



Minister Steve Whan
Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Emergency Services
Minister for Rural Affairs

MEDIA RELEASE

New fishing arrangements for Fish Rock and Green Island announced

January 28, 2010

Minister for Primary Industries, Steve Whan, today announced that fishing will continue at Fish Rock and Green Island, however some changes to the fishing arrangements have been introduced to provide increased protection for the critically endangered grey nurse shark population.

Minister Whan said the review into the fishing arrangements at Fish Rock and Green Island is now complete and changes will be introduced.

“We have listened to the community and stakeholders and are implementing a balanced solution,” Minister Whan said.

“The previous fishing rules at Fish Rock and Green Island that were in place since 2002 permitted the use of bait and wire trace directly over grey nurse shark aggregations provided vessels were not anchored or moored.”

“Recently published research suggests that grey nurse sharks are being accidentally hooked in the vicinity of Fish Rock and supports the requirement for increased protection at this site.

“Other research being conducted by Industry & Investment NSW (I&I NSW) at Fish Rock has shown that grey nurse sharks will readily take a range of commonly used baits suggesting the existing rules are unlikely to protect the species from accidental hooking.”

“Injuries and mortality from accidental and incidental hooking is recognised as a key threatening process to the survival of the east coast population of grey nurse sharks.”

Minister Whan said recreational fishing at Fish Rock and Green Island will continue to be permitted, however restrictions on some fishing methods will be introduced.

“The changes at Fish Rock and Green Island consist of a Closure Notification under the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* and are not associated with a Marine Park,” Minister Whan said.

“The new arrangements will see restrictions introduced for medium and high risk fishing methods including bait fishing and jigging.”

“Spinning and trolling with artificial fly or lure will continue to be permitted.”

“Commercial fishing will not be affected by the changes.”

Recreational beach and rock fishing, spanner crabbing and spearfishing will not be affected by the changes and the area in the vicinity of Gap Beach to Smoky Cape is excluded from the closure.

The existing prohibition on taking demersal species by spear fishing within 500 metres of Fish Rock will continue.

Minister Whan said the NSW Government will continue to work with fishers and the local community to ensure the changes have minimal impact on the local economy.

“I have instructed I&I NSW to make the necessary arrangements for an additional Fish Aggregating Device near Fish Rock,” Minister Whan said.

“The changes represent a balanced and informed approach to improving protection for grey nurse sharks while recognising the significant social and economic values of Fish Rock and Green Island to recreational and commercial fishers, the diving industry, and associated local businesses.”

Minister Whan said the closure notification will take effect on Friday 28 January 2011.

“The new rules will be in force from that time, however I&I NSW fisheries officers will be implementing an education and advisory period until after the end of the Easter period (30 April) before the new rules are strictly enforced. Action will however be taken against repeat offenders during this period.” Minister Whan said.

“Fish Rock is one of the most significant and iconic grey nurse shark aggregation sites on the east coast of Australia and these new arrangements will reduce accidental injuries and deaths.”

For more information on the changes visit www.industry.nsw.gov.au/fisheries.

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