



Australian Government

Department of Sustainability, Environment,
Water, Population and Communities

SUBMISSION FORM for the Coral Sea Commonwealth marine reserve proposal

Submission ID

(Office use only)

Thank you for your interest in the Coral Sea Commonwealth marine reserve proposal. Good information on our ocean habitats, wildlife and resources, and the people who use and enjoy them is critical to the identification of Commonwealth marine reserves. This public consultation period is an important opportunity for you to give feedback on the Coral Sea Commonwealth marine reserve proposal.

To ensure your submission is as relevant and effective as possible, please ensure that you:

- complete **Part 1** identifying yourself and/or your organisation
- provide clear and concise feedback
- in **Part 2** refer to the Coral Sea Commonwealth marine reserve and/or specific zones of the marine reserve you have feedback on

Submissions must be received by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (DSEWPaC) no later than close of business on 24 February 2012.

How to make a submission

Please refer to the Coral Sea Commonwealth marine reserve proposal when making your submission:

www.environment.gov.au/coasts/mbp/coralsea

Please ensure that you provide your contact details on your submission so that the Department can notify you that your submission has been received.

To submit your feedback :

- **email** this form complete with your contact details, feedback and any additional information to: Submissions.CoralSea@environment.gov.au

or

- **post** this form **free of charge** to:

Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

MBP submissions – Coral Sea

Reply Paid 787

Canberra ACT 2601

Submissions must be post-marked or received by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (DSEWPaC) no later than close of business on 24 February 2012.



Part 1- Personal Information

Required fields are marked with an asterisk (*)

Any personal information you provide to the Department is protected by the provisions of the *Privacy Act 1988* and will only be used to assist the Australian Government to complete the marine bioregional planning process. Please include relevant contact details where possible so that the Department can notify you that your submission has been received.

Please fill out in black ink only

1. First Name:
Adam Smith (AUF Spearfishing National Chair); Luke Randell (AUFQ Spearfishing Commissioner)
2. Postal Address:
14 Cleveland Terrace Townsville Qld 4810 1/36 London Rd Clayfield 4011
3. Telephone:
0418 726 584 0411 468 523
4. Email:
spearfishing@auf.com.au ; savespearfishinginthecoralsea@gmail.com
5. Are you making this submission on behalf of an Organisation? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Name of Organisation: This is a joint submission of:-
1. AUSTRALIAN UNDERWATER FEDERATION – NATIONAL SPEARFISHING COMMISSION 2. AUSTRALIAN UNDERWATER FEDERATION QUEENSLAND – SPEARFISHING COMMISSION
[both organizations throughout this submission referred to jointly as “AUF”]
Primary Interest
6. What is your primary interest in the marine environment? (please pick one)
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial fishing <input type="checkbox"/> Research <input type="checkbox"/> Mining
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreational fishing <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation <input type="checkbox"/> Ports
<input type="checkbox"/> Game fishing <input type="checkbox"/> Yachting or private boating <input type="checkbox"/> Oil and Gas
<input type="checkbox"/> Charter fishing <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous use and stewardship <input type="checkbox"/> Shipping
<input type="checkbox"/> Aquaculture <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism <input type="checkbox"/> Leisure and recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Fishing related business <input type="checkbox"/> Community/local resident
<input type="checkbox"/> Other please specify:



Secondary Interest

7. please specify: SPEARFISHING

All comments will be treated as public documents and may be made public on the DSEWPaC website.

I consent to my name/organisation and comments (including any personal information in my comments) being made publicly available*

Yes

No

Note: If you wish your comments to remain confidential, you must clearly mark all or part of your comments as 'confidential', providing reasons why the Department should consider your request for confidentiality. Please note that public submissions are not normally confidential and a request for confidentiality does not make your comments automatically exempt from release. Submissions (including submissions marked confidential) may be shared with other government agencies to assist the Australian Government to complete the marine bioregional planning process. All submissions may be subject to release under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.



Part 2: Coral Sea Commonwealth marine reserve proposal

To complete **Parts 2a and 2b** you will need to refer to the Coral Sea Commonwealth marine reserve proposal available at: www.environment.gov.au/coasts/mbp/coralsea

Part 2a.

Please provide specific feedback on the proposed zones for the Coral Sea Commonwealth marine reserve. In providing your feedback you may wish to consider:

- any aspects of the proposed zone boundaries and/or what activities are allowed in each of the zones.

