



Special Issue
Marine Parks &
Grey Nurse Sharks

ANGLERS'

ACTION



NEWSLETTER OF THE ANGLERS ACTION GROUP (SYDNEY NORTHSIDE) INC

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Marine Parks and Grey Nurse Sharks

President's Message

Increasing access restrictions is perhaps the biggest threat to face recreational anglers in the immediate future, and the biggest threat comes from the national representative system of Marine Park Authorities. The primary purpose of this representative system of MPAs is to establish and manage a comprehensive, adequate and representative system of marine parks to contribute to the long term ecological viability of marine and estuarine systems and to maintain ecological processes and systems and to protect Australia's biodiversity at all levels. The assessment and declaration process for MPAs is based on the biodiversity assessment of particular bio-regions, of which there are five in NSW, being the Tweed-Moreton Shelf, Manning Shelf, Hawkesbury Shelf, Bateman's Shelf and the Two Fold Shelf. NSW currently has 4 marine parks, being Lord Howe Island, Solitary Islands, Jervis Bay, and Cape Byron. There will be more on the way, with Tomaree to Seals Rocks being the next candidate. The Hawkesbury Shelf will be the last bio-region to undergo the selection process.

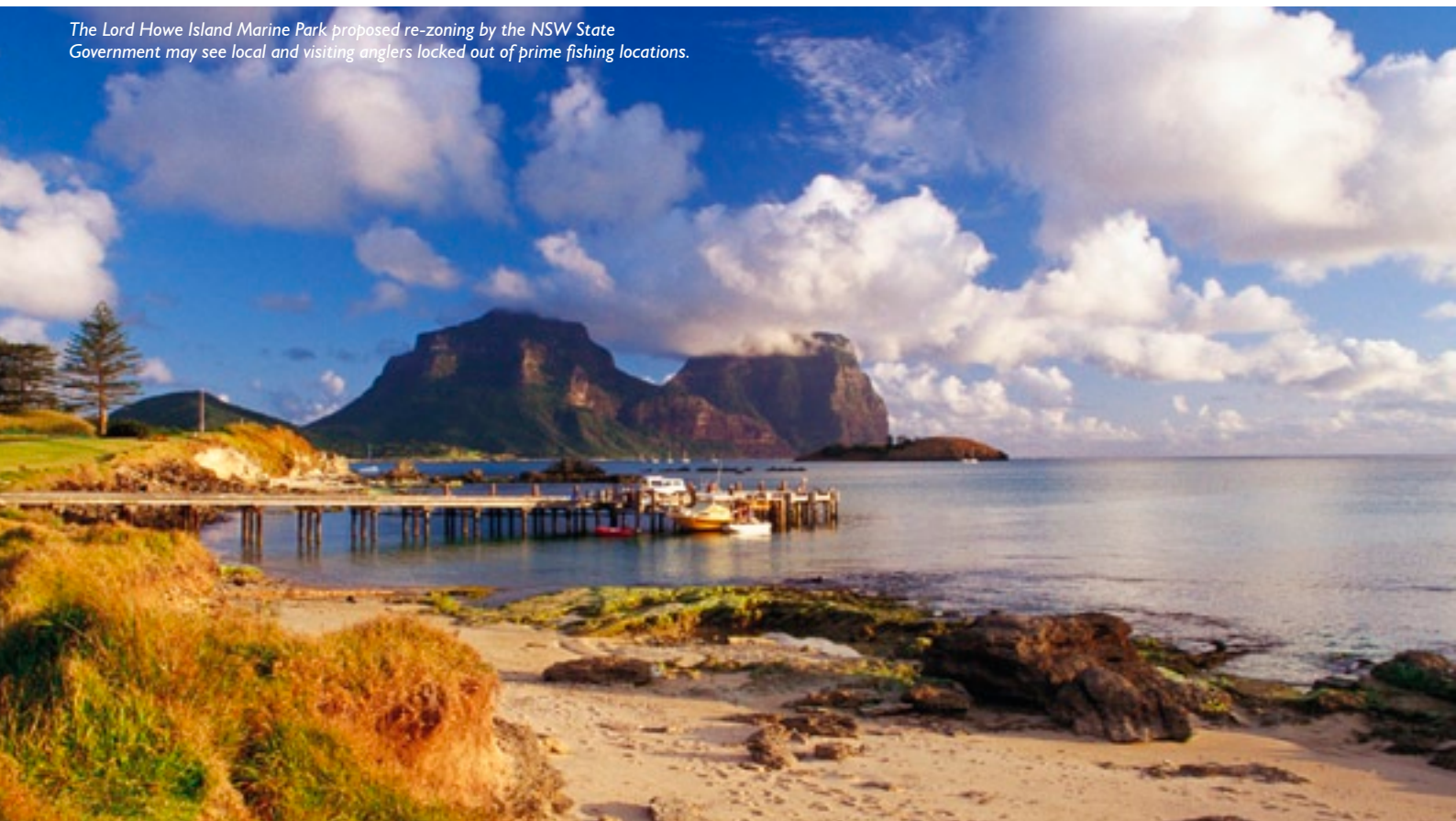
The Greens and environmental groups are pushing for ever increasing percentages of the coast line to be locked away as no-fishing zones, and are using the marine parks process, grey nurse shark critical habitat zones and any other protection areas to push their cause as they find excuses for no-take

