



CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS NOW AVAILABLE FOR LEVIES

AFMA has responded to requests from operators to be able to pay their levies by credit card. When the next levy notices go out, there will now be the option of paying by credit card via the BPAY method, which can be done over the phone or Internet. Just follow the prompts on your levy notice. This is one of a number of improvements being undertaken to make your business with AFMA easier.

ANOTHER ROUND OF COMMENT FOR EASTERN TUNA PLAN

The AFMA Board has decided to make one significant change to the draft Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF) Management Plan. Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT) catch taken by longline in the area of the ETBF during the period 1 January 1992 to 23 December 1996 will be included in the total qualifying catch when assessing whether a permit holder meets the 30 tonne threshold for classification as an 'active' permit. The Allocation Advisory Panel for the ETBF recommended the change to the Board.

The draft Plan will go out for a third round of public comment for four weeks commencing this coming Saturday 21 August. The AFMA Board will welcome submissions on any part of the draft plan but would like stakeholders to focus on providing comments on the significant amendment to the draft plan, being the inclusion of SBT in catch history. The draft Plan is available on AFMA's website at www.afma.gov.au under 'Latest News', and your comments should be provided to the Mgr Eastern Tuna and Billfish, AFMA, Box 7051 Canberra Business Centre ACT 2610, fax (02) 6272 4614, or email easterntuna@afma.gov.au.

Also, the next Eastern Tuna Management Advisory Committee (ETMAC) meeting is coming up on 2 September, and the draft agenda is expected to be up on the AFMA website next week.

VMS FOR THE GILLNET HOOK AND TRAP FISHERY?

AFMA Compliance is involved in a working group looking at the implementation of Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) in the Gillnet Hook and Trap (GHAT) Fishery. VMS is used on a fishery-by-fishery basis to assist in achieving compliance with fishery management arrangements, particularly where fishing activity needs to be restricted to certain areas or zones. The working group will be providing advice to the next GHAT Management Advisory Committee for their consideration.

OPTIONS FOR MANAGING THE NPF

A report by the Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics (ABARE) into possible management strategies for maximising the sustainable economic return from the Northern Prawn Fishery (NPF) has now been released. 'Management Options for the Australian Northern Prawn Fishery, an Economic Assessment' by Roger Rose and Tom Kompas, is now available on the AFMA website, www.afma.gov.au under 'Latest News' and the ABARE website, www.abareconomics.com. Presentations by Dr Kompas will be held in Darwin, Cairns and Brisbane to present the results from this study. Stay tuned for final presentation dates.

HAVE YOU GOT OUTSTANDING LEVIES?

Operators are reminded that if you have entered into an arrangement with AFMA to pay any outstanding levies to please ensure payment is made by the due date or your fishing concession may be suspended or cancelled.

BIGGER PENALTIES FOR ILLEGAL FOREIGN FISHING

There have been a number of changes to fisheries legislation which came into effect recently. The *Fisheries Legislation Amendment (Compliance and Deterrence Measures and Other Matters) Act 2004* and its associated Regulations came into effect on 6 August 2004. It mainly deals with illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing by foreign boats, including increasing the maximum penalty for fishing offences and inclusion of pursuit costs in the security bond for apprehended vessels. You can find the full legislation on the Scaleplus law site at the following web address:

<http://scaleplus.law.gov.au/html/comact/11/6785/rtf/0282004.rtf>.

GREATER CERTAINTY FOR THE SMALL PELAGIC FISHERY

AFMA is currently drafting a management options paper for Zones B, C and D of the Small Pelagic Fishery to ensure the sustainability of the stocks and to ensure a framework to encourage rational development of the fishery. This follows the investment warning issued on 6 July 2004. AFMA is planning to circulate the paper at the end of August and following a comment period of one month, hold a meeting of the SPF working group during the second week in October. AFMA hopes the working group can agree on a recommended long-term management approach for the fishery.

NEW PRAWN SEASON SEES SOME CHANGES

The Northern Prawn Fishery second season is set to commence on 1 September. The coming season brings a couple of changes to the management arrangements in this fishery. These include the prohibition of the 'Bigeye' bycatch reduction device (BRD) and new specifications in relation to cod-end skirts. Anyone seeking further information on these issues, or on the process for developing and testing new BRD designs, should contact Alistair Bain on 1300 723 621 or email alistair.bain@afma.gov.au.

ILLEGAL BOATS GO UP IN FLAMES

Three Indonesian fishing boats- one of which had over 200 shark fins on board when apprehended- were destroyed by burning on Monday this week. The masters of all three vessels were found guilty of fishing illegally within Australia's Fishing Zone earlier this year. When illegal fishing charges are upheld and a bond is not paid, the vessel becomes the property of the Commonwealth and can be destroyed. Since the start of 2004 to date, there have been 87 vessels apprehended for fishing illegally in Australia's northern waters.

MACs AT UPCOMING BOARD MEETING

Did you know that as part of AFMA's commitment to improving communication between the Board and its Management Advisory Committees (MACs), the Board now meets with each MAC at least once a year. The following MACs will meet with the Board at its next meeting in Canberra on 31 August-1 September: South East Trawl (SETMAC), Gillnet Hook and Trap (GHATMAC) and Great Australian Bight (GABMAC). Whenever possible, at least one Board member will also attend MAC meetings as an observer.

MESSAGE FROM THE COMMONWEALTH FISHERIES ASSOCIATION (CFA)

The Commonwealth Fisheries Association Ltd (CFA) was formed in April 2002, and its membership is made up of industry associations from most of the major Commonwealth fisheries. Membership is also open to individuals/companies from smaller fisheries where there are no formal associations. The Association was established as a forum for consideration of issues relating to Commonwealth fisheries, and to represent the views of Commonwealth fishers with government agencies. The CFA is affiliated with ASIC, the national seafood industry body. The CFA meets regularly with AFMA, as a means of improving communication and resolving issues.

Some of the issues on which the CFA have engaged AFMA over the past two years have been:

- Adjustment for displaced fishing effort
- Ongoing review of AFMA's overheads
- Submission to the Review of the Cost Recovery Policy
- MPAs across Commonwealth fisheries
- Auction and tender as a means of allocating access rights
- Proposed amendments to the fisheries legislation

In addition, CFA coordinated a response from industry on a number of issues which were sent to MACs and other stakeholders by AFMA and DAFF for comment. A list of contact details for industry people in Commonwealth fisheries is being compiled for the purpose of circulating issues of interest to industry. If you would like further information on CFA, please contact the President, Geoff Fuller, on 0417 577 910, or the Executive Officer, Gail Richey, on 03 6428 7766 or 0418 620 018 or email trawline@tassie.net.au.

AFMA UPDATE FEEDBACK

Please FAX this page back on (02) 6272 3087

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