

REPORT

Fishers for Fish Habitat Forum 2010

SURVEY

Question 1 There are several things that could be done to restore fish numbers. People were asked to rank the options in priority order (1 is the highest priority and 6 is the lowest priority).

Results

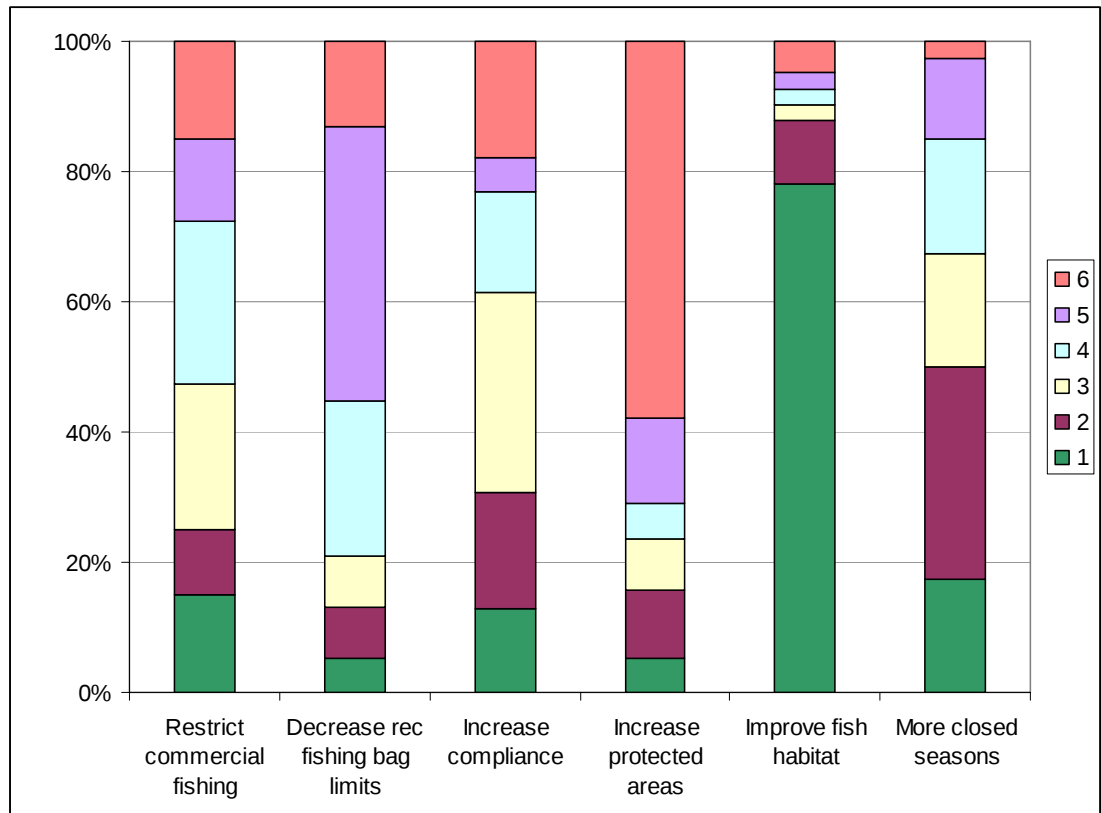


Figure 1: Ranking of options that could restore fish numbers, in priority order (1, highest).

What we learn from this

- Habitat improvement is a high priority. Other options have a relative low priority comparative to habitat improvement.
- Increasing protected areas is the lowest priority option.
- Restricting commercial fishing is an option for which there is no obvious priority.
- Over 60 % thought that increasing compliance and having more closed seasons had at least some priority in terms of increasing fish numbers.

Question 2 Respondents were asked what the key fish habitat issues are that need to be addressed to improve recreational fishing. There were no prompts provided.

Results The key fish habitat issues that were listed referred to freshwater (16 issues), saltwater (marine or estuarine – 18 issues) or fish habitat in general (52 issues). The issues that were raised are listed below.

Issue important for habitat	No. times it was nominated
Education of either fishers or the general public or both	11
Pollution of waterways	10
Impacts associated with development	7
Politicians and politics of decision-making	6
Riparian issues, related to vegetation and/or stock access	6
Water quality	5
Seagrass condition, protection, rehabilitation	4
Environmental flows	3
Promoting and sustaining involvement	3
Management of habitat	3
More habitat needed	3
Habitat protection needed	3
Resnagging	3
Wetlands condition, protection, rehabilitation	3
Awareness about habitat	2
Barriers to fish passage	2
Mangrove condition, protection, rehabilitation	2
Need for resources	2
Fisher access	1
Need for scientific data	1
Impact of drag netting	1
Foreshore erosion	1
Impact of other water sports	1
Fishing rules and regulations	1
Saltmarsh restoration	1
Species taken from rock platforms	1
Aquatic weeds	1

What we learn from this

- Education is seen as the most important issue for addressing fish habitat and the improvement of recreational fishing. Fishers, the general public and politicians were all seen as important targets for education about fish habitat. Education and awareness accounted for one quarter of the issues raised.

- Pollution, water quality and the impacts associated with development are also considered key issues affecting fish habitat. These issues also accounted for one quarter of the issues raised.
- The condition of habitat features important for carrying capacity, such as seagrass, mangrove, saltmarsh, wetlands and snags, accounted for 15% of the responses.

