

2013-14 Statewide Recreational Fishing Survey

Social and attitudinal survey

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Introduction

This social and attitudinal survey (wash-up survey) formed part of the larger 2013-14 Statewide Recreational Fishing Survey (SRFS2013-14) (Webley et al., 2015). The aim of this survey was to provide participants the opportunity to comment on various fisheries-related topics at the end of the 12 month telephone-diary survey of SRFS2013-14. It collected comments on various topics from 1 406 people. Some questions were 'closed' questions requiring a specific response (e.g. Yes/No) and others were 'open', meaning the participants were able to provide short sentences describing their opinion, concern, or recommendation.

Methods

The wash-up survey was done during November and December 2014, following the completion of the telephone-diary survey. Households that participated in the telephone-diary survey were invited to participate in the wash-up survey.

A total of 1 406 people participated in this survey. 1 281 were active fishers (i.e. people that participated in the telephone-diary survey and went fishing at least once during the period) and 125 were inactive fishers (i.e. people that participated in the telephone-diary survey but, despite intending to fish, never went fishing during the period). This report presents only the active fishers' results. Each household was represented by one person aged 15 years or more.

Both closed-ended (e.g. yes / no answers) and open-ended (e.g. a short sentence answer) questions were included in the survey. The answers to the open-ended questions were manually categorised. As with the telephone-diary survey, this survey's data were expanded to the population level by weighting to demographic benchmarks using the RecSurvey package in the R statistical software.

This report provides an overview of the key results of the wash-up survey. Similar surveys were conducted as part of the 2000-01 National Recreational Fishing Survey (NRFS2000-01) and the 2010-11 Statewide Recreational Fishing Survey (SWRFS2010-2011), and some inter-year comparisons are presented.

Results

Closed questions

Fishing frequency

Fishers were asked to compare their fishing frequency during the telephone-diary period with the 12 months prior. In the 2013-14 survey, more fishers thought they had fished more often during the survey than in the 12 months prior to it. This is different to the 2000-01 and 2010-11 surveys, where more fishers thought that they had fished less often. In 2000-01, almost half of all fishers thought that they had fished less often than the previous 12 months. Over time it appears that fishers think they are fishing more often (Figure 1).

Fishers who thought that their fishing frequency had changed were asked to provide a reason for this change. The reasons were similar between the 2010-11 and 2013-14 surveys (Figure 2 and 3). In both surveys, personal preference was the main reason for fishing more, while work/business was the main reason for fishing less. Likewise, in both surveys work/business was the main reason provided by inactive fishers for their lack of fishing (Figure 4).

Figure 1: Fishing frequency in the telephone-diary survey compared to the 12 months prior.

