

# PIRSA

## Regional Impact Assessment Statement

Implementing updated Snapper management arrangements in South Australia.

September 2019



# Implementing updated Snapper management arrangements in South Australia.

Information current as of 27 September 2019  
© Government of South Australia 2019

## Disclaimer

PIRSA and its employees do not warrant or make any representation regarding the use, or results of the use, of the information contained herein as regards to its correctness, accuracy, reliability and currency or otherwise. PIRSA and its employees expressly disclaim all liability or responsibility to any person using the information or advice.

## All Enquiries

PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture  
Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA)  
Level 14, 25 Grenfell Street  
GPO Box 1671, Adelaide SA 5001  
T 08 8226 0900  
E [PIRSA.Feedback@sa.gov.au](mailto:PIRSA.Feedback@sa.gov.au)

# Contents

Regional Impact Assessment Statement .....	1
1. Issue to be addressed.....	4
2. Region(s) impacted by the proposal .....	5
3. Stakeholders affected by the proposed initiative.....	5
4. Stakeholders consulted.....	5
5. Consultation .....	6
6. Summary of Impacts and Analysis .....	8
6.1 Economic Factors .....	9
6.2 Social Factors .....	12
6.3 Environmental Factors .....	12
6.4 Equity Factors.....	13
7. Mitigation .....	13
8. Coordination .....	14
9. Local Government .....	14
10. Preferred option .....	15
11. Final option.....	16

# 1. Issue to be addressed

The November 2018 scientific stock assessment report by the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI), classified Snapper in Spencer Gulf/West Coast as 'depleted' meaning current management is not adequate to recover the stock, or adequate management measures have been put in place, but not yet resulted in measurable improvements. The report also classified Gulf St Vincent and the South East as 'sustainable', however, there were indications of increased pressure on the Gulf St Vincent stock, which also needs to be managed. In December 2018, in response to this updated scientific information, PIRSA implemented additional Snapper spatial closures, reduced charter Fishery bag limits and initiated a review of Snapper management arrangements.

In June 2019, SARDI provided additional updated scientific information on snapper spawning biomass estimates from scientific surveys undertaken in December 2018. This new information indicated the 2018 Snapper spawning biomass was 22.9% lower in the Spencer Gulf, and 86.8% lower in Gulf St Vincent, than it was five years ago.

SARDI Aquatic Sciences have finalised the 2019 Snapper Fishery Assessment report which classifies the Spencer Gulf/West Coast stock as depleted and the South East stock as sustainable, consistent with the 2018 stock classifications. Taking into account the latest information including the June 2019 biomass estimate, the 2019 report classified the Gulf St Vincent stock as depleting. This means that fishing mortality is too high (i.e. overfishing is occurring) and moving the stock in the direction of becoming recruitment impaired and is a change in status from sustainable in the 2018 report.

The State Government recently consulted on management arrangements for the future management of Snapper in South Australia (Option A and Option B below). Taking into account feedback from consultation additional options were also considered (Option C and Option D below). These proposed management arrangements are to reverse the long-term decline of Snapper stocks in South Australia.

**Option A:** A statewide Snapper closure that would apply to all state waters from 1 October 2019 to 28 February 2023, including various supporting fisheries management activities.

**Option B:** A Snapper closure would apply to state waters north and west of Newland Head, Cape Willoughby and Vennachar Point from 1 October 2019 to 28 February 2023. The area south of Newland Head, Cape Willoughby and Vennachar Point would have an annual seasonal Snapper closure from 1 October to the end of February each year until 2023 with management arrangements to implement a total allowable catch from 1 March to 30 September each year and various supporting fisheries management activities.

**Option C:** An annual state-wide Snapper closure would apply to all State waters from 1 October 2019 to the end of February 2020. This state-wide seasonal spawning closure would apply until Snapper stocks have recovered. From 1 March 2020 and on 1 March each year thereafter, Gulf waters in Spencer Gulf and Gulf St Vincent (north of Edithburgh to Wirrina) will remain closed to fishing for Snapper. The area outside of Spencer Gulf and Gulf St Vincent (south of a line from Edithburgh to Wirrina) would be open to fishing for Snapper from 1 March 2020 until 30 September each year, with management arrangements to implement a total allowable catch from 1 March to 30 September each year and various supporting fisheries management activities. These management arrangements would remain in place, until stocks have recovered, consistent with defined biological reference points to be developed as part of a revised Snapper harvest strategy.

