

**NSW FISHERS
IT IS TIME TO
ACT.....!!!!!!!**

I've called this a mini news letter (possibly on steroids) but if you fish or know anyone who does, I urge you to read this right through.

This letter is sent to all supporters of both CAFR (Community Action for Fish Rock) and Ecofishers.

Many of you receiving this have data bases of your own and I implore you to forward this to as many fishers and supporters as possible.

WHY.....???????

The recent declaration of new rules for Grey Nurse sites is the start of an insidious cancer of Marine Parks by stealth.

As every new GNS site is declared it comes with "no bait" fishing regulations already attached.

**Bearing in mind that there are at least 40 (Four Zero) aggregation sites off NSW not yet declared, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to work out that one by one these sites will be declared.....
then at some point in the future (5-10 years ??) they decide to join the dots and lo and behold they will have achieved on the sea what they did on the land with National Parks.**

IT HAS ALREADY STARTED...!!!!!!

MERMAID REEF IS THE FIRST.

**Fisheries and Govt. are yet to explain the criteria for declaring GNS sites. In fact in the case of Mermaid Reef, recreational fishers can't use bait (\$22,000 first offence, \$44,000) but commercial operators can.....
Tell me how that protects the GNS.**

Close examination of the submission paper shows aggregation sites marked

that have never been mentioned before and in the case of Fish Rock and Green Island seems to be an absolute lie.

Who ever heard of Grey Nurse aggregating on the seaward side of an island in a raging current yet in the Fisheries discussion paper they actually highlight THREE aggregation sites at Fish Rock, two being on the northern side in the constantly raging southern current that Fish Rock is renowned for. It is quite clear that the two northern sites serve no other purpose other than a bloody minded attempt to suggest that fishers are fishing directly over the sharks. There has never been any recorded agg sites on these northern sites, the divers won't even dive there due to the roaring current that tubulates and tears between the bombora and the island, yet Fisheries have ear-marked it as an 'Agg Site'. Grey Nurse sharks ALWAYS congregate and sleep (or try to) on the sheltered side of structures, not the other way around.

THE SPREAD OF THIS CANCER MUST STOP NOW...!!!

In line with DPI manipulation the discussion paper and submission details are hard to find.

Submission details can be found at the bottom of this letter.

WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DOING.

- **As previously reported in October, Ecofishers have elected a whole new executive committee.**
- **The website is currently under reconstruction. While we are at it let us know what features you would like to see on our website.**
- **Establishing contact with Fisheries, State Govt. and other representative fishing bodies.**
- **We highlighted the shortcomings of the new GNS fishing rules particularly in relation to land based fishers and surface bait fishing from boats.**
- **Arranged for an extension to Mulloway submissions in response to**

members concerns about the manner in which the submission process was being handled.

- **We are not only talking about unity but practising unity among fishers.**
- **A coalition of CAFR, Ecofishers, RFA and ANSA successfully forced Govt. to revoke fishing rules at GNS site in relation to land based fishing.**
- **We are continuing to pressure the Govt. to reconsider all facets of fishing rules at GNS sites especially regarding surface baits.**

WHAT WE NEED YOU TO DO...!!!!!!

- **Govt. has called for submissions re revoking fishing rules at GNS sites.**
- **No doubt they expect a pat on the back from fishers (and we do thank them for that) and flak from the greenies.**
- **NOW IS THE OPPORTUNITY TO REMIND THEM THAT WE BELIEVE THE WHOLE GREY NURSE DEBATE HAS BEEN MANIPULATED AND CORRUPTED BY FISHERIES.**
- **Approx \$450,000 was granted to Fisheries to study ALL fishing methods used in proximity to GNS sites.**
- **This money collected from our Fishing Licence fees is supposed to be used for the benefit of recreational fishing not to be used against us and have us banned from fishing and hand over iconic fishing spots to the only group that benefits financially yet doesn't have to pay an access fee to use a public asset.....the commercial dive groups.....**
- **How was studying the feeding patterns of GNS (a protected species) ever going to assist rec fishing..????**

SO WHAT METHODS OF FISHING WERE STUDIED..?????

- **Dangle a fish bait directly in front of a Grey Nurse for up to 10 minutes to see if he will eat it. This resulted in only a 22% strike rate (maybe 4 out of 5 sharks don't eat fish).**

- **Jigging.....** Even after actually hitting the shark with the jig on the way down on five occasions, they didn't get one single reaction to jigging (hence that method is still allowed).
- **Trolling plastics and lures for hundreds of kilometres around Fish Rock** once again resulted in no reaction (this method is also still allowed).

WHAT THEY DID NOT TEST.....!!!!!!!