zones. This is understandable as it is their agenda, it's out in the open and well publicized. They have a cause and use whatever means to push it.

What is not understandable are the blatant anti-fishing agendas and outcomes that are in operation in many of these processes. NSW is not alone, with similar processes occurring in Queensland with the GBRMPA and also in Western Australia with the latest being Ningaloo Reef Marine Park. The model for the processes used in NSW was based on the GBRMP model as stated in a November 2001 letter to AAG secretary by former Minister Eddie Obeid: "The NSW approach to marine parks is based on the successful Great Barrier Reef Marine Park model. This approach is enshrined in the ground-breaking 1997 NSW Marine Parks Act, which aims to provide high levels of protection for our marine environment whilst also permitting sustainable multiple use within our parks". Yet members of the Federal Government appear to be aware of problems with this "successful model", with a pre-election promise by John Howard to have a review of the GBRMPA operations, and Senator Ian Macdonald stating "But we as a government understand that there are problems, there is a patent unfairness about the access to the recreational fishery in this area". So why isn't the State Government or the Minister of Primary Industries aware of similar unfairness in NSW?

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The Lord Howe Island Marine Park proposed re-zoning by the NSW State Government may see local and visiting anglers locked out of prime fishing locations.





The stated purpose of marine parks is to be “large marine protected areas that are designed to conserve all forms of marine plant and animal species (biodiversity) and provide for a multitude of uses”. For this end the NSW coast is divided into 5 bioregions, and bioregional assessments are made to map scientific and ecological information about the marine environment. This information is used to identify possible candidate sites for marine parks and other marine protected areas.

This is fine in theory, but let’s look at the Minister’s reply to AAG’s request concerning the re-examination of Cabbage Tree Bay as an aquatic reserve based on the scientific justification used for its declaration.

The Minister writes: “The aquatic reserve at Cabbage Tree Bay at Manly was established for the conservation of aquatic biodiversity as part of a network of aquatic reserves in the Sydney area for the protection of rocky shores.

“The identification of these candidate sites was based on guidelines developed for the national representative system of marine protected areas. The key criteria considered for candidate sites included the range of ecosystems found in the site, the ecological importance and uniqueness of the site. Cabbage Tree Bay has five rocky shore habitat types and meets the criteria developed by the steering committee. Other scientific information available was supportive but did not sway the identification process. I confirmed my advice to your secretary last year that Cabbage Tree Bay was specifically declared as a no-take aquatic reserve following strong support from Manly Council as well as the general community”.

And to rub salt into the wound, the Minister also writes in the same letter to AAG: “The NSW Government recognizes the fishing rights of recreational fishers. The Fisheries Management Act 1994 states that, at common law, the public has a right to fish in the sea and in the tidal reaches of all rivers and estuaries”. It appears this right is being eroded, and the erosion is being pushed by a Greens ideology with tacit approval from NSW Fisheries.

In this case, site selection is based on meeting criteria developed by a steering committee, and scientific information was only supportive. As for the declaration of the area as a no-take aquatic reserve it appears that science had nothing to do with the process at all, being dictated by support from the local Council and the general community. And NSW Fisheries obviously sided with the no-take proposal. The three pertinent aspect of this process are: the lack of scientific data used in the declaration process, the lack of support given to recreational anglers by NSW Fisheries and ACoRF, and the lack of support given to the local fishers by those not affected by the closure. These aspects are repeated in all the marine parks declared so far, including the current process at Byron Bay. One just needs to read the letters by Gary Crombie for the process at Lord Howe Island, and Richard Taffs for his comments on Byron Bay and the Solitary Islands, to see the similarities. The anti-fishing agenda for the marine park process is not restricted to NSW, as the GBRMP in Queensland and the current debate over Ningaloo Reef in Western Australia testifies. Locally, recreational and commercial anglers may show displeasure at the process and may be vocal when voicing their concerns, but this is only a local reaction. The majority of unaffected anglers do little to support their past time, and angler apathy is quite well known. Most will sit back and do nothing as access restrictions of all types increase.