Proposed Marine National Park Zone	Feedback
<div data-bbox="699 703 895 920"></div> <div data-bbox="225 936 1369 1043"><p>Spearfishing – Safe Sustainable Selective Seafood Australian Underwater Federation - Spearfishing Commission Australian Underwater Federation Queensland – Spearfishing Commission</p></div> <div data-bbox="486 1093 1106 1541"></div> <div data-bbox="486 1547 1106 1581"><p>http://www.savespearfishinginthecoralsea.com/</p></div> <p>Around 51% of the proposal is national park or “no take” zone. The AUF believes that this is too high a percentage for no take and will exclude our members from some historically important locations such as Kenn Reef. The exclusion will have considerable socio-economic impacts.</p> <p><i>Specific Principles for proposed Coral Sea Marine Reserve 9. Zoning will be based on the consideration of the risks that specific activities pose to the conservation objectives of each MPA.</i></p> <p>The AUF agrees with the principal that zoning will be based on risk – however no risk assessment has been included or developed in partnership with stakeholders.</p> <p>The AUF supports the Recfish Australia Policy (2007) on Marine Protected Areas which states:</p>	

4.2 Recfish Australia will NOT support:

4.2.1 No take/no go zones - the establishment of any no-take/ no go reserves unless it is satisfied there is sound scientific justification;

The AUF is not satisfied that there are sound scientific justification for 51% no take and suggests that a 34% is a maximum benchmark and same as the adjacent GBRMP. Further scientific and risk based research needs to be undertaken to quantify the location and percentages.

Furthermore, the AUF understands that the GBRMP ought to have been only 20% protected based on scientific principles and was only raised to 34% without consultation, through under handed political means and for political gain at the time. This should not happen here with the Coral Sea zoning.

One should protect wildlife **for** people and **not** from people.

The WWF, PEW and other green groups might want to ask themselves who the enemy is? We should promote the idea of working with people, rather than against them.

Rather than deny access to a few recreational fishermen having minimal impact on the resources of the Coral Sea and who are already subject to bag- and size restrictions, why not work with these people and use their eyes to report other illegal activities which have a far greater impact?

If we were to exclude recreational fishermen from the Coral Sea as per the agenda of the Green groups, we could be exposing the Coral Sea to real enemies in the form of foreign commercial fishermen.

The Commonwealth Government might do better maintaining surveillance in the Coral Sea than by creating massive lockout zones which they cannot possibly police nor place under surveillance on their own.

Mr Burke ought to be realistic and explain to the Greens that recreational users are needed in the Coral Sea and encouraged to maintain activities on a limited sustainable / subsistence basis, in return for the use of their eyes and ears.

The best conservationists are the ones who go into the wilderness to experience and appreciate it - the worst ones were those who sit in armchairs seeking to exclude others from access.

The second worst are those who try to take the cities with them when they visit exclusive areas - these are the people creating luxury resorts in wilderness areas, luring wealthy foreign visitors to enjoy luxury and comforts in what should have been wilderness areas.

The best conservationists are those who prefer to 'rough it' when visiting the wilderness - take pictures and leave footprints!

Recreational fishermen also 'rough it', take pictures, a few fish for personal consumption and leave no footprints!

Most of the wildlife in South Africa is currently in the hands of game farmers catering for hunters, wild life safaris, photographers and wilderness hiking. They have converted cattle stations back to the natural habitat for fauna and flora - no reason why proper management cannot do the same for the marine habitat in the remote Coral Sea!

The remoteness of the Coral Sea, which limits access to a few fortunate spear-fishers, who visit the Coral Sea a couple of times in their lifetime.



The impact of spearfishermen is further reduced by the following constraints:

- Spearfishermen are limited in access by depth - as breath hold divers they are limited to a very small portion of relatively shallow reef areas in the Coral Sea.
- Spearfishermen are limited to daylight hours - unlike line fishermen they cannot operate at night. They have 50% less time to make captures and therefore 50% less chance of having an adverse impact on species, than other forms of fishing.
- Spearfishermen cannot operate in adverse conditions i.e. in strong winds and currents. They are limited to periods of small tidal movement which occur over a few days, twice a month (neap tides), weather permitting.
- Spearfishermen require clear water - it is not advisable to operate in murky water due to dependence on eyesight as their primary sense for awareness of danger, such as sharks. Sharks rely on smell and electromagnetic sensitivity and can operate efficiently and under disguise in murky water. Underwater visibility deteriorates during periods of strong tidal movement and in rough weather conditions.