Question 3 There are things that affect how involved recreational fishers are in fish habitat work. Respondents were asked to indicate how important each of the following factors is:

- Knowledge about what habitat is important and why
- Knowledge about what can be done to improve fish habitat
- Knowledge about how to get funding to do fish habitat work
- Lack of funding
- Time to apply for funding and/or to find other people to work with
- Time to do fish habitat work
- Access to other resources (information, support, equipment, people)
- Too many other commitments
- Not sure how much good it will do
- Other

Results

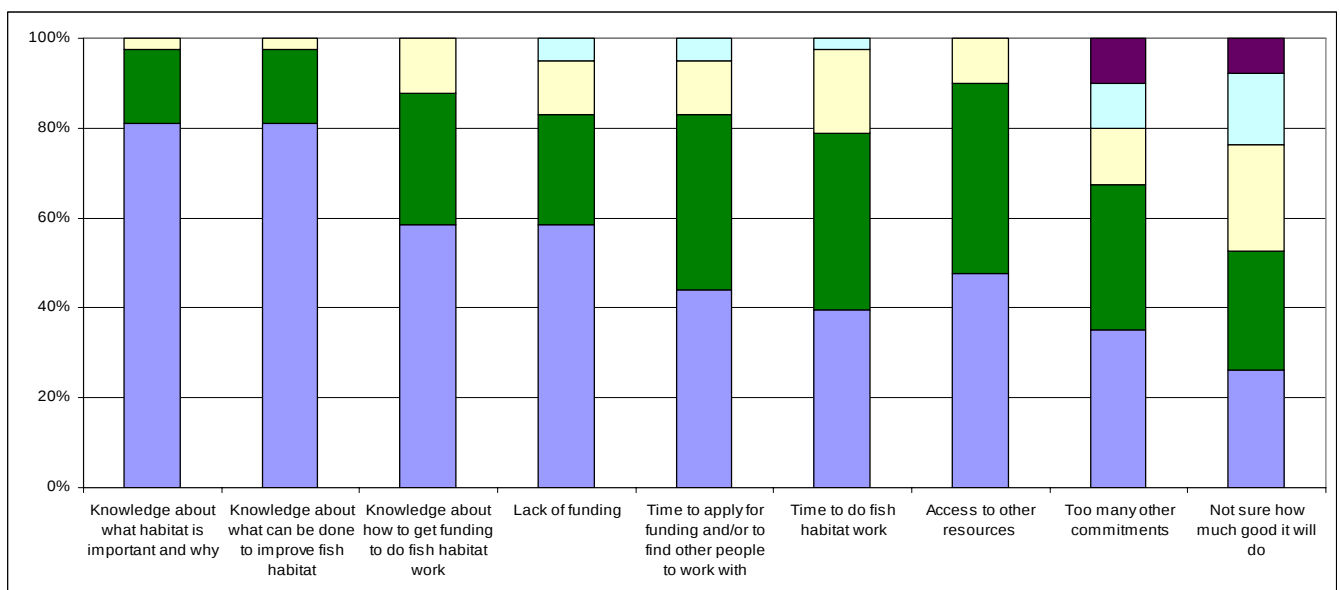


Figure 2: The relative importance of factors affecting involvement in fish habitat work. Rank of 'very important' is shown in mid-blue, 'important' in green, 'somewhat important' in yellow, 'not at all important' in pale blue and 'completely irrelevant' in dark purple.

What we learn from this

- The most important barrier to fishers getting involved in habitat work is knowledge: knowledge about what habitat is important and why, and about what can be done to improve fish habitat.
- Knowledge about funding sources and lack of funding is also important, as is access to other resources (people, equipment, and so on).
- The factors of least importance were having too many other commitments and not being sure how much good being involved would do.

Question 4 Respondents were asked whether or not they thought money from their recreational fishing licence fee should be spent on fish habitat rehabilitation?

Results Yes – 95%

No – 5%

What we learn from this

- The majority of respondents are happy to have funds generated by the recreational fishing licence invested in fish habitat rehabilitation.

Question 5 Respondents were asked how they would prefer to access information about fish habitats, selecting top three choices from a list.

Results

Option	1 st preference (%)	1 st , 2 nd or 3 rd preference (%)
Online/websites	43	67
Email mailing list	14	28
Information at bait / tackle / boat shops	12	26
Talks at fishing comps or clubs	12	19
Articles in local newspaper	12	9.5
Brochures	9.5	26
Leaflet with fishing licence /renewal	7	43
e-newsletters	5	9.5
Articles in fishing magazines	2	33
Printed newsletter	2	24
Other	2	9.5

Other options that were noted included:

- including habitat segments on television shows
- looking at ways to better inform the general (non-fishing) public about habitat.

What we learn from this

- Most prefer to access information about fish habitat online and/or via an email mailing list.
- A leaflet included in the recreational fishing licence / renewal is the second most preferred option overall.
- Stand alone printed material (eg brochures, newsletters) is not a preferred option, however articles in fishing magazines are the third highest overall preference (behind web-based material and leaflet with licence).

Question 6 Respondents were also asked what is the best way to get information about habitat from recreational fishers, selecting options from a list.

Results

Option	Preferred (%)
Face to face meetings	64
Talks at fishing comps or clubs	43
Online discussion boards	36
Online surveys	36
From key people involved in industry organisations	28.5
Other	17
Telephone / print surveys	12

The suggestions for other options that would be good for getting information from recreational fishers included:

- conducting surveys / questionnaires at popular fishing spots, possibly using Fishcare volunteers
- having one day meetings, more often and in more regions
- being present at shows, open days and/or fishing workshops, possibly in conjunction with Fisheries Education Officers and Fishcare volunteers.

What we learn from this

- Recreational fishers see value in having face-to-face opportunities to share habitat information. Face-to-face included special meetings, such as the Forum, and talks at events where fishers are gathering, such as club meetings or competitions.
- Online options for getting habitat information from fishers are also supported.