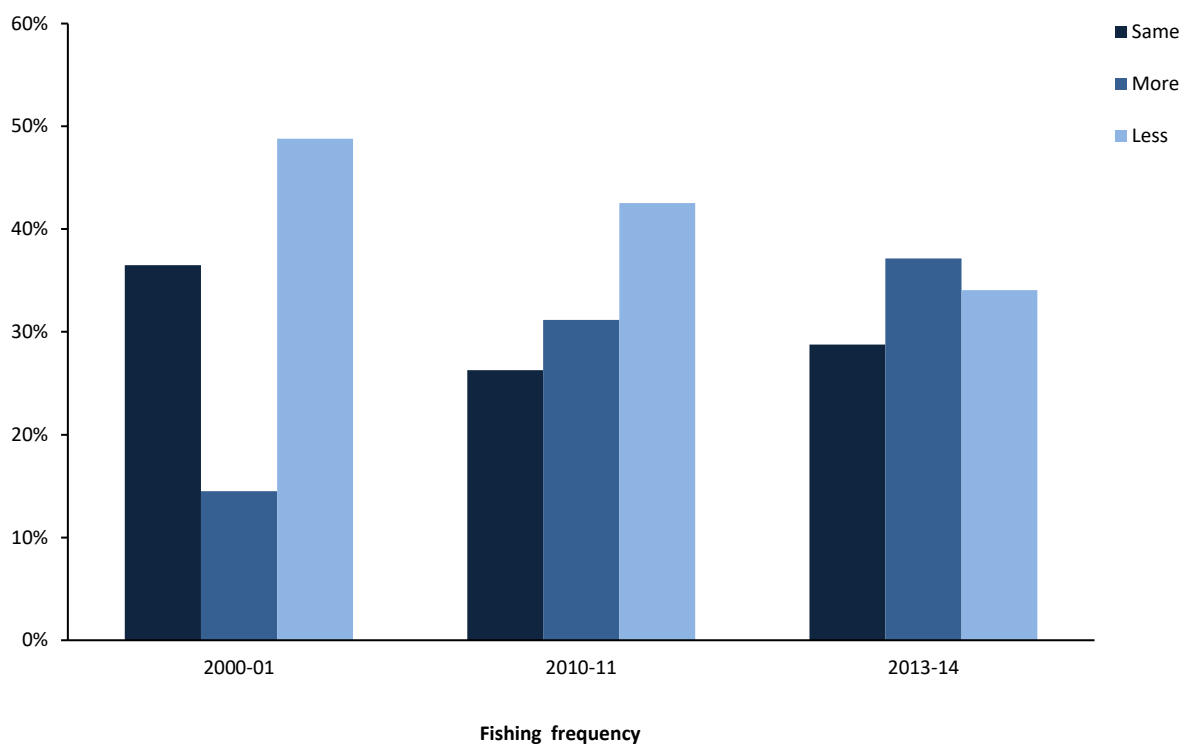


Figure 2: Top 5 reasons for fishing more

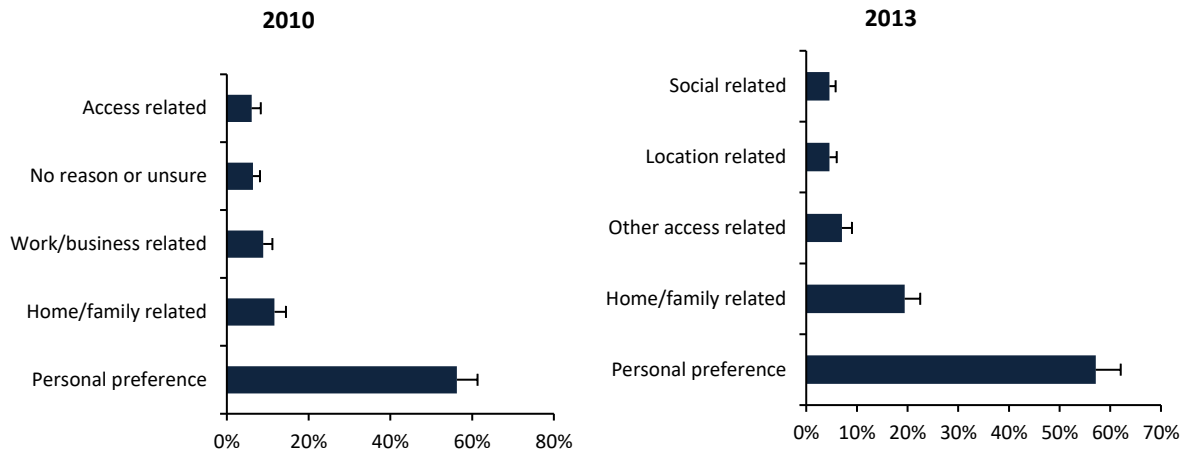


Figure 3: Top 5 reasons for fishing less

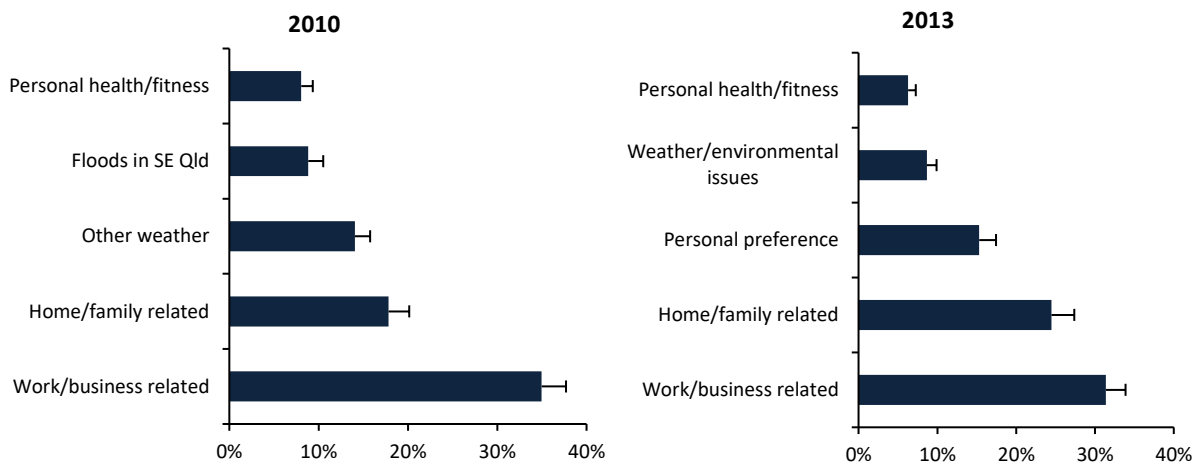
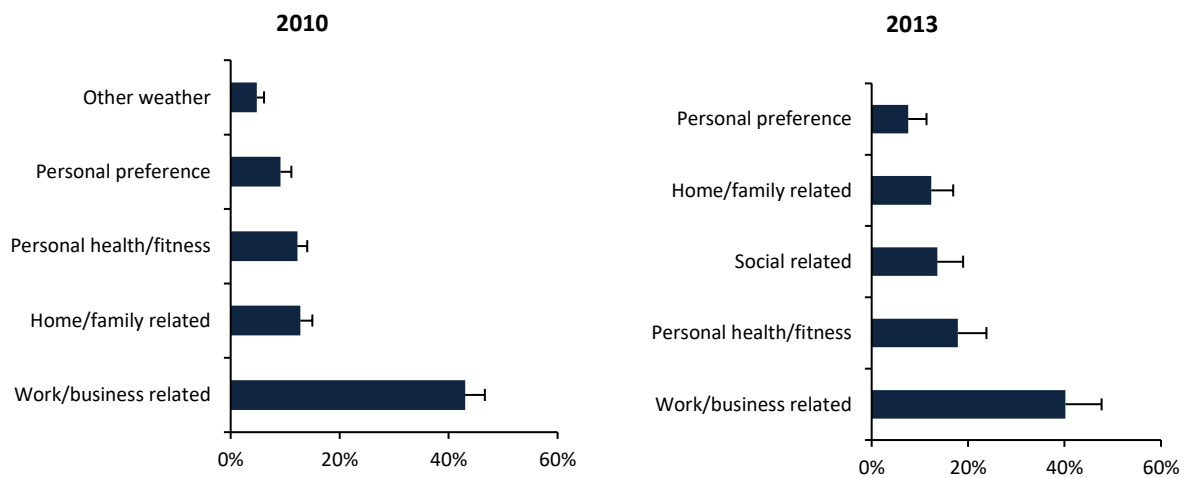


