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*Fish Now, Fish Forever*

Dr Gavin Begg  
Executive Director  
Fisheries & Aquaculture  
GPO Box 1625  
Adelaide SA 5001  
By Email: [jane.ham@sa.gov.au](mailto:jane.ham@sa.gov.au)

22 June 2021

Dear Dr. Begg,

**RE: Sustainability of Black bream and Greenback flounder in the Lakes and Coorong Fishery.**

RecFish SA have received the Chairman's report from the May meeting of the Lakes and Coorong Fishery Management Advisory Committee (LCFMAC) and wish to express concerns regarding the decision of the committee to take no immediate action to address the sustained depletion of Black bream and Greenback flounder stocks in the Coorong.

The depleted status of Black bream and Greenback flounder has been recognised for several years, with management initiatives implemented in 2018 and 2019 to prevent further decline of stocks. The LCFMAC again acknowledged the status of these stocks at its meeting of October 2020, when it agreed that *"this matter be further examined as part of the assessment of the LCF for 2019/20 to consider an appropriate management response."* It should be noted that the 2019 arrangements were not implemented until PIRSA were reminded of its obligations by RecFish SA and in 2020, agreed management arrangements were not implemented at all.

The *Assessment of the South Australian Lakes and Coorong Fishery in 2019/20* (Earl, J. and Bailleul, F. 2021) referred to in the October 2020 meeting of the LCFMAC was presented to the MAC early in 2021 and again confirms the depleted status of Black bream and Greenback flounder stocks and further, emphasises that management actions put in place for Black bream in 2018 and 2019, "are yet to show any measurable improvements in the stock." Catch statistics from the assessment show that 1.76 tonne of Black bream was taken by L&C fishers in 19/20, which appears to counter claims that the commercial sector does not target this species or suggests that additional measures must be implemented in the large-mesh gillnet fishery in the Coorong to reduce the level of by-catch.

In response to the warnings presented in the 19/20 stock assessment, the recreational delegate to the LCFMAC, Mr. Vern Leng, submitted a proposal to introduce specific management arrangements to the fishery to prevent further depletion of Black bream and Greenback flounder stocks and contribute to rebuilding stock resilience. This proposal was considered at the May meeting of the LCFMAC (which Mr Leng was unable to attend).

The advice of the LCFMAC to defer any affirmative action on Mr Lengs proposal until its meeting in November, pending the development of a stock recovery and monitoring plan, exposes these species to continued commercial exploitation which may result in further stock decline. Clearly, the LCFMAC has exercised poor judgment in considering the matter and providing this advice to the Minister.

RecFish SA request that the advice of the LCFMAC be considered unsuitable for management of these species and; that PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture take immediate action to develop and implement actions to protect these species prior to renewed fishing effort for Black bream in July and Greenback Flounder in November.

RecFish SA are willing to support actions which contribute to the sustainable management of these species and are available to discuss possible management options to achieve this goal.

You may contact me to further discuss this matter.

Yours sincerely

Mick Wilson  
Chair