

Northern Inland Bioregion

REGIONAL MANAGEMENT, COMPLIANCE AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION OVERVIEW

The major management and compliance activities in the northern inland bioregion relate to the fishing of the freshwater component of the barramundi (*Lates calcarifer*) stock. For simplicity of reporting, these activities are reported under the north coast bioregion (pp. 151–152), which covers the more significant estuarine breeding component of the barramundi stock.

Recreational fishing participation for inland freshwater fishing (including cherabin or freshwater prawns, *Machrobrachium rosenbergii*) in the north of Western Australia is estimated at around 2% of recreational fishers (Baharthah and Sumner 2002), or some 12,000 fishers per year generating 190,000 fishing days.

REGIONAL RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Scientific information for the management of northern freshwater species, particularly barramundi, has been provided by historical Department of Fisheries research projects. Some abundance data for the estuarine component of the stock can be obtained from the commercial catches recorded in the CAES system and reported on pp. 72–74. In addition to barramundi, Lake Argyle catfish (*Arius midgleyi*) and cherabin are also taken in this inland bioregion. Catch and abundance data for the catfish stocks are available via the commercial fishery statistics, but no data are available for cherabin, which are not taken commercially.

Recreational catch information for this region may be provided by the National Recreational Fishing Survey undertaken in 2000/01.

Southern Inland Bioregion

REGIONAL MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW

The major species fished recreationally in southern inland waters are native marron (*Cherax tenuimanus*), trout (both rainbow trout, *Oncorhynchus mykiss* and brown trout, *Salmo trutta*) stocked by the Department of Fisheries into public dams and rivers, and redfin perch (*Perca fluviatilis*), an introduced, self-perpetuating exotic stock. The native catfish or freshwater cobbler (*Tandanus bostockii*) is also taken in small numbers, as are black bream (*Acanthopagrus butcheri*) artificially stocked into some inland impoundments.

Recreational fishing participation for inland freshwater fishing (including marron) in the south of Western Australia is estimated at around 3% of recreational fishers (Baharthah and Sumner 2002), or some 18,000 fishers per year generating 80,000 fishing days.

REGIONAL COMPLIANCE AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION OVERVIEW

Fisheries Officers stationed in Geraldton, Fremantle, Mandurah, Bunbury, Busselton and Albany conduct recreational fishing compliance and education activities in the southern inland bioregion. Volunteer Fisheries Liaison Officers located in major coastal centres also assist these officers. Please note that, as the records of VFLO contacts do not differentiate between coastal and inland activities, and to ensure that their contact information is not duplicated in this report, they have not been included in the table below.

The recreational marron fishery presents the highest risk of non-compliance with the management arrangements in this bioregion. These risks include illegal fishing during the closed season (March to December), the use of illegal fishing gear, use of scoop and drop nets in 'snare-only' waters, illegal fishing in closed Water Corporation catchment dams, and the theft of marron from dams on private property.

The other main fishery in the southern inland bioregion is the recreational trout fishery. Compliance and education in this fishery focus on the illegal use of baits in 'artificial lure only' waters, exceeding bag limits, fishing without a current licence, and the taking of trout during the closed season.

Activities during 2000/01

Most hours delivered in this bioregion are targeted at compliance and education activities within the marron fishery. The season for this fishery ran from 6 January to 28 February 2001, however numerous patrols were conducted in November and December to target out-of-season fishing. There were some prosecutions for fishing in the closed season, but the majority of the infringements were issued for the use of scoop nets or drop nets in 'snare-only' areas.

There has also been an increase in the incidence of people illegally taking marron from licensed aquaculture farm dams, and this is impacting on the livelihoods of the farmers operating these businesses. A single raid on a dam can remove the bulk of the stock for that farm and have a flow-on effect on production for many years. Department of