

Minister for Primary Industries

MP105/1075
(stamped 8th July 2005)

Mr Phillip Ingram
Anglers Action Group
PO Box 630
Narrabeen NSW 2101

Dear Mr Ingram

Thank you for your letter of 21 March 2005 concerning the operating hours of the Hawkesbury River estuary trawl fishery.

I can confirm that the Department of Primary Industries has received a proposal from local commercial fishers to open Broken Bay for prawn trawling at night on weekends and public holidays.

I can advise that the department has undertaken consultation with the relevant fisheries advisory bodies regarding the proposal. It is apparent that there is no consensus at present between the recreational and commercial sectors regarding the proposal,

I have there decided not to change the current operating hours for prawn trawlers in Broken Bay. A change to the operating hours will be considered if a consensus approach is supported by the key fishery advisory bodies on commercial and recreational fishing in the future.

Although regional liaison forums were not utilized to discuss this proposal, I am advised that they held throughout NSW at various times to discuss specific issues.

The Department monitors catch rates for prawns and squid harvested in the prawn trawl fishery and I can advise that these species are currently being harvested at sustainable levels.

Fish stocks in NSW are monitored in several ways to detect important changes. Data for this monitoring comes from several sources. The first source is the monthly catch returns submitted by commercial fishers, These data can be used in two ways:

1. Monitor catch landings
2. Calculate catch per unit of effort (CPUE).

The second source of data is the programs undertaken by the Department to monitor the age and lengths of individual fish. These data can be used to verify patterns of recruitment and estimate the mortality rate of fish. These more advanced methods of

stock monitoring are planned to be introduced into the fishery performance reports within the next two years.

For information on the squid research project entitled "Biology and ecology of the temperate loliginid squid (*Photololigo etheridgei*) in the Hawkesbury River, NSW: Implications for the management of its fishery", you will need to contact Ms Katie O'Donnell at kodonnell@bio.usyd.edu.au or Sydney University on (02) 8351 4932.

If you have further enquiries please do not hesitate to contact Mr Darren Hale, Fisheries Manager, Trawl, on (02) 6645 0503

Yours sincerely

Ian Macdonald MLC
NSW Minister for Primary Industries