**Option D:** An annual state-wide Snapper closure would apply to all State waters from 1 October 2019 to the end of January 2020. This state-wide seasonal spawning closure would apply until Snapper stocks have recovered. From 1 February 2020 and on 1 February each year thereafter, the northern Gulf waters would remain closed to Snapper fishing in Spencer Gulf (north of a line from Port Neill and Moonta Bay) and northern Gulf St Vincent waters (north of a line from Wool Bay to West Beach) until stocks have recovered. The area of waters outside of northern gulf closures would be open to fishing for Snapper from 1 February 2020 until 30 September each year, with management arrangements to implement a total allowable catch from 1 February to 30 September each year and various supporting fisheries management activities. These management arrangements would remain in place, until stocks have recovered, consistent with defined biological reference points to be developed as part of a revised Snapper harvest strategy.

## **2. Region(s) impacted by the proposal**

All coastal regions of South Australia will be impacted where Snapper is caught and where commercial, charter boat operators and recreational fishers reside and spend money to catch this fish. Key regions are the Yorke Peninsula, Eyre Peninsula, southern Fleurieu Peninsula, Kangaroo Island and the West Coast.

## **3. Stakeholders affected by the proposed initiative**

- Marine Scalefish Fishery
- Charter Boat Fishery licence holders and operators
- Rock Lobster fishery with option C
- Recreational Fishers
- Aboriginal Traditional
- Tourism Industry
- Bait and Tackle Shops
- Seafood Processors and retailers
- Seafood Consumers

## **4. Stakeholders consulted**

- South Australian community, particularly those with an interest in recreational fishing
- Recreational fishing sector
- Minister's Recreational Fishing Advisory Council
- Commercial fishing industry
- Marine Fishers Association and other commercial associations with access to Snapper
- Charter boat licence holders
- Surveyed Charter Boat Owners and Operators Association
- SA Blue Crab Pot Fishers Association

- Southern Fisherman’s Association
- SA Rock Lobster Advisory Council
- South East Professional Fisherman’s Association
- SA Sardine Industry Association
- Spencer Gulf and West Coast Prawn Fisherman’s Association
- Wildcatch Fisheries SA
- SA Northern Zone Rock Lobster Fisherman’s Association
- Central Zone Abalone Fishery
- Abalone Industry Association of SA Inc.
- Southern Zone Abalone Management Corporation Inc.
- Seafood Processors and Exporters Council Inc.
- Fish processors and retailers
- Bait and Tackle Shops
- Local councils in coastal regions and Local Government Association of South Australia
- South Australian Tourism Commission
- Department for Environment and Water
- Conservation Council of SA
- SA Native Title Services
- Department of Fisheries in Australian States and Territories
- Australian Fisheries Management Authority
- Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC)
- Commonwealth Department of Agriculture
- Commonwealth Department of Environment and Energy

## 5. Consultation

PIRSA commenced a review and consultation on the Snapper management arrangements in November 2018. PIRSA held a series of workshops with the commercial, recreational and charter boat sectors. Following the workshops, PIRSA convened a joint sector meeting on 14 December 2018 with key members from the commercial, recreational and charter boat sectors to develop a consensus position on interim management arrangements to support the recovery of Snapper stocks in Spencer Gulf/West Coast and to maintain sustainable management of the Gulf St. Vincent and South East stocks.

Further joint sector (commercial, recreational and charter boat sector) meetings were held on 13 February 2019 and 20 June 2019 to provide information on updated Snapper information and to canvass possible Snapper management options for further public consultation. At this meeting, all fishing sectors were provided with an opportunity to put forward their ideas for future

Snapper management and two key research priorities were identified (post release survival and recruitment).

The *Consultation Paper: Management scenarios for Snapper in South Australia* was released for a 3 week public consultation period in August 2019. Feedback was sought through the State Governments YourSAy website on two management options (Option A and B) contained within the paper. During this period PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture provided correspondence to key stakeholders advising them of the Consultation paper and to provide feedback through the YourSAy website. The Minister also held meetings with key stakeholders during the consultation period.

