

## **RecFish SA Response to 2016 Recreational Fishing Review:**

Size, Bag and Boat Limit Review

&

King George Whiting Management Options Paper

### **Summary**

This document is in response to the 2016 Recreational Fishing Review by PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture. Its particular focus is on the review of Size, Bag and Boat Limits as well as the Management Options for King George Whiting in South Australia paper. RecFish SA's response to the Draft Management Plan for Recreational Fishing in South Australia is covered in a separate document.

RecFish SA is the peak body for recreational fishing in South Australia. Our membership comprises fishing clubs and associations, community groups, Recreational Fisheries Committees and individual fishers. We strive to represent the interests of South Australia's 277,000 recreational fishers. As such, the approach taken to the 2016 Recreational Fishing Review was to seek widely, the views of the South Australian recreational fishing community.

RecFish SA's public consultation sought the views of recreational fisher through an online Survey (The RFSA 2016 Online Survey). Survey responses were received from 1,550 individual recreational fishers. Detailed feedback was also welcomed from the recreational fishing public with 12 separate submissions received from individuals, one from a tackle store and one from a regional unincorporated group.

RecFish SA member organisations and Recreational Fisheries Committees (RFCs) were also encouraged to provide feedback, with submissions, information and advice provided by; the Development RFC, West Coast RFC, Port Lincoln RFC, Upper Spencer Gulf RFC, South Australian Recreational Fishers Association - Upper South East Branch, and by The South Australian Game Fishing Association on behalf of the Adelaide Game Fishing Club.

The RFSA survey sample and feedback sample represents individuals and organisations from across the South Australian recreational fishing community demographic. Individual respondents of all ages were surveyed, with younger fishers and female fisher underrepresented. A sample of postcodes (48.5% of survey respondents) reveals that survey respondents from all major regions of the state were surveyed. This was complimented by regional feedback from the the West Coast, Port Lincoln, South East, Spencer Gulf and Yorke Peninsula.

Although it is not being suggested that the RecFish SA sample is a proxy for the sentiment of the entire SA recreational fishing community, the results presented may provide valuable insights for fisheries managers to consider. Surveyed responses and feedback provided, shows both significant levels of support for some of the proposed changes and options, as well as high levels

of opposition and concerns about others. A number of broader issues have also been raised in the feedback received. Some of these concerns relate to the recreational fishing data presented as informing the review.

While RecFish SA recognise and support the principle that fisheries should be managed using the best available information, a number of concerns are raised in this response document. Some specific concerns raised about the 2013/14 South Australian Recreational Fishing Survey (SARFS), relate to methodology & sample size, as well as, for a number of fisheries, the accuracy of estimates. Another concern is the reliability of certain data being used to inform important management decisions.

A number of the issues raised relate to the resourcing of the recreational fishing sector. It is considered that this has not been historically sufficient and while this is in many cases, a political or public policy question, rather than strictly a fisheries policy question; RecFish SA are of the view that this issue must be raised at this time. Resourcing cannot be decoupled from the current considerations, because many community concerns, including the need for more and varied research, improved compliance effort and sector development are symptomatic of the long term resourcing situation. Potential solutions to these issues are likely to be equally constrained by resourcing and thus beyond the ability of the department alone, to address.

RecFish SA hope that the feedback presented will be of use to PIRSA Fisheries in understanding some of the sentiments of the recreational fishing community as well as assisting in the identification of areas to be improved in the future.

## Abbreviations

ITE - Individual Transferable Effort  
ITQ - Individual Transferable Quota  
LML - Legal Minimum Length  
PRM - Post Release Mortality  
NRIFS -National Recreational and Indigenous Fishing Survey  
RFC - Recreational Fisheries Committee  
RFSA - RecFish SA  
SARFS - South Australian Recreational Fishing Survey

## **The 2013/14 South Australian Recreational Fishing Survey**

RecFish SA support fisheries being managed using the best available information. We recognise that the availability of quality data is a shared ambition of fisheries managers and the recreational fishing community. It is acknowledged that the supply of relevant and recent recreational fishery data is often constrained by available resources. With that said, there are still community expectations that the research being done is fit for purpose.

Some concerns about the applicability of 2013/14 SARFS data relates especially to fisheries which are accessed/ targeted by a lower proportion of the recreational fishing community. When estimates of harvest in regional or small participation fisheries are required, statewide survey methodology may not be suitable, and the data collected, may not be the best available. The use of such harvest estimates has potential to become even more problematic where data with significant Standard Errors are used to calculate total harvest weight estimates from average weights. It is recognised that on-site surveys for Blue Crabs and Piri were employed to address this kind of issue, however concerns for other fisheries still persist.

The non-collection of social and economic data since Henry and Lyle (2003) is identified as a key issue for the recreational fishing community. Again, while it is possible to acknowledge resourcing constraints, this does not change the fact that it is impossible to manage and assess, for optimum community benefit when there is no regular measure of these indicators.

## **The RecFish SA Approach to Providing Feedback: Survey & Submissions**

RecFish SA believe that recreational fishers should be afforded ample opportunity to have input on important decisions for their sector. Our ever-growing network of recreational fishers and fishing organisations, coupled with our embrace of electronic technologies has allowed us to reach more fishers than at any point in our history. Coupling survey results with individual, regional and expert submissions, enables RecFish SA to provide feedback which is suitably well informed and well considered.

## **RecFish SA Online Survey and Community Consultation for 2016 Recreational Fishing Review**

### **RecFish SA 2016 Recreational Fishing Review Online Survey Demographics**

#### Survey Reach

RecFish SA promoted community awareness of the 2016 Recreational Fishing Review through social media and email campaigns as well as participation in television news interviews, radio interviews, metropolitan and regional newspaper interviews.

The online survey was open from March 18, 2016 until April 17, 2016. This timing was chosen to allow sufficient time for the community to consider the key proposal and options before undertaking the survey. The RecFish SA Online Survey was promoted and distributed through a number of channels and campaigns, with the aim of offering recreational fishers around South Australia the opportunity to have input.

The following is a summary of survey reach and promotion:

- Survey Facebook campaign 1      - Reaching 72,085 people\*
- Survey Facebook campaign 2      - Reaching 14,504 people\*
- Survey Facebook campaign 3      - Reaching 12,328 people\*
  
- Email Campaigns -                      - Members, Stakeholders, Tackle Shops

Survey Promotion Interviews; ABC 981 Adelaide, ABC South East, regional newspapers.

\*targeted audience were SA residents with an interest in recreational fishing.

#### Survey Participation

A total of 1,550 individual survey responses were received.

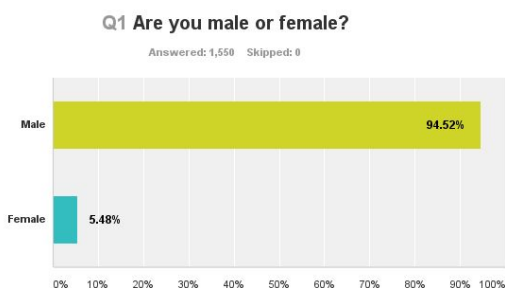
#### Sample

RecFish SA consider the surveyed sample to be useful and somewhat reflective of fisher sentiment towards proposed changes and management practices. It is important to note that it is being not proposed this sample is directly, statistically representative of the South Australian recreational fishing community.

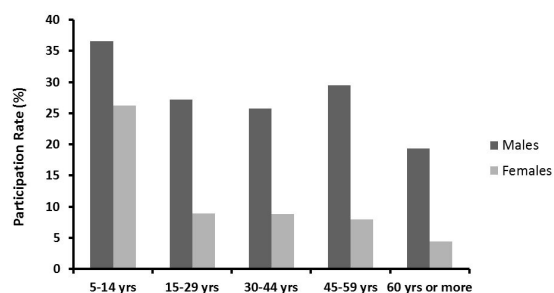
With the exception of demographic questions, respondents were able to skip questions if they found irrelevant to their fishing, the completion rate was >81%.

## Gender & Age

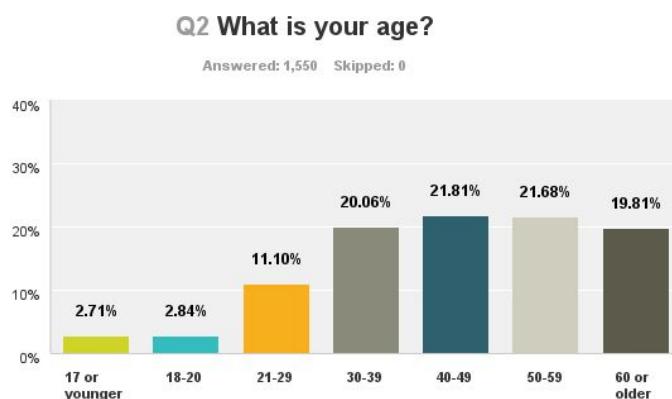
Online survey respondents were predominantly male (94.52%), with female fishers unrepresented when compared with surveyed participation rates. While the age category intervals are not directly comparable, fishers between 30-59 years old, as well as fishers over 60 are well represented in the RFSA Online Survey. Young fishers up to the age of 29, appear to be under-represented when compared with statewide recreational participation rates (Giri & Hall. 2015).



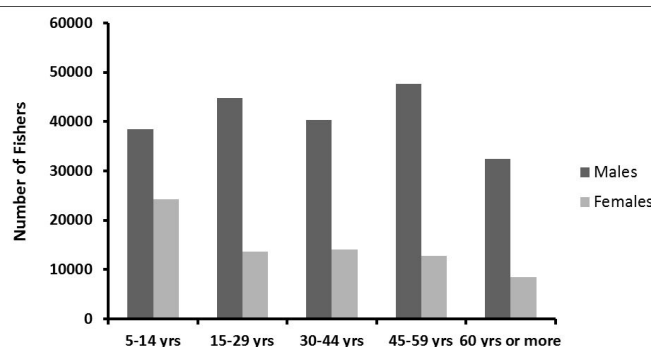
RFSA Online Recreational Fishing Review Survey Q1



SA Recreational Fishing Participation (Giri & Hall: P19)



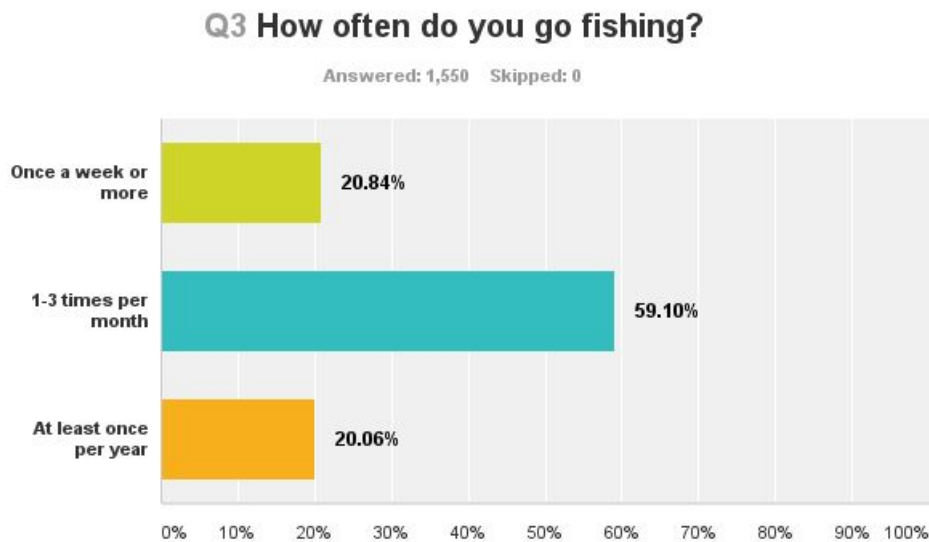
RFSA Online Recreational Fishing Review Survey Q2



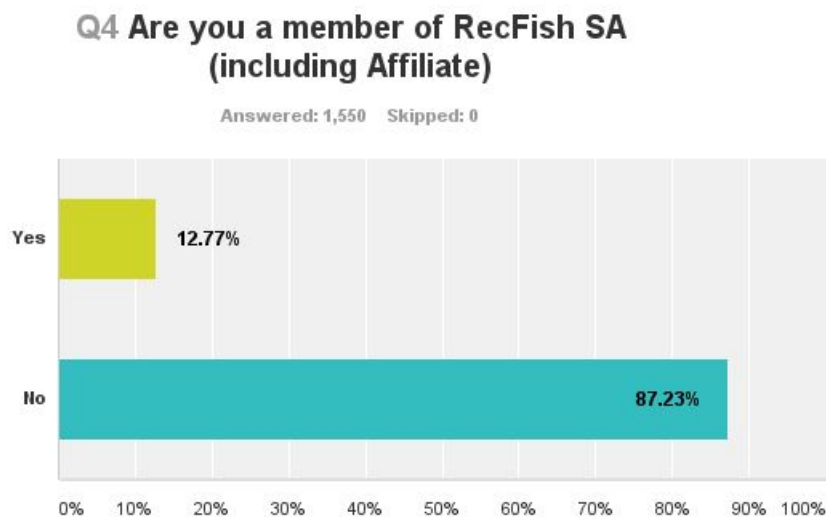
SA Recreational Fishing Participation (Giri & Hall: P19)

## Avidity

According to Giri & Hall (2015) the mean number of days South Australian fishers, fish per year is 4.1. The RFSA Online survey sample indicated that respondents predominantly fish at least 12 times per year (79%), significantly more than the mean number of days fished for South Australian fishers.



