

26<sup>th</sup> July, 2002.

The Director  
Representative Area Programme  
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority  
PO Box 1379  
TOWNSVILLE QLD 4810

**Re: RAP Proposal.**

Dear Sir,

**INTRODUCTION**

The Game Fishing Association of Australia Research & Development Foundation Ltd (GFAA R & D) was incorporated in 1994 as the scientific research arm of the Game Fishing Association of Australia (GFAA) and to provide the continued development of the sport of game fishing in Australia.

One of our main objectives is the conservation of marine animals and their environment and the management of pelagic species in particular to prevent the depletion of stocks of game fish in the Territorial waters of Australia.

GFAA itself, is the oldest National Game Fishing Association in the world, having been formed in 1938. Together with the GFAA R & D it represents nearly 9000 members in 82 game fishing clubs throughout Australia. The International Game Fish Association (IGFA) came out of GFAA in 1939 and both organisations have common members and goals.

The majority of vessels used by our members are privately owned and many make the annual trek from Southern waters to the Great Barrier Reef to participate in both the light and heavy tackle game fishing season.

In addition, our members are a major clientele of the Charter Boat Industry and as such have a vital interest in all aspects of the management of recreational and charter fishing for tuna and billfish in the waters of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

We insist our members fish to a strict set of ethical rules and the Foundation's constitution fosters a strong conservation ethic.

Some of the research programmes sponsored and funded by the GFAA R & D have been:

- A Genetic Analysis of Black Marlin (*Makaira indica*) Stock Structure by Dr Julian G. Pepperell, of Pepperell Research & Consulting Pty Ltd, and Dr John E Graves, of the School of Marine Science Virginia Institute of Marine Science, VA, USA.
- Archival Tagging of Pacific Blue Marlin (*Makaira mazara*) in Hawaiian waters in conjunction with the Pacific Ocean Research Foundation.
- Vision in Game Fish Research by Dr Kerstin Fritches of the University of Queensland Vision Touch and Hearing Research Centre.
- Representation on the Great White Shark Research Working Group.
- Sponsorship of the Third International Billfish Symposium held in Cairns, August 2001.
- Funding to CSIRO in years 2000, 2001 and 2002 for Pop-up Archival Satellite Transmitting tags (PATS) to study the behaviour and movement of black marlin in the Coral Sea and broader Western Pacific Ocean, including arranging charter boat and crew time. More PATS will be deployed this season.
- The development with the Commonwealth Government of the "Marlin Bill", introduced into Federal Parliament on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1997 by the Minister, Senator Parer. This Bill protected black and blue marlins in the AFZ from commercial take to ensure the long term viability of the game fishing industry in Australia. In conjunction with this, the Foundation negotiated and signed a memorandum of understanding with the long line permit holders in Area E of the Coral Sea to provide responsible management of tuna and billfish in that area. This initiative has seen the end of conflict between game and commercial fishers in Area E.
- GFAA was instrumental in the formation of the oldest and most successful game fishing tagging Programme in the World, the Australian Game Fish Tagging Programme (by NSW Fisheries) in 1973. The GFAA R & D, in conjunction with NSW State Fisheries, has negotiated with the US based Billfish Foundation to develop and provide a new generation of tags to be deployed in tunas and billfish in the AFZ from September 2002. These tags, with a proven high recovery rate, will add considerably to the body of knowledge on the biology of tunas and billfish in our waters.

Information from our programmes considerably helps in the management and sustainability of marine animals in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

## **RAP SUBMISSION**

Enclosed are Community Participation detail maps numbers 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9, which have been marked up in suggested zones with the following zone legend numbers: 1, 2, 3, 4 and Coastal Areas A, B, C. The attached detail defines these proposed zones.

In addition to the details and submissions provided in the attachment, the GFAA R & D make the following points:

- The activities of game fishing has insignificant impact on the bio diversity of the Reef, whilst providing those participating with the opportunity for totally diverse activities and a full eco tourism experience.
- We consider GBRMPA has no legislative power to create green zones and we question what better effect arbitrary blocks of green zones will have over yellow zones as proposed by us.
- We submit the main adverse impact on sections of the reef, which have become degraded, is from structures and massive numbers of divers in concentrated area. Strong anecdotal evidence from our members, and indeed the writer's own observations, bears this out. Game fishing vessels trolling through do not impact adversely.
- The Game Fishing Industry would be devastated if blocks of green were introduced into areas we have marked number 1. It should be noted in areas NQ, NR and X2 that we are the only stakeholders, particularly East of the reef itself. These areas are vital to us as game fishers and we reiterate, our activities have insignificant, if any, adverse impact.
- Game fishing is seasonal and as we target highly migratory species our activities are not concentrated heavily in one area, unlike dive operators. Our activities introduce limited numbers of humans at any one time in any given location and yellow or clear zones give all the protection needed to the Reef from those activities.

Should public hearings issue from this process, we would want to be involved in an endeavour to ensure the Game Fishing Industry and our members get a "fair go".

**Yours faithfully**  
**The GFAA R & D Foundation Ltd**

**Robert H. Lowe**  
**President.**