There were 805 individual completed submissions received through YourSAy during the public consultation process conducted between 8 and 31 August 2019. A further 88 submissions from individuals or key stakeholder groups were received by PIRSA. An analysis of the YourSAy feedback provided the following:

- 432 submissions (54%) strongly agreed or agreed with Option A while 307 (38%) strongly disagreed or disagreed.
- 202 submissions (25%) strongly agreed or agreed with Option B while 491 (61%) strongly disagreed or disagreed.
- 506 submissions (63%) supported the proposed research and management projects.

The three key stakeholder groups (Marine Fishers Association, Minister's Recreational Fishing Advisory Council and Surveyed Charter Boat Owners and Operators Association) who are most impacted by any changes rejected both of the proposed management options in the consultation paper.

All three groups have requested alternative options to be considered to recover Snapper stocks in South Australia, while balancing the social and economic impacts. A summary of the key stakeholders' submission is provided below:

Marine Fishers Association (MFA): The MFA do not support option A or B and maintain their position of extending the state Snapper closure to 31 January 2020 and maintaining current catch limits. The MFA seek a reinvestment into SARDI's research and stock assessment program and support all the complementary actions in the Snapper consultation paper.

Minister's Recreational Fishing Advisory Council (MRFAC): The MRFAC have raised numerous concerns with Option A and B and instead have provided an Option C, which they consider is a significant improvement addressing the long-term sustainability of Snapper stocks (and other key fish stocks) and seeks to integrate community expectations. They have raised concerns with the current scientific information, due to the reduced level of funding. They have provided the following options:

1. Increase funding for Snapper Science and Fisheries Management
2. Extend the current closure from 1 October to December 27 and make the current spatial closures permanent for the period 1 October to 30 June 2020
3. For the period 1 October to 30 June 2020:
  - a. Reduce the daily recreational bag limit to 2 Snapper with 1 over 60 cm
  - b. Minimum hook size 6/0.

- c. Mandatory Snapper release weights
  - d. Close the commercial sector
  - e. Prawn trawling not to occur in waters less than 15 m and prohibited within spatial closure zones.
4. Commence a SA Snapper Shepherds (stewards) campaign.

Surveyed Charter Boat Owners and Operators Association (SCBOOA): SCBOOA strongly disagrees with Options A and B, as in their view, both would result in the devastation of the charter sector; they have recently taken a reduction to its limits and has numerous bookings. The association supports the proposed research and management projects in the consultation paper. The association have indicated a number of measures (fee relief, grants, secure shares, financial and health support services) to support charter boat licence holders if the proposed Snapper closure is implemented. Industry considered that they should be able to continue to operate with the current limits, a review of the spatial and temporal closures be reviewed to determine the most effective strategy to support stocks during the spawning season, harvest tags.

Wildcatch Fisheries SA (WFSA): WFSA support the notion of improving the status of Snapper stocks and support the submissions provided by each of the commercial and Charter Boat sectors. WFSA believe that there is a need to properly resource the Snapper stock assessment and research program, as this has failed Snapper in SA. They support the need for collection of recreational fishing data to inform the management of catch shares.

Australian Fishing Trade Association (AFTA) recognise the importance of long-term sustainable stocks and have provided key points of an option C following discussions with AFTA members. These key points include: reduced bag limit (1 per person with a size limit of 40 to 60 cm), Tag and release program, SA fishing licence, increased research funding, Snapper fishery management committee, fish stocking, increase fisheries compliance, no trawling in aggregation/spawning areas, artificial reefs, extended seasonal closures, reduction to commercial effort (longlines), commercial and buy-back of commercial licences.

Local councils also provided submissions, which can be found in section 10.

## 6. Summary of Impacts and Analysis

In formulating fisheries management approaches, a balance must be struck between ecological, economic, and social considerations, informed by the best available science, noting that the *Fisheries Management Act 2007* establishes primacy for sustainability objectives to be pursued (over other social and economic considerations) in managing fish stocks that are at risk of over-exploitation or at risk of being endangered, as is the case for Snapper, evidenced by the current scientific information provided by SARDI.