## RFSA Membership

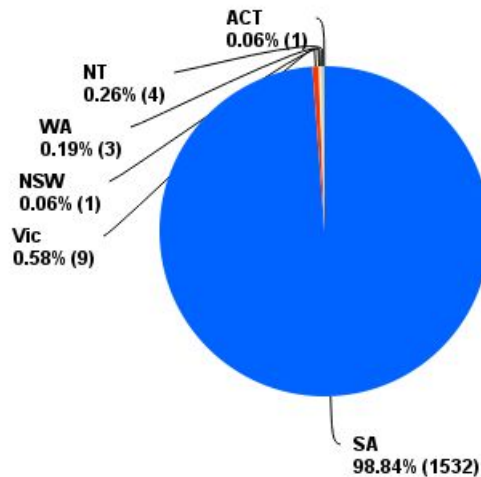


## Residence

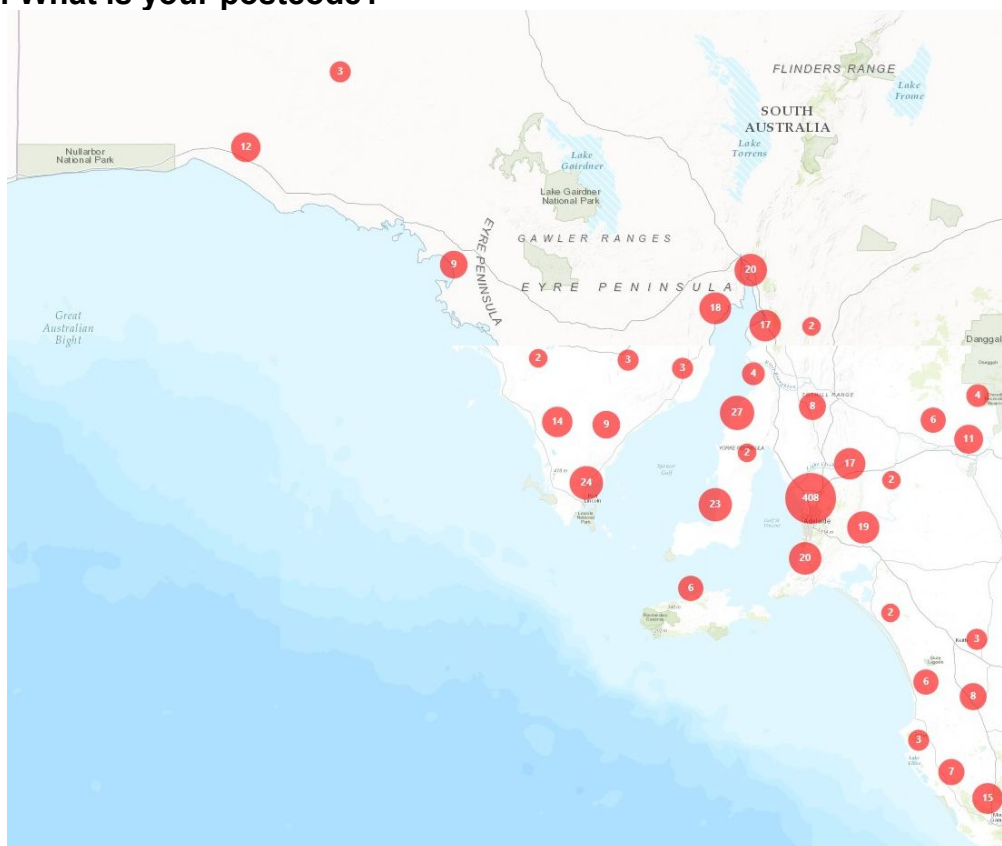
Almost 99% of respondents were SA residents, with metropolitan and regional areas represented.

### Q5 State of Residence

Answered: 1,550 Skipped: 0



### Q6: What is your postcode?



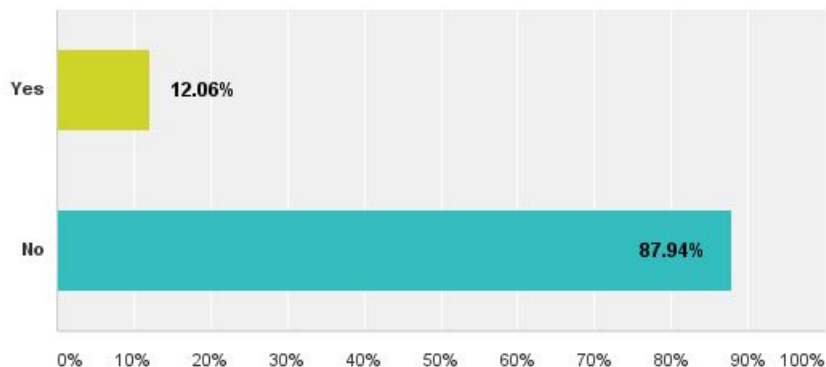
*Participants by region: Postcodes were added to the survey once underway, therefore were collected for only 48.9% of respondents*

## Fishing Club Membership

Almost 88% of respondents indicated that they were not a member of a fishing club.

### **Q7 Are you a member of a Fishing Club?**

Answered: 1,550 Skipped: 0



## **Feedback**

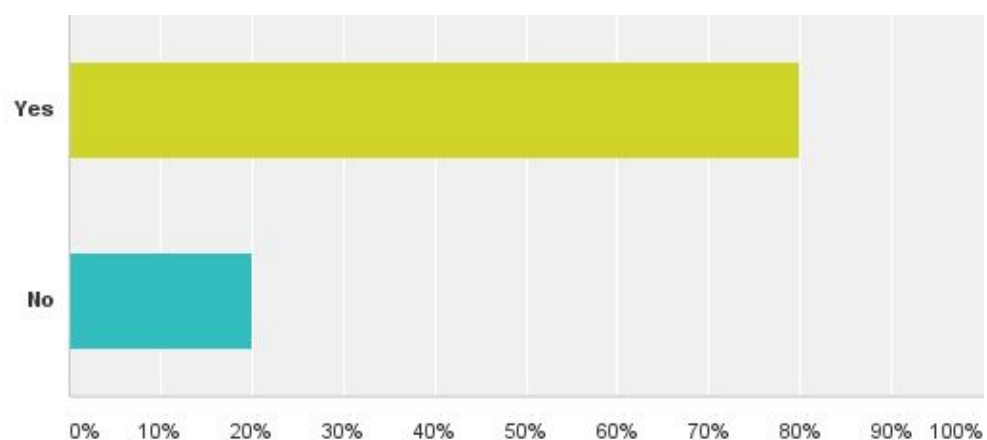
### **Size Bag and Boat Limit Proposed Changes**

#### **Southern Garfish *Hyporhamphus melanochir***

PIRSA Proposal: Reduce bag limit from 60 to 30 and boat limit from 180 to 90

#### RFSA Online Survey & Consultation Results:

**RFSA Survey Question 8: Do you support the proposal to reduce the Garfish Bag limit from 60 per person to 30 per person (180 to 90 per Boat)?**



79.9% of respondents indicated support for the PIRSA proposal, with 20.1% against the proposal.



### Surveyed Support for Smaller Bag Limit Reductions

The online survey took the 20.1% of respondents who indicated that they did not support the PIRSA proposal to a followup question (Q9). This question asked about whether the respondent would support a lower/ more modest reduction to the Southern Garfish bag and boat limits.

Of those respondents asked the followup question, 32.48% indicated that they would not support any change. The remaining respondents indicated they would be supportive of a reduction to 40 per bag/120 per boat (29.26%), or 50 per bag/150 per boat (38.26%).

### Further Feedback Received

Overall, few written comments from the public were received about the proposed changes to garfish bag and boat limits. In answer to Q39 “Further Comments”, two survey respondents mentioned specific concerns about the level of commercial exploitation of this species. Another respondent was concerned about the policing of recreational dabbling.

### Organisation/ Group Feedback

During the consultation period, the West Coast RFC (WCRFC), Port Lincoln RFC (PLRFC) and South Australian Recreational Fishers Association - Upper South East Branch (SARFA -USE), each indicated support for the PIRSA proposal, with the view that any reduced recreational harvest contribute to the sustainability of the stock. It is noted that a 2013 DRFC draft policy paper on garfish, supported the bag and boat limit currently proposed.

## **Discussion**

A majority of the feedback received was supportive of the proposal.

### Post Release Mortality

RecFish SA draws attention to the fact that the risk of post release mortality (PRM) of line caught Southern garfish, is considered to be high, due to angler handling (McLeay *et al.*, 2002). Fragility, specifically the relatively high rate of scale and slime-coat loss, when touched, is proposed as a major contribution to a 24 hour PRM rate of 49% for the similar species *Hyporhamphus australis* (Butcher *et al.*, 2010).

It is generally accepted that Southern garfish are sought after for their eating qualities, but offer less in the way being a sporting target. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the major reason recreational fishers release garfish, is when captures do not meet the prescribed LML. The SARFS in 2013/14 estimated the recreational release rate of garfish at 11.3% or 110,419 individual fish.

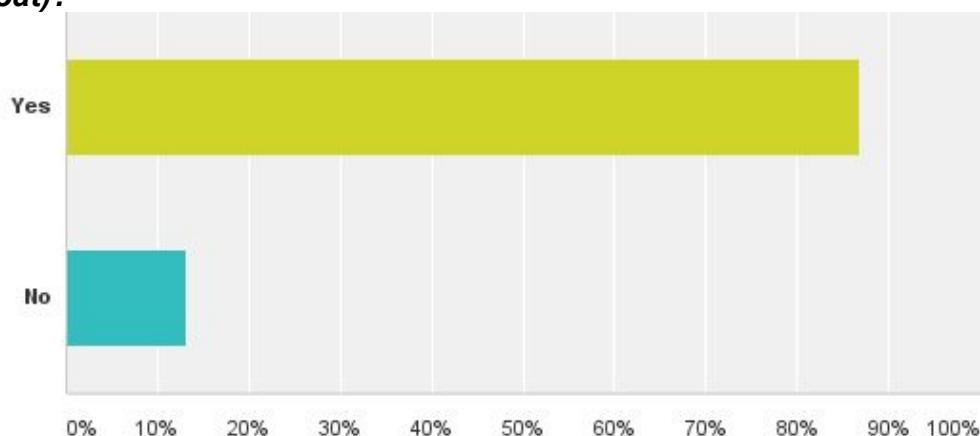
RecFish SA would welcome the opportunity to work with fisheries managers and scientists, to develop best practice garfish release techniques educational material. The findings of Butcher (2010), suggest that PRM may be significantly reduced by avoiding contact with the body of undersized Garfish and minimising the period of air exposure. RecFish SA are confident that there would be significant interest in the recreational fishing community to assist the recovery of garfish stocks without impacting on retained harvest, through adopting best practice release techniques.

### Australian Herring (Tommy Ruff) *Arripis georgianus*

PIRSA Proposal: Reduce bag limit from 60 to 40 and boat limit from 180 to 120

#### RFSA Online Survey & Consultation Results

**RFSA Survey Question 10: *Do you support the proposal to reduce the Australian Herring Bag limit from 60 per person to 40 per person (180 to 120 per Boat)?***



86.79% of respondents indicated support for the proposed reduction, with 13.21% against the proposal.

#### Surveyed Support for Smaller Bag Limit Reductions

The online survey took the 13.21% of respondents who indicated that they did not support the PIRSA proposal, to a followup question (Q11). This question asked about whether the respondent would support a lower/ more modest reduction to the Australian Herring bag and boat limits.

Of those respondents asked the followup question, 54.68% indicated that they would not support any change. The remaining 45.32% indicated they would be supportive of a reduction to 50 per bag/150 per boat.

#### Further Feedback Received

Two survey comments in response to Q39 “Further Comments” specifically related to the PIRSA proposal for Australian Herring, with both suggesting the

proposed limit was still too high. It was also brought to RecFish SA's attention by a member; that one South Australian fishing association whose members competition fish, would favour a smaller reduction to 50 per bag (150 per boat).

### Organisation/ Group Feedback

A submission received from the West Coast RFC supported the proposed reduction for Australian Herring to 40 per bag, 120 per boat. The Port Lincoln RFC indicated it was of the view that many local fishers support the proposal. A submission from a group called the Edithburgh Action Group (EAG) which held public meetings at Edithburgh on the Yorke Peninsula, indicated that it generally supported the proposed reduction and considered it would not significantly impact upon fishing activity in the area.

### **Discussion**

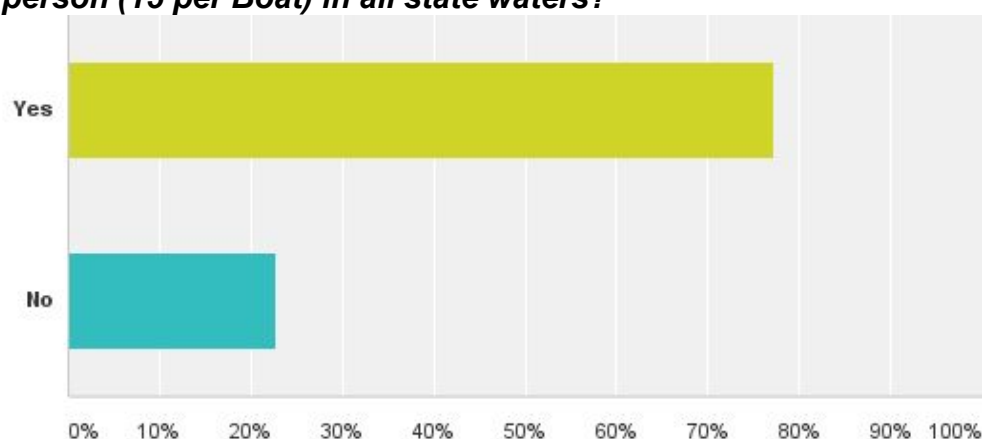
Survey respondents and submissions received indicated significant support for this proposal. It is considered that this change would be unlikely to have a significant impact on most recreational fishers.

### **Snapper *Chrysophrys auratus***

PIRSA Proposal: Change bag limits for Snapper between 38cm - 60cm in all other waters to 5, and boat limits to 15 for all state waters. No changes to Snapper Larger than 60cm.

### RFSA Online Survey Results & Consultation Results

**RFSA Survey Question 12 : *Do you support the proposal to standardise the Bag & Boat limit for Snapper between 38-60cm by applying a limit of 5 fish per person (15 per Boat) in all state waters?***



77.27% of respondents indicated support for the proposal to standardise bag and boat limits for Snapper, with 22.73% against the proposal.

### Further Feedback Received

A total of 34 comments in response to Q39 “Further Comments” referenced Snapper. Fifteen of these, raised concerns about the impacts of commercial fishing on stocks, with five comments specifically raising concerns about the impacts attributed to the increase in long-line fishing effort for this species.

Four comments related to the annual Whyalla Snapper Fishing Competition. Three of the comments called for a ban or suspension of the competition, with two respondents citing concerns about the ethics of the catch and keep competition. Another comment acknowledged the community and tourism benefits derived from the competition, but suggested that it become catch, tag and release.

Two survey comments called for an increase to the LML for Snapper. Single comments received raised a number of issues including, concern about PRM rates, the under-recognition of the economic contribution/expenditure of recreational snapper fishers, commercial compliance and the suggestion of a maximum size limit.

### Organisation/ Group Feedback

A submission received from the West Coast RFC and a submission from the regional group, the EAG, supported the proposal. Feedback from the Adelaide Game Fishing Club and one additional email comment, indicated support for this proposal.

### **Discussion**

The survey responses and further feedback received, indicated significant support for the proposal to standardise the bag limits for Snapper in all waters. There was no specific question asking for written comments about Snapper in the RFSA survey. It may be seen that the relatively high number of comments received about this species (in response to Q39 ‘Further Comments’), highlights the cultural significance and social value of Snapper to the recreational fishing community.

