



WELCOME TO THE NEW *AFMA Update*!

Welcome to this very first edition of *AFMA Update*, a new newsletter produced by AFMA, direct to you.

AFMA is striving to improve the way it communicates with our many stakeholders - we want to keep you regularly informed of what is happening at AFMA. This newsletter will be produced fortnightly and sent to you on a regular basis as a new way to keep you aware of any upcoming events, important notices, key issues and decisions. Our flagship publication, *Fishing Future*, will continue to be produced on a quarterly basis.

MESSAGE FROM THE HON. IAN MACDONALD, MINISTER FOR FISHERIES, FORESTRY AND CONSERVATION

I take this opportunity of welcoming all stakeholders in Commonwealth fisheries to this first issue of the *AFMA Update*. The timely and cost-effective communication of fishery management news, information and decisions is one that I have a particular interest in, and this newsletter is part of the process of ensuring that AFMA delivers the best possible service to its clients and stakeholders.

Current economic circumstances make this a difficult time for the Australian fishing industry, a situation well recognised by the Australian Government. With a new and dynamic Board, Managing Director and senior management team and enhanced government funding, I am confident that AFMA is well placed to deliver the best possible fisheries management for Commonwealth fishers. I am pleased with this and other initiatives to improve the image and communication performance of AFMA.

I hope that you will, as I do, look forward to reading future editions of the *AFMA Update*.



MESSAGE FROM THE COMMONWEALTH FISHERIES ASSOCIATION (CFA)

The Commonwealth Fisheries Association welcomes this new initiative of AFMA to improve its communication with stakeholders. CFA acknowledges that effective communication is one of the most difficult challenges facing any organisation, particularly with the diverse range of stakeholders AFMA deals with. To do so without increasing the communications budget to any great extent is to be commended.

In dealing with the fishing industry, it must be recognised that while a large percentage of operators do have access to computers, and do use web-based technology, a lot still prefer their information to come via hard copy. It makes it much easier to take to sea with them to read, and to pass the information around. CFA members look forward to receiving the *AFMA Update* on a regular basis.

Watch out for regular updates from CFA and the Australian Seafood Industry Council in future editions!

NEW, EASY ACCESS TO AFMA

AFMA now has a new direct phone line known as **AFMA Direct** on **1300 723 621**. This number will put you directly in touch during business hours (8.30am-5.30pm) on weekdays from anywhere in Australia, for the cost of a local phone call. Keep this number handy!

AFMA will soon also have the capacity to accept credit card payment for licences and levies up to \$10,000 via the **BPAY** system. We'll let you know as soon as the service is available. We are also investigating options for direct credit card payments via phone and internet banking systems. Stay tuned for more new initiatives in the coming weeks!

AUTO-LONGLINING DECISION TO ENSURE SUSTAINABILITY

AFMA has decided to allow the use of automatic longlining in the the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery (SESSF). The fishing method will be made available to all scalefish hook operators in the fishery however no auto-longlining permits will be granted (other than existing trial permits) until consideration by AFMA later this year of the further management measures required.

In the interim, a number of additional constraints will be applied immediately to trial permit holders including an area closure to significantly reduce the take of breeding school sharks and an immediate constraint on further expansion of the areas in which the method is used. The Board was confident that the impacts of this fishing method could be managed with appropriate management tools including area and time closures and strict catch limits to ensure the ecological sustainability of the fishery. For further information, contact Paula Shoulder on AFMA Direct 1300 723 621.

ARE YOU OVER THE LIMIT? NO OVERCATCH FOR SCALEFISH IN 2005 THE SESSF

The provisional grant process for Statutory Fishing Rights (SFRs) for the 2005 year in the SESSF is about to commence. SFRs are being introduced for the first time in this fishery on 1 January 2005.

All SESSF operators have been advised that AFMA will not be able to adjust for any overcatch of scalefish species after 2004. That means that it is your responsibility to ensure that you are not in an overquota situation (exceeding your quota entitlements) on 31 December 2004. Please don't wait to cover you catch with quota- you should do it immediately!

SEABIRD TRIAL ON THE EAST COAST

A new line weighting trial for the mitigation of seabird bycatch in the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF) has been approved. This trial will differ slightly from previous trials in that industry members will play a major role in monitoring performance, in setting up pathways for information sharing and will be instrumental in developing processes for advising participants of current issues. The trial will be conducted during daylight hours and will use particular gear regimes including a minimum swivel weight of 98 grams to ensure rapid sinking of lines.

INVESTMENT WARNING- SMALL PELAGICS FISHERY

AFMA has written to all Small Pelagics Fishery permit holders, warning about new or further investment in the Small Pelagics Fishery. Effective 6 July, any future investment and catch will not be taken into account in any process for allocating future access rights for Zones B, C and D of the fishery. Inquiries about this warning or the fishery should be directed to the Small Pelagics Fishery Manager, Mr Steve Bolton, on AFMA Direct 1300 723 621, or email steve.bolton@afma.gov.au. AFMA will be issuing a discussion paper during August to begin a consultation process on a range of management options for sustainable development of the fishery.

GET YOUR OVERDUE LOG RETURNS IN!

Please note that log returns for all fishing activity up to 30 June 2004 were due by 15 July 2004. All operators must ensure that any outstanding log returns (including nil returns) are submitted to AFMA immediately. This data is required to produce accurate fishery statistics for the last financial year.

QUOTA- WHAT'S HOT?

The past six months saw Blue Grenadier as the top leased species in the SESS fishery with 5,076 tonnes leased. Flathead was next at 2,935 tonnes leased, followed by spotted warehou (2,231 tonnes), school whiting (1,043 tonnes) and ling (1,032 tonnes). Western Gemfish was the least traded with just 37 tonnes leased this year.

AFMA UPDATE FEEDBACK

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- I would prefer to have AFMA Update emailed to me, not faxed
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