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21/6/2017

Joanne Klemke  
[joanne.klemke@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:joanne.klemke@ecodev.vic.gov.au)

Dear Joanne,

**Re: Draft Ray Protection Regulation support from Marine Care Point Cooke**

I would like to formally record my support (and in principle, that of the friends group Marine Care Point Cooke) to the Draft Ray Protection Regulation that has recently been developed by Fisheries Victoria in association with those members of the “Project Banjo” action group. This group (which I am a member of) has been formed as a result of the wanton slaughter of rays in many locations, but particularly Rye Pier and throughout other locations on the Mornington Peninsula.

I believe that the reduction of the bag limit on rays, skates and guitarfish from five animals per day to one is a prudent and sensible step, and was quite surprised that the bag limit was set so high for these cartilaginous fish, which have been demonstrated to be quite susceptible to sustained fishing pressure. Furthermore, the bag limit of one will still be adequate to provide a fisher with a considerable meal, remembering that many ray species attain a considerable size. It is also worthy of note that a minimum size limit could well be something to explore in the future, as it is currently absent from the regulations. As it stands, the institution of a maximum size limit and a ban on taking rays over 1.5 metres in length is a wise move; many studies have conclusively shown that fish populations are disproportionately reliant on the largest individuals for breeding purposes, as these individuals tend to be the most fecund (i.e. Having the highest reproductive potential).

I personally don't believe that a zero bag limit on rays is currently warranted, as thankfully the ray population seems to be in reasonable shape if my regular observations of these magnificent animals throughout Port Phillip Bay is any guide.



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The ban on taking rays within 400 metres of piers, jetties and the like is potentially going to be quite difficult to police and enforce, and it is something that has clearly been developed as a direct response to the stabbing and mutilation of rays that has occurred from these structures. That said, I am always reluctant to penalize a large number of law-abiding citizens for the sins of a few, and believe that detection, enforcement and the beefing up of animal cruelty laws would be the best approach here. Mutilating or butchering a ray for no reason and returning it to the water (in many cases, still alive) is a horrendous crime, and catching someone in the act of doing so is surely going to be the best course of action. The penalties that would apply to such an act would necessarily have to send a message as well.

Please note that these views are mine in my capacity as President of Marine Care Point Cooke, and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer, Melbourne Polytechnic.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any queries or questions about the views that I have provided here.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andrew Christie", is written over a light yellow rectangular background.

Andrew Christie  
President, Marine Care Point Cooke  
&  
Lecturer (Aquaculture Program)  
School of Food, Plant and Animal Industries  
Melbourne Polytechnic  
Cnr Cooper St and Dalton Rd,  
Epping, VIC. 3076  
+ 61 3 9269 1693  
Email: [andrewchristie@melbournepolytechnic.edu.au](mailto:andrewchristie@melbournepolytechnic.edu.au)