Feedback received also appears to represent relatively broadly held, recreational fishing community concerns about the historical and ongoing impacts of the commercial snapper fishery. The general sustainability of the stock(s) is also a key concern. Recreational fishers are interested to ensure that appropriate management arrangements are in place for all sectors, so as to ensure that maximum benefit can be delivered to the community. For the recreational sector optimum benefit involves, ongoing and improved access, to high-quality snapper fishing experiences. Historically, management approaches have not been able to achieve this.

The historical catch records of Snapper presented in Fowler (2013) show a fishery where commercial catch and effort fluctuates significantly according to strong recruitment year classes. These year classes are progressively fished

down until a new year class enters the fishery. However, recent poor recruitment in Spencer Gulf and stock depletion in southern Gulf St Vincent and the South East (Fowler et al, 2013) indicate the parlous nature of these fisheries that has led to a classification of “transitional depleting.” Recfish SA also believe that much of the decline in catch and effort in SG in recent years may be attributable to the closure of traditional commercial snapper grounds such as the Santa Anna, Illusion and Jurassic Park. Fowler and McGarvey (2014) report that the level of displaced catch and effort as a result of these closures was considerable. While, these closures are presumably assisting the recovery of the fishery, there is much concern with the transfer of this effort to the Northern Gulf St Vincent fishery.

Recfish SA also believe that the decline in stock status in SSG may be attributed to significantly increased use of long-lines by commercial operators particularly in the southern Spencer Gulf during the period from 2004 – 2007 where effort increased by 259.5% (Fowler et al, 2013).

Of most concern is that now as the SG fishery has declined, commercial long-line operators have turned their attention to northern Gulf St Vincent where catch increased by 873.5% between 2008 and 2012. While NGSV shows continuing strong indicators of robust stocks, at least up until 2013, (Fowler, 2013), if history is a guide it would be unreasonable to believe that this level of catch is sustainable in the medium term and that it is likely that fishery performance will decline as biomass is reduced and the fishery enters a phase of poor recruitment.

Recfish SA have received a significant amount of feedback from recreational fishers across the state indicating that the presence of increased commercial long-line activity is a source of conflict within the fishery (including between commercial long-line and handline operators) and are concerned with localised depletions and eventual reduced productivity of the entire fishery. Of particular concern are reports that “teams” of vagrant long-line operators have entered areas such as Kingston SE, Victor Harbor and Ardrossan and have heavily impacted on local populations of snapper.

Due to the nature of the fishery where commercial operators often focus effort solely on Snapper, Recfish SA believe that there are a number of measures that may be introduced that will secure the long term environmental, economic and social sustainability of the snapper fishery and which will stabilize commercial value and ensure recreational ambitions. These are;

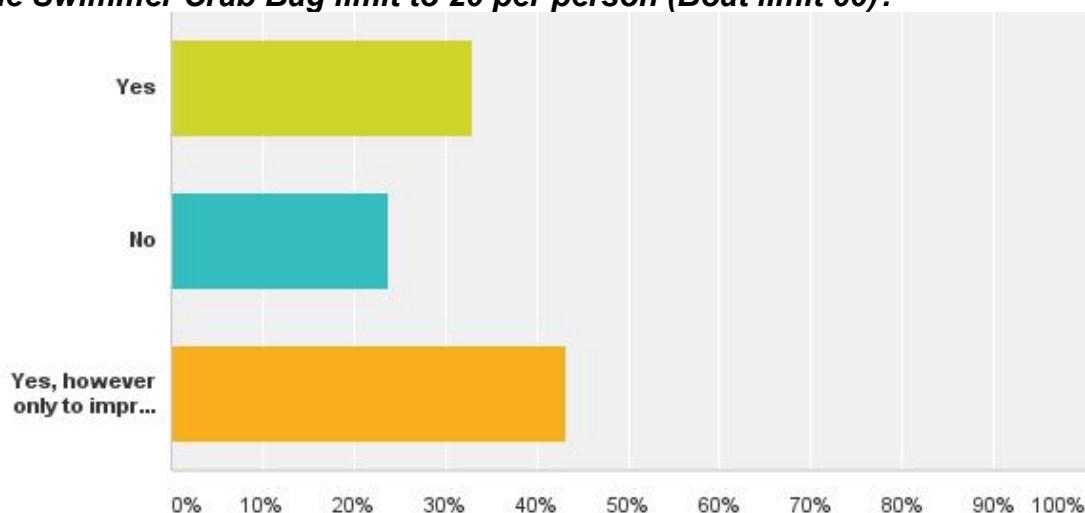
1. Introduce statewide recreational bag limits that match those currently in place in Gulf St. Vincent.
2. Introduce commercial fishing zones to the snapper fishery that limit individual operators to fishing only in one zone.
3. Remove the endorsement for snapper long lines from all licence holders including any that may exist outside of the Marine Scale Fishery.
4. Introduce a TACC for each of the commercial fishing zones with no transferability between zones.
5. Introduce ITQ for individual fishers within zones

## Blue Swimmer Crab *Portunus armatus*

PIRSA Proposal: Reduce bag limit from 40 to 20 and boat limit from 120 to 60

### RFSA Online Survey & Consultation Results

**RFSA Survey Question 13: Do you support the proposal to reduce the Blue Swimmer Crab Bag limit to 20 per person (Boat limit 60)?**



23.86% of survey respondents were against the proposal to reduce the recreational bag limit for Blue Crabs to 20 per person (60 per boat). 32.98% indicated that they supported the proposed reduction, while 43.16% indicated that they would support the proposal though *“only to improve recreational crabbing experiences & better share crabs among rec fishers. (ie. this should not reduce the overall recreational allocation/ result in an increase to the Total Allowable Commercial Catch).*

### Further Feedback Received

A total of 23 responses to survey question Q39 “Further Comments” referenced Crabs. The most common issue raised (12 comments) was recreational compliance. Comments drew attention to a perceived minority of recreational fishers, who are thought to flout the rules. Respondents called for an increased compliance effort from PIRSA Fisheries, in order to appropriately monitor recreational crabbing, especially on beaches and jetties. Two respondents suggested there is a need for better availability of educational materials/measures, with one respondent calling for tougher penalties to encourage compliance.

Another issue raised in a number of survey comments (6) was concern about the impacts of commercial crabbing on stocks and with respect to localised abundance near popular recreational areas. Two respondents gave accounts of witnessed crab wastage which they attributed to recreational catches larger than the fishers could use/process. One respondent raised concerns about the decline in abundance of legal sized crabs on GSV northern beaches. Another respondent indicated that they did not support the principle of reducing bag

limits with the aim of sharing the resource between recreational fishers.

### Organisation/ Group Feedback

Feedback was received via submissions from three RFCs and one regional group. The West Coast RFC supported the proposal, though were concerned that the limit change should contribute to available biomass / relative abundance and that it should not result in a higher commercial allowable catch. The submission from Regional group, the EAG, echoed that of the WCRFC. The Port Lincoln RFC indicated that they felt many anglers would support the proposed bag limit reduction.

The Development RFC submission indicated acceptance of the PIRSA proposal, in so far as it was based upon maintaining allocated harvest fractions. The submission did however, suggest that rather than reduce recreational bag limits, PIRSA may have cause to revise sector allocations. The DRFC also raised concerns about the use of PIRSA's stated social justification of a *reasonable catch*.

### **Discussion**

Much of the feedback received supported the PIRSA proposal to reduce the Blue Swimmer Crab/Sand Crab combined limit to 20 per person (60 per boat). Both support for and reservations about, the concept of "a reasonable days fishing" were expressed, along with concern about a perceived lack of community engagement in establishing this principle. There appears to be significantly more support for the social concept of improving equity of access among recreational fishers.

The sampled level of support for better sharing the resource between recreational fishers was relatively high. This draws attention to the significance of local abundance and the importance of having a reasonable chance of catching at least some legal sized crabs per trip, in order to support high quality recreational fishing experiences. It is recognised that in a shared fishery, this can often not be achieved without also putting in place sharing arrangements between sectors, which go beyond basic allocation provisions.

Since 2014, the DRFC, Commercial Fishers, PIRSA and RecFish SA, have worked together (and separately) to establish recreational crabbing areas/ commercial no crabbing areas in GSV. These arrangements have focused on spatially sharing access to the resource and reducing conflict between sectors. Changes have been supported by recreational fishers, commercial fishers regional centres on the eastern Yorke Peninsula and the Yorke Peninsula District Council. RecFish SA are engaged in ongoing discussions with commercial crabbers on this topic and consider that developing longer term arrangements, which ensure conflict is reduced and recreational experiences supported, is a critical component of managing this fishery, for optimum community benefit.

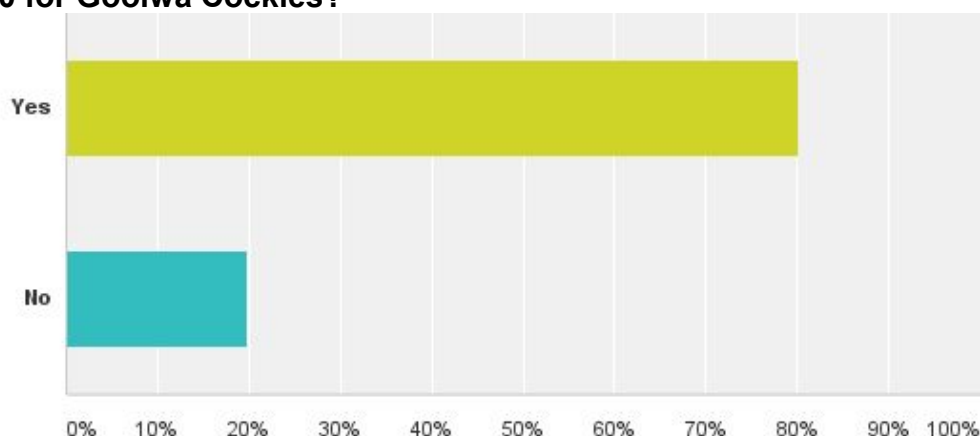


## Pipi (Goolwa Cockle) *Donax deltoides*

PIRSA Proposal: To introduce a car boot (equivalent of a boat limit) limit of 900 for Pipi east of the line of longitude 136°E.

### RFSA Online Survey & Consultation Results

#### **RFSA Survey Question 14: Do you support the introduction of a car boot limit of 900 for Goolwa Cockles?**



80.12% of respondents indicated support for the introduction of a car boot limit of 900 for Goolwa Cockle east of 136°E. 19.88% of respondents did not support the proposal.

### Support for a higher car boot limit

The online survey took the 19.88% of respondents who indicated that they did not support the PIRSA proposal of a car boot limit of 900 for Goolwa Cockle, to a follow-up question (Q15). This question asked about whether the respondent would support a higher car boot limit of 1200 for Goolwa Cockle. 64.12% of respondents indicated that they would *“not support the concept of a car boot limit. The limit should be defined by how many people are traveling in the car”*. 35.88% of respondents indicated that they would support a car boot limit of 1200 for Goolwa Cockle.

### Further Feedback Received

A total of two written comments in response to Q39 from the survey referenced Goolwa Cockle. Both of these made reference to the commercial harvest. One respondent raised concerns about the size of cockles being harvested. The other respondent, was concerned that the high price of Goolwa Cockle for bait is an incentive for more recreational fishers to try to harvest their own and that this was putting increased pressure on the recreational area west of the Murray mouth.

### Organisation/ Group Feedback

The submission from the WCRFC indicated support for the proposed car boot



limit of 900 for Goolwa Cockle.

## Discussion

Responses received indicated significant support for the concept of a car boot limit. Although, specific comments were not received during the consultation period, RecFish SA has had significant community feedback in the past highlighting concerns about the need for increased compliance effort on Goolwa beach and the need for improved, targeted education campaigns.

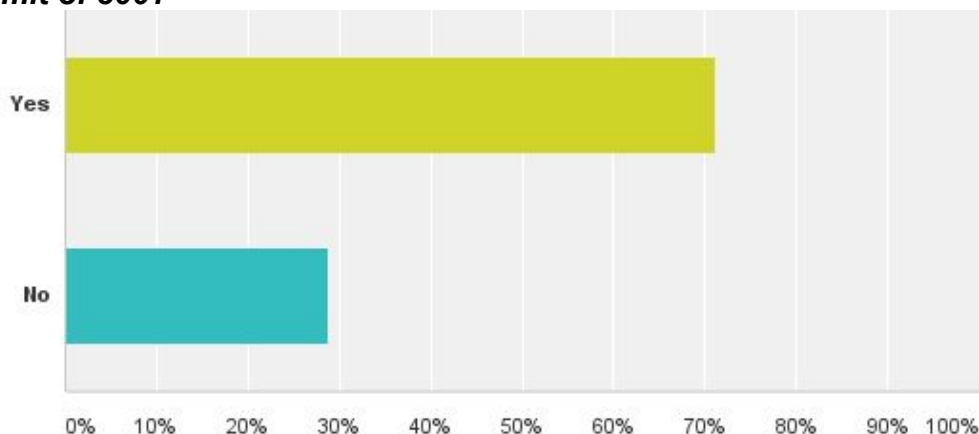
Bait supply and affordability is important for recreational fishers. With cockles representing up to 50% of bait sales at tackle shops in 2008 (Davies *et al.*, 2008) it is clear that cockles are/were the bait of choice for many anglers. While RecFish SA recognise the right of the commercial sector to sustainably optimise the value of their harvest, there is also an argument to consider the historical access recreational fishers have had to this resource through the bait market.

## Pipi *Donax deltoides*

PIRSA Proposal: To formalise the reduction of the bag limit from 300 to 100, west of longitude 136°E and introduce a car boot limit of 300

### RFSA Online Survey & Consultation Results

**RFSA Survey Question 16: *Do you support the proposal to formalise the reduced bag limit of 100 Pipi per person, west of 136°E & to introduce a car boot limit of 300?***



71.21% of respondents indicated that they would support the PIRSA proposal, with 28.79% against the proposal.

### Further Feedback Received

Only one written comment from the survey (Q39) referenced Pipi, west of 136°E. The respondent argued that the formalisation of the 300 limit for Pipi

was an insufficient measure to recover the stock.

### Organisation/ Group Feedback

The WCRFC submission indicated support for the proposal. The PLRFC raised serious concerns about Pipi stocks on Gunyah beach and advised that a two year closure may be required for the stocks to recover. The RFC suggests that a closure may be easier to monitor for compliance and that some in the community have concerns about the impacts of people ignoring the current rules.