There may be justification for exclusion zones for the protection of specific species such as the grey nurse shark, although this was the excuse by the green and environmental groups to hijack the grey nurse protection issue and push for an extended no-take zone at Montague Island. Likewise, there may be good reasons for ‘no-take zones’ in marine parks. But the problem is that the process is easily hijacked by those with an anti-fishing agenda. The only retort fishers have against ideologies is the use of scientific data. But is it? Julian Pepperell in his book *Fish Tales*, quotes Michael LaChat, a Professor of Christian Ethics at The Methodist Theological School in Ohio - “Life negates life, and if we have an obligation to future generations for ensuring biodiversity and ecological well-

being, then we surely ought to be active managers of fisheries too (and not stand passively by). We are part of the natural order. By omission or commission, we are predators as well as conservers”. In other words, we are an integral part of the environment and not merely observers and bystanders, and a well managed and sustainable fishery should be enjoyed. The key is management, not exclusion.

Cape Byron Marine Park: Have your say in the process

The draft plan for the Cape Byron Marine Park has been announced, and includes a three month period for public comment which now closes on 29th November. The proposal, as it stands, calls for 27.5% of the park to be sanctuary zones resulting in closure of many of the fishing spots, but this is increased if other aspects which preclude certain styles of fishing such as no-anchoring zones are included.

The local fishing community is angry, as the demonstration on 18th September showed, and lobbying and submissions have begun to win back what they previously had access to. It appears the standard process for marine parks is first to have severe blanket fishing restrictions followed later with enough minor concessions so anglers feel they have a win. At least the Federal Government is realizing the anti-fishing agenda in the zoning for the GBRMP, as Senator Ian Macdonald said in a pre-election statement “But we as a government understand that there are problems, there is a patent unfairness about the access to the recreational fishery in this area”. So why aren’t the State Government or the Minister of Primary Industries aware of this fact in NSW?

AAG member Richard Taffs is the recreational angler representative on the Solitary Islands Marine Park Advisory Committee, and as such has had experience with the marine park process and what is involved. Following the announcement of the Cape Byron Marine Park, AAG was in contact with Bruce Mahoney of the Richmond Valley AAG, and Bruce’s comments were passed on to Richard. This prompted Richard to email us the following, expressing his concerns at the anti-fishing agenda of the Cape Byron Marine Park as it now stands:

“Phil,

Good to see Cape Byron Marine Park zoning issues being brought to the attention of AAG members by Bruce. I’m very interested in what happens there as both a regular visitor to Byron and because what happens in one marine park sets a precedent for what might happen elsewhere. I represent recreational anglers on the Solitary Islands Marine Park Advisory Committee, but as well as our local issues there’s a bigger picture with more marine parks likely to be established along the coast.

“The proposed regulation that really concerns me with Cape Byron is in 5.3 Anchoring and mooring: “anchoring is not permitted on any reef within the Marine Park”. This would put an end to some of the best aspects of recreational fishing - for example, anchoring up and floating lightly weighted baits back for snapper, mackerel etc. The Solitary Islands regulation is “no anchoring in any Sanctuary Zone” plus defined “no anchoring areas” over “significant coral communities” and that is a workable compromise. This is an issue worth fighting for. Looking at Bruce’s submission and the draft zoning, he’s had a couple of wins, especially with some 100m zones opened up along the beaches to permit beach fishing. It’s the off-shore fishers who have been hit particularly hard with the no-anchoring reg and over-representation of sub-tidal reef (and rocky shoreline) in Sanctuary Zones.

“Though for beach fishers, the Main Beach-Clarkes Beach inclusion in a Sanctuary Zone is ludicrous. This would be the most used beach in NSW outside of Bondi and Manly, with throngs of beach goers, surfers, commercial activities, sand castle sculptor, even an ice cream vendor driving up and down - but you won’t be able to wander down from the caravan park with the kids and have a fish. It needs to be managed for human activities - no self respecting pair of oyster catchers

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would be seen there. Will beach cleaning by Council be permitted, will it affect use of the beach for surf carnivals and commercial operators, will seaweed removal by Council be permitted when it becomes a problem, shoreline recession stabilisation work allowed etc? Why ban low impact beach fishing for a couple of travelling species yet permit all this other activity?