Figure 4: Top 5 reasons for no fishing

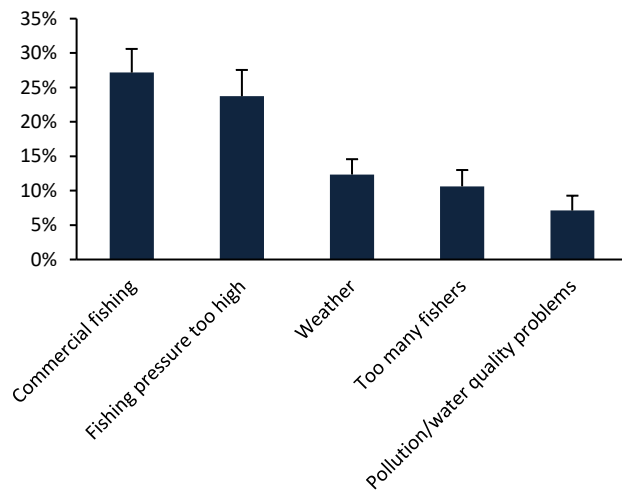
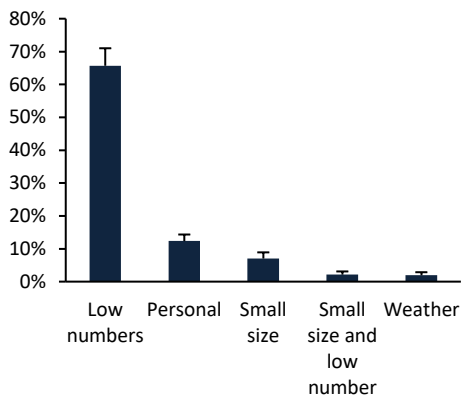
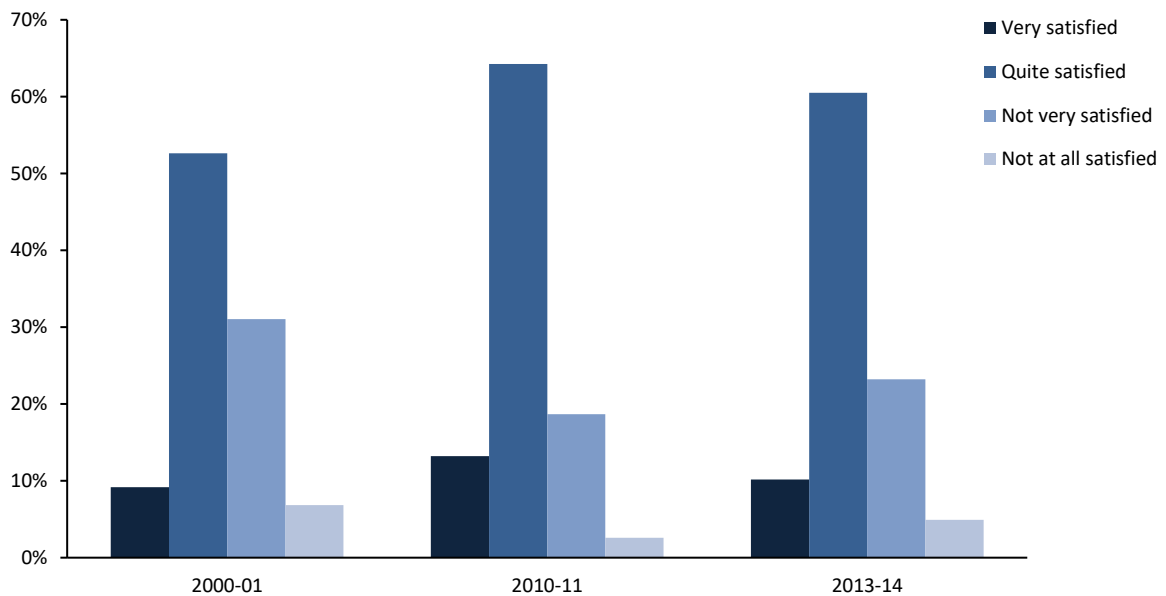


Fishing satisfaction

In 2013-14, 71% of fishers were satisfied with fishing, while 28% of fishers were unsatisfied. This is similar to 2010-11, where 78% of fishers were satisfied and 21% were unsatisfied, and an improvement over 2000-01, where 62% were satisfied and 38% were unsatisfied (Figure 5). The remainder of fishers were unsure.

Although most recreational fishers were satisfied with fishing, it is important to understand why some were dissatisfied. Therefore, dissatisfied fishers were asked to provide up to two reasons. In 2013-14, the main reason provided was low numbers of fish or crabs (Figure 6). Of the fishers who thought numbers were low, they thought that the major reasons for low numbers were primarily fishing related and secondarily environmental (Figure 7).

Figure 5: Fishing satisfaction in 2000-01, 2010-11 and 2013-14



Information sources

Survey participants were asked about their sources of information regarding fishing regulations and other fishing information. Most fishers said that they never used social media to help them plan a fishing trips (e.g. to check weather, tides, bait, what's biting etc.), however around a quarter of fishers said that they sometimes used social media in this way (Figure 8).