### **Discussion**

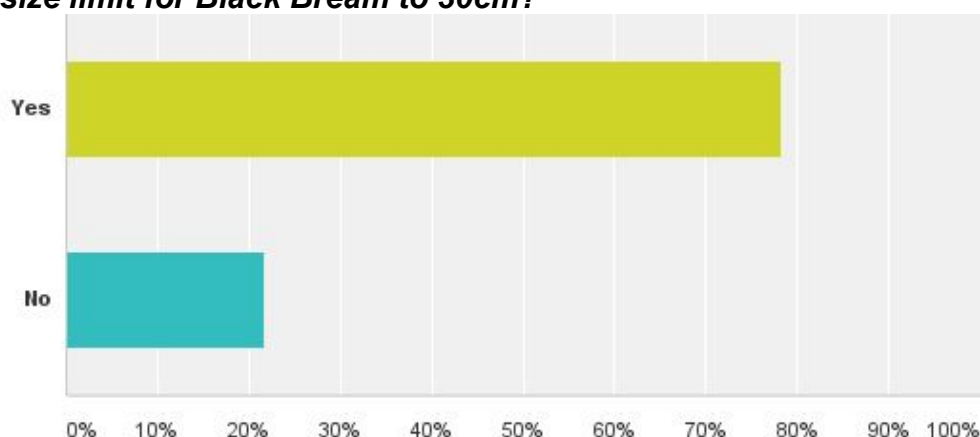
While significant at 71.21%, it is noted that surveyed support for this proposal was 10% lower than for the proposal relating to Pipi east of 136°E. Although no explanation can be inferred from comments received, is likely that owing to it's regional location, a reduced proportion of the survey sample, would access this stock or be affected by the proposal. RecFish SA draws attention to the local concerns raised, and suggests that PIRSA work with local fishers to evaluate management arrangements.

### **Black Bream *Acanthopagrus butcheri***

PIRSA Proposal: Increase the minimum size to 30cm. Separate management review to be undertaken for Black Bream in the Lakes and Coorong Region.

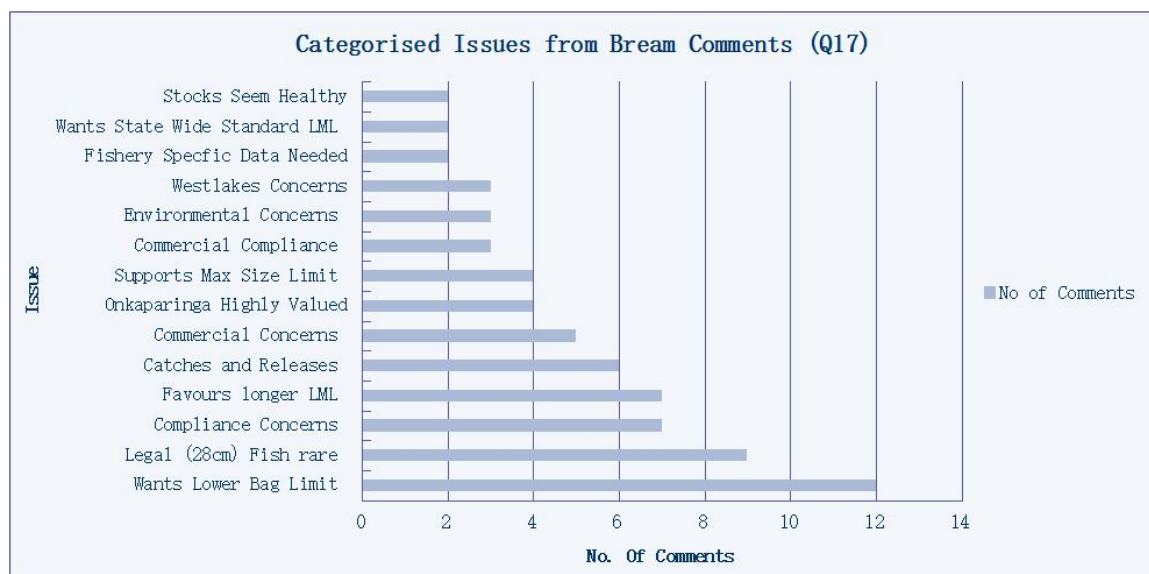
### RFSA Online Survey & Consultation Results

#### **RFSA Survey Question 17: *Do you support the proposal to raise the minimum size limit for Black Bream to 30cm?***



78.22% of respondents indicated support for the proposal to increase the LML for Black Bream to 30cm. 21.78% of respondents did not support the proposal.

Question 17 provided a field where respondents were invited to comment about Black Bream. 76 comments were received in response to the question; *“RecFish SA understands that many estuary locations are different. Do you have any comments about Black Bream/ Black Bream limits where you fish?”*



Note: Only issues with at least 2 comments were categorised.

The issue most frequently raised by respondents, with 12 comments was that these respondents felt the current bag limit was too high. Six respondents commented that they only catch and release for bream and seven respondents each, raised issues of noncompliance and the desire for an even higher LML.

Nine respondents indicated that captures of Bream at the current LML of 28cm was an uncommon occurrence where they fished. There was some concern from Westlakes fishers, that small average size and high abundance may be evidence of overpopulation.

## Discussion

Support for the proposed increase to LML was reasonably high among survey respondents. However, the comments received offer further complexity to be considered, with many of the respondents contradicting, the comments of others. This was especially the case with regard to the matter of LML. RecFish SA suggest that this reflects three important considerations.

Firstly, there is a now well established cohort of recreational fishers who target Bream regularly and practice catch & release most, or all of the time. These fishers are likely to be in favour of management designed to optimise their experiences, which are often unrelated to their opportunity to harvest Bream.

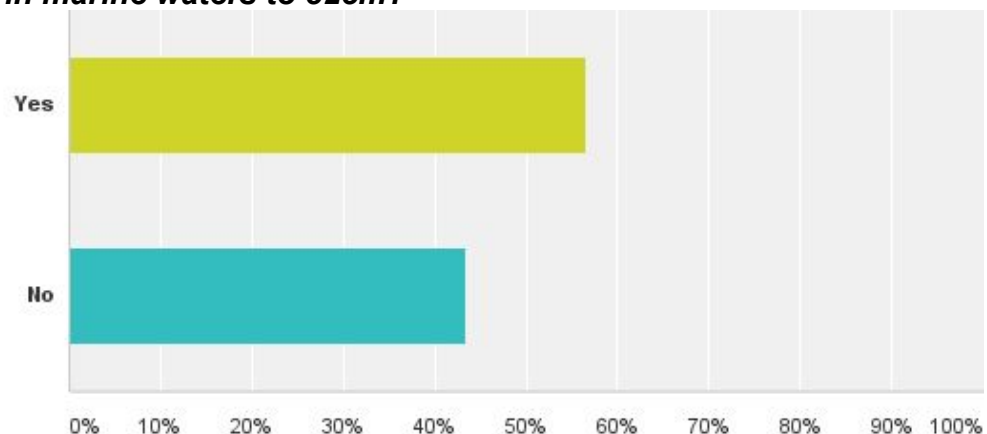
The second consideration is that the RFSA survey and the 2013/14 SARFS clearly show that some anglers do value the ability to harvest some bream with an estimated 8% retained (Giri & Hall, 2015). Finally, the survey comments reflect the fact that the locations where people fish for bream, often have unique characteristics and it is possible that these somewhat discrete fisheries, may have significantly different population dynamics. Some of the challenges facing managers, appear to be a lack of relevant data and the need to balance simplicity of regulations, with the unique nature of these fisheries and the values of the communities that access them.

## Mulloway *Argyrosomus japonicus*

PIRSA Proposal: Increase the size limit in marine waters to 82cm and introduce a boat limit in the Coorong Lagoon of 30 (46-75 cm fish, which is 3 times the bag limit) and retain the marine boat limit of 6.

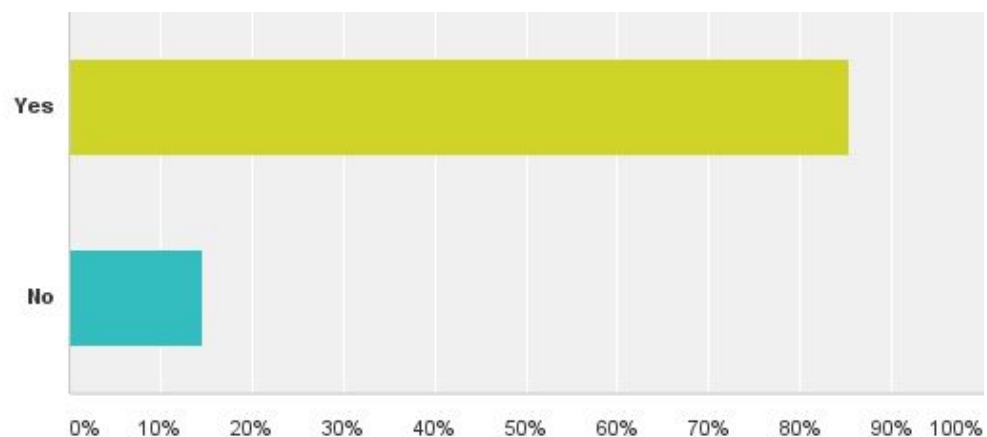
### RFSA Online Survey & Consultation Results

#### **RFSA Survey Question 18: *Do you support raising the minimum size for Mulloway in marine waters to 82cm?***



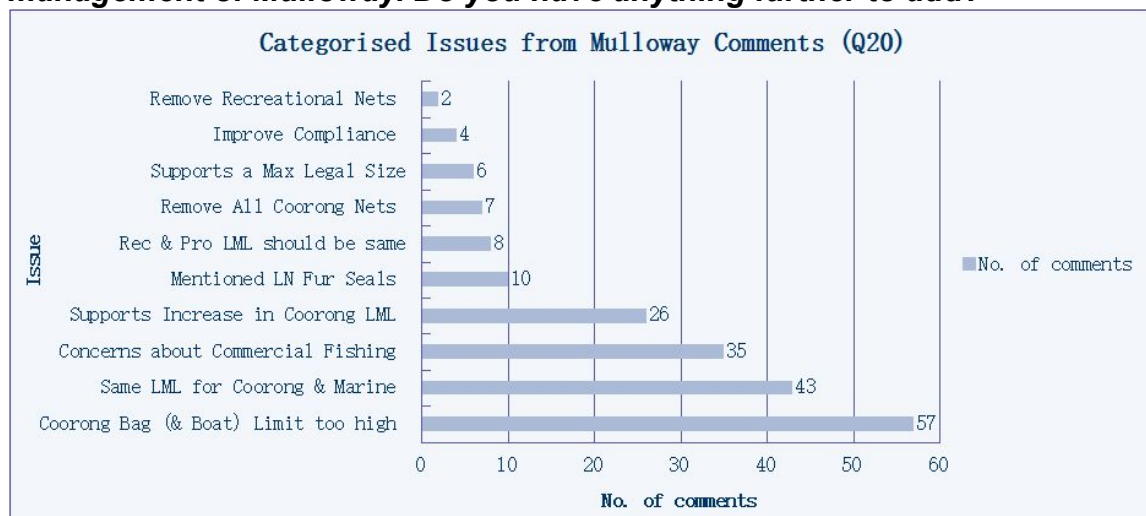
56.51% of respondents indicated support for the proposal to increase the LML for Mulloway in marine waters to 82cm. 43.49% of respondents did not support the proposal.

#### **RFSA Survey Question 19: *Do you support the introduction of a Boat limit of 30 fish for Mulloway between 46-75cm in the Coorong Lagoon?***



85.42% of respondents indicated support for the proposal to introduce a boat limit of 30 fish for Mulloway between 46-75cm in the Coorong Lagoon. 14.58% of respondents did not support the proposal.

**RFSA Survey Question 20: RecFish SA understand that many recreational fishers have comments about the current and future management of Mulloway. Do you have anything further to add?**



Note: Only issues with at least two comments were categorised.

A total of 258 written responses were received to survey question 20. The issue most frequently raised by respondents, with 57 comments, was the opinion that the Coorong recreational bag limit of 10 (and proposed boat limit of 30) is believed to be too high. 43 respondents recommended that the LML be standardised so that the Marine LML also apply to Coorong waters. 26 respondents recommended raising the Coorong LML (though not necessarily as high as the LML for marine waters), with eight respondents making the point to say that, they found it important that the LML be the same for both recreational and commercial sectors.

35 respondents raised concerns with the level of commercial exploitation of Mulloway, especially in the Coorong. Seven respondents called for all nets to be removed from the Coorong, with two respondents specifically recommending that recreational netting be stopped.

Other comments included questions or concerns about fur seals (10), support for a maximum size limit/ slot limit (6) and the need for improved compliance efforts from PIRSA Fisheries (4).

## Discussion

The responses received to the proposed changes for Mulloway were mixed, with strong support for the introduction of a Coorong boat limit, however only a slight majority (56%) in favour of increasing the LML for other waters. The level of interest in the management of this species was high, as evidenced by the receipt of 258 written responses. Commercial and recreational exploitation of juvenile Mulloway in the Coorong “gauntlet” fishery, ranked as the highest concern, accounting for approximately 70% of comments received.

The poll results for questions 18 & 19, taken along with the comments received in question 20, allude to community dissatisfaction with current and historic

approaches to managing this species. Put simply, there is little community confidence that raising the LML of Mulloway outside the Coorong, will have significant impacts on stock sustainability, so long as the Coorong lagoon remains a gauntlet of gill nets.

Many recreational fishers surveyed, also suggested a need to reform recreational controls for the Coorong fishery. It would be expected that if any changes resulted in an increased LML, that this needs to apply to both sectors in order to be effective.

Fisheries scientists have recently highlighted priorities for research to inform the future management of this fishery. These priorities appear to align with a number of the recreational sector's concerns. In particular, the need to better understand the use of the Coorong estuary by juvenile Mulloway and the need for independent monitoring of undersized gill net by-catch discards, have been identified as top research priorities for the management of this stock (Earl & Ward. 2014).

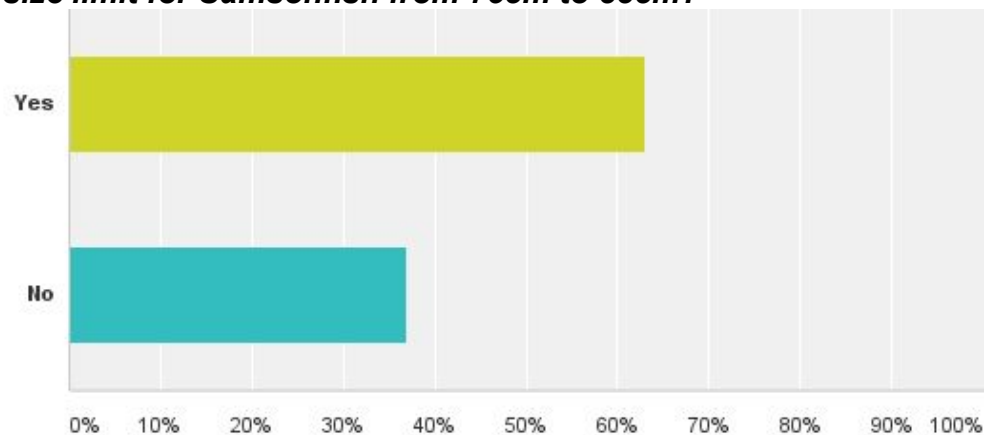
Earl and Ward (2014) also highlight the need for regular recreational catch estimates as a top priority. It appears as though the current SARFS, is unfit for this purpose. This is because the Relative Standard Error (RSE) of the 2013/14 recreational Mulloway harvest estimate is considerably high, at 45.9% (Giri & Hall, 2015). This is significantly higher than for Whiting, Garfish, Herring and even Snapper harvest estimates and suggests that current SARFS data alone, is not suitable to go on to produce reliable recreational sector harvest figures, especially once this is converted to a weight estimate. More reliable data is essential for the management of a species as socially and economically important as Mulloway.