We trust reason and logic will prevail over 'the precautionary principle', which 'reverses the burden of proof'!

The target group for exclusion from the Coral Sea will be local anglers, Australian citizens.

Green groups, who wish to exclude Australian citizens from access to Australian waters, are largely based in the USA and Great Brittan.

It appears that Australians are to sacrifice their way of life for marine reserve which will benefit the rest of mankind.

On the surface this appears to be a noble sacrifice for Australians to have to make.

The reality is that the Coral Sea is already protected, due to its remoteness from large human populations - it is a long way off the mainland and generally only accessible to large oceangoing craft, such as fishing trawlers and recreational charter vessels.

The reality is that the fisheries in the Coral Sea are already in a healthy state.

The opposite is the case for many fisheries elsewhere in the world.

To make a difference one should cast seed and fertilise where it would have the greatest effect.

We cannot make much difference nor improve the productivity of the Coral Sea by further protecting it.

We could make a huge difference by protecting some of the fisheries under demise in many other parts of the world.

Human beings can go a long way to protecting our fragile world, were we all to go through life trying to minimise our impact on the environment and its species.

We have an unwritten obligation not to waste effort protecting already well managed fisheries, whilst ignoring fisheries in dire straits.

Australia may be a soft target - but the benefits of efforts to lock out recreational users from the



Coral Sea will be even softer!

Green organisations such as the WWF and Pew should practise what they preach and concentrate efforts elsewhere, where they would make a difference.

Conservation is about reducing the people impact in areas of low carrying capacity and shifting some of the impact to areas of higher carrying capacity.

To do otherwise would be to be penny wise and pound foolish.

The Coral Sea is an area of low impact and high carrying capacity.

While the AUF are not implicating increasing human/extractive activities in the Coral Sea, we see it as a waste of time money and effort to have absolutely massive areas declared 'no take' zones.

In terms of the importance of specific reefs to the AUF and its members, the AUF can provide detailed information on catch of some highly valued species, such as dogtooth tuna (below) as well as National and Queensland records.

Kenn and Fredrick which are proposed to be sanctuary zones have been important for capture of large dogtooth tuna by our members.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Reef</u>
Erik Krahn	84.75	Wreck
Ian Puckeridge	83	Wreck
Bob McComb	82	Cato
Paul Roso	81.5	Fredrick
Bernard Finnerty	81	Kenn
Andrew Bateman	80	Shark
Andrew Boomer	76.5	Cato
Ron Mullins	75	Kenn
Ted Lougher	75	Cato
Peter Watman	74	Cato

There are many Australian and Queensland records taken on Coral Sea reefs. Records not only demonstrate the importance of these reefs to spearfishers but also the health state of the fishery. The following are some examples:-

Australian Record – Blue Spot Coral Trout – P Mullins - 24.7 kg – Wreck Reef;

Australian Record – Waho – R Boler – 50 kg – Wreck Reef;



Australian Record – Green Job Fish 0 A Boomer – 14.4 kg – Wreck Reef;

Australian Record - High Fin Amberjack – Greg Pickering – 16 kg – Wreck Reef;

Australian Record – Golden-Spotted Trevally – G Crawford – 12.2 kg - Marion Reef;

Queensland Record – Dog Tooth Tuna – L Randell – 60 kg – Flinders Reef;

Queensland Record – Yellowfin Tuna – A Smith – 15 kg – Marion Reef;

Queensland Record – Giant Trevally – C Robb – 46 kg – Marion Reef.