- **They didn't lower a bait to the bottom on the other side of the island to see if the sharks would come around in search of a free feed. I would have allowed them 10 hours instead of ten minutes for this one.**
- **They did not test live bait at all...!!!!** Claimed they couldn't get permission from animal welfare groups. All they had to do was observe those of us that do use live bait and record their findings..... I believe that still counts as research.
- **When they trolled plastics and lures they did not even bother putting a pilly on another line. Probably already knew as we do that would fail to produce a strike from GNS also.**
- **Did not anchor at various distances from agregation sites and berley up to see if they could attract GNS.**

**In other words, they barely did half the work they obtained the grants for
that constitutes a breach of contract and we should ask for our money back.**

To cut a long story short, Fisheries used this flawed research, gleefully blown out of proportion by anti fishing groups, to produce the set of rules recently put in place.

Not only does this equate to a breach of contract but also a "Breach of Trust".

We should direct the fishing licence trust to never again hand over one single cent to Fisheries for research..... let them get their funding from the Govt, not directly out of our pockets.

SO WHERE TO FROM HERE...???

This newsletter provides much of the material to suggest that there is not one shred of evidence that recreational fishing has any interaction with GNS. Yes

sharks do carry hook injuries but not one iota of proof that these injuries were caused by sharks taking baits intended for other fish species. Nor is there a single shred of evidence that a single hook in a shark happened at the very place they locked us out of, being Fish Rock.

90% of the hooks shown in photos and video footage are actually massive long-line hooks trailing barnacle encrusted 150 lb Jinkai leaders which should be Fisheries own documented proof that the Grey Nurse travels out very far and wide to feed at night and doesn't feed at the aggregation sites as constantly suggested by Fisheries.

Of the tens of thousands of photos and videos of Grey Nurse sharks at aggregation sites taken and distributed by divers over the decades there is NOT ONE single photo or piece of footage showing a GNS being hooked by a fisherman at these aggregation sites. Why, if there are tens of thousands of divers with hi-Tec film gear at these sites per year is there absolutely NO footage, it's simple...the GNS doesn't eat the fishermen's baits at these sites. The divers have inadvertently provided their own proof of that. They can't argue with their own photos can they?

Any fishing regulations, if proven absolutely necessary, need to be site specific.

The target species, current flow and structure at each GNS site is different and therefore fishing methods vary from site to site.

Surface baits for Kingies at one site, downrigging for mulloway at another, spinning for Tailor at yet another and so it goes on.

ANOTHER WAY THAT FISHERIES HAVE MANIPULATED THIS PROCESS IS.....

The current no bait rules apply to all current GNS sites AND ALL SITES IN THE FUTURE.

This Govt. was elected on the promise that all future fishing restrictions would need to be proved by solid scientific evidence and take into account local socio-economic effects.

WE NEED YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS TO LODGE A SUBMISSION.

Remember the original Grey Nurse submission when rec fishers were swamped by the number of greenie submissions.

It will only take one line to form a submission if you can't think of what to say.

Here are a few suggestions you can put into your own words.

- **COUNT THE SHARKS..... Anecdotal evidence and some scientists suggest that there is far in excess of 5000 Grey Nurse sharks off NSW at which point the critical endangered listing should be lifted and this debate fades into the sunset.**
- **The statistics used in the original discussion paper were over ten years old. Why were there no current figures available at such a critical debate.**
- **Revoke ALL recent rule changes until proven by independent research.**
- **Surface baiting will never impact with bottom dwelling GNS.**
- **In spite of tens of thousands of scuba divers observing these sharks over the last twenty to thirty years, many with cameras, there is not one recorded instance of a GNS chasing a hooked fish.**
- **Finish the job..... do the rest of the research.**
- **Commercial fishers are still permitted to use baited fishing methods at the newly declared Mermaid Reef. Bearing in mind that this apparently does not impact GNS then recreational fishers should be allowed to use these same methods at ALL GNS sites.**
- **Revoking the rule for land based fishers is a good start..... how about revoking these unproven restrictions for all boat based fishers.**

I welcome comments both for and against but my view counts as one. If you have something to add, SEND IN A SUBMISSION.....!!!!!!!

**Chris Wallis
Chairman
Ecofishers and CAFR**

SUBMISSIONS DETAILS.

Link to DPI website

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/info/gns-critical-habitats>

ADDRESSES FOR SUBMISSIONS

Mail

**Grey Nurse Shark Critical Habitat Review”
NSW Department of Primary Industries
Locked Bag 1
Nelson Bay NSW 2315**

Email fisheries.threatenedspecies@dpi.nsw.gov.au.