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Minister releases recreational fishing changes for vulnerable West Coast demersal fish

Fisheries Minister Jon Ford announced proposed changes to the fishing rules for West Coast demersal species to reduce catch by 50%. Changes applying from 15 October include closed seasons for vulnerable species, reduced bag and boat limits, increased minimum size and voluntary log books. Government has committed \$5.3million in additional research funds and \$7.8m over 4 years for education and compliance.

<http://www.fish.wa.gov.au/docs/pub/WestCoastDemersal/management.php>

Recfishwest cautious about flow on effect from long closed seasons

Recfishwest described the new management package for recreational anglers on the West Coast a necessary step in the right direction in the interest of resource sustainability. The timing and length of closed seasons are critical to ensure sustainability targets are met with the least possible impact on enjoyment of fishing and businesses. Including more demersal species should be considered a realistic alternative to extended closures.

<http://www.recfishwest.org.au/MediaStateWestCoastRec2008.htm>

Contract awarded for Woodman Point boat ramp upgrade

Work will begin later in June to double the number of boat launching ramps by adding a four lane boat ramp with two holding jetties and a disabled access pontoon. Completion is expected in early September.

<http://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/RecentStatements.aspx?ItemId=130350>

More monitoring wanted for Cockburn Sound

Businesses in the Kwinana Industrial Area have urged the WA State Government to increase funding for environmental monitoring of the Cockburn Sound waterway. The Cockburn Sound Management Council was established in 2000 to coordinate environmental planning and management of the waters of Cockburn Sound, the most intensively used marine embayment in WA, plus Owen Anchorage and their catchment areas.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/06/18/2277921.htm> and <http://csmc.environment.wa.gov.au/>

Virus breakout and spread panics abalone trade

Authorities have admitted there is little they can do to stop the spread of the virus and protect the industry from widespread and devastating losses. It is impossible to remove a virus, so let the virus run its course, burn itself out and let the stocks recover behind it. The industry wants a federally enforced quarantine to ban all human water based activity in the affected area. Cleaning and disinfection protocols have been developed.

<http://www.growfish.com.au/content.asp?contentid=11357> and

<http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/WebPages/SCAN-6ZX7S5?open>

Rio Tinto supports community fishing education

Fisheries Volunteers will be taking the sustainable fishing message across the Pilbara region during July and August with their new community education trailer donated by Rio Tinto Iron Ore. Inland areas where boat ownership is high will be included with mine site talks, shopping centre displays and school talks, and show people why it is so important to "Fish for the Future" and what responsible recreational fishers need to know.

<http://www.fish.wa.gov.au/docs/media/index.php?0000&mr=558>

\$197,500 penalty for illegal netting

A commercial fisherman's action in fishing for prawns near Shark Bay with illegally altered nets has cost him nearly \$197,500 in fines, penalties and confiscated items. Commercial nets are required to be fitted with Fish Exclusion Devices to minimise the catch of undersized and juvenile fish in these important fish nursery areas.

<http://www.fish.wa.gov.au/docs/media/index.php?0000&mr=561>