The proposal is consistent with the legislated ecologically sustainable development objectives of the *Fisheries Management Act 2007*. However, as part of reviewing the Snapper management arrangements, it was also acknowledged that previous efforts to manage Snapper over the past decade have not met the desired biological sustainability objectives due to the low level of natural stock replenishment experienced during this period and considerations given to attempting to limit the social and economic impacts associated with management actions to protect Snapper stocks. In this context, it was important for the Government to weigh up the expected social and economic impacts against the impact of overfishing (noting the objects of

the *Fisheries Management Act 2007*) and the long-term impacts this would have on business, regional towns and economies.

## 6.1 Economic Factors

Snapper is distributed across the South Australian coastline and supports important commercial, recreational, charter boat and Aboriginal fisheries. This broad geographic distribution and economic importance makes Snapper one of South Australia's most significant fishery resources. Snapper is also a popular species amongst seafood consumers and, as such, commands a premium price in our markets and restaurants.

Based on commercial fishery statistics, there were 184 Commercial Marine Scalefish Fishery licences with catch of Snapper in 2017/18. Of these, six licences had a catch of Snapper of more than 10 tonnes over 2017/18, ranging from 16 to 38 tonnes, with snapper making up an average of 94.2% of their catch. 35 licences had a catch between 1 tonne and 10 tonnes of Snapper over 2017/18, with six of these licences having catches between 5 and 10 tonnes making up on average 40.5% of their catch. Of the fishers who recorded they targeted Snapper, 143 licences caught less than 1 tonne over 2017/18, with Snapper making up on average 9.1% of their total catch.

For the Charter fishery, there were 48 Charter Boat licences that undertook a trip to target Snapper in 2018. Six Charter Boat licence holders undertook more than 100 trips in 2018, while 13 Charter Boat licence holders undertook between 50 and 100 trips. Less than 50 trips were undertaken by 29 Charter Boat licence holders in 2018. In the same period, 16 licences had on average caught more than one (1) tonne of Snapper, ten licences averaged between 500 kg and one tonne and 26 licences caught on average less than 500 kg of Snapper.

The commercial gross value of production (GVP) of Snapper was \$3.7 million in 2016/17. This is 16.2% of the overall Marine Scalefish Fishery of \$22.8 million in the same period. Although the value of Snapper to the recreational fishery is more difficult to quantify, it is acknowledged Snapper has historically been an important target species for key regional towns and communities, particularly in the Gulf regions of South Australia. Snapper is also a key target species of the Charter sector, comprising almost 20% of the overall number of fish retained by customers.

The South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC) have provided the information below on international, domestic and intrastate visitors that involved fishing whilst in South Australia. The data is the annual average over the last three years to March 2019. Of all international visitors to South Australia, six (6) per cent undertook an activity that involved fishing. The top three (3) regions for fishing include:

- 24 per cent of international visitors to the Yorke Peninsula went fishing (1,900 visitors)
- 19 per cent of international visitors to the Eyre Peninsula went fishing (3,600 visitors)
- 16 per cent of international visitors to the Riverland went fishing (1,500 visitors)

Of all the domestic overnight visitors to the state, seven (7) per cent conducted a fishing activity. 85 per cent of these visitors were from within the state and 15 per cent from Interstate. Our top three (3) regions for fishing included:

- 31 per cent of visitors to the Yorke peninsula went fishing (162,000 visitors)
- 15 per cent of visitors to the Eyre Peninsula went fishing (65,000 visitors)
- 12 per cent of visitors to the Riverland went fishing (49,000 visitors)

It is difficult to ascertain whether these visitors are visiting for the purpose of targeting Snapper, however it should be noted that the Yorke Peninsula and Eyre Peninsula will be affected by the options presented.

Given the information above, not taking any action on Snapper and allowing stocks to deplete to a point in which they were no longer viable for supporting commercial, recreational or charter fishing would have long term economic impacts on many regions of the state, including the most populated Gulf areas. This includes the majority of the \$3.7 million per annum commercial fishery and significant economic role Snapper has for the charter and recreational fishery.

