



# Game Fishing Association of Victoria

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To GFAV Committee, Delegates, Clubs & Affiliated Members

12th January 2010

## Mako Sharks Update

It has been a month now since we received advice that we will not be able to fish for Makos from the end of January. Since our update of 19<sup>th</sup> December the GFAV's major activity has been to support the meeting night at Hastings. The following summary has been placed on the front page of the GFAV website – [www.gfav.com.au](http://www.gfav.com.au).

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The Bass Strait Game Fishing Club in association with GFAV and VRFish held a Public Meeting at Hastings on January 6th to inform and to raise awareness of what can be done by all anglers to prevent the demise of Game Fishing in Victoria. A key outcome from the meeting was the Request for Action by all recreational fishers. If you are concerned for the future of fishing you need to act.

Over 350 anglers attended a public meeting in Hastings on the 6th January learn about the ban on fishing for Mako and Porbeagle sharks in Australian Commonwealth Waters as of the end of January 2010.

The anglers are calling on Peter Garrett, the Federal Minister for Environment, Heritage and Arts, to delay the ban until a flaw in the controversial EPBC Act (Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act) is remedied. Under legal advice sought by the Victorian Recreational Fishing Peak Body (VRFish), Garrett has the "room to move" ability under the EPBC by granting an interim exemption. It seems that the sharks have been placed on the international endangered migratory species listings due to apparent short numbers in Mediterranean waters.

Minister Garrett has enraged anglers by enacting the ban contrary to his statement in September 2009 where he agreed to delay the decision until after a current review of the shortfalls in Australia's legislation. Furthermore, the review of the EPBC Act recommends amendments to fix the flawed section regarding Appendix I & Appendix II migratory species.

The minister's rationale may be to ban the sharks before the EPBC Act is changed because he won't be able to if recommendation 17 of the Hawke review is accepted!!!

A large groundswell of opposition has arisen amongst the anglers Australia wide in opposition to the decision on the basis that there is no scientific evidence that Mako Sharks are at unhealthy levels in Australian waters. Anglers have been recording and collating data from a pro-active, voluntary tagging program for over twenty years, and have evidence that the sharks are in-fact non transitory to Northern Hemisphere waters!

A recent Ernst and Young report commissioned by VRFish found that the recreational fishing industry in Victoria is worth \$2.3 billion annually to the Victorian economy. In Victoria, Mako sharks are one of only a few species sought by offshore game fishermen, so this ban will have a devastating effect to our Victorian economy. Game Fishing is estimated to be worth in excess of \$100 million annually to the Victorian economy. Moreover, it takes away yet another outdoor pastime for many thousands of recreational fishers.

VRFish are working hard on your behalf and they are pursuing three different avenues to move towards resolving this issue. GFAV would like to recognise that VRFish staff have attended meetings during their holidays and that one staff member has cancelled his holidays because of the importance of this issue. ***Your 'peak' bodies are doing all that they can and it is really now up to you - what are you going to do?***

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The website also has 15 documents relating to this issue under the following headings:

- What you need to do
- GFAV Statements
- GFAA Statements
- Miscellaneous Press Releases (Senator Colbeck, GFAA, Recfish, ANSA)
- DEWHA Fact Sheet and Media Release
- Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)

GFAV, VRFish and representatives of Bass Strait GFC have been very active in raising awareness of this issue. VRFish are looking after the legal issues and working with Ernst and Young in building the (Victorian) case to take to Canberra.

GFAV now request that all Game Fishers act now. The advice received from the Shadow Minister for the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts is to write letters and to make phone calls. Some guidelines on how to approach have been provided by Bass Strait GFC:

- *Please remember to WRITE a letter - it does not need to be long.*
- *The letter should include in your own word how this will affect you.*
- *It should include you feel this has been rushed through without public comment or consultation.*
- *It should include you feel from what you have read there is no scientific data to back this decision up.*
- *Also include how much you spend on fishing a year, and include any club/ website/ organization you belong to.*
- *Please remember you are talking to people and writing to people who represent YOU.*
- *Please be respectful and please refrain from abusing them.*
- *If you have decided to ring any of these departments and speak to people from these departments all you need to do is tell them who you are and why you are calling.*
- *You are calling to discuss how unhappy you are that this decision has been made without public consultation.*
- *Explain how YOU feel it has upset you and ASK what can be done to change the situation.*
- *If you need facts refer to 'http://www.gfav.com.au' and 'http://bassstraitgamefishingclub.com/makoban.html'*
- *Please remember - it is facts and the number of letters and phone calls that are needed.*

### **Phone Numbers**

Hon Kevin Rudd MHR  
Prime Minister  
Tel: (02) 6277 7700

Hon Peter Garrett MHR  
Minister for the Environment,  
Heritage and the Arts  
Tel: (02) 6277 7640  
Email: [Peter.Garrett.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Peter.Garrett.MP@aph.gov.au)

### **Postal Addresses for letters**

The Minister of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts  
The Hon Peter Garrett AM.MP  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives,  
Parliament House,  
CANBERRA, ACT, 2600.

The Hon Tony Burke MHR  
Minister for Agriculture,  
Fisheries & Forestry  
Tel: (02) 6277 7520  
Email: [Tony.Burke.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Tony.Burke.MP@aph.gov.au)

GFAV have also been advised that there is a committee to consider that is currently investigating the proposed listing of the three sharks. Copies of any letters should be sent to this committee – closing date is 15<sup>th</sup> January so

urgent action is required. Please send a copy of your letter to the Secretary of the Joint Standing Committee of Treaties letting them know that you do not support the listing of the shortfin mako, longfin mako and porbeagle sharks as migratory species under the EPBC Act.

Committee Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties  
Department of House of Representatives  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

By email to: [jsct@aph.gov.au](mailto:jsct@aph.gov.au)

(For further information see <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/25november2009/tor.htm>)

Regards,  
Geoff Fisher.