



## CLARENCE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE

29-31 Skinner Street

South Grafton 2460

Phone/ Fax: 02 6643 1863

Web site: [www.cec.org.au](http://www.cec.org.au)

E-mail: [admin@cec.org.au](mailto:admin@cec.org.au)

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The Hon Mr Barry O'Farrell  
Premier of NSW  
Parliament House  
Sydney  
Email [office@premier.nsw.gov.au](mailto:office@premier.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Mr O'Farrell

### **Protesting the Marine Park Moratorium**

The Committee of the Clarence Environment Centre has instructed me to write to you requesting your Government's justification for supporting the Shooters and Fishers Party Moratorium on all new Marine Parks for 5 years.

Your Minister, the Hon Katrina Hodgkinson, claims the decision is not politically motivated, and you yourself have assured the people of NSW that your Government will not do political deals with minor parties. That being the case, and given the Government already had the power to approve or reject marine park proposals, it makes absolutely no sense to take away the Government's right to approve such parks, even if your proposed "audit" identifies an urgent need for further marine protection.

Associate Professor Steve Smith from the Coffs Harbour based National Marine Science centre, is the latest in a long list of marine scientists expressing concern at the moratorium, and welcomes the audit of marine parks, but only if it's going to be a truly objective review.

Any objective audit will come to the same conclusions that have been arrived at all over the world, that the creation of marine parks, with sanctuary and fishing exclusion zones are a very, very important conservation measure.

Only a week ago, on June 21<sup>st</sup>, IPSO released a Preliminary Report on ocean stresses and impacts, detailing the work of marine scientists from around the globe, who have identified that there are now over 500 marine species that are highly depleted, as a direct result of over-exploitation and other human impacts.

Typical of the IPSO case studies is the plight of the Chinese Bahaba. A large fish which can exceed 100kg, the Bahaba was first described as recently as the 1930s, and within 70 years has become critically endangered, a situation exacerbated by supposed medicinal benefits in its muscular swimbladder.

Bahaba occurs in river estuaries of southeastern China, where as much as 500 tonnes were harvested annually in the past, with the swimbladder selling for just a few dollars. However, today the capture of a single fish is newsworthy with swimbladder fetching up to \$70,000 a kilogram.

Had just a single estuary been declared a sanctuary zone, the Bahaba would not be in its current parlous state. Around the world the lack of timely protection has seen Blue Whale, Atlantic Bluefin Tuna, Nassau Grouper in the Caribbean, Knifetooth Sawfish from tropical Indian and Pacific Oceans, and Angel Shark in the northeastern Atlantic are other species experiencing similar stresses.

Huge Cod, Herring and Pilchard fisheries have all collapsed in the northern hemisphere in a single human lifespan, with authorities moving too late to protect these species, which scientists now believe can never recover.

The Bahaba case study by Dr William Cheung, Lecturer in Marine Ecosystem Services at the University of East Anglia's, School of Environmental Sciences, is just one of a series of similar studies, detailed in the IPSO's Preliminary Report.

There is a case study on the state of the world's coral reefs by Professor Ove Hoegh-Guldberg, Director of the Global Change Institute, University of Queensland, which details the major stresses reefs are facing from local factors such as overfishing, pollution, and unsustainable practices.

Another study by Professor Dr. Jelle Bijma Marine Biogeosciences Alfred Wegener, Institute for Polar and Marine Research, in Germany, details the impacts of pollutants which, apart from plastics and other solids, include chemicals such as brominated flame retardants, fluorinated compounds, pharmaceuticals, and synthetic musks used in detergents and personal care products.

Professor Tom Hutchinson, Centre for Environment, Fisheries & Aquaculture Science, at Weymouth, in the UK, presents the findings of another study looking at human induced climate change, described as the "deadly trio" affecting today's oceans – warming, acidification and oxygen depletion.

These factors must combine to provide a wakeup call for the critical need for immediate action to protect marine ecosystems worldwide, and the best way is to create sanctuaries, and no go zones for fishing. In Australia, the recommendation was for the creation of marine parks along just 20% of the coastline. Is that too great a price for mankind to pay to see the oceans flourish and remain productive in perpetuity, or is our greed simply too great, and we want it all now?

Please reconsider this very backward decision, which is the Shooters Party 5 year moratorium, and also reinstate the protection recently removed from areas such as Fish Rock.

Yours sincerely  
John Edwards  
Clarence Environment Centre

**Copies to:**

*Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson*  
*Phone (02) 9228 5210*  
*Fax (02) 9228 5969*  
*Email [office@hodgkinson.minister.nsw.gov.au](mailto:office@hodgkinson.minister.nsw.gov.au)*

*Minister for the Environment, Robyn Parker*  
*Phone (02) 9228 5253*  
*Fax (02) 9228 5763*  
*Email [office@parker.minister.nsw.gov.au](mailto:office@parker.minister.nsw.gov.au)*