

Recommended Access and Allocation Criteria for the West Coast and Gascoyne Commercial “Wetline” Fisheries

A Report to the Minister for Fisheries prepared by the Commercial Access Panel

Fisheries Management Paper no. 207

WAFIC Comments

28 April 2006

WAFIC is pleased that the CAP has given consideration to a number of the issues WAFIC raised in its submission to the draft report (Fisheries Management Paper 191). WAFIC recognises that arriving at an access and allocation formulae that is fair and equitable requires consideration of a number of factors that must be balanced in arriving at a final position. WAFIC acknowledges that this is a very difficult task, particularly in a fishery with such a long history and given the difficulty of balancing Government warnings and the lengthy passage of time before Government initiated consideration of appropriate allocation and management arrangements.

After considering the recommendations from the report WAFIC believes that the CAP has discharged its duties and responsibilities in a responsible and transparent manner, and has arrived at recommendations that it can fully justify. WAFIC commends the CAP in this regard.

WAFIC acknowledges that with the move to management plans for the wetline fisheries will in effect close the commons available to LFB's. The issue of take of wetline fish by commercial fishers not endorsed in these fisheries raises a number of issues. Both the CAP and the Management Planning Panel have raised this as an issue and have highlighted that this matter also applies more generally to other commercial fisheries such as rock lobster and abalone. WAFIC's preference to deal with these matters is for the Minister to initiate a separate process to consider these matters and provide him with appropriate recommendations. One possible way might be to use the process the Minister has initiated in regard to the review of the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994* to consider the matter.