There are likely to be short-term impacts from the closure such as:

#### Option A

- Impacts on recreational fishing holidays/regional tourism across the state including charter fishing activities.
- Impacts on regional towns where Snapper is important for recreational fishing tourism.
- Impacts on commercial and charter fishers who have built a reliance on Snapper.
- Eliminates supply of South Australian Snapper to consumers.
- Cost of Snapper will increase for the Seafood consumer

#### Option B

- Impacts on all fishing sectors including recreational and charter fishing and tourism for the majority of the state during peak holiday periods (November, December, January).
- Impacts on regional towns on the West Coast, Spencer Gulf and Gulf St Vincent where Snapper is important for recreational fishing tourism.
- Impacts on commercial and charter fishers on West Coast, Spencer Gulf and Gulf St Vincent who have built a reliance on Snapper during the spring and summer periods.
- Cost of Snapper will increase for the Seafood consumer

#### Option C

- Impacts on all fishing sectors including recreational and charter fishing and tourism for the majority of the state during peak holiday periods (November, December, January).

- Potential impacts on recreational fishing holidays and associated regional tourism in towns located in each Gulf.
- Will disproportionately affect Charter Boat Fishing activities and income for charter operations who target the spawning areas in the gulfs (noting that fishing could occur for Snapper outside the gulfs and for other alternative species). This may possibly be offset by some charter operators in gulf waters participating in the FRDC research project on post release survival of Snapper by conducting charter fishing research trips with customers tagging and releasing fish.

#### Option D

- Impacts on all fishing sectors including recreational and charter fishing and tourism for the majority of the state during peak holiday periods (November, December, January).
- Potential impacts on recreational fishing holidays and associated regional tourism in towns located near to the spawning areas and northern parts of each Gulf.
- Will disproportionately affect Charter Boat Fishing activities and income for charter operations who target the spawning areas in the northern gulfs (noting that fishing could occur for Snapper in the southern gulfs and for other alternative species). This may possibly be offset by some charter operators in gulf waters participating in the FRDC research project on post release survival of Snapper by conducting charter fishing research trips with customers tagging and releasing fish.

The submissions from the commercial and charter boat industries indicated that if options A or B were implemented, it would significantly impact their businesses, which will have flow on effects to those industries that support commercial and charter boat industries. For some licence holders in commercial and charter boat fisheries that rely on Snapper for income, it would force their business to shut down.

The local councils indicated that options A and B would have devastating impacts to businesses, tourism and the local economy in their regions. In particular, they highlighted that fishers will not travel to the regional towns to target other species and there will be a loss of people spending on fuel, food, accommodation, caravan parks, hospitality and fishing specific expenses as well as highly probably decline in real estate demand and prices. While not consulted upon, options C and D would have similar impacts during the peak summer holiday period during November, December and January.

Recreational fishers (and those on Charter Boats) and commercial fishers have the opportunity to target a range of other species (King George Whiting, Squid, Garfish, WA Salmon, Flathead, Samson Fish, Yellowtail Kingfish) following the implementation of the proposed management arrangements.

PIRSA has recently secured funding from Fisheries Research and Development Corporation to support a project that will assess the potential to diversify the Marine Scalefish Fishery of lower valued species in South Australia. In addition, the commercial Marine Scalefish Fishery reform process is currently underway, with the industry developing a reform package that includes the key elements of zoning the licences and regionalising management arrangements, unitising the fishery with consideration given to implementing regional individual transferable catch quotas for principal species, and reducing the number of commercial licences.

For the long-term, positive impacts are likely to occur through ensuring the long-term sustainability of Snapper targeted by each of the sectors in South Australia, particularly in regional areas. If the proposed management arrangements are not made to Snapper then the potential ecological, economic and social impacts across the fishery, particularly in regional areas, are likely to be larger if the sectors are not sustainable or shared in an equitable way in the long-term.

## 6.2 Social Factors

The proposed changes in the short-term will have a major impact to commercial, charter boat and recreational fishers that predominately focus their fishing efforts on Snapper.

In addition to the socioeconomic impacts that are raised in section 7.1, the main social impacts from the submissions received indicated the loss of benefit derived from recreational fishing, or the mental health impacts of any further closures to the Snapper fishery.

There will be long-term benefits of the proposed changes through the sustainability of the Snapper fishery in the long-term.

