of these. Catchment management is already a major theme of the plan.</p>	See 7.2 above
		<p>12.2 Noted that Atrazine which is used by the agricultural industry needs to be studied as to its effect on the aquatic environment (information provided with submission on atrazine).</p>	<p>Following the fish kill in Stokes Inlet, atrazine was detected in the water. While there is no evidence to suggest that atrazine caused the fish kill, its presence in the water suggests that it would be valuable to monitor its levels after spraying in the catchment.</p>	<p>Encourage research project in relation to chemical sprays (including atrazine) in the catchment, involving landowners and research institutes. Add to existing action relating to water quality monitoring.</p>
		<p>12.3 Suggested that the resource sharing issue was only identified by respondents to the survey not the rest of WA? Allowing access to the estuarine fishery by all licensed fishers spreads the fishing effort and ensures a sustainable fishery.</p>	See 7.2 above	See 7.2 above

13	Recfishwest	13.1 Would have preferred to have input into the plans preparation then comment on the draft. \$1 million buyback of licences was supposed to be accompanied by a shift in resources from commercial to recreational, this has not happened.	Noted.  Comment on licence buyback considered in 7.2.	No change
		13.2 For Action F1, believes there should be no netting in the inlet (recreational or commercial).	Noted. Comments considered in 7.2 which relates to Action F2.	See 7.2
		13.3 Considers that commercial netting should not be permitted in the inlet so Action F2 should not be needed.	The commercial fishery is considered sustainable by the Department of Fisheries. Any decision on net fishing would have to be made by the Minister for Fisheries.	See 7.2
		13.4 Action F3 – considers that the allocation of black bream is not a priority of Integrated Fisheries Management.	See 7.3 above	See 7.3 above
		13.5 Action F4 – supports monitoring but noted that given the Murdoch study is underway, replication if this is not considered cost effective. A low level sampling project to determine spawning success would be more appropriate.	See 6.1 above	See 6.1 above
		13.6 Action F5 – stated that much research has already been undertaken on black bream survival	Noted. Comments considered above in 7.5.	See 7.5 above



	<p>rates and movement and Department of Fisheries should be able to provide papers on these to the steering group. Recfishwest supports an attempt to get greater participation in the Angler Log Book program.</p>		
	<p>13.7 Supports Action F6.</p>	Noted	No change
	<p>13.8 Supports Action F7 and believes that once refuge areas are identified they should be protected.</p>	<p>Noted.  The Centre for Fish and Fisheries Research, Murdoch University are currently undertaking the study identified in Action F7.</p>	Add to Action F7 that following identification that refuge pools should, where necessary, be protected.
	<p>13.9 Considers that Recommendations A1 and A2 need careful monitoring. Cautious of greater vesting of areas in Department of Environment and Conservation as they have restricted access to recreational fishers through closing tracks in a number of places.</p>	See 5.3 and 5.2 above	See 5.3 and 5.2 above
	<p>13.10 When considering Actions A5 and A6 thinks that speed and activity regulations should be jointly administered by staff of DEC, DPI and Department of Fisheries and all should be trained in how to handle water compliance issues in a sensitive manner.</p>	Government agencies have set responsibilities some of these are relevant to Stokes Inlet and are outlined in the linkages and legislation section of the plan. Department for Planning and Infrastructure (DPI) is responsible for boat usage on the inlet and as such they are the lead agency for both actions.	No change

		<p>13.11 Considers that under Action CH2 a total ban on beach access is unnecessarily adversarial. A sub-committee should be set up with traditional owners to see if access can be maintained that does not impact on the cultural values.</p>	<p>The action in the plan does not ban access to the beach but rather states that the culturally significant pools be protected. Access to the beach is managed by DEC, who noted that the fencing off of the pools does not ban access to the beach.</p>	<p>No change</p>
		<p>13.12 Considers that for Action CE4, Stokes Inlet is important to the wider community as well as the local community. The wider community needs to be engaged also, which perhaps could have been done better in the development of the plan.</p>	<p>Noted. Community and organisational consultation for the plans preparation has been extensive and has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• media releases,</li> <li>• letters to interested parties,</li> <li>• surveys (including one sent to Recfishwest in November 2006), and</li> <li>• communication through membership on the steering group</li> </ul>	<p>Change action CE4 to include the words 'wider community'.</p>
14	Aquatic scientist	<p>14.1 Thinks the plan needs to mention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estuarine Condition Statement (in section 1.3 and on bottom of page 13 and on page 18 Strategy 1),</li> <li>• Role of the Department of Water (add in linkages and legislation section),</li> <li>• Condition of the system more clearly and should show a consolidated list of information gaps, and</li> <li>• List of actions completed during plan's preparation and where information gaps have been</li> </ul>	<p>Noted and supported.</p>	<p>Change plan to incorporate suggestions.</p>