Proposed Habitat Protection Zone	Feedback
	<p>Most of the important reefs for AUF members are covered under the Habitat Protection Zone. This is appropriate as spearfishing does not damage habitat.</p> <p>The proposed management of recreational fishing (including spearfishing) in this zone is unacceptable and not practical for our members.</p> <p>The current zoning allows “Catch and release fishing: take fish for consumption for the duration of a trip is permitted”. This zoning will not work for spear fishers. We are selective and take very few fish but we do not catch and release. Some of our fish are very large including 20-80 plus kg dogtooth tuna which cannot be eaten on a trip and some are also local, state, Australian or world records which we wish to return to the mainland for weighing on official scales.</p> <p>Allowing the taking of fish from these zones only for immediate consumption isn’t practical. People travel to these areas to target game fish such as dogtooth tuna and wahoo when spearfishing. These are large fish, and when a diver lands one it will provide fillets well in excess of what can be consumed on the trip. A better option if additional restrictions are sought for these areas would be to have a restrictive limit on the number of fish an individual can take.</p> <p>The AUF recommends that the bag limits that apply in the GBRMP should be consistent with the Coral Sea so that there is limited confusion and equity .</p> <p>The AUF suggests that a fall back position for discussion is that a bag limit of 20- 30 for the boat (similar to other Commonwealth Reserves) may be more practical.</p>

Proposed Special Purpose Zone	Feedback
	<p>No comments</p>



Proposed Multiple Use Zone	Feedback
<p>Suggestion that there is a declared “Recreational fishing zone” for the most important reefs.</p>	

Part 2b.

Please provide general feedback on the Coral Sea Commonwealth marine reserve proposal. In providing your feedback you may wish to consider:

- the impacts of the proposed marine reserve on you/your sector/organisation/community
- the benefits of the proposed marine reserve for you/your sector/organisation/community
- any aspects of the proposed marine reserve boundaries and/or zones that you would like to see amended

General feedback on the proposed Coral Sea Commonwealth marine reserve
<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>The Australian Underwater Federation (AUF) is a representative body that operates from the national to the local level and covers the sports of spearfishing, scuba diving and underwater hockey. The AUF as an organization provides rules for spearfishing competitions, record keeping, codes of conduct and importantly, representation to government and other community groups.</p> <p>Australian Underwater Federation – Queensland (AUFQ) is the Queensland branch of the AUF. Each sport is represented by various commissions and this submission is made on behalf of the AUF.</p> <p>The AUFQ is the state body representing the following spearfishing clubs in Queensland:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bundaberg Skindivers Club - Cairns Underwater Association Inc. - Curtis Coast Spearfishing - Mackay Down Under Skindiving - Tweed Gold Coast Freedivers - Sunshine Coast Skindivers - Underwater Adventurers Club - Townsville Skindiving Club Inc. - Maryborough Skindivers Inc - NQ Underwater Explorers Club



The AUF through the national and state Chairs and the Presidents of local spearfishing clubs in Cooktown, Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Gladstone and South East Queensland are doing their best as volunteers to promote spearfishing in Queensland waters. We are also aligned with recreational fishing organizations such as Recfish Australia.

The Coral Sea which is a vast area and considered by many as one of the last frontiers. People travel from all over the world to fish, dive and spearfish these waters. We are also aware that minority 'Green' groups like the WWF and PEW are pushing for a total 'lock out' of these areas. While we have faith in government and the democratic process that this is unlikely to occur the AUF Spearfishing Commission feels it is very important that we express the views of the Spearfishing fraternity and the importance to us of retaining access to the Coral Sea for our activities. We have gained some comfort from the Consultation Paper and the proposed zonings.

We do not consider groups with agenda's like that of PEW and WWF as 'conservationists' since conservation implies sustainable use - 'preservationist' is probably a more appropriate term. In 2008 the PEW foundation proposed a total fishing closure of over 1 million square kilometres of the Coral Sea and in 2009 the Commonwealth Government responded by declaring a Coral Sea Conservation Zone.

While the peak recreational fishing and diving groups represent a broad cross section of the community we often lack the resources that are available to funded industry and preservation groups, relying instead on the limited pool of volunteers who give up their time for the future of the sport - yet the views of our membership is no less important.

Upon the ministers announcement on the 25th November 2011 the AUF Spearfishing Commission launched the "Save spearfishing in the Coal Sea" website. In support of this submission spearfishers have registered their support online and been given the opportunity to provide their own feedback.

Spearfishing – Safe Sustainable Selective Seafood

The AUF promotes spearfishing as being 'SAFE SUSTAINABLE and SELECTIVE':-

Safety

While safety is an important consideration in all forms of recreational fishing it is particularly important to educate and promote safe practices when spearfishing. Some of the ways the AUF as an organisation promotes safety by having a code of conduct that is provided to members, providing safety equipment to clubs, training (oxyviva and first aid), discussing safe diving practices at meetings, and reviewing safety messages and how best to promote safe practices. This has initiated the 'Spear Safe' campaign which has seen widespread promotion of safety in the sport to the spearfishing community as a whole, including addressing the culture in the sport and training for participants.