## 6.3 Environmental Factors

Snapper is a large, long-lived species, which is distributed throughout the Indo-Pacific region including Australia, where its extensive distribution includes the coastal waters of the southern two-thirds of the Australian mainland and northern Tasmania. It takes two to three years for Snapper to reach maturity, at an approximate length of 23 cm.

Since the 1980s, research into Snapper population biology snapper has been undertaken, which has identified the timing of reproductive activity. Research indicates that maturation commences during October, but spawning does not commence until late November. The numbers of fish in the aggregations and the proportions of fish that are spawning increase through November, then peak in December, before they decline throughout January.

Although Snapper aggregate to spawn every year, similar to many fish species, there is no relationship between spawning stock size and the number of additional juvenile fish which are added to the population each year. This is because the survivability of eggs and larvae is mainly dependent on environmental factors such as temperature, salinity and food availability. This means that snapper aggregations can have a successful spawning event but the eggs and larvae may not survive to add new juvenile fish to the population if the environmental conditions are not suitable.

The implementation of the Snapper management arrangement is critical in ensuring the sustainability of Snapper stocks. It may increase pressure on other species, however, there are management arrangements in place to protect those species and an annual scientific assessment is undertaken on these species to ensure they remain sustainable. The proposed Snapper management arrangements are likely to:

- Provide maximum protection for the Snapper stock.
- Provide additional protection for spawning aggregations during the spawning period.

- Support the behaviour of the fish immediately prior to spawning in October and may play a role in success of spawning and therefore future recruitment into the fishery.
- Improve recruitment of juveniles to stocks. Enhanced recruitment would ultimately lead to increased production in the fishery.
- Eliminate fishing pressure by all sectors.

If the proposed management changes are not implemented and current fishing pressure is maintained, negative environmental impacts may occur across the fishery and in both regional and metropolitan areas. This may include Snapper stocks being depleted to lower levels, which would extend the length of time to recover stocks; it would also cause a long-term shift that will place immense pressure on other key species such as King George Whiting, Garfish and Calamari.

## 6.4 Equity Factors

The *Fisheries Management Act 2007* provides that a fishery management plan must specify the share of the fishery to be allocated to each fishing sector, based on the existing shares at the time the first management plan is requested. The *Management Plan for the Commercial Marine Scalefish Fishery* has formally allocated the Snapper resource between the three fishing sectors based on the best available data on the catch shares for each sector at the time the Management Plan was developed, as follows:

- Commercial 81%
- Recreational 18%
- Aboriginal traditional 1%.

The proposed changes to the management of Snapper will equally apply to all fishing sectors in South Australia.

## 7. Mitigation

Stakeholders have generally showed concern for the sustainability status of Snapper stocks and supported the need for management action.

The largest risk is commercial, recreational and charter boat fishers being unaware of the amendments to the Snapper management arrangements. To mitigate this, PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture will inform all stakeholders of the implemented management arrangements through numerous communication methods such as FishFacts, PIRSA website, brochures, radio stations, Advertiser and local papers etc. to communicate the changes to the affected parties.

PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture also have Fishcare volunteers on ground to provide information to recreational fishers. In addition, PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture Compliance Officers will be closely monitoring recreational, charter boat and commercial fishers following the implementation of the proposed management arrangements. If a person is found to be illegally taking Snapper, they may face enforcement action including expiation notices and/or prosecution before a Court.

The consultation paper also highlighted the need for additional research on Snapper and four projects that are planned to be undertaken during any closure period.

- Invest in additional research to strengthen the recreational fishing data
- Invest in new research to strengthen the science on the post release survival of Snapper after catch and release
- Invest in new research to establish a reliable cost-effective method for monitoring the annual strength of juvenile fish numbers entering Snapper stocks.
- Convene a national Snapper workshop in Adelaide in 2019 to bring together fisheries management, science and industry experts.

## 8. Coordination

The following Government agencies were consulted in relation to this issue:

- Department for Environment and Water
- South Australian Tourism Commission
- South Australian Native Title Services
- Local Government Association of South Australia and local coast councils
- Department of Fisheries Australian States and Territories
- Commonwealth Department of Agriculture
- Commonwealth Department of Environment and Energy
- Australian Fisheries Management Authority

## 9. Local Government

Local councils in coastal regions and Local Government Association of South Australia were informed and invited to provide feedback on the consultation paper.