"Submissions on the Draft Zoning Plan close 12th November* Marine Parks can bring benefits if they are properly structured and managed as multi-use parks with a fair go for recreational fishers. However the Cape Byron proposal as it stands is anti-fishing and this needs to be clearly pointed out to the policy makers.

signed: Richard Taffs"

* The closing date for submissions has been extended to 29 November 2004. The draft plan and submission form can be downloaded from MPA's web site: <http://www.mpa.nsw.gov.au/cbmp/cbmp-zoning-plan.htm>

Cape Byron Marine Park proposal leads to formation of Richmond Valley Anglers Action Group

Proposed in 2002, and with original submissions closing on 26 September 2003, the draft plan for the Cape Byron Marine Park was announced on 6 August 2004, with public comments to close on 29 November. The CBMP extends over 40km of coast line from Lennox Head in the south to Brunswick Head in the north, and encompassing over 22,700 hectares. It consists of four types of management zones: sanctuary zones being the highest level of protection where no form of fishing is allowed; habitat protection where high impact commercial fishing activities are restricted; general use zones; special purpose zones. 6,080 hectares or 27.5% of the park are sanctuary zones.

The draft management plan was developed by the Cape Byron Marine Park Advisory Committee following consultation with industry groups, representatives from stakeholder groups, and public submissions. And what was the breakdown of the original 3000 submissions?

To quote Ian Macdonald from Hansard 1/9/04:

"I advise the House that about one-third of respondents indicated recreational and/or commercial fishing as their primary activity in the marine park. Twenty-four per cent of respondents indicated that recreational fishing was their primary activity, and another ten per cent indicated they were involved in commercial fishing. A further ten per cent nominated environment and conservation activities, and a further five per cent nominated beach going. Other activities nominated by respondents included aquaculture, charter operations, dog walking and horse riding, four-wheel driving, research, boating, diving, snorkelling, spearfishing, surfing, swimming, walking and running, and whale and dolphin watching".

It was the result of these consultations that prompted the formation of the Richmond Valley Anglers Action Group. The original submission of the RVAAG accepted the fact that sanctuaries zones were inevitable, but has this been turned on them? From the web site of the National Parks Association: "On a positive note, the Cape Byron Marine Park submissions reflected a recent positive shift in attitudes towards marine sanctuaries. The fishing sector have previously been unsupportive of sanctuaries yet their submission for this park suggested that twelve percent be zoned in this way. Although still substantially below scientific recommendations, this is a great step forward from a group who previously were totally opposed to the concept".

As Lindsay points out below, its not the percentage of area that are sanctuary zones, it's their location over prime fishing spots! The conservation groups were

pushing for a minimum of fifty percent no-take sanctuaries, and were hoping for eighty percent. With 27.5% of the park proposed to be sanctuary zones, it is the recreational angler and spearfisher that are the hardest hit of any user group, but the local anglers are being told that recreation angling is the winner. It's a bit like someone pissing in your boots and then trying to tell you it's raining!

The following is a recent letter from Lindsay Doust from the Richmond Valley AAG to the Editor of the "Northern Rivers Echo" on the marine park proposal.

Lindsay writes:

"Mr. Dailan Pugh continues to promote the premise that of 22,087 hectares in the Cape Byron Marine Park, only 6000 are fully protected. The crunch is not 6000 hectares. Recreational anglers will happily give up 6000 hectares, but not when they are the prime fishing spots that will be off limits if the proposal as it stands is finally adopted. Of all the park users, anglers will be the most adversely affected.

"The Richmond Valley Anglers Action Group represents the interests of club and non-club anglers and is looking forward to negotiating with the Marine Park Authority prior to the closing date for submissions on 30 November 2004. The basis of our negotiations will be that the present proposals are unacceptable. We can only assume that Mr. Pugh is playing political games when he claims that anglers are the winners in the Marine Park and that we have achieved all or more than was asked for.

My submission and that of our group were far from extreme, accepting the reality of the park and willing to admit some areas would have restrictions placed upon them, but in no way reflecting at all the proposals as they exist in the present document.

Lindsay Doust
President, RVAAG"

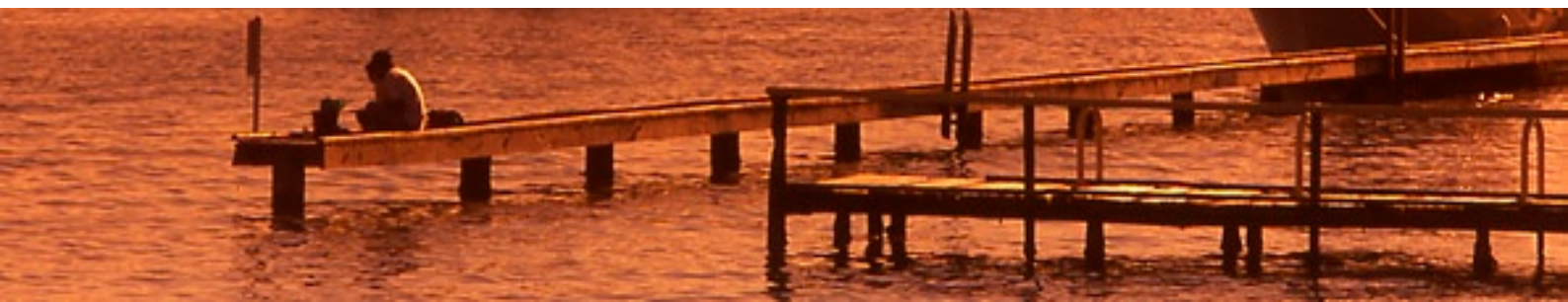
Fairy Penguins: Double standards?