Fishers were also asked to nominate their main, secondary and preferred information sources. Main and secondary sources were similar, with the Fisheries Queensland website being the most common source, followed by other fishers (Figure 9). Most secondary sources were the same as the primary sources. With regards to preferred sources, 64% of active fishers were happy with their current information sources or had no preferred source. The remaining active fishers (36%) did tell us their preferred source of information with almost a quarter preferring to get information from their tackle store (Figure 10).

Figure 8: Social media use for fishing

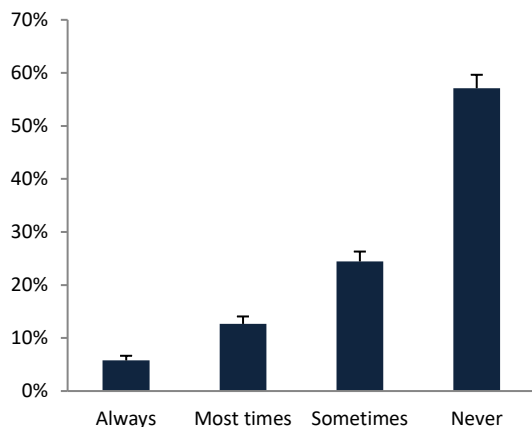


Figure 9: Main information sources

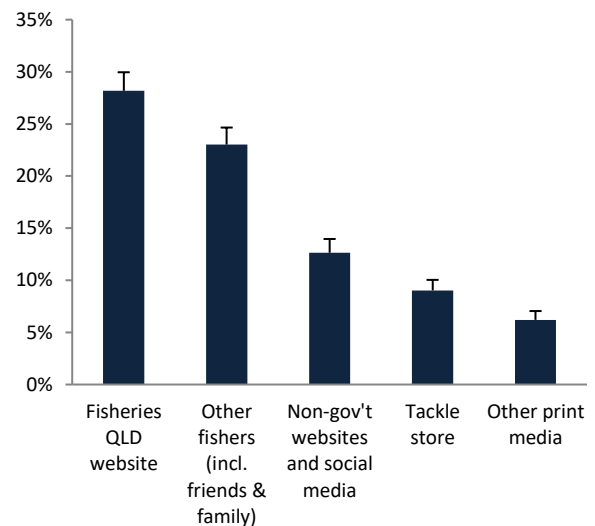
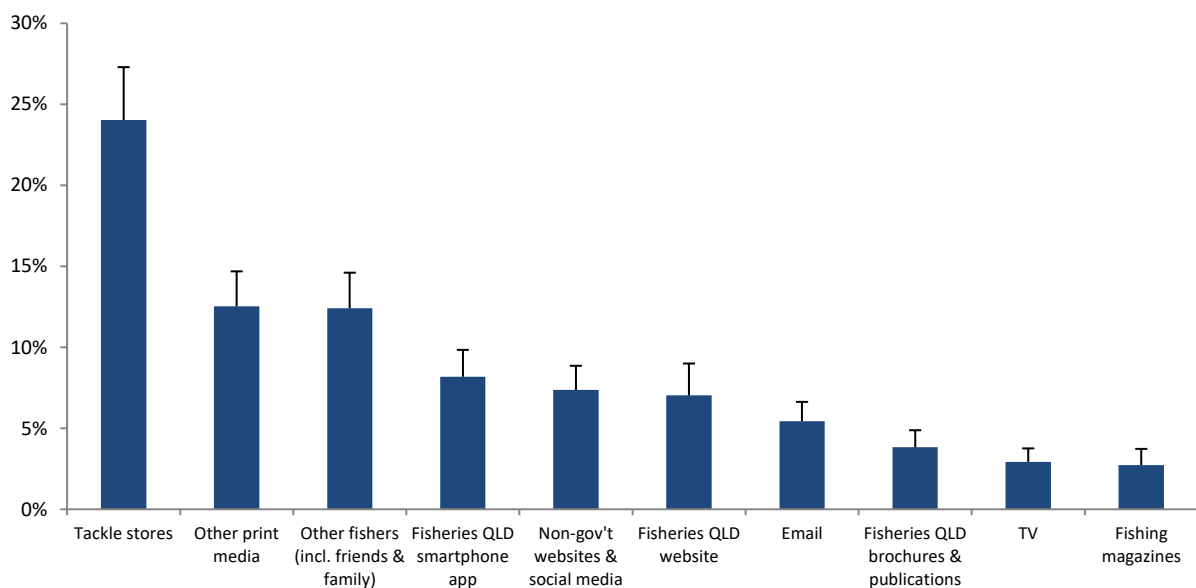


