

Fisheries luring in new ideas

Agnes fisho says halve crab limits

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HALVING mudcrab take limits and imposing a net-free zone in the Boyne River are among new suggestions to make the fishing industry sustainable in the long term.

Agnes Water dad and one of four recreational fisherman of the east coast Mud Crab Working Group, Wayne Bonham, said it was time to take action amid dropping mudcrab numbers and increased illegal activity on the water.

Mr Bonham wants the mudcrab take limits halved to five per person as a trial for five years, with the crustaceans' stocks re-evaluated afterwards to determine if the lowered limit should continue.

Admitting his suggestion would not be a popular one with some fishermen, he said it was important people knew it was for the future of fishery stocks.

"I used to go crabbing every week but I go every three

months now because the crab numbers are so low," he said.

"Now I just see the stocks are under pressure and when you see that you also see an increase in illegal activity including tampering with other people's pots, which is rife up and down the coast."

Mr Bonham's suggestions were some of many in response to the Queensland Fisheries discussion paper, which explored ways to create a sustainable future for the east coast fisheries.

Submissions closed on Monday in response to the reform options, including reviewing size and bag limits within the recreational sector and imposing new restrictions on commercial fishermen.

Member for Gladstone Glenn Butcher said the major issue fishermen raised with him was to implement a net-free zone in the Boyne River.

Mr Butcher has had initial discussions with Agriculture Minister Mark Furner but said



CHANGES LOOM: Agnes Water recreational fisherman Wayne Bonham, pictured holding a spangled emperor, believes the take limits for mudcrabs should be reduced.

Photo: Contributed

before any decision was made it would require public consultation.

He is also exploring a potential short-term, net-free zone for barramundi fishermen within the popular fishery before the Boyne Tannum Hook-Up.

"I'm trying to find out if that's achievable and if that matches in with our fishing strategy and laws," Mr Butcher said.

"I'm led to believe they've done this in other estuaries.

"That may be something in the short term we can get into place.

"We'll let the fisheries get to that period and involve them in a long-term plan."

Queensland Fisheries is expected to start consultation on draft harvest strategies later this year and discuss proposed changes to the fisheries regulation early next year.

Boyne River dredging nearly done

THE long-awaited dredging of the Boyne River is expected to be finished next month after the project was delayed by wet weather.

The removal of 12,000 cubic metres of sediment across the 15-metre wide channel started late February and was expected to be finished in time for the Boyne Tannum HookUp on May 4.

Member for Gladstone Glenn Butcher said the \$1 million state-funded project was shaping up to be finished in early June.

"I flew over coming back from Brisbane today and you can certainly tell where the work is being done," he said.

"It's a nice green-blue water, where the rest of it is sand.

"I talked to (Gladstone Ports Corporation chief executive) Peter O'Sullivan prior to the Boyne Tannum HookUp and they were halfway through.

"It's been fine weather since then.

"They were saying it could be done by early June... as long as the weather stays fine.

"Hopefully it's not too far away at all."

The shallow water has been a problem for the region's fishermen since 2011 when the gradual buildup of sand started.

The work will allow half a metre of depth during the lowest astronomical tide.

Gladstone contractor East Coast Maritime is using a backhoe and barge method.



DROPPING IN: Dolomedes briangreenei, a newly described species.

Kroombit Tops NP yields new species of spider

THEY float on the water's surface – a different kind of web – feeling for vibrations.

When a fish or tadpole swims by, they attack, entombing the creature in their legs.

A water spider, Dolomedes briangreenei, is a newly described species, identified by arachnologist Dr Robert Ra-

ven, from the Queensland Museum.

The specimens he used for identification came from Kroombit Tops National Park and were collected in the 1990s.

That may sound like a while ago but Dr Raven is a busy man.

He's recently described 23 news species of Australian spider, including D. briangreenei, and said there was plenty more to go.

"There's at least 10,000 (spider species in Australia) altogether," he said.

"We've got 4000 described. The Queensland Museum has

described 1200 alone."

Dr Roberts named the Kroombit Tops spider in honour of world-renowned physicist Professor Brian Greene.

Professor Greene made a discovery about the effects of gravitational waves in the universe by looking at the way water spiders hunt their prey us-

ing waves and associated vibrations.

"These are pretty spectacular animals," Dr Raven said of D. briangreenei.

"I was up at Kroombit Tops last year and the year before, it's cold up there."

"These spiders can handle lots of weather."

GIANT

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