Sustainable

Spearfishing as a form of fishing is very ecologically sustainable and doesn't produce bycatch. Spearfishers are limited in where and when they can hunt, with factors like visibility, depth of water and strong currents limiting where and when you can spear. These factors combine to limit the potential impact the sport can have and ensure the conservation of our fisheries resources.



Selective

'Selective' is the way in which modern spearfishers take only enough fish for their immediate needs and respecting the marine life encountered.

In the future 'SAFE SUSTAINABLE SELECTIVE' will continue to be a major focus for the AUF with the SPEARSAFE review of safety in the sport continuing and the ongoing promotion of sustainable and selective practices both within the organisation and in the community generally.

Sustainable Spearfishing in the Coral Sea

The Coral Sea is one of the best fishing and spearfishing locations in Australia and the world. It is renowned for clear, deep water and the abundance and large size of Dogtooth tuna, pelagic fish and healthy shark populations.

The Coral Sea has been initially proposed for a sanctuary by an international conservation groups like WWF and PEW. The AUF National Spearfishing Commission and many recreational fishers and spearfishers believe that this proposal is unrealistic and will severely impact on our activity.

In order to make a difference and provide some facts about the Coral Sea and the low impact of selective spearfishing we are working with scientists from James Cook University on biology of Dogtooth tuna, Sharks and catches of fish.

The Coral Sea is a huge expanse of reefs and it should not be 'locked up' by over 51 percent. There are very few human visits and these are high value economically and socially for tourism and charter boat operators, fishers and some SCUBA divers. Australia has a multi-billion dollar recreational fishing industry and the new generation of fishers and spearfishers want to continue to sustainably access the amazing fish and marine life of the Coral Sea.

An individual spearfisher is likely to spend at least \$5,000 per trip to the Coral Sea on the charter and specialist gear to target the gamefish present. Based on an average take of 2 to 3 fish per trip this values the individual fish taken at between \$2,500 and \$1,600 each demonstrating the value that spearfishers place on the opportunity to access this fishery.

For spearfishers the Coral Sea is an area where not many get a chance to go, but for those who are fortunate it's some of the most fantastic diving you'll get a chance to do. Clear water, lots of sharks, and the opportunity to target large 'once in a lifetime' game fish like dogtooth tuna and wahoo. However, the declaration and review of the Coral Sea Conservation Park is of concern to all spearfishers.

Extreme environmental groups such as PEW and WWF are well funded and have the resources and connections to access and lobby the ministers and departments in Canberra that will determine the outcome. However, we have faith sanity and democracy will prevail and draw some comfort from the proposed zoning in the Consultation Paper which we consider a reasonable outcome.

Spearfishing in the Great Barrier Reef and Coral Sea

We are very fortunate to live in Queensland and enjoy clear water and eating quality seafood such as Coral Trout and Spanish Mackerel all year round. However, for every blessing there is a disadvantage. In Queensland, and particularly the GBR, a boat is essential for travelling the large distances of 20-50 Nm to reach clean water and coral reefs. The weather is also a major limiting factor with prevailing winds of 15-25 knots restricting most boating activities.

The tourism campaign that promotes Queensland as "Beautiful one day and perfect the next" unfortunately does not ring true if you are a spearfisher. Spearfishing is very restricted by weather conditions. While you may have perfect visibility and abundant fish one day the wind can then howl for the next 2-4 weeks curtailing any attempts to get out to the reef and spearfish.



The GBR extends over 2300km from Torres Strait to Bundaberg and if you include the Coral Sea there is over 1 million square km of water and over 2900 reefs and over 600 islands.

All spearfishers aspire of going to the coral sea but for most of us it will remain a distant dream. For many divers in Queensland it is a once in a life chance to get onboard a charter boat and actually visit or hunt for the incredible 'once in a life time' blue water behemoths.

