

Developmental Fisheries Management

Application outcomes and recommendations

Application

Applicant		Summary	
App No.	2015_1	Subject	Take wrasse with fish traps
Name	Ian Fitch	Year	1 50 tonnes
Address	30 Main Rd George Town 7253		80 to 120 traps

Proposal Summary

Taking of purple and blue throat wrasse from State waters using traps. Further specification of areas is not provided.

Fifty tonnes is sought for the first year, using 80 to 120 fish traps in a depth range of 10 to 50 metres. Soak time envisaged is 1 to 2 hours, suggested as being deeper than the current fishery.

Mr Fitch holds no Tasmanian commercial fishing licences.

Vessel *Concorde* owned by Mr John Hammond. No details of any licences to be used (e.g. FLV) or details of operation.

Long term suggested potential is 1,000 tonnes.

Plans to use large numbers of traps in deeper water, slow ascent of traps to reduce impact of barotrauma on catch (as a live fishery).

Attachment: *Consumer Demand for Sustainable Wild-caught and Cultured Live Reef Food Fish in Hong Kong 2006.*

Attachments

Attached to this recommendation are the following documents:

1. Application received and supporting information;
 2. Application assessment pro forma:- preliminary assessment;
 3. Comments received from the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council (TSIC);
 4. Comments received from the Tasmanian Association for Recreational Fishing (TARFish);
 5. Comments received from IMAS;
 6. Wrasse fishery assessment 2010-12.
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Summary of comments received

Record of comments from TSIC, TARFish and IMAS are attached.

TSIC states that "the wrasse fishery is managed as part of the scalefish fishery and we support the current management arrangements for the fishery".

TARFish, in summary, does not "believe the applicant has satisfactorily demonstrated that his proposed activity meets the policy criteria of long term, commercially profitable, environmentally sustainable and socially acceptable activity".

TARFish states [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] "apparent
reliance on a government grant to finance fish traps".

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] "reputable scientific studies".

RTI-DL-RELEASE-DPIPWE

IMAS comments Fitch permit application Wrasse

Development Fishing Permit Application – trap fishing for wrasse (App No. 2015_1)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above permit application, submitted under the developmental fishing policy. Staff at IMAS have discussed the proposal and wish to make several comments.

In summary, the proponent seeks to use established fishing methods (fish traps) in an established and actively managed fishery, the limited-entry wrasse live-fish fishery. As noted in recent IMAS fishery assessment reports, the live wrasse fishery already has substantial latent capacity and at this stage the stocks (Bluethroat Wrasse and Purple Wrasse) have not been assessed.

The application seeks to allow the proponent access to the fishery outside of the existing limited entry licensing system as well as providing a significantly greater gear entitlement than is currently available to existing operators. The main point of differentiation relates to fishing in deeper waters than most (but not all) current operations and the export of product overseas.

Notwithstanding the concerns of existing wrasse fishers about allowing a new operator into the fishery (with a 40-fold increase in gear allocation), coupled with uncertainty about the ability of the stocks to support a significant increase in catches – it should be noted that there is evidence (research and anecdotal) that fishing pressure on legal sized wrasse is already very high in some localised areas – IMAS wishes to highlight the following concerns.

A major issue for the live fish fishery for Wrasse relates to barotrauma. Rimmer and Franklin (1997) established mortality rates of over 40% for Bluethroat Wrasse captured at depths of greater than 20m, with no significant improvement in survival rates following venting (puncture of the air bladder to relieve the effects of barotrauma).

The fishery is not currently assessed under the EPBC Act so product cannot be exported. Wrasse are relatively difficult to handle for live transport, male Bluethroat Wrasse in particular tend to be aggressive with conspecifics.

Live transport of Wrasse for export to Asia from Tasmania has not, to our knowledge, been successfully attempted, and thus there is considerable uncertainty as to whether this would be feasible or cost effective.

Marketing and acceptability of the species to the Asian market has not been properly assessed, so there is considerable uncertainty as to the viability of such a venture.




Bycatch is a potential issue for this fishery, while existing fish trap operations tend to be conducted in shallow water, fishing in deep water and with a large number of traps is likely to involve some level of bycatch. For a number of the potential bycatch species (including undersized Wrasse) barotrauma represents a concern for subsequent survival. The proposal to hold and accumulate bycatch on board, prior to release in cauffs at depth, even if feasible is still likely to result in incidental mortality of some released fish.

Yours,

Caleb Gardner

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¹ Rimmer MA and Franklin, B (1997) Development of livefish transport techniques. Final Report for FRDC Project 93/184 & 93/185.

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From: Mark Nikolai <mark.nikolai@tarfish.org>
Date: 19 March 2015 18:13:50 AEDT
To: "Steve.Withers@dpiwve.tas.gov.au" <Steve.Withers@dpiwve.tas.gov.au>
Subject: Developmental Fishing Permit 201501

Robert

I refer to your letter dated 27 February 2015 in relation to the above matter.

The TARFish Committee has considered the application and provide the following comments.

The application appears to be poorly completed with a distinct lack of accurate detail to assess the feasibility of the proposed activity. Incorrect dates, unclear relationship with a valid fishing licence holder and an apparent reliance on a government grant to finance the fish traps are some examples of what appear to be a lack of understanding by the applicant in their endeavours to validate the permit application.

We question the applicants claim that wrasse do not suffer the effects of barotrauma with many reputable scientific studies indicating this species does suffer the effects.

We question the applicants claim that the live export wrasse fishery is in its infancy as we are aware of an operator in the north west of the state who we believe has been exporting live wrasse to Asian markets for over 20 years.

We do not believe the applicant has satisfactorily demonstrated that his proposed activity meets the policy criteria of long term, commercially profitable, environmentally sustainable and socially acceptable activity that value adds to low value species.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on this permit application and we hope the Minister finds our comments of value in his decision making.

Regards

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TSIC comments Finch application wrasse

I wish to provide the following advice in respect to the two applications forwarded to TSIC for comment.

In respect to the application from Mr Ian Fitch for a permit to target wrasse in deeper water TSIC does not support the application. The wrasse fishery is managed as part of the scale fish fishery and we support the current management arrangements for the fishery.

Neil Stump

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