There were four (4) submissions received directly from local councils, with another Council submitting feedback through YourSAy, for a total of five (5).

Yorke Peninsula Council: YP Council support efforts and initiatives to ensure Snapper populations are managed and protected, but believes that the current proposed options will serve to set tourism back significantly in their area, and do not believe the economy and community could recover from in the short term. They indicated the options could potentially be devastating for the future of the Yorke Peninsula area. The Council asked that further consultation be undertaken on appropriate measures that will support recovery of stocks, but maintain social and economic viability. They recommend a shorter closure, a reduction in bag limit or a longer seasonal closure in specific areas.

Copper Coast Council: CC Council is supportive of the current spatial spawning closures being extended until the end of February, but wants the fishery to reopen at that time. They also

indicated that during the closure, more research should be undertaken and are supportive of additional funding to be allocated to Snapper research and compliance activities.

Yankalilla Council: The Council resolved to inform the Minister their concern at the potential impact of an extended closure to the Snapper fishery for recreational and commercial fishers as well as small business on the Fleurieu Coast. In debate the Council noted, 'the Ministers call to action and the need for more research to ensure the future of the Snapper fishery in the Gulf of St Vincent and the Spencer Gulf.' The Council also 'welcomed the intent of the action to protect our fragile marine environment.'

Kangaroo Island Council The KI Council considered the impact of fishing off the North Coast of Kangaroo Island is insignificant compared to the Gulf waters. The Council consider the Investigator Strait has been improperly associated with the recorded impacts in Gulf St Vincent. The Council is in favour of 'substantially revised recreational bag and size limit restrictions and revision for commercial trip limits would allow this region to play a meaningful part in sustainable management of the fishery whilst maintaining some benefits to the local economy.'

Barunga West Council: The BW Council resolved that there have already been negative economic impacts from the current local Snapper spatial closure. The BWC rejects both proposed management options for Snapper. The Council considers the current scientific information to inform the three and half year closure needs to be updated and independently verified and that alternative management options be developed and distributed for further public consultation.

## 10. Preferred option

Many submissions suggested alternative management options for Snapper, consistent with the feedback from the key sectors. Alternative options raised through this feedback aligned to the concerns over the regional social and economic impacts.

Taking into account feedback from the commercial, recreational and charter boat sectors, the latest scientific information and all other information available, the following management option has been adopted by the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development to strengthen Snapper management arrangements.

- This option is supported by research which indicates:
  - The classification of the stocks as depleted in Spencer Gulf/West Coast and depleting in Gulf St Vincent.
  - The key spawning and nursery areas in South Australia are contained within Spencer Gulf and Gulf St Vincent.
- This option is based on feedback from stakeholders on:
  - 54% support for the long term statewide closure, indicating support for a significant management response, which has been implemented in the areas in which the Snapper fishery is classified as depleted (Spencer Gulf/West Coast) and depleting (Gulf St Vincent).

- Limiting any shorter term closures to maximise protecting spawning Snapper by covering only the spawning period from November to January (11%), which will be the period of time annual seasonal Snapper closure in the South East will be implemented.
- More restrictive management controls for the commercial sector (27%), introducing a TACC (15%) and buyback of the commercial sector (10%), which will be considered when implementing a total allowable catch and suitable controls to prevent over exploitation in the South East when this region is open.
- Support for a reduction in recreational (22%) and charter (6%) bag limits, which will be considered when implementing a total allowable catch and suitable controls to prevent over exploitation in the South East when this region is open.

## 11. Final option

- A total Snapper closure to apply to the waters in the Spencer Gulf/West Coast and Gulf St Vincent regions from 1 November 2019 to 31 January 2023, where the Snapper fishery is classified as depleted and depleting, respectively;
- An annual seasonal Snapper closure to apply to the waters in the South East region from 1 November each year until 31 January each year, until 31 January 2023, where the Snapper fishery is classified as sustainable; and
- The catch of Snapper in the South East region will be open to commercial, recreational and charter boat fishers subject to a total allowable catch and suitable controls to prevent over exploitation of Snapper stocks.