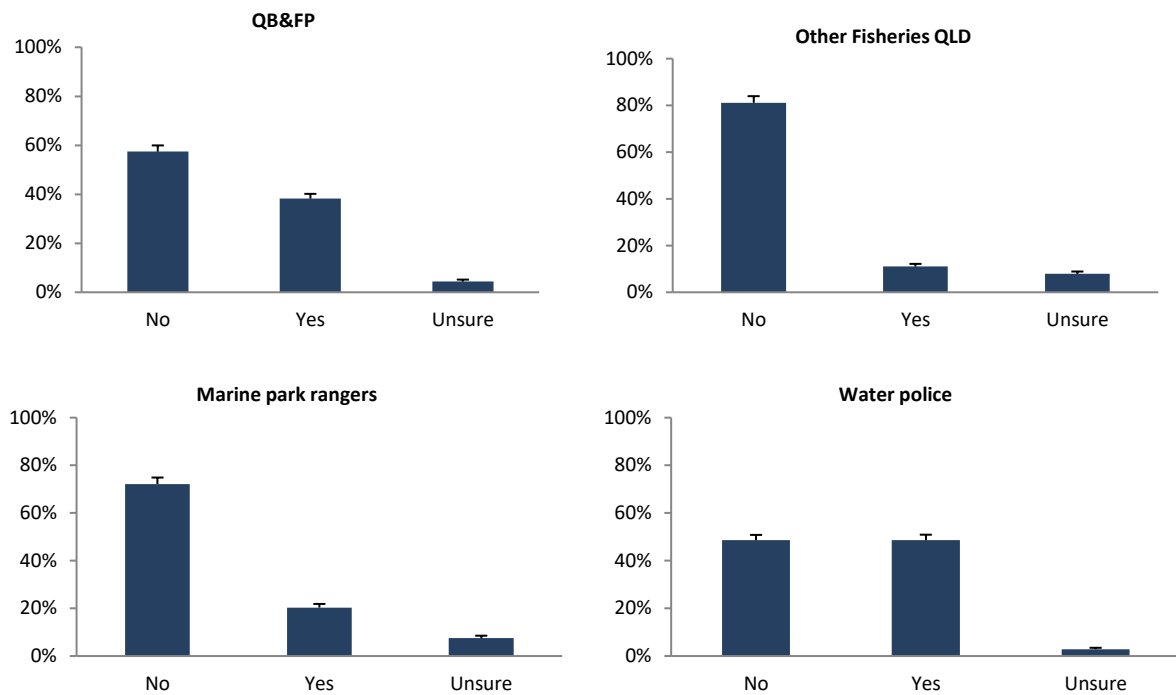
Figure 10: Top 10 preferred information sources



Field staff

Being visible on the water and at boat ramps is an important part of enforcing fisheries regulations. Fisheries staff are often on the water performing enforcement, monitoring and research functions. Fishers were asked whether they recalled seeing any government field staff during the survey period. QB&FP officers were reported as being seen on the water by 38% of fishers, which compares favourably to those who recalled seeing water police (49%) and marine park rangers (20%) (Figure 11).

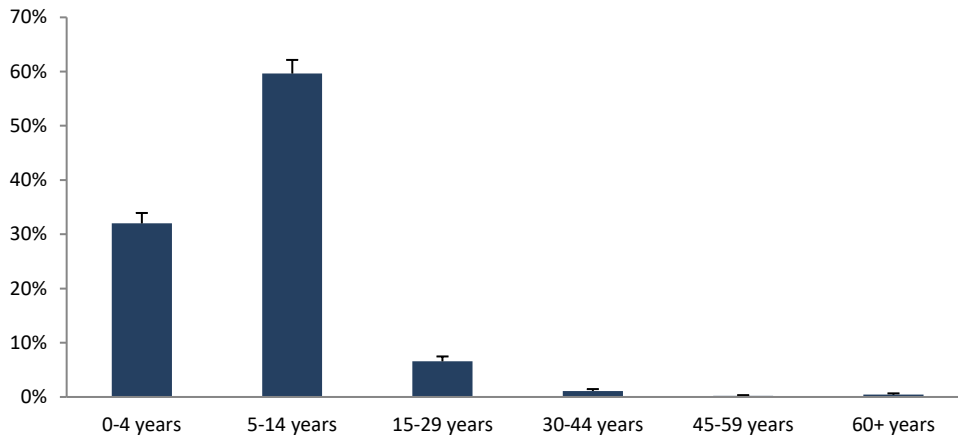
Figure 11: Field staff encounters



Fishing experience

Fishers were asked to recall the age that they started recreational fishing. As expected, this survey found that recreational fishing is an activity that most Queenslanders take up at a young age. Most (92%) fishers started fishing before they turned 15. Few fishers commenced fishing after 30 years of age (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Age that fishers started fishing



Open-ended questions

In the open-ended section of the survey, participants were initially asked if they had anything to say or suggest about fishing and fisheries. After making their suggestions they were then prompted for any comments on the following 6 themes:

1. "...particular fish or species that you like to fish for"
2. "...size or possession limits for any species in Queensland"
3. "...about other regulations or fisheries management"
4. "...about any science or research to do with fisheries in Queensland"
5. "...about this survey specifically"
6. "...about boat ramps, jetties or other facilities"

A total of 2 066 comments were received from 819 households. These comments have been weighted to represent the views of the estimated number of recreational fishers in Queensland during the SRSF2013/14 (Webley et al., 2015). Many fishers commented on multiple topics, which maximised the feedback provided.

A wide range of comments were received and many were grouped into topics. For example, comments about size limits, crab pot limits, stocked impoundment permits and others were grouped into the topic 'Fisheries regulations and management'. Table 1 describes the top 10 topics of comment and these topics are individually examined below.