Figures leaked from the National Parks and Wildlife Service to a Manly councillor and published in the Manly Daily, show a sharp decline in Manly's fairy penguin population, despite the implementation of conservation measures that include fishing and boating restrictions in the declared critical habitats during the penguins' breeding season between 1 July and 28 February each year. The published figures of the NPWS's monitoring program were 68 pairs of penguins in 1998/99, 70 pairs in 1999/00, 74 pairs in 2000/01, 64 pairs in 2001/02, 55 pairs in 2002/03 and 49 pairs in 2003/04.

The article also said the "NPWS refused to release the monitoring figures saying they are part of an internal document not to be made public" as monitoring reports "only show isolated results from a year and do not look at the big picture". The article also quoted an NPWS statement into the decline "Now more conservative monitoring methods have been adopted since 2002 to avoid double counting of birds and counting of non-productive burrows".

Whether there is a decline in the fairy penguin numbers or not, the councillor points out that "It is the State Government that is pushing ahead with a hotel and tourist development at the Quarantine Station in the penguins' critical habitat. A major concern consistently raised by environmentalists is that the proposed ferry service will motor straight through the little penguins critical habitat".

Surely this proposed ferry service must be subject to the same restrictions faced by boaters for the conservation of the fairy penguin population? If the ferry service is permitted despite boating restrictions in the critical habitat zones to save the fairy penguins, then fishers and boaters have every right to feel victimized. Or are there other agendas at play and the prime concern is not for the well being of the fairy penguin population?



Grey Nurse Shark: Population estimates explained and discussed

The Minister has yet to announce the second discussion paper into measures for further protection of the grey nurse shark. It is not known what options are being presented by NSW Fisheries scientists or management, nor how much information will be presented in the discussion paper, but the Minister has recently stated that the management strategy options he is considering are not geographic based.

The following is AAG's appraisal of the population data available, and is centered on the apparent discrepancy between the observed number of juveniles and what is expected from the figures given by Fisheries research. This discrepancy indicates either a reproductive failure or population separation based on age, and the reason for this discrepancy needs to be identified for any sensible management decisions to be made.

Fisheries scientists used the Peterson mark/recapture method when estimating the grey nurse shark population along the east coast of Australia (EA Project 30786/87). This is a fairly standard and robust method used for estimating the size of animal populations. The procedure involves capturing a number of individuals, marking and releasing them, and later recapturing to check for marked individuals. In the case of the grey nurse, the individuals are tagged rather than captured and marked. The variables in the estimating equation are:

M = the number of individuals marked in the first sample.
C = the total number of individuals "captured" in the second sample.
R = that number of individuals in the second sample that are "marked".

One of three equations can be used in the population estimate:

- i) The Biased Estimator: $N = CM/R$
- ii) The Unbiased Estimator: $N = ((M+1)(C+1)/(R+1)) - 1$
- iii) The Unbiased Estimator with replacement accounted for:
 $N = M(C+1)/(R+1)$

The first is the commonly used equation but it can produce a bias in the estimation of the population. It is generally applicable if (M+C) is greater than N, and also the number of recaptures N needs to be greater than 7. The second is the corrected Petersen's formula to produce an unbiased population estimate. The third equation is called the Chapman modification to the Peterson equation, and is used when the removal of sampled individuals is not feasible.

NSW Fisheries estimate of between 410 and 460 of the grey nurse shark population along the east coast of Australia was based on a survey during 2003. In the original "capture" or "mark" process 24 sharks were tagged at 5 recognised GNS aggregation sites. The follow-up "re-capture" or "resight" survey between 14-29 June sighted 16 tagged sharks from a total of 313 sharks.

Hence, C = 313, M = 24 and R = 16, and substituting these into equation i) gives the population estimate N of 469 individuals, into equation ii) gives an unbiased estimate N of 460 individuals and into equation iii) gives an estimate N of 443 individuals.