## Samsonfish *Seriola hippos*

PIRSA Proposal: Increase size limit to 88cm. Reduce bag limit from 2 to 1 and boat limit from 6 to 3

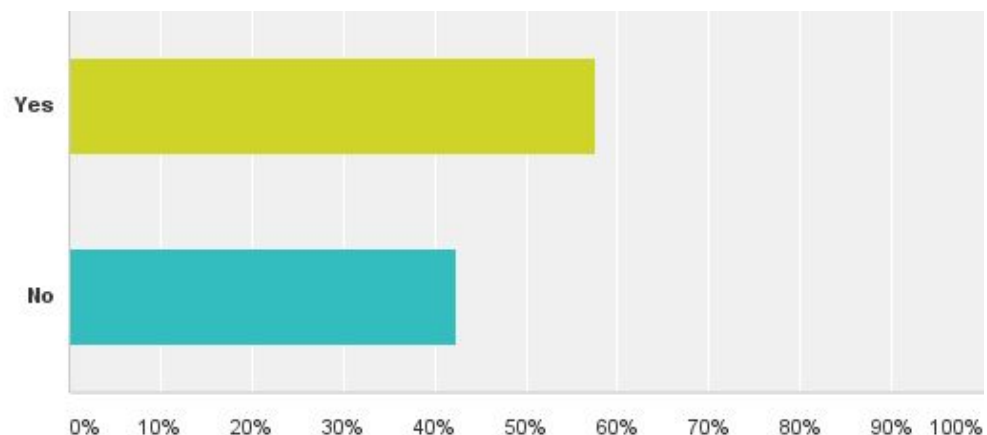
### RFSA Online Survey & Consultation Results

**RFSA Survey Question 21: Do you support the proposal to raise the minimum size limit for Samsonfish from 75cm to 88cm?**



63.07% of respondents indicated support for the proposed increase in the LML for Samsonfish, with 36.9% of respondents against the proposal.

**RFSA Survey Question 22: Do you support the proposal to reduce the Bag limit for Samsonfish from 2 per person (Boat: 6) to 1 per person (Boat 3)?**



57.56% of respondents indicated support for the PIRSA proposal to reduce the bag and boat limit for Samsonfish, with 42.44% of respondents against the proposal.

### Further Feedback Received

Two comments related to Samsonfish were received in response to Q39



'Further Comments'. Both respondents raised concern that the information in the 2013/12 survey in relation to Samsonfish release rates was not credible and did not reflect common practice in this fishery.

#### Organisation/ Group Feedback

A submission received from the West Coast RFC recommended that neither proposal for Samsonfish be adopted.

#### **Discussion**

Although surveyed sentiment was marginally in favour of each of the PIRSA proposals for Samsonfish, the proposals and the feedback received highlight some issues with the approach taken.

Firstly, it should be acknowledged that most South Australian recreational fishers do not target, or have ever caught a Samsonfish. Therefore, use of the 2013/14 SARFS figures to inform the assessment that there has been an increase in harvest as presented, is problematic. While the 2016 PIRSA Size Bag and Boat Limit Support Document does acknowledge that the RSE for the estimate of Samsonfish harvest numbers is >50%, it is worth noting that the RSE is in fact calculated at closer to 99.7% and thus the estimate is entirely unreliable.

RecFish SA is aware that many fishers who target Samsonfish practice catch and release or catch-tag and release, so it is likely that recreational tagging databases contain meaningful data for this fishery. Offshore fishers are usually organised, skilled anglers with a sense of resource custodianship and desire to support sustainability of the stock. If fisheries managers are seeking support for a precautionary approach, due to a lack of data (with respect to the bag limit reduction), then working more closely with the offshore fishing community, may be the ideal way forward. This has the potential to engender greater support for management and may provide fishery managers with greater access to relevant databases regarding catch, effort and recapture trends.

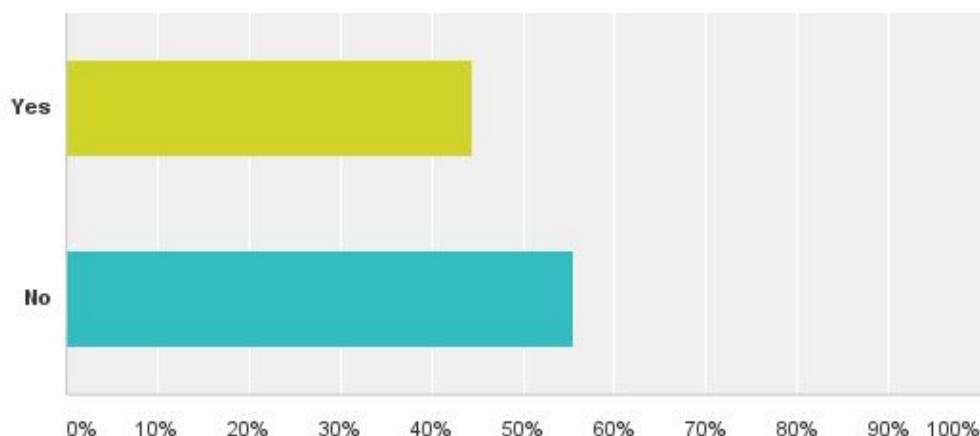
#### **Yellowtail Kingfish *Seriola lalandi***

PIRSA Proposal: Reduce the bag limit for Yellowtail Kingfish greater than 60cm from 2 to 1 and boat limit from 6 to 3

#### RFSA Online Survey & Consultation Results

**RFSA Survey Question 23: *Do you support the proposal to reduce to Bag limit for Yellowtail Kingfish over 60cm from 2 fish per person (Boat 6) to 1 per person (Boat 3)?***





55.46% of respondents opposed the proposal to reduce the bag and boat limit for Yellowtail Kingfish over 60cm, with 44.54% of respondents supporting the proposal.

#### Further Feedback Received

A total of four comments received related to Yellowtail Kingfish. Two of these comments were responses to Q39 “Further Comments”. One related to the fact that clubs and tagging organisations possess important data not currently used by PIRSA fisheries. The other respondent was concerned about aquaculture escapees.

Two further comments about Yellowtail Kingfish were received in answer to Q38 “Do you have additional comments on the Management Options for King George Whiting”. Both respondents raised concerns about the impact Yellowtail Kingfish could be having on King George Whiting stocks.

#### Organisation/ Group Feedback

Feedback received from the Adelaide Game Fishing Club supported this proposal.

A submission received from the West Coast RFC recommended that the PIRSA proposal for Yellowtail Kingfish, not be adopted.

#### **Discussion**

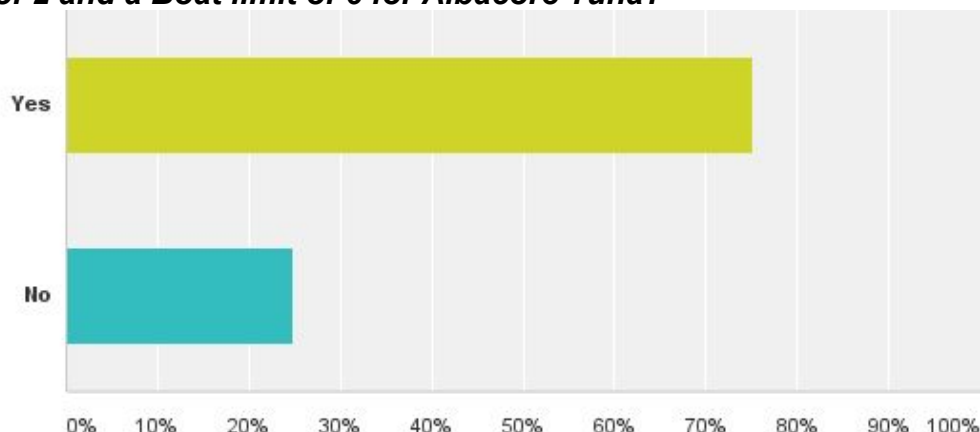
The majority of feedback received did not support the proposed bag and boat limit reduction for Yellowtail Kingfish over 60cm. Similar to Samsonfish, most SA recreational fishers do not regularly fish for this species. Many regular game fishers, especially those that belong to an angling club, practice tag and release. It is noted that a major game fishing club; the Adelaide Game Fishing Club are supportive of this proposal. Although few other comments were received on this issue, it may be noted that most (3) related to the perceived impacts of this species on King George whiting, rather than the state of the Kingfish stock itself.

## Albacore *Thunnus alalunga*

Proposal: Introduce a bag limit of 2 and a boat limit of 6

### RFSA Online Survey & Consultation Results

**RFSA Survey Question 24: Do you support the proposal to introduce a Bag limit of 2 and a Boat limit of 6 for Albacore Tuna?**



75.24% of respondents supported the proposal to introduce a bag limit of 2 and boat limit of 6 for Albacore, with 24.76% of respondents opposing the proposal.

### Organisation/ Group Feedback

In 2014 RecFish SA received a proposal from the South Australian Game Fishing Association to establish a bag and boat limit for Albacore in South Australia. This proposal was supported by the RecFish SA Council. During the consultation period, feedback received from the Adelaide Game Fishing Club also supported this proposal.

### **Discussion**

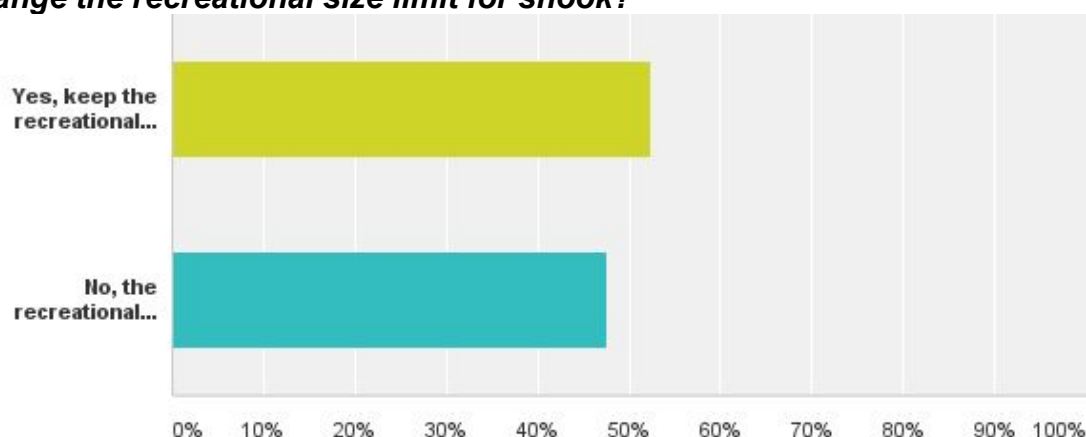
This proposal is community driven, it was proposed by the association representing SA game fishers and endorsed by the state peak body for recreational fishing. It is aimed at setting a community derived reasonable harvest standard and at proactively maintaining social licence. Although most South Australian fishers don't fish for Albacore, the surveyed support for this proposal was relatively high, especially when compared to other proposals affecting game fish species.

## Snook *Sphyraena novaehollandia*

PIRSA Proposal: No Change

### **RFSA Online Survey & Consultation Results**

**RFSA Survey Question 25: *Knowing it is a split size limit (lower LML for the commercial sector), do you support support the proposal not to change the recreational size limit for snook?***



52.36% of RFSA survey respondents indicated that they wanted to keep the current recreational LML - *“keep the recreational minimum size at 45cm, it doesn't matter that the commercial minimum size is lower (41cm)”*. 47.64% indicated that they thought the recreational LML should change - *“No, the recreational minimum size limit should now be reduced in line with the commercial size limit to 41cm”*

#### Further Feedback Received

A total of three comments received in answer to Q39 “Further Comments” referenced Snook. Two respondents urged for the commercial LML to be raised to 45cm, in line with the recreational sector. One respondent commented that recreational fishers should keep the 45cm LML regardless of the difference across sectors.

#### **Discussion**

In September 2014, RecFish SA were asked by PIRSA for feedback on a proposal to reduce the LML for Snook from 45cm to 41cm. The RecFish SA council/ membership considered the proposal and agreed that the reduction was not an ideal outcome for recreational fishers. The next step was to seek public opinion via Facebook and online forums. The unanimous feedback from respondents at the time, was that they did not support the LML reduction to 41cm.

RecFish SA provided a submission to PIRSA reflecting the sentiment of feedback received and rejected the proposal. RecFish SA were not expecting the outcome of a LML split across sectors, as the proposal related to LML, rather than *Recreational LML* and the fishery is shared with equal allocations of 49.5% (PIRSA, 2013).

RecFish SA chose to include Q25 for two main reasons. Firstly, RecFish SA were of the view that many recreational fishers may have been unaware that following consultation in 2014, PIRSA Fisheries decided to apply a different

LML for Snook to the commercial and recreational sectors.

Secondly, so that recreational fishers surveyed in 2016 would have the chance to consider the current arrangement and provide feedback. The views surveyed on the proposal for *no change*, was split, almost evenly. This is likely to reflect a division of opinion in the recreational fishing community.

### Management Options for King George Whiting (*Sillaginodes punctatus*) in South Australia

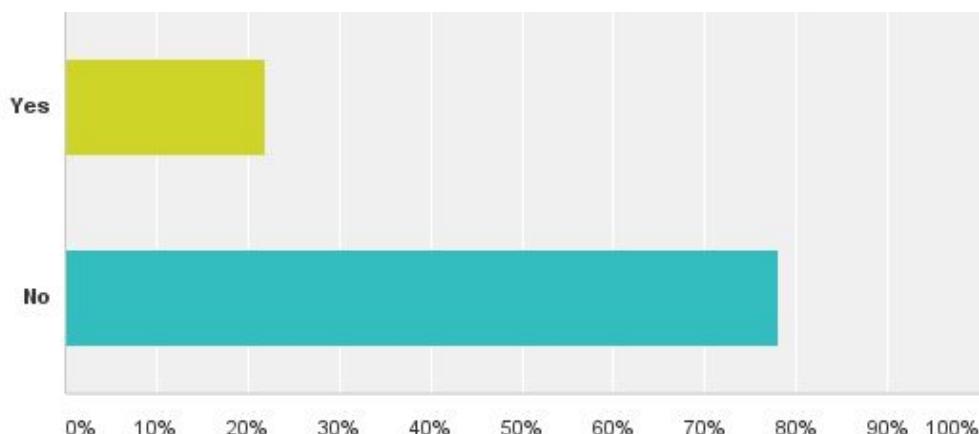
#### **Option 1 - Implement a maximum size limit**

PIRSA Proposed Option: For all waters east of longitude 136°E, introduce a maximum size limit of 40 cm and maintain the existing minimum size limit of 31 cm to apply to all fishing sectors. This would effectively introduce a slot limit for King George Whiting in these waters.