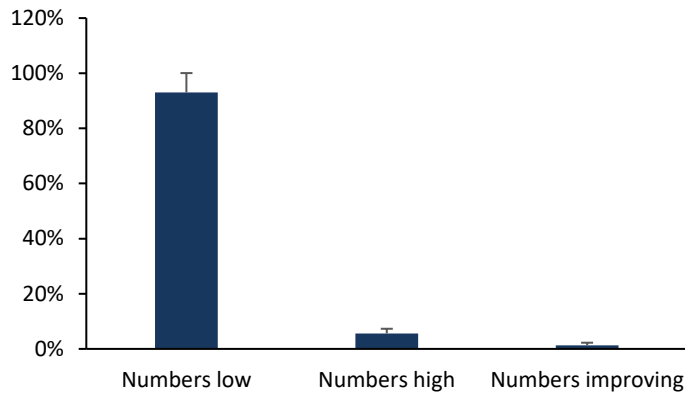
Table 1 – Most common topics of comment by active fishers

Topic	% of responses
Fish numbers	15%
Fisheries regulations and management	13%
Boat ramps and jetties	10%
Habitat and environment: quality and management	10%
2013-14 recreational fishing survey	8%
Commercial fishing concerns	8%
Policing	6%
Fish size	4%
Fishing pressure concerns	4%
Science and research	2%

Fish numbers

Comments about fish numbers represented 15% of comments received (Table 1). Of these comments almost all fishers were concerned with fish numbers being low. Most comments about high fish numbers related to pest fish such as tilapia and carp (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Fish numbers comments

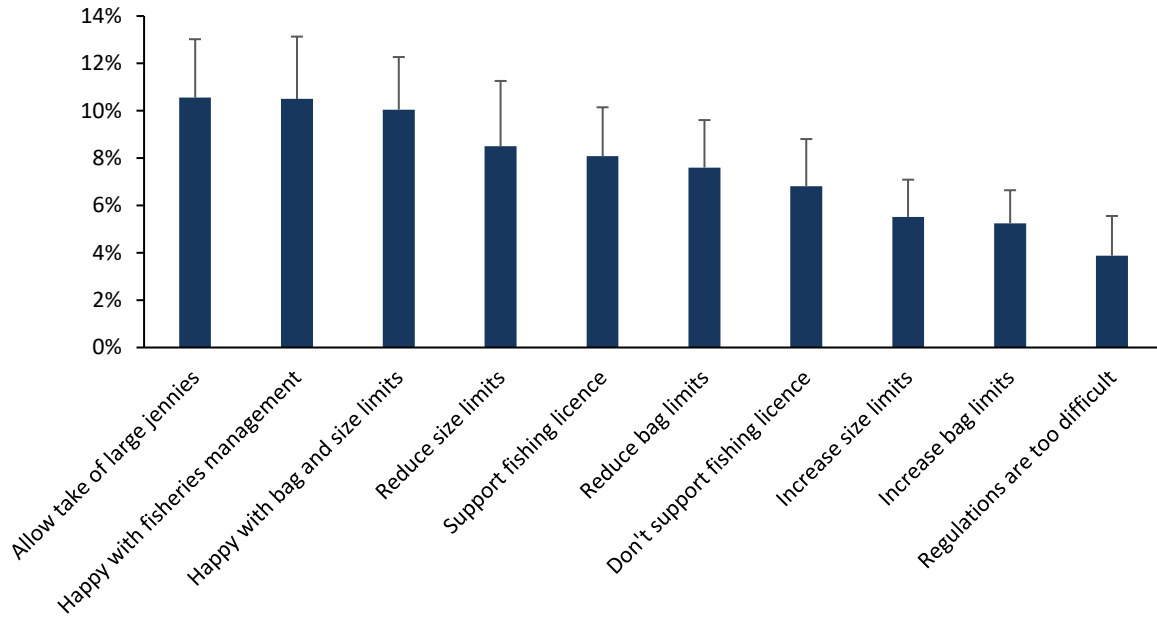


Fisheries regulations and management

Comments about fisheries regulations and management represented 13% of the comments received (Table 1). It included size and possession limits and was the second most common topic of comment among fishers. Fishers commented on a large variety of regulations, management and related issues (Figure 14).

Within this topic the most common statement was that large jenny crabs should be able to be legally taken (11%). The second and third most common responses were that fishers are happy with fisheries management generally (11%), and with size and possession limits specifically (11%). If these two positive topics were combined then more than 20% of comments made said that they were generally happy with fisheries management and regulations. Other fishers commented that size and possession limits should be changed (either increased or decreased).

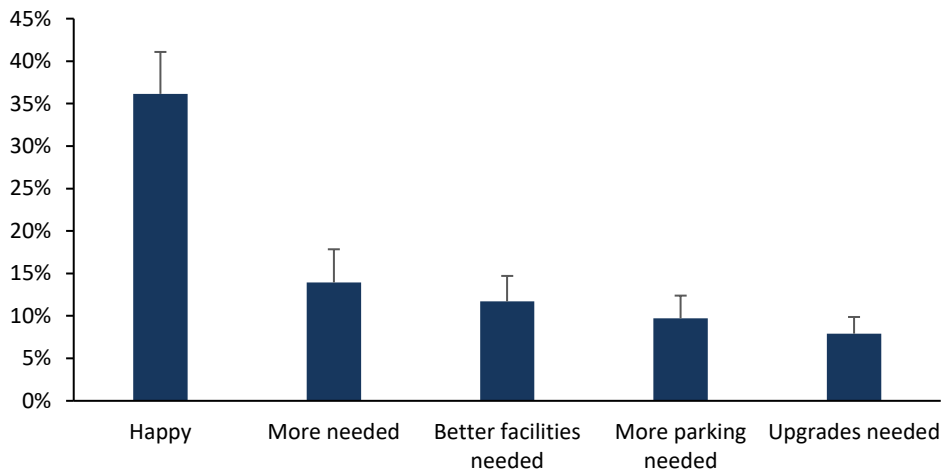
Figure 14: Top 10 most common topics about fisheries regulations and management



