

WORLD FISHERIES DAY - 21ST NOVEMBER 2009



As a community service these fact sheets are put out by Gecko – Gold Coast & Hinterland Environmental Council Ass Inc.

A recent United Nations study reported that more than two-thirds of the world's fisheries have been overfished or are fully harvested and more than one third are in a state of decline because of factors such as the loss of essential fish habitats, pollution, and global warming.

The World Fisheries Day helps in highlighting the critical importance to human lives, of water and the lives it sustains, both in and out of water. Water forms a continuum, whether contained in rivers, lakes and oceans.

This is why a majority of human settlements, whether small villages or mega cities, are situated in close proximity to water bodies. But this proximity has also led to severe ocean and coastal pollution from run-off and from domestic and industrial activities carried out near-by. This has led to depletion of fish stocks in the immediate vicinity, requiring fishermen to fish farther and farther away from their traditional grounds. Overfishing and mechanization has also resulted in a crisis – fish stocks are being depleted through 'factory' vessels, bottom trawling, and other means of unsustainable fishing methods.

Unless we address these issues collectively, the crisis will deepen. The World Fisheries Day helps to highlight these problems, and moves towards finding solutions to the increasingly inter-connected problems we are facing, and in the longer term to sustainable means of maintaining fish stocks.

The Queensland Government is expanding the State's freshwater noxious fish list in a bid to further protect native fish stocks. Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland Tim Mulherin said a list of the proposed additions had been released for public comment. Mr Mulherin said the Government was continuing to review the noxious species list to protect freshwater habitats and Queensland's native fish stocks. For a full proposed list of noxious species or to provide feedback visit www.dpi.qld.gov.au

"World Fisheries Day celebrations serve as an important reminder that we must focus on changing the way the world manages global fisheries to ensure sustainable stocks and healthy oceans ecosystems. Just last month the United Nations General Assembly called on countries that have not yet done so to become a party to the Law of the Sea regarding jurisdiction over national and international waters, as well as the seabed, and to maintain sustainable fisheries".

Gecko contributes to the conservation of a health habitat for fisheries through submissions to Governments on coastal management and ocean conservation zones; active membership of SEQ Catchments; rehabilitation of catchment areas through bush care groups and education of school students through its Catchment to Coast environmental education program funded by the Federal Government's Caring for Our Country program.

Further reading: "Fisheries Data, Status of Fisheries in the Gold Coast Area" REP 351.82362 GOL available now in Gecko library