#### **RFSA Online Survey & Consultation Results**

Respondents were shown Questions 26 & 27 on the same screen

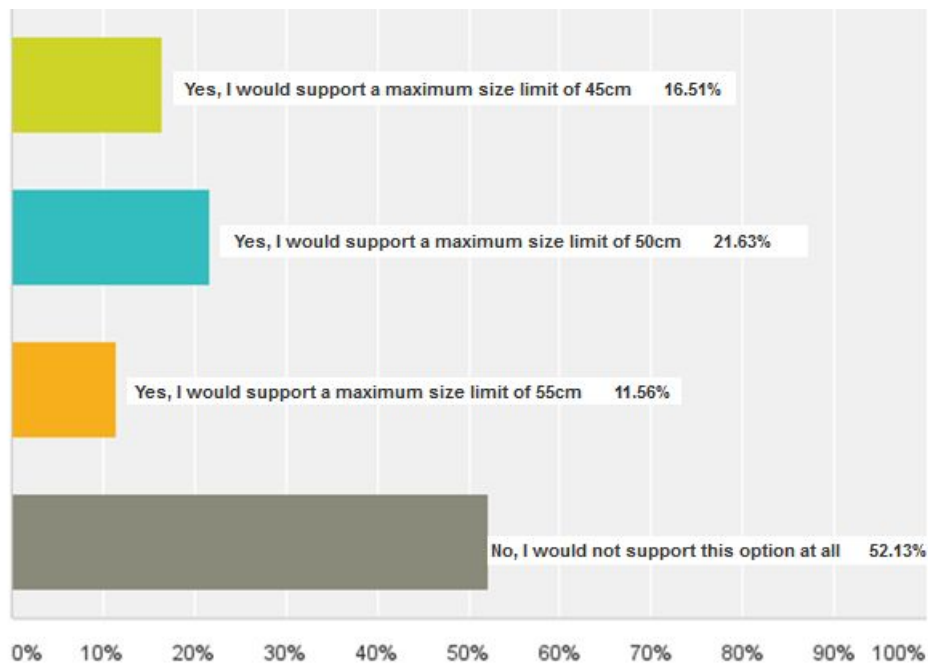
**RFSA Survey Question 26: *Would you support the management option of implementing a maximum size of 40cm for King George Whiting (east of 136°E)?***



78.02% of respondents indicated that they do not support implementing a maximum size limit of 40cm (*east of 136°E*), with 21.98% indicating they would support this option.

#### Surveyed support for a higher maximum size limit for KGW (*east of 136°E*)

**RFSA Survey Question 27: *If you answered no, would you be likely to support a higher maximum size limit?***



52.13% of respondents indicated that they still not support any maximum size at all.

#### Further Feedback Received

In response to Q38 'KGW Management' 28 respondents raised the issue that in the area they commonly fish, 40cm+ KGW make up much or most of the catch. Twenty-one respondents raised concerns about the potential for high PRM for large fish, which are commonly caught in deep waters. Eleven respondents suggested that if a maximum limit is introduced, it would be better to have a 'snapper style' split bag limit, thereby allowing for a smaller number of 40cm+ fish to be retained.

Three email comments received from individuals, specifically opposed this option.

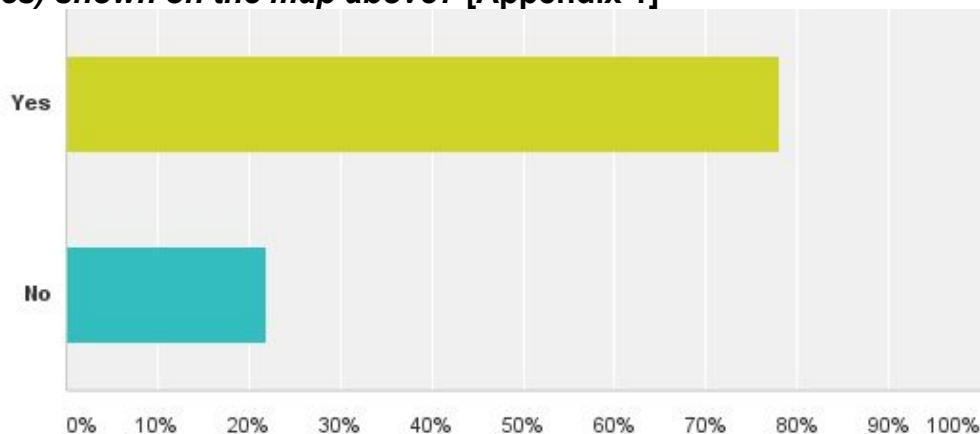
#### Organisation / Group Feedback

Submissions from the DRFC and WCRFC opposed this option, with the latter citing concerns about the potentially high PRM of fish caught in deep waters. This sentiment was shared by the local group, the EAG. The PLRFC suggested that if this option was brought in, it would be more reasonable to implement a 'snapper style' split limit, with some 40cm+ allowed to be retained. The South Australian Recreational Fishers Association - Upper South East Branch strongly opposed this option in their submission. They suggest that most KGW caught in the South East of SA are 40cm in length or greater and this option would make access to the fishery very difficult. The SARFA -USE also forwarded a petition with 514 local signatures, in opposition to a 40cm upper size limit.

### **Option 2 - Implement Spawning Spatial Closures**

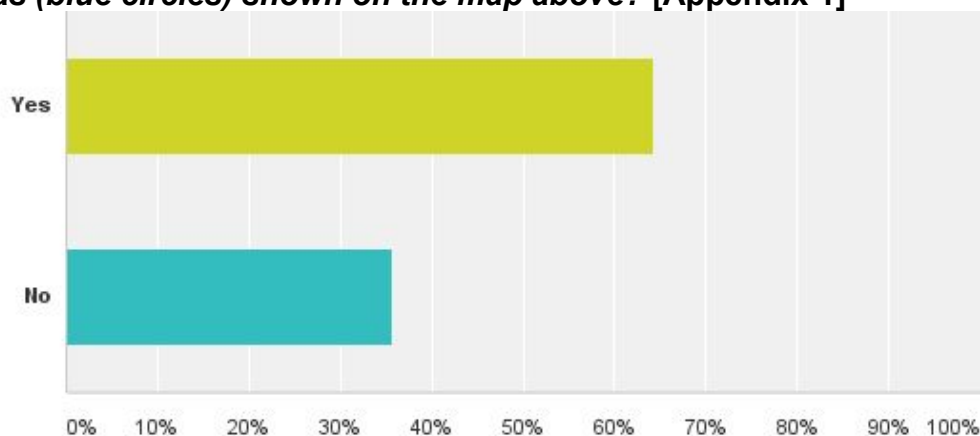
**Proposed management option:** Introduce spawning spatial closures to apply to all sectors (recreational, charter and commercial fishers):

**RFSA Survey Question 28:** *Would you support the option to introduce King George Whiting spawning spatial closures during April in the areas (blue circles) shown on the map above? [Appendix 1]*



78.17% of respondents indicated that they would support the spawning spatial closures, during the month of April. 21.83% of respondents indicated they would not support this option.

**RFSA Survey Question 29:** *Would you support the option to introduce King George Whiting spawning spatial closures between March and May in the areas (blue circles) shown on the map above? [Appendix 1]*



64.20% of respondents indicated that they would support the spawning spatial closures, between March and May. 35.80% of respondents indicated they would not support this option.

#### Organisation / Group Feedback

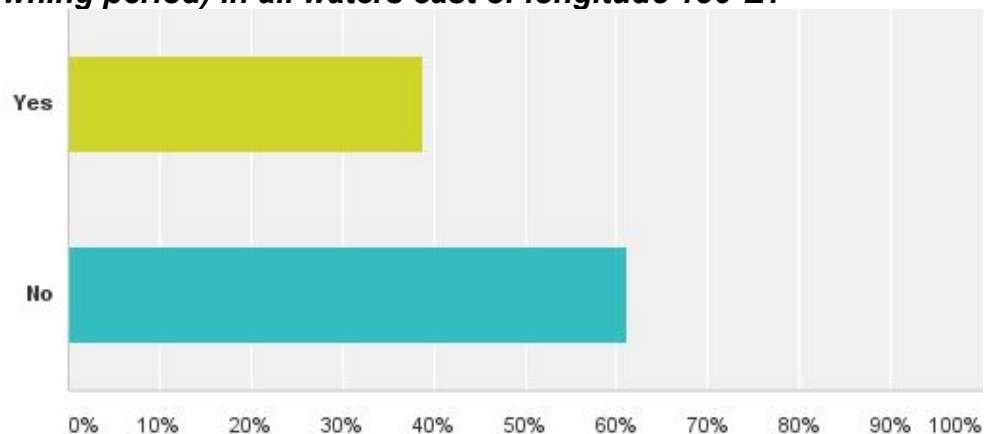
A submission from the local group, the EAG, opposed this option. The group has asked for proof that the areas identified are key spawning grounds for KGW and for an investigation/ social & economic modeling of the projected impacts of the closure.

The WCRFC and the PLRFC both raised concerns about the proposed Spencer Gulf spawning spatial closure area, being a location where they understand prawn trawling to occur.

### Option 3 - Implement Seasonal Closure

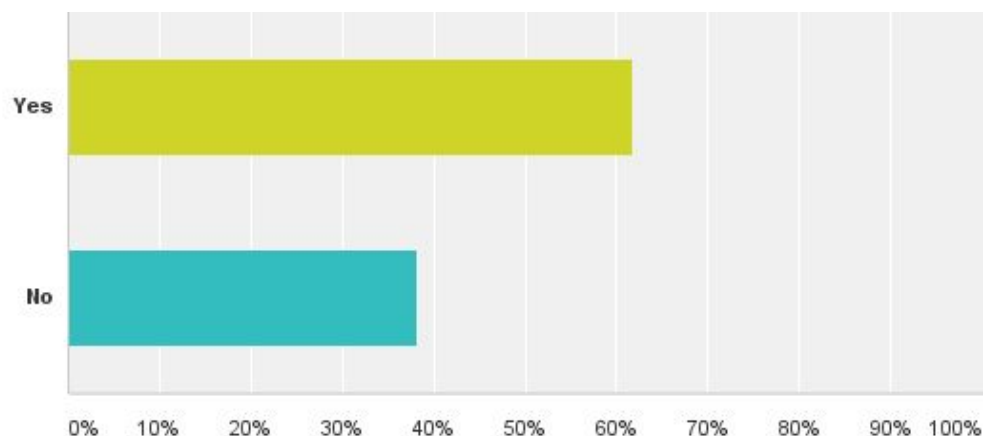
**Proposed management option:** Introduce a seasonal closure to apply to all sectors (recreational, charter and commercial fishers)

**RFSA Survey Question 30:** *Would you support the option to introduce a closure to fishing for King George Whiting from March to May (majority of the spawning period) in all waters east of longitude 136°E?*



61.07% of respondents indicated that they oppose a seasonal closure from March to May (east of 136°E). 38.93% of respondents indicated they would support this option.

**RFSA Survey Question 31:** *Would you support the option to introduce a closure to fishing for King George Whiting during April (peak spawning period) in all waters east of longitude 136°E?*



61.78% of respondents indicated that they would support a seasonal closure during April (east of 136°E). 38.22% of respondents indicated they oppose this option.

### Further Feedback

In response to Q38 “Whiting Management” three comments were received which relate directly to Option 3. Two respondents raised concerns about the effect that closures would have on regional tourism. One respondent indicated support for an April seasonal closure, however added that this should be suspended during the Easter break.

### Organisation / Group Feedback

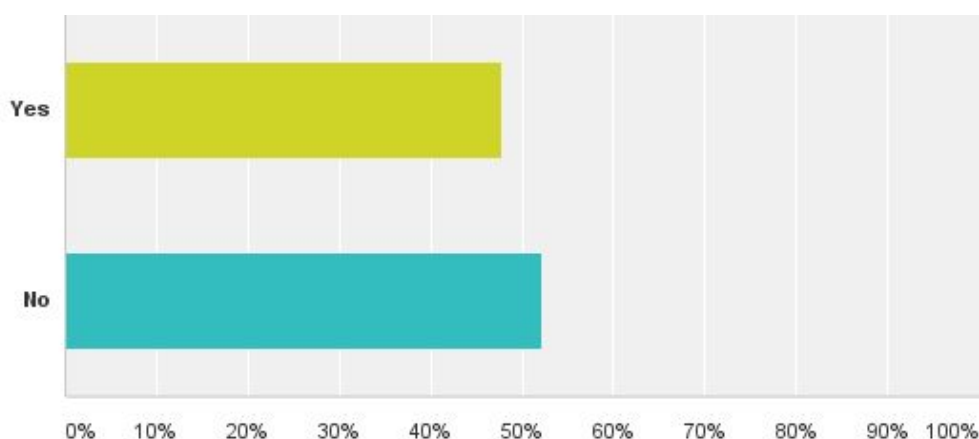
The Upper Spencer Gulf RFC (USGRFC) indicated support for a seasonal closure for KGW of between 4 to 6 weeks. Local group, the Edithburgh Action Group indicated general support for a trial of a statewide 4 to 6 week closure (beginning after Easter).

A submission from the WCRFC opposed the option of a seasonal closure saying that would adversely impact on tourism and regional economies. It also raised concerns that if the fishery was closed east of 136°E, this would result in an influx of visitation putting pressure on the fishery west of 136°E. The PLRFC indicated that on balance those consulted thought fishers would prefer not to have a seasonal closure.

