

Catching Fish for Everyone!



MEDIA RELEASE

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FISHERMEN ANGRY AT GBRMPA GREEN ZONE CLAIMS

FISHERMEN are angry at claims by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) about benefits of no-fishing "green zones" in the Marine Park.

Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA) President Mr Neil Green said his telephone had been "running hot" and fishermen were disgusted at attempts to justify the personal and economic devastation caused by the GBRMPA fishing bans.

Mr Green was responding to a statement by GBRMPA Chair Mrs Virginia Chadwick.

Mrs Chadwick said monitoring of closed reefs found numbers of fish like coral trout had increased and "has shown the importance of green zones and why they are vital to the future of the reef."

Mr Green said increased fish numbers reported from some reefs were the result of actions by the Queensland Government, not GBRMPA.

"At the same time new green zones were imposed, the State Government implemented new catch limits that reduced the commercial harvest of reef fish by over 1,000 tonnes. That is why there are more fish being seen on reefs -- and a lot less fish in retail outlets.

"Researchers have always predicted it would be five to 10 years after the introduction of no fishing green zones before they could accurately conduct stock assessments to value the increased numbers of fish like coral trout attributed to these zones.

"The latest surveys are showing a spike in fish numbers and of course GBRMPA are trying to take the credit prematurely. That's the way they are. Their public relations machine is a lot better than their science.

"What we are seeing now can be easily explained. The Queensland Government's Coral Reef Fin Fish Plan was introduced the same day the green zones were bestowed on us, immediately reducing the commercial reef fish catch by over 1,000 tonnes a year.

"It's been two years since this plan was introduced, which represents over 2,000 tonnes of legal-sized reef fish not caught but left in the water. This is what the current research is seeing, not green zone effects!

"Obviously two years hasn't been long enough for fish to spawn and grow to represent the increase that GBRMPA are trying to attribute to their devastating green zones.