		addressed (Section 3.2).		
		14.2 Thinks that in relation to Table 2, the values currently reflect human use values rather than estuarine values.	These threats and values were identified by the community. Changes in text are appropriate to make this clearer.	Add the word 'community' to the title of Table 2.
		14.3 Stated that while in Section 4 the plan states that the "community would like it to stay as it is, healthy" – scientific information suggests it is not healthy but quite vulnerable.	The term healthy inlet reflects community opinion. As such it can be described as a social value. Scientific information is provided in the threats section of the plan. The plan may need to better describe the environmental condition of the inlet.	Change Section 3.1, Threats, to clearly indicate the current environmental condition of the inlet.
		14.4 Thinks the plan does not have RCTs but rather aspirational targets. RCTs have to measure a resource and be affected by management actions.	The plan contains long term targets which reflect community values.	Delete the words 'Resource Condition Targets' from the plan.
		14.5 Considers the main driver for Action WQ1 should be the project officer.	The project officer is a key driver of many if not all the actions, particularly in terms of coordinating actions. This is mentioned in the action relating to the project officer. However, the actions in the catchment will be undertaken under the direction of the Esperance Regional Forum.	No change
		14.6 Thinks that for Action WQ2 need to track organic matter.	Noted and supported.	Add testing for organic matter to Action WQ2.
		14.7 Suggests the Department of Water is an additional lead for Actions WQ3, WQ4 and F6.	While the Department of Water will provide assistance in these actions it is preferred to have one lead agency where possible.	No change

15	Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee (RFAC)	15.1 Believes they have not been adequately consulted during the plan's preparation.	Consultation during the plans preparation has been comprehensive and has included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• media releases,</li> <li>• survey of community and organisations (including one sent to Great Southern RFAC),</li> <li>• letters to interested parties,</li> <li>• membership on the steering group (including the chair of the Esperance-Goldfields RFAC)</li> </ul>	No change
		15.2 Believe Action F1 should cover all sustainability not just commercial fishing.	Noted and supported.	Change Action F1 so that it applies to the whole fishery.
		15.3 In relation to Action F2, Integrated Fisheries Management will address resource sharing.  Strongly recommend that the whole estuary be closed to net fishing.	Noted.  See 7.2 and 7.3 above	See 7.2 and 7.3 above
		15.4 Supports Action F3	Noted	See 7.3
		15.5 Support Action F4	Noted	See 6.1
		15.6 Are aware that research has already been carried out on the survival rates of released Black Bream. Support promotion of angler log book program. (Action F5)	See 7.5	See 7.5
		15.7 Support Action F6, F7 and A6	Noted	No change

	<p>15.8 Consider community consultation on any tenure change for Recommendation A1 should be mandatory.</p>	<p>Noted. The need for community consultation with any tenure change is already mentioned in the action.</p>	<p>No change</p>
	<p>15.9 Supports the walk trail identified in Recommendation A3 but believes it necessary to build vehicle access and parking facilities to ensure more reasonable access to the beach.</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>No change</p>
	<p>15.10 Opposed to water skiing and jet skiing which are considered inappropriate activities for this estuary.</p>	<p>Noted. Action A5 does not support water skiing.</p>	<p>No change</p>
	<p>15.11 Consider it is essential that a dedicated 4-wheel drive access be provided to the beach. They believe this would resolve any concerns regarding freshwater pools and traditional owner concerns covered in Action CH2.</p>	<p>Action CH2 states that the freshwater pools need to be protected.</p> <p>Access is managed by the Department of Environment and Conservation. A copy of this submission will be forwarded to them for consideration.</p>	<p>No change</p>