## **Option 4 - Reduction to the Recreational Bag and Boat Limits**

Proposed management option: A reduction to the recreational bag limit (including for the Charter Boat Fishery) in all waters east of longitude 136°E

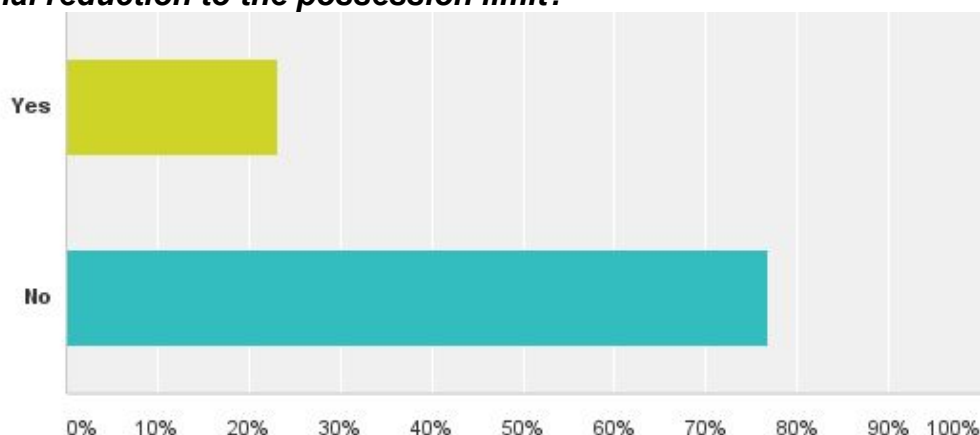
**RFSA Survey Question 32: *Would you support the option (4a) to reduce the daily bag limit from 12 to 10 (boat 36 to 30) King George Whiting with a proportional reduction to the possession limit?***



52.11% of respondents indicated that they oppose a bag limit reduction from 12 to 10 (boat 36 to 30). 47.89% of respondents indicated they would support this option.



**RFSA Survey Question 33: *Would you support the option (4b) to reduce the daily bag limit from 12 to 8 (boat 36 to 24) King George Whiting with a proportional reduction to the possession limit?***



76.73% of respondents indicated that they oppose a bag limit reduction from 12 to 8 (boat 36 to 24). 22.73% of respondents indicated they would support this option.

Further Feedback

In response to Q38 “Whiting Management” four comments were received specifically relating to Option 4. Three respondents raised concerns about the effects reduced bag limits could have on fishing visitation/tourism and the associated benefits to regional towns. Another respondent indicated that they did not support a bag limit reduction as they only have limited opportunity to go fishing.

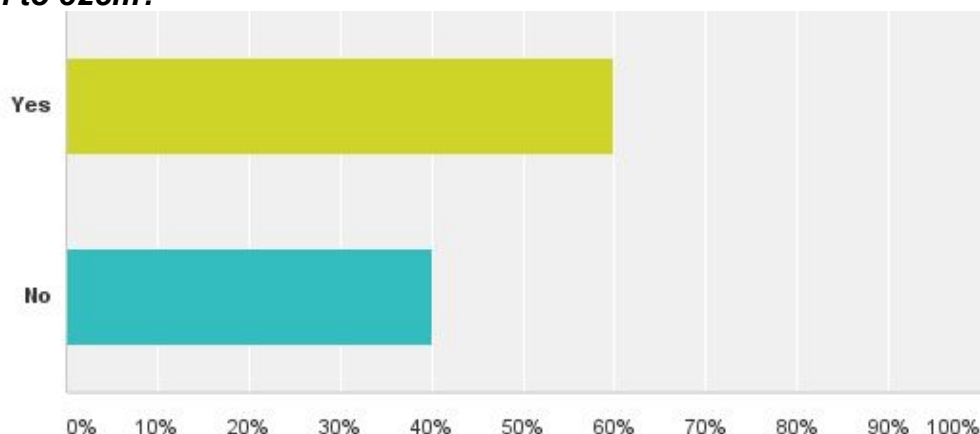
Organisation / Group Feedback

Although calling for further research, especially into KGW reproduction to inform long term management, the DRFC indicated that it would support a bag limit of 10 KGW as an interim measure. The WCRFC suggested to keep the bag limit at 12, however accepted a reduction in the boat limit to 30. The submission from the regional group, Edithburgh Action Group did not support any bag limit reduction.

**Option 5 - Increase Minimum Size Limit**

**Proposed management option:** Increase the minimum size limit to 32 cm, which is the size at maturity for King George Whiting, in all waters east of longitude 136°E

**RFSA Survey Question 34: *Would you support the option to increase the legal minimum length for King George Whiting (in waters east of 136°E) from 31cm to 32cm?***



60% of respondents indicated that they would support raising the LML for KGW (*east of 136°E*). 40% of respondents indicated that they oppose this option.

Further Feedback

In response to Q38 “Whiting Management” a number of comments specifically related to Option 5. 19 respondents raised concerns about PRM of released undersized fish and the fact that the discard of KGW may increase if the LML is raised to 32cm. 16 respondents commented that KGW over the LML of 31cm are already hard to find in the areas they fish.

Organisation / Group Feedback

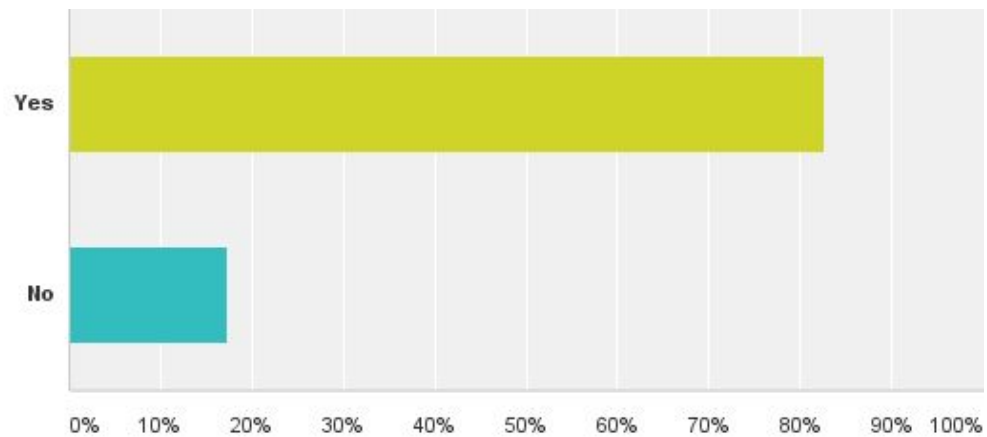
Although calling for further research, the DRFC indicated that it would support an increase in the LML, statewide. Regional group, the EAG also supported the concept of an increased LML being applied statewide, though added that their community thought this would provide little sustainability benefit.

Both the USGRFC and the WCRFC raised questions about the benefit of raising the LML. They argued that the sustainable west coast KGW fishery (west of 136°E) with a lower LML indicated that it was not this harvest control that was important.

**Option 6 - Commercial Effort Day Limits or Catch Quotas**

**Proposed management option:** Additional management arrangements are developed to apply to commercial fishing effort or catch

**RFSA Survey Question 35: *Would you support the option of additional management arrangements being developed to apply to commercial fishing effort or catch?***



82.7% of respondents indicated that they would support additional management arrangements being developed to apply to commercial effort or catch. 17.30% of respondents did not support this option.

#### Further Feedback

In response to Q38 “Whiting Management” 138 respondents referenced concerns about the commercial King George Whiting fishery. While many did not relate directly to the proposal for an ITE or ITQ, 56 respondents did raise concerns about commercial netting of KGW, with five opposing the recent proposal to reopen netting areas.

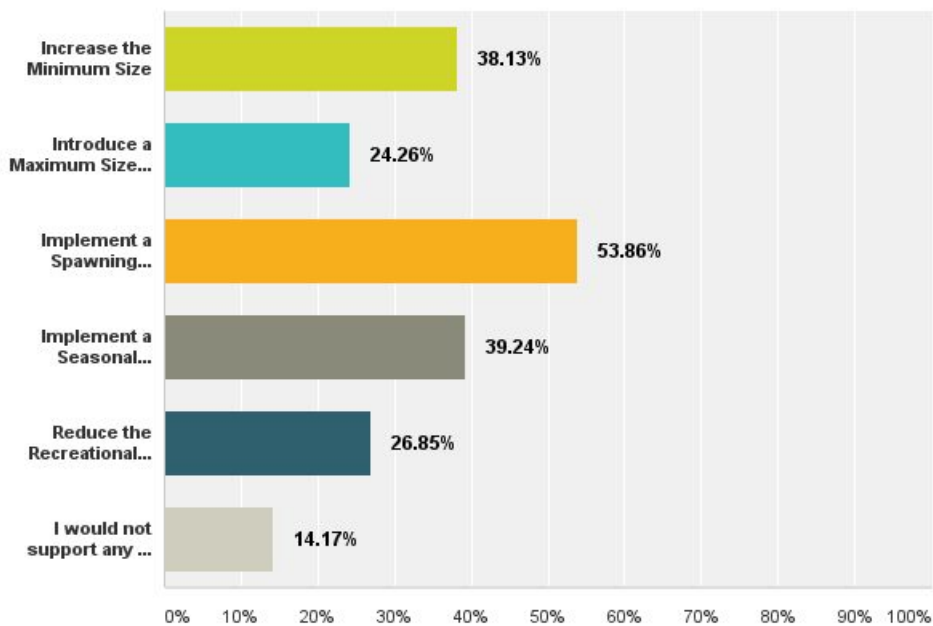
Eleven respondents specifically indicated support for the commercial KGW fishery to be quota (total/individual) managed.

#### Organisation / Group Feedback

The submission from the WCRFC suggests ‘Zoning’ Marine Scale licences to prevent effort transfer. Some members acknowledge the benefits of a ITQ system, but also the high costs.

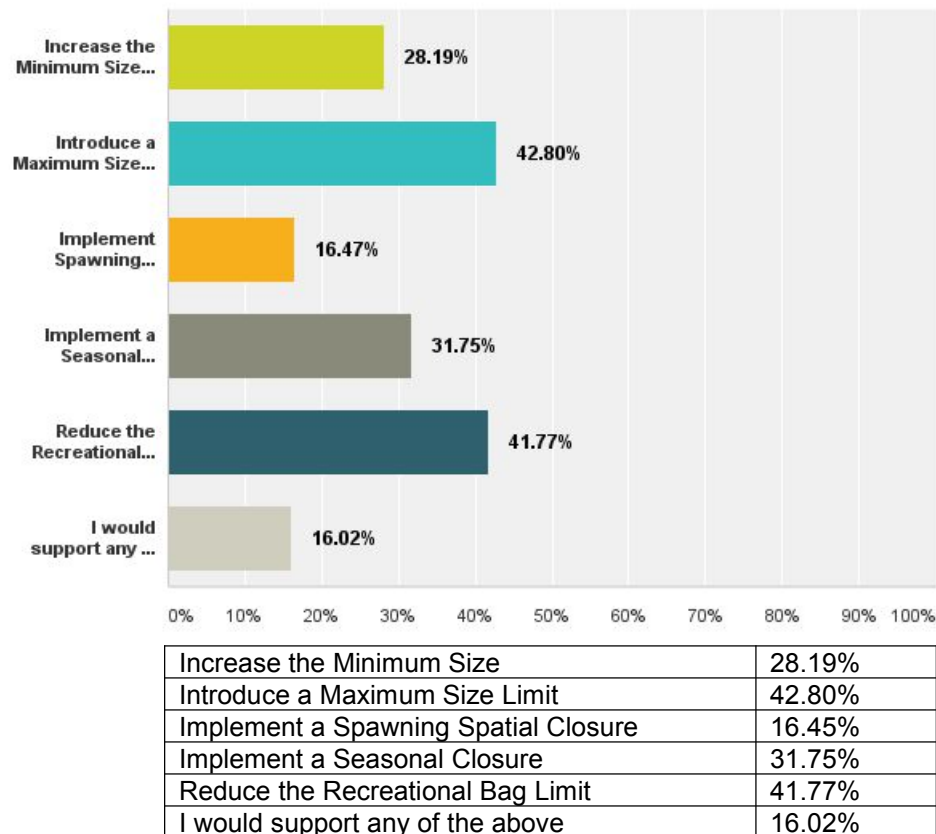
## Comparing KGW Options:

**RFSA Survey Question 36: Which of these options do you find most acceptable? (You can choose up to 3)**

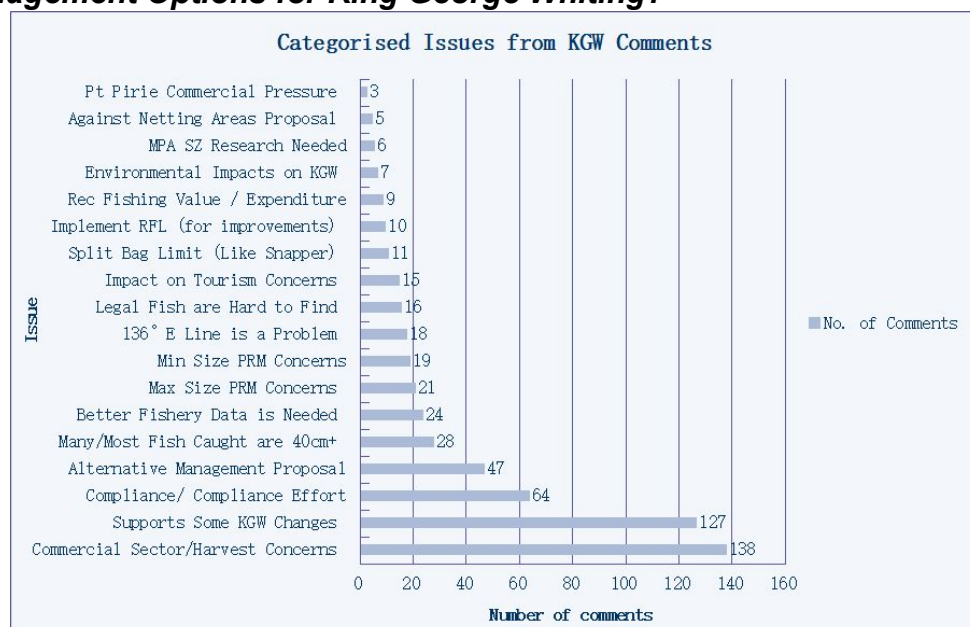


Increase the Minimum Size	38.13%
Introduce a Maximum Size Limit	24.26%
Implement a Spawning Spatial Closure	53.86%
Implement a Seasonal Closure	39.24%
Reduce the Recreational Bag Limit	26.85%
I would not support any of the above	14.17%

**RFSA Survey Question 37: Which of these options do you find least acceptable? (You can choose up to 3)**



**RFSA Survey Question 38: Do you have additional comments on the Management Options for King George Whiting?**



457 written responses received. Only issues with 2 or more comments are categorised above.

## King George Whiting Options Discussion

### Options least supported by feedback received

From feedback received, option 1 (a 40cm upper size limit) recorded the highest level of opposition, with 78% of survey respondents against the proposal. Twenty-eight respondents sent comments saying this would impact on most or all of their KGW catches and 21 respondents were concerned about the potential for high PRM rates. This option was also revealed to be least favoured through organisation & group feedback, with no support recorded and a petition with 514 signatures against it, forwarded.