Population estimates of the grey nurse has implications in management strategies, even if the population is in a state of decline as appears to be the case with

studies in population dynamics of the grey nurse. A deterministic robust model to determine quasi-extinction (where no. females < 50), and losing 12 sharks per year to incidental catch was used. The number of females is the rate-limiting step, 150 females gives birth to 150 pups every 2 years, ie 75 pups per year.

Six scenarios were used in the modelling: population of 300, 1000 and 3000 for mortality rate of 1 per month and also at 2 per month (of which 75% were female), so the modeling was done on females with mortality rates of 9/year and 18/year. With a female mortality rate of 9/year, quasi-extinction is reached in 13-16 years with a population of 300 sharks, in 84-95 years with a population of 1000, and in 289-324 years if the population is 3000. If the mortality is 18/year, then quasi-extinction is reached in 6-8 years, 45-53 years and 173-200 years for populations of 300, 1000 and 3000 sharks. It is obvious that different management strategies would need to be employed to arrest the



declining population, and these strategies would be dependent upon the size of the initial grey nurse population. Hence the importance of knowing the size of the grey nurse population.

A paper by Ottway and Burke (EA Project No. 30786/87 June 2004) called "Mark-recapture population estimate and movements of Grey Nurse Sharks" gives an account of the Petersen mark/recapture estimates for the east coast grey nurse shark population.

This paper provides a comprehensive discussion of the Petersen technique as applied to the grey nurse population. It also assesses the validity of the assumptions and why the

estimates are representative and unbiased. From this paper: "The mark-recapture/re-sighting estimates suggest that the total population of the Grey Nurse Sharks (i.e. all individuals irrespective of size and sexual maturity) in coastal waters of SE Australia is between 410 and 461 individuals with a maximum 95% confidence value of 766 individuals. However, the total number of sexually mature adult Grey Nurse Sharks is between 161 and 194 individuals with a maximum of 95% confidence value of 321 individuals". And: "Given what is currently known about Grey Nurse Sharks in SE Australia, if management actions do not increase the shark's survival, this population may well be extinct before the end of the 21st century".

NSW Fisheries contend that the impact of scuba divers on the behaviour of grey nurse sharks is negligible, and this is based on a study by a PhD student from Southern Cross University on the sharks at Julian Rocks. But, there have apparently been two studies on the behaviour of grey nurse sharks by scuba divers at the Aliwal Shoals in South Africa. These have incorporated the use of underwater video cameras positioned in aggregation sites to visually observe what the sharks do upon the arrival of boats and divers. Though results have not been published, what has been gleaned is that it appears that up to 80% of the sharks move to other locations when dive boats and divers arrive, and the conclusion reached is that movement and noise do affect their behaviour. This also raises the question of the assumption of randomness in the Petersen mark/recapture sampling program of NSW Fisheries, as if true it means individuals do not have the same chance of being tagged.

This is supported by the fact that the grey nurse sharks moved away from the critical habitat zone at Magic Point, Maroubra, for 5 months early in 2004. With up to 50 divers at the site at any one time on weekends, this indicates at the very

least that self-regulation does not work with the eco-dive industry and that the presence of divers does have an effect on the behaviour of the sharks. Anecdotal evidence from spearfishers and some scuba divers indicate that grey nurse do, at times, exhibit arching and tail cracking, both warning signs of aggression in the grey nurse. There have been several reported incidents of grey nurse sharks attacking spearfishers and divers, the last being at Byron Bay on 4th August 2004.

From the population estimates given by Ottway and Burke (2004), plus the data presented at the grey nurse shark forum eg the age for sexual maturity now accepted by NSW Fisheries, it is calculated that there are about 250 juveniles, 75% or 187 of which are females. It also implies that of the, say, 175 adults, then 131 are mature females, and these should give birth to 2 pups every 2 years, or 65 pups per year. Over 9-10 years (Fisheries own accepted figure for the age of sexual maturity), there should be a minimum of 585 juveniles less say 85 for incidental mortality of juveniles over a 9-10 year period, giving 500 juveniles in the population, instead there is observed half that number. An obvious shortfall between what's expected and what's observed. This is indicative of either a population separation not detected by Fisheries, or a reproductive failure. If the latter, then question is: what is the cause of this reproductive failure?

The less than expected number of pups observed in surveys has also been commented on by Ottway and Parker, February 2000, in "The Biology, ecology, distribution, abundance and identification of marine protected areas for the conservation of threatened Grey Nurse Sharks in south east Australian Waters" – NSW Fisheries Final Report Series No. 19 (ISSN 1440-3544). In referring to 3 coastwide surveys undertaken in November and December 1998, March/April and June/July in 1999, Ottway and Parker state:

"The number of pups observed (i.e. 6 – 14) was less than expected (i.e. 34 – 42) based on the numbers of reproductively mature females. This is cause for concern because: (1) it suggests that the pups were not observed using the existing sampling techniques, or (2) it is possible that a reproductive failure may have occurred giving an average fecundity of less than 1 pup per annum: a rate that is clearly insufficient to sustain a population yet alone enable it to recover".