Boat ramps and jetties

Comments about boat ramps and jetties represented 10% of the comments received (Table 1). The most popular comment on this topic was that people are happy with them (36%). Other comments included suggestions for more ramps and jetties, better facilities (e.g. water, toilets and cleaning stations) together with more parking (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Top 5 ramps and jetties comments

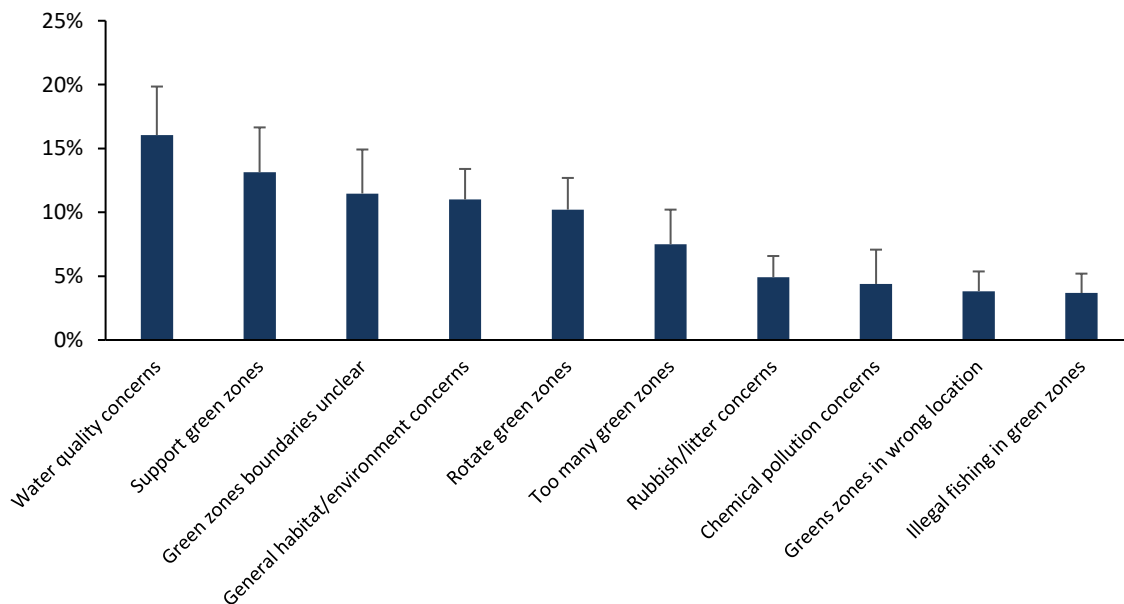


Habitat and environment: quality and management

Comments about habitat and environment: quality and management represented 10% of the comments received (Table 1). This topic included the natural condition of the aquatic habitat together with their management. Comments about green zones have been included here because green zones are primarily a habitat and conservation management tool and not part of fisheries regulations (Figure 16).

Concern about water quality was the most common comment received on this topic, indicating that recreational fishers do care about the natural environment that they use. Support for green zones was the second most common comment. However a large proportion of comments were about the management of green zones for example, suggestions for rotating them, the number of them, their location and illegal fishing within their boundaries. Fishers also commented about rubbish in the waterways and chemical pollution.

Figure 16: Top 10 most common topics about habitat and environment: quality and management

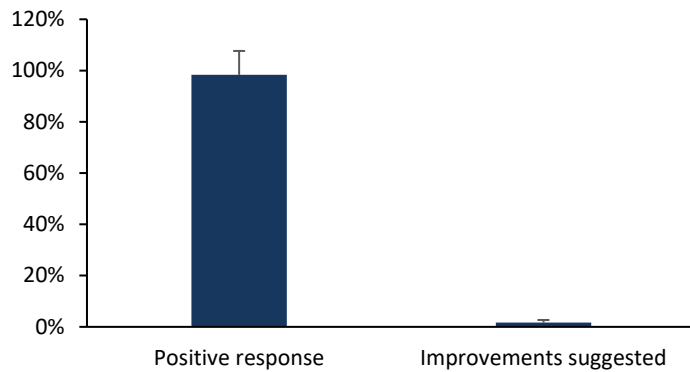


Survey feedback

Comments providing survey feedback represented 8% of the comments received (Table 1).

Survey participants overwhelmingly provided positive feedback about the 2013-14 Statewide Recreational Fishing Survey (98%). A small number of active fishers suggested improvements to the survey, such as making the diary bigger and offering incentives for participation (Figure 17).