The next least favoured option was option 4(b) the proposed bag limit of 8 per person (24 per boat), with 76.7% of survey respondents against the proposal. Written responses were mostly concerned with potential impacts to regional tourism. The only organisational support recorded for this option came from the DRFC and they called for it to be an interim measure.

The third least supported option was option 3(a), a three month seasonal closure. 61% of survey respondents opposed this option. Although few specific comments were received, these focused on the potential economic impacts for regional areas, especially during holiday periods.

### Options most supported by feedback received

From feedback received, option 6 (Commercial Effort Day or Catch Quotas) was the most favoured option with 82% of respondents indicating that they would support this option. 138 written comments referenced concerns about the commercial KGW fishery, with 56 respondents concerned specifically about the impact of netting.

The next most supported option was 2(b) (an April Spawning Spatial Closure) with 78% of respondents indicating that they would support this option, followed by option 2(a) (a March to May spawning spatial closure) recording 64% support. However, while the majority of survey respondents favoured these options, there was strong local opposition to them from the EAG.

The option which was the fourth most supported by survey respondents was option 3(b) (an April seasonal closure). Feedback from organisations/ groups was split with the USGRFC and EAG offering some support, while the PLRFC and the WCRFC voicing concern.

## Discussion

### KGW Issues of Concern

#### Post Release Mortality

Concern about the potential for new management options for KGW to result in increased PRM was raised by 40 respondents. Twenty-one respondents were

concerned about PRM in relation to the proposed maximum size limit of 40cm. It was contended that this is especially relevant as many larger KGW are caught in deeper southern gulf or ocean waters and may be subject to barotrauma.

The remaining 19 respondents on this issue, raised concerns about the potential for increased PRM, should a higher LML of 32cm be adopted. A number of submissions, especially from fishers who regularly fish in the northern gulf areas, reported already high levels of undersized discard. It is noted that research has estimated 97% of King George whiting taken from shallow waters in SA, by recreational anglers survive being released (Kumar *et al.*, 1995). It may be necessary to address concerns by developing best practice handling standards for KGW fishing.

### Commercial fishing

The most common issue raised in feedback received, was concern about the impact of commercial fishing on KGW stocks. At face value this may seem unusual given that Giri and Hall (2015) estimate the 2013/14 recreational harvest of KGW to be 58.1% of the total harvest, however, there is greater complexity to this sentiment. Views expressed about the West Coast (WC) KGW commercial fishery were largely positive, with no negative comments received about the WC hook/ handline fishery and seven comments referencing the success of this harvest method, in ensuring ongoing fishery performance. Concerns about commercial fishing for KGW are mostly focused on haul netting in the upper gulf areas, where a higher proportion of new and sub-recruits are more common.

### Measuring Fishery Performance

A number of comments received expressed a lack of confidence in the data/ research behind establishing estimates of the KGW fishery performance. Twenty-four respondents call for better fishery data to be collected, while at least six individuals and a number of organisations suggested that it was necessary for researchers to factor in potential effects of the recently introduced Marine Park Sanctuary Zones.

RecFish SA would also like to draw attention to the fact that in determining stock status, SARDI consider Handline Effort, Handline CPUE and Age Structures to be Primary Performance Indicators (Fowler *et al.*, 2014a). Yet despite the fact that the recreational sector is thought to be responsible for >50% of the SGV & SG total catch, recreational data is not included in the analysis of these key fishery performance indicators. Estimated harvest rates and allocations appear to point to the need to incorporate/collect recreational data for GSV & SG KGW fisheries management and/or rely more on fishery independent data.

In 2015, RecFish SA were briefed by SARDI on a project proposal to determine King George whiting (KGW) spawning areas and support the

development of a fishery independent technique for estimating spawning biomass and the evaluation of future strategic management options. RecFish SA provided a letter of support to accompany the SARDI funding application to the FRDC. RecFish SA understands that SARDI was successful in securing funding and we look forward to assisting with this project where possible. RecFish SA would also expect that any management options adopted as a result of the 2016 Recreational Fishing Review, be evaluated for performance and also be reassessed, when data from the aforementioned SARDI project becomes available.

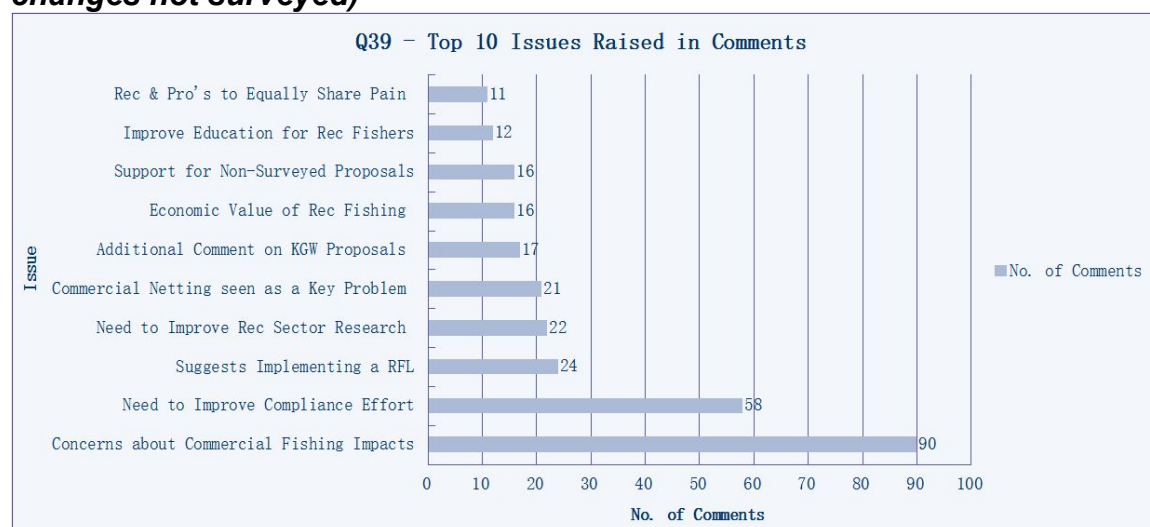
## Allocation

According to Giri and Hall (2015), the 2013/14 recreational harvest for KGW was 58.1% of total harvest. This is above the trigger limit set out for this fishery (PIRSA, 2016, Draft Management Plan) when the mean figure is taken, or just below the trigger limit of 53.35% (at 53.31%) if the lower end of the confidence range is taken. Nevertheless, given the SE for the 2013/14 recreational harvest estimate and the fact that a significant proportion of the harvest shift may be attributed to declining (but not fully explained) commercial effort, questions are raised about whether it is appropriate to be looking to constrain the recreational harvest as a portion of the total catch, at this point in time.



## Additional Issues & Comments

### ***RFSA Survey Question 39: Additional Comments (including proposed changes not surveyed)***



Top 10 (broader issues) raised in response to Q39

### **Discussion Broader Issues**

A number of the issues raised in response to Q39 have been dealt with in response to specific proposals so far. Some concerns however, are less related to individual species and are instead broader issues, relating to the management and development of recreational fishing in South Australia. A number of these matters are covered in RecFish SA's response to the Draft Management Plan for Recreational Fishing in South Australia, however it is important to acknowledge them in this document.

Dissatisfaction with the current level of compliance effort, for which funding is allocated from general revenue in South Australia, ranked highly in responses received. RecFish SA considers that this is a matter for the State Government to consider in light of the sentiment expressed.

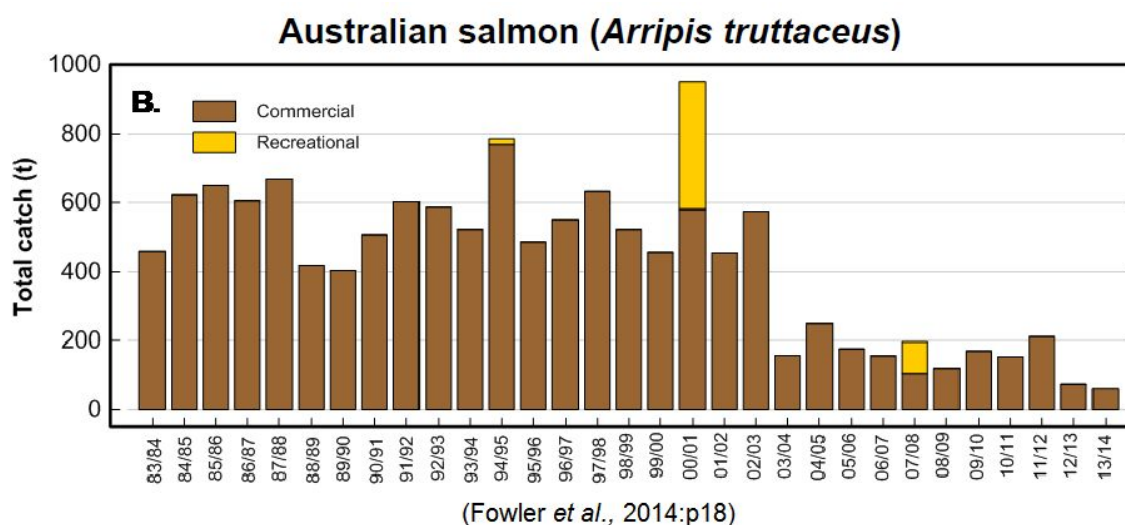
Similarly, the need for improved investment into research and education have been identified by respondents and by RecFish SA as key priorities for the future of recreational fishing in SA. The appropriate level of resourcing of these key issues is critical to the sustainable development of the recreational fishing sector, as well as to ensure a fair approach to sharing the community resource and the responsibility for managing it.

Finally, the recognition and measurement of the social and economic value of recreational fishing in South Australia, is identified as a critical component for sector development. The collection of such data is required in order to appropriately inform decisions around sector allocation, evaluating management and guiding future investment. The most recent surveyed expenditure by recreational fishers in South Australia was in 2000/01 and was estimated to be \$148.4M (Henry & Lyle, 2003).

Interestingly, an Ernst & Young report (2011) estimated the 2010/11 expenditure by recreational fishers in South Australia's Murray Darling Basin alone, to be at \$114M. Given freshwater fishing has accounted for 13-16% of recreational fishing effort in South Australia (Henry & Lyle, 2003, Jones, 2009), the inconsistency between the figures makes comparison difficult. What it does highlight is the need for a consistent survey regime to inform future management and development.

### Western Australian Salmon *Arripis truttacea*

Sector allocations for West Australian Salmon were not made in the 2013 Management Plan for the South Australian Commercial Marine Scalefish Fishery (PIRSA), due to 2007/8 commercial catch of 111.6t (Jones, 2009) not being considered at the time, to be historically representative of that sectors catch. Yet the figure below shows that 2007/8 catch has turned out to be reasonably representative of the commercial harvest over a period of 11 years. RecFish SA acknowledge that a review of the Salmon fishery is planned, however given the current development of A Management Plan for Recreational Fishing in South Australia, now may be the opportune time to consider setting sector allocations for this species.



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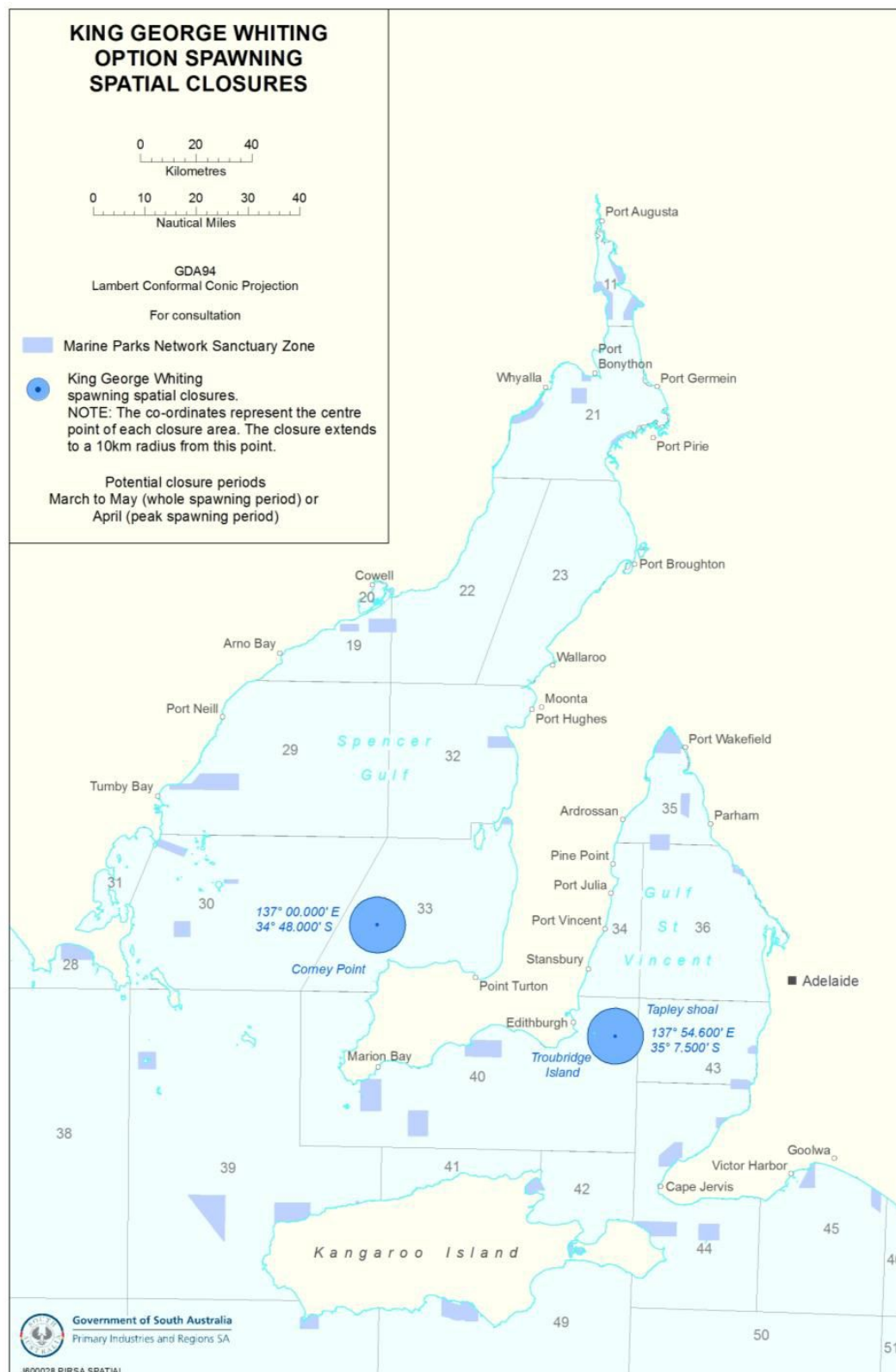
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## Appendix 4: PIRSA Spatial Closures Map



Note that appendix 1, 2, 3, 5 & 6 are not included in this version