Management of the grey nurse will be dependent upon Fisheries research. To date population studies by NSW Fisheries has indicated that: incidental mortality is about 12 per year, but could be double this figure; the population is estimated to be about 410-460; the population is in a state of decline, irrespective of the numbers used (300 to 3000) – it just takes longer to reach quasi-extinction; of critical importance in management is to reduce the incidental mortality, and of prime importance are the juvenile females.

Any argument against the fisheries population research will need to be based on flaws in the Fisheries research or sampling, or on other independent research which may or may not support the Fisheries research. This independent verification will not happen with the support of NSW Fisheries nor ACoRF, so management plans will be based solely on the work of NSW Fisheries. An independently funded research program into the presence of grey nurses at 'non-recognised' sites is currently underway. AAG has learnt that unconfirmed reports from a 2 week survey period between Crowdy Head and Moreton Island about 100 sharks were sighted, and the majority of which were juveniles. If this is the case, then this research needs funding from moneys from the recreational fishing trust.

One aspect that has not been looked at is the apparent discrepancy between the observed number of juveniles and what is expected from the figures given by Fisheries research. This discrepancy indicates either a reproductive failure or population separation based on age, and the reason for this discrepancy needs to be identified for any sensible management decisions to be made. A population

is in a state of decline only when the mortality rate exceeds birth rate. The current research and management restrictions are concentrating on reducing the mortality, but there should also be examination for the reasons of the apparent reproductive failure resulting in a fecundity rate that is "clearly insufficient to sustain a population yet alone enable it to recover". It might just be that the grey nurse population along the east coast is on a self-destruct course.

Despite the claims by NSW Fisheries, there is mounting evidence that boats and divers do have an effect on the behaviour of the grey nurse, and this could be a reason for the apparent reproductive failure. If Fisheries, Conservationists and the Dive Charter Industry are so concerned about the survival of the east coast grey nurse population, then they should be pushing for total exclusion zones in these critical habitat sites where there is to be no interaction with grey nurses by any group, except for scientific study. This is the approach taken on land with the Wollomi Pine, so why not with the grey nurse shark?

Unalienated Crown Land and Angel Rings

Following the publication of Anglers' Action #37 (March 2004) AAG had correspondence with Pittwater Council regarding the article on the installation by ANSA of angel rings on Sydney's northern beaches. Pittwater Council emphasized the complex nature of unalienated Crown land and the reasons Council is not prepared to accept costs and management responsibilities for Crown land (where the angel rings installation was proposed) over which Council has no responsibilities. Pittwater Council also enclosed a document called "The Boundaries of Ignorance" which discusses the history and issues of unalienated Crown land that was presented to the College of Law in March 26, 2003. AAG consequently retracts all criticism of Pittwater Council in that article as it was premature and unwarranted.

AAG was in contact with ANSA at the time, and learned the following:

- (1) Resulting from Manly Council's response to the installation of angel rings, ANSA approached the NPWS and negotiations were promising. AAG was also told that generally ANSA had a mixed response from NPWS, being dependent upon local management of specific parks.
- (2) Resulting from Pittwater Council's response, ANSA will seek ownership and responsibility from the Department of Lands for each location in a council LGA.
- (3) Warringah Council was agreeable to the installation and these could be done within six weeks.
- (4) The Dept of Lands were expressing concerns with public liability issues, and wanted indemnification from ANSA.
- (5) NSW Fisheries were expressing concerns but these issues had been resolved.

Recent events in regard to angel rings include:

- (1) The NPWS is 100% on-side and has signed a letter giving ANSA permission to install rings within National Parks.
- (2) There is now no hindrance to the installation of rings within National Parks.
- (3) Manly and Warringah Councils are supportive of the concept, but Manly is still waiting a ruling from the Department of Lands.

The Department of Lands have yet to give a ruling on management responsibility of unalienated Crown lands, and it is this ruling that will determine who has responsibilities for care, control and management of sites located in unalienated Crown lands before installation of angel rings will continue in platforms under control of various councils.

A complex process, but ANSA are to be congratulated for persevering on a project that will save lives on the rock platforms.