Very few private boats are large enough to travel the 150-400 Nm to the Coral Sea reefs. An estimated 10-15 charter boat trips carrying a total of 100 – 200 spearfishers travel to the Coral Sea each year. However, if spearfishing was totally excluded it would be devastating to the sport as a whole. It would be a massive loss to all spearfishers from Australia and internationally who want the opportunity 'one day' to dive in the deep blue oceanic waters, in a foreign environment and pit their wit, skills, strength and fitness against a truly inspiring and mighty fish.

Scientific and community research

Scientific research supports the view that spearfishers catch a tiny proportion of the fish landed each year - less than one percent compared to that caught by recreational and commercial fishers. Fishery indicators, such as catch per unit effort (CPUE) and average weight, of fish landed by spearfishing have remained stable over time. From records kept during spearfishing competitions, catch rates of 0.09 to 2.57 fish (0.3-3.9kg) per diver hour have been reported.

A recent study of spearfishers in the GBR reported catch rate was 1.08 fish per hour and the mean size of target fish caught by spearfishers was 1.95kg (Frisch et al 2008). The research compared line and spearfishing methods and concluded that, in general, spearfishing was found to be much more selective than line fishing, both in terms of species and size of the fish landed. As a result, the total number of undersized, undesirable or protected fishes captured by spearfishers was far less than the number captured by line fishers.

According to the National Recreational and Indigenous Fishing Survey (2003) the annual effort for diving in Queensland was 46,904 hours in 2001 of which 37,110 hours was Spearfishing.

A recent survey reported that 84% of people agreed that Spearfishing is a sustainable and selective use of marine resources and 89% of people agreed that in general spearfishers are more environmentally conscious than they were in the past.

Recreational fishing Policy on Marine Protected Areas

Recreational anglers recognise the difficult challenge Australian governments face when seeking to achieve a balance between biodiversity conservation and access to marine resources. This is particularly relevant given the current uncertainty that surrounds not only the extent of biodiversity in each marine region, but also the nature and extent of the impact that recreational fishing is having on that biodiversity.

Recreational anglers are not opposed to the creation of Marine Protected Areas. Establishing Marine Protected Areas has the potential to conserve Australia's rich marine biodiversity and ensure a more sustainable future for recreational anglers, and the regional economies that depend on recreational fishing. However, recreational anglers are concerned that no-take MPAs are being created in some areas even when there is little or no evidence that recreational fishing in those areas is having an adverse effect on the marine environment. Application of the 'precautionary principle' (which reverses the 'burden of proof') enables measures to be taken even when there is little or no evidence recreational fishing is having an adverse effect.

This policy has been developed following a Recfishing Research national seminar on MPAs (Recfish Australia, 2007).



4 POLICY

4.1 Recfish Australia will support:

4.1.1 Science - a national representative system of multiple use MPAs in Australian waters based on biodiversity protection and sustainability of fisheries resources where the need has been identified through independent peer reviewed science;

4.1.2 Management - MPAs with simple, practical management plans based on decisions that are risk-based, transparent, informed and timely and with sufficient resources for implementation and future management;

4.1.3 Reviews -MPAs that are subject to review and monitoring to measure the effectiveness and appropriateness of management plans;

4.1.4 Reasonable use - MPAs that provide reasonable use and minimise impacts on existing users.

4.1.5 Unity - a unified approach (national, state and local) and will assist recreational fishers to present well researched, credible alternatives to Government that meet the objectives of MPAs but minimise the impacts on recreational fishers;

4.1.6 Socio-economic consideration - social and economic factors being given equal consideration to environmental factors in the evaluation of MPA proposals;

4.1.7 Compensation - initiatives to enhance recreational fishing where MPAs have a significant impact on recreational fishing;

4.1.8 Alliances - strategic alliances with other groups (commercial fishing, tourism, oil and gas, conservation) where common objectives have been established;

4.1.9 Guideline - the development of guidelines for effective engagement of stakeholders including adequate opportunity for consultation in the development phase in MPA establishment;

4.1.10 Monitoring- recreational fishers to get involved in the collection of baseline data in MPAs including catch and effort, value of fishing to local economies, values, attitudes, opinions, desires of recreational fishers;

4.1.11 Involvement greater involvement by local communities in the development, implementation and management of the MPAs in their localities and a greater sense of 'ownership' of those MPAs;

4.1.12 Locals - using local community knowledge to develop a much better understanding of marine biodiversity within MPAs and the nature, extent and impact of activities within;

4.1.13 Partnerships - creation of partnerships with stakeholders of MPAs to forge a greater effectiveness in management, monitoring, reporting, education and extension of common interest objectives for sustaining biodiversity;

4.1.14 Advisory Groups - establishing a stakeholder advisory group or committee to provide opportunities for the community to engage with government and its agencies on the continuing MPA management processes and direction

of research for increasing the knowledge base; and

4.1.15 Other policies - the policies or positions taken by individual state or territory peak representative

recreational fishing bodies on specific MPAs or MPA programs in the waters of their state or territory.

