The journey towards an explicit resource sharing arrangement for the Tasmanian Rock Lobster Fishery

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Outline

• overview of the Tasmanian Rock Lobster Fishery
• historical perspective
• the process to develop a resource sharing arrangement
• the final outcomes
• the challenges
Where is Tasmania?
Fishery overview

• Major Tasmanian Fishery
• Commercial sector, $45 million, exports
• Highly popular, iconic recreational fishery
• State has jurisdiction out to 200 miles
• Species is the Southern Rock Lobster *Jasus edwardsii*
Overview cont

- Commercial sector has 315 licenses, approx 240 vessels fish
- Commercial catch is highly regulated
- TACC is 1523.5 tonnes
- Recreational participation is not limited
- Growth in participant numbers and catch
- 16,000 participants, catch estimate 2003 - 155 tonnes
- Recreational trigger point in management plan 10% of commercial catch
Governance of Fishery

• Minister makes the final decision
• objectives under the Act
• advice to Minister from:
  – Department
  – Crustacean Fisheries Advisory Committee
  – Recreational Fisheries Advisory Committee
• Peak bodies
  – Tasmanian Rock Lobster Fishermen’s Association
  – Tasmanian Association for Recreational Fishing
Historical perspective

• Recreational sector
  – no major changes to key management arrangements
  – participation has doubled in last 10 years

• Commercial sector
  – moved from input controls to and ITQ system in 1998
  – pot limits and seasons

• 2002 - 1st rec/com working group
  – MOU on common issues
  – “brick wall” on concept of formal sharing

• 2003 Trigger point reached- rec catch 10% of TACC
Perceptions

- Commercial sector
  - had taken a “lot of pain” restructuring under ITQ’s
  - promise of greater resource security and potential to increase TACC as stocks rebuilt
  - unregulated sector v highly regulated sector
  - concerns about flow of future benefits

- Recreational sector
  - believed current limits were adequate
  - greater concerns about increasing commercial effort inshore
The Process

• 2004
  – new rec/com working group with explicit task
  – developed a draft resource sharing framework
  – new framework considered by FAC’s and Peak bodies
Draft Framework Principles

• TAC for whole fishery
• explicit share to each sector
• initial allocation based on current catches
• buffer for recs to cover increased participation
• allocation of 90% commercial 10% recreational
• future TAC increases or decreases to be shared in proportion to overall share
• 5 yearly review of shares
• monitoring of catches
2005 - major review of management plan
- 1st public consultation phase “Issues paper”
- feedback indicted support for key principles
- RecFAC - new concept of guaranteed minimum
- Rec Peak body - no explicit share or 30%
- 2nd public consultation phase
- submissions considered by FAC’s and Dept
- report to the Minister
The Result

• Minister supported framework without amendment
• Gazetted last week

• Final arrangement
  – from 2007/8 Minister can set a TAC for fishery
  – If TAC is 1700t +, then 90% 10% split
  – If TAC is <1700t, then rec sector has 170t, remainder to com sector
  – plan expires in 5 years
  – rec catch assessed every 2 years
The Challenges

• the political debate is yet to occur
• good stocks provide best opportunity
• managing expectations about negotiating a deal within the working group
• communication with 16,000 rec fishers
• how to explain “big picture” issues why is a sector limit necessary
• how to focus on the basis for allocation not % split
• resource sharing is not a significant control alone, but needs to be addressed before other rec/com issues