The draft zoning plan for Lord Howe Island Marine Park: a local has his say

AAG Vice President, Warwick Gibson recently received an email from Gary Crombie in Lord Howe Island. Gary obviously has an axe to grind, being a local sportsfishing charter operator. But he does make a good point re fishermen being left out of the process and sensible management rather than lock-outs being a good alternative. Lord Howe Island is the Greens' 'teacher's pet' and they've been pushing for fishing bans for as long as most long time visitors to the Island can remember.

Gary says:

"Hi Warwick,

Thanks for your interest. Unfortunately submissions on the draft zoning plan have closed but if there are any ears you can still whisper in then all help appreciated. I have attached a copy of my submission re zoning to give you some background, and a copy of an email forwarded to me by a friend that has been circulating on the mainland to get enough submissions to counter the local submissions against extensive sanctuary zoning.

"In essence they are looking at around 35% Sanctuary Zoning in State waters around the island. You are familiar with Lord Howe and have seen how little fishing pressure the waters are subject to and how little damage has been done to the area. The Government is saying that they need to set these areas aside as representative unfished areas (even though they have been fished for the last 150 years) for future comparisons and as representative untouched areas of all habitat types in the Park. This is the full extent of their scientific justification.

"Basically they asked for any scientist with a half baked interest in even the most insignificant and unthreatened organism to submit their wish list and then used that as justification as to why they need such a large area of sanctuary zoning. Basically they are forcing fishermen out into Commonwealth waters where "out of sight, out of mind" and the State doesn't have to worry. There is also a very strong bias to dive operations which is hardly surprising as the man drafting the plan is a diver not a fisherman. Interesting to note that anchor damage is offered as a major reason for excluding fishos from a large area around the Admiralty Islands, but this area coincidentally happens to be an area heavily frequented by dive operators who will continue to be allowed to anchor there!

"Submissions on the draft have been closed, countered, and correlated, and not surprisingly the man doing this (who also drafted the plan) has managed to interpret the data to totally agree with the NSW Government's position. The Lord Howe Island Advisory Committee drafted a very reasonable Zoning plan but the Government didn't feel that this met their commitment to the Greens so they threw it out and directed their Marine Park manager to come up with something more extensive. At this stage I resigned from the process. It's interesting to note that three people have left the committee since its inception and they were all fishermen. They were not replaced. This leaves one fisherman on the committee and he is a quasi-commercial fisherman who fishes almost exclusively in the Commonwealth fishing zone and so is unaffected by the State proposals.

"This probably sounds like the usual "they are out to get me" paranoia but I can assure you they are out to get me, along with every other fisherman who wants to fish one of the last frontier fishing spots on the Australian East Coast. This isn't just my opinion. 99% of local fishermen consider the Sanctuary Zoning to be too extensive. I challenge anyone to get the local fishos together and put this to a vote, regardless of the mathematical gymnastics performed by the Marine Park manager when "interpreting" the submissions received on the matter.

"This will have an impact on the local community and economy, one that has looked after both the marine and terrestrial environment for the past 150 years. It will also have an impact on the fishermen of NSW and Australia as a whole by removing yet another of our few remaining top line fishing destinations, instead of sensibly managing them. The Lord Howe Island community has sensibly managed our fishery for the past 150 years. Our reward is that the NSW Government will take our fishery away to preserve it as an example of all the

Become a member of the **ANGLERS ACTION GROUP** and contribute to the future of recreational fishing in NSW

We aren't a fishing club and we don't hold fishing competitions. We do stand up for your rights and act on your behalf when issues emerge that threaten your future in recreational fishing.

You can contribute to a healthy recreational fishery by becoming a member, have input into AAG discussions and get informed with issues of the ANGLERS ACTION throughout the year.

Fill out this form and send a \$10.00 cheque or money order to:

The Secretary, AAG, PO Box 630 Narrabeen NSW 2101

(for further info contact Warwick Gibson 02 9460 6444 bus. hours)

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Receive the ANGLERS ACTION sent by email or post. The advantages of email is that you get it in full colour, plus you can email the information onto others.

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things the State used to have before the Government allowed them to get stuffed by development and commercial interests! If you have any further questions you know how to reach me.

Thanks,

Gary Crombie"

Editor: What has always been evident at pristine marine locations such as Lord Howe Island is that dive charter operators want to have the dive sites to themselves and appear to be aligning themselves to the Greens in the push for more parks. No sinkers landing on their noggins while they earn a dollar nursemaiding the 'eco-divers'. (eg South West Rocks, Batemans Bay, Julian Rocks etc etc.). There is also the issue of the dodgy science used to implement the Lord Howe Island Marine Park and that it's a NSW Government agenda, not a decision based on sound research. It's reminiscent of the Minister's response at AAG's concerns into the scientific principals used at Cabbage Tree Bay.

ANGLERS'

ACTION

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