Recreational Fishing Havens: Promoting harmony between recreational and commercial fishers?

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A NSW recreational fishing fee

- Fee introduced in 2001 to raise revenue to improve recreational fishing
- Fees placed in Trusts
- Creation of recreational fishing only areas to be funded by fee through re-allocation and paying compensation
RFH selection

• Distribution of regional papers with buyout options
• Local community forums
• Invitation for public submissions
• Havens selected based on response and demand
Target fisheries

- Estuary general fishery
  - 600 fishers in 100 estuaries in 2006
  - mesh and haul netting

- Estuary prawn trawl
  - operates in 4 estuaries (5 before buyout)
Buyout process

- Commercial fishers invited to register
- No guarantee for inclusion
- Payment offer based on:
  
  ‘Twice the average value of personal catches over the best 3 consecutive years between 1986 and 1999’

- Payments ranked to ensure value for money
Results

- 30 havens created in 2002
- Botany Bay and Lake Macquarie
- 10 compulsory buyouts required for Botany Bay
## Total businesses bought out

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>No of businesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>No of businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estuary General</td>
<td>823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estuary Prawn Trawl</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean Prawn Trawl</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean Trap &amp; Line</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean Hauling</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Boat registrations surrendered

- 468 boats
- 399 general purpose boats
Mesh nets surrendered

- 1,201 registrations
- Total length = 535km
- Most >700m in length
Haul nets surrendered

- 481 registrations
- Most < 300m in length
- Some > 1km
## Total buyout expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Buyout, RRD Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$1,932,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$499,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$2,253,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$5,668,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>$4,127,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3,198,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>$869,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$18,546,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Are havens effective?

- 1 year creel surveys of recreational fishers in Lake Macquarie and Tuross Lake ‘before’ and almost 2 years ‘after’ creation of RFHs
- Marked changes between years
# Lake Macquarie survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>% change (number)</th>
<th>*Change in mean (cm)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dusky flathead</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailor</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sand whiting</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpeter whiting</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Also increases for bream, flounder, sand mullet, squid, blue swimmer crabs
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fish Type</th>
<th>% change (number)</th>
<th>Change in mean (cm)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dusky flathead</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sand whiting</td>
<td>835</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bream</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sand mullet</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Verdict of 30 havens

- Quality and quantity of most recreational species has increased
- Buyout intended to ensure no shift of effort into unclosed estuaries

But........

- 20 fishers re-entered the industry
Lesson learned

- Re-entry restrictions required
The future?

- Additional buyouts proposed but no closed areas
- Recreational funds available, commercial loan repayable through a levy
- **Commercial aim:** Structural adjustment
- **Recreational aim:** Resource re-allocation
- Re-entry restrictions required
- Based on sound guidelines