4.2 Recfish Australia will NOT support:

4.2.1 No take/no go zones - the establishment of any notake/ no go reserves unless it is satisfied there is sound scientific justification;

4.2.2 Discrimination - discrimination against any forms of recreational fishing and exclusion from areas and species that are available to other fishers; or

4.2.3 Unreasonableness - any MPA which will impact on recreational fishing to protect species, elements of biodiversity or natural features that could be protected in areas where there would be less impact on recreational fishing.



Bio-Regional Planning and Outcomes Sought

The AUF supports sustainable and responsible use of our oceans resources.

We understand that the Coral Sea Bio-Regional planning process will result in multiple use zonings including a mixture of protected waters and areas open to fishing.

AUF acknowledges the value in protecting marine biodiversity, especially in the Coral Sea. However, it is not acceptable to simply lock away these areas.

Any closures must be based on solid, peer reviewed, scientific evidence and in consultation with stake holders.

Recreational fishing and fishers (including spearfishers) have no or measurably insignificant impacts on the marine ecosystem and identified conservation and biodiversity values of the Coral Sea.

It is incumbent upon the Australian government through an open consultation process with all stakeholders to identify the risks and threats to these conservation values and then determine how best to minimise the impacts of these risks and threats.

The science behind and decisions needs to be clear and concise and supported by stakeholders as well as peer reviewed by international scientists.

We request that the AUFQ be consulted prior to any further zoning decisions being taken that will impact upon spear-fishers.

Economic impacts and compensation

In view of the loss of access for recreational fishing to over half of the Coral sea region, in line with the Recfish policy that where changes in management of an area disadvantage any stakeholder group that adequate compensation and/or offsets should be made available, we would ask for compensation to be paid by the Commonwealth into a Recreational fishing trust fund. Considering the loss of future access to around 500 000 square kilometres of ocean we believe the compensation figure should be in the order of \$100 million

Save Spearfishing in the Coral Sea

Attached to this submission is a petition and website submissions from:-

www.savespearfishinginthecoralsea.com

Around 427 replies were received from spearfishers across Queensland, Australia and the World. You will note that the overwhelming theme of the comments received is the sustainability of spearfishing activity.

Please also review the videos and news items at:-

<http://www.savespearfishinginthecoralsea.com/apps/videos/>



INITIATIVES OF THE AUSTRALIAN UNDERWATER FEDERATION – SPEARFISHING COMMISSION



The Great Australia Shark Count Project involves community monitoring by divers, fishers, scientists and conservationists and provides the community, managers and decision makers with a valuable data source. It also complements other Commonwealth initiatives for monitoring Grey Nurse Sharks. It is the largest shark monitoring program in history with over 10,000 logged sightings.

http://www.auf-spearfishing.com.au/public/protected_species/protected_species.php

The Coral Sea and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park are important areas for all Australians. These include commercial and recreational fisheries and tourism operators.

The monitoring data from the Great Australian Shark Count is essential baseline information for fishers, divers, conservationists and managers to consider in the context of current and future management.

Read the full report 'Community monitoring of reef sharks in the Coral Sea and Great Barrier Reef, Australia May 2008'

<http://savespearfishinginthecoralsea.webs.com/Coral%20Sea%20Shark%20Report%202008-7.pdf>



Spear Safe is a national AUF initiative to improve safety for Australian spearfishers. The initiative involves some of Australia's top divers and attempts to bring together a cohesive view on safety issues involved with spear-fishing. Spear Safe has the potential to save lives and greatly reduce the number of injuries and fatalities occurring all over Australia associated with spearfishing.

<http://www.spearsafe.webs.com/>





<http://www.savespearfishinginthecoralsea.com/>

Thank you for your interest and feedback on the Coral Sea Commonwealth marine reserve proposal.