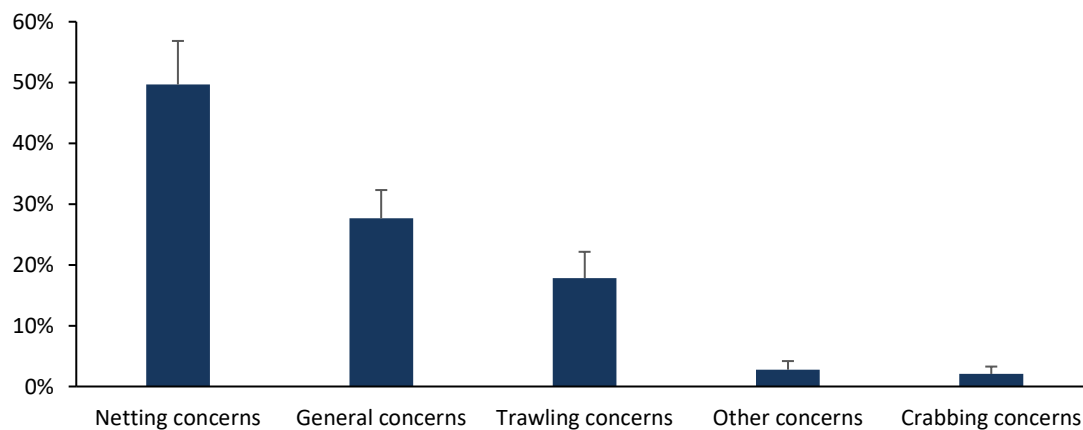
Figure 17: comments about the 2013-14 statewide survey



Commercial fishing

Comments about habitat and environment: quality and management represented 8% of the comments received (Table 1). Half of the comments on this topic related to concerns about netting (Figure 18).

Figure 18: commercial fishing comments



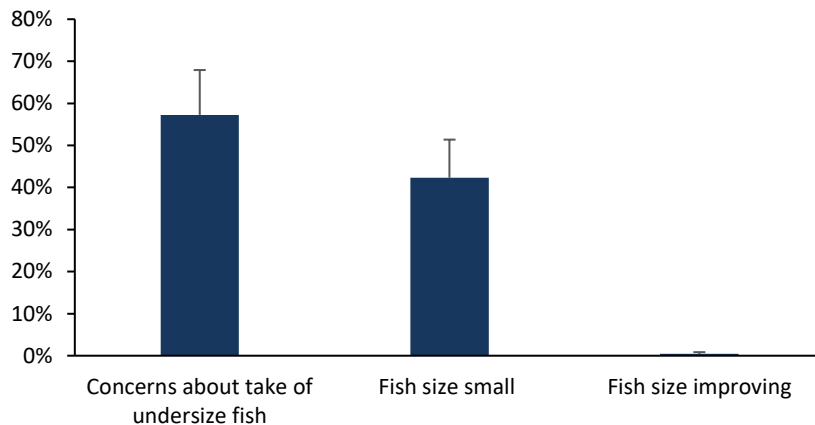
Policing

Comments about policing of fisheries rules and regulations represented 6% of the comments received (Table 1). Almost all of these comments suggested that there should be more patrols and greater visibility of enforcement officers. These suggestions were often made in conjunction with mention of activities such as interference with crab pots or perceived breaches of size and possession limits, the latter being examined below.

Fish size

Comments about fish size represented 4% of the comments received (Table 1). Fishers were concerned about the take of undersize fish and that many fish they catch are too small. A few comments said that the size of fish was improving (Figure 19).

Figure 19: Active fishers: Fish size comments



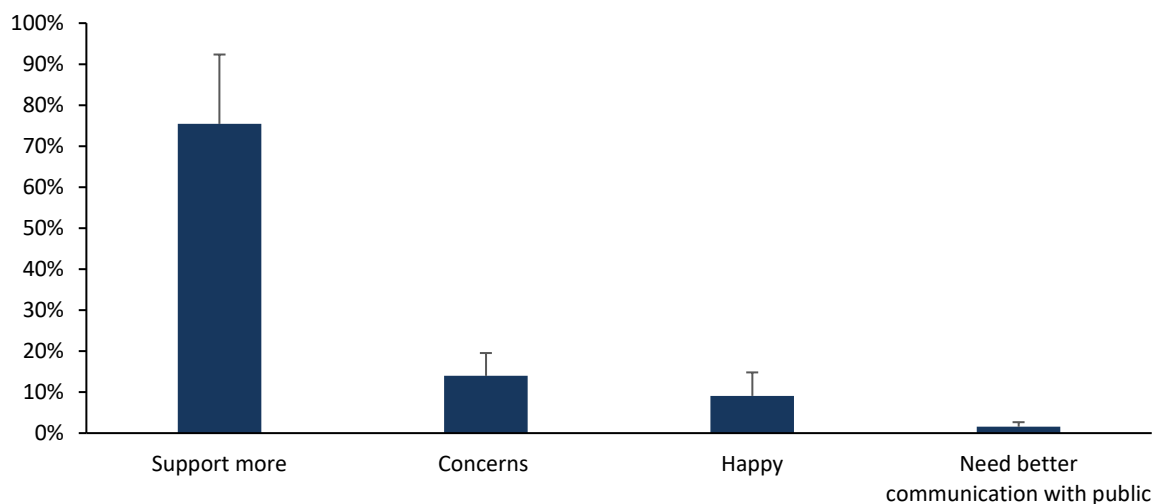
Fishing pressure

Comments relating to fishing pressure represented 4% of the comments received (Table 1). Comments were classified as relating to fishing pressure where fishers made comments about overfishing or stating that there were too many fishers.

Science and research

Comments relating to fishing pressure represented 2% of the comments received (Table 1). More than three quarters of the comments on this topic supported more fisheries research. 14% of comments were concerned with current research, while 9% said they were happy with what's being done. A few comments suggested that research findings be better communicated with the public, such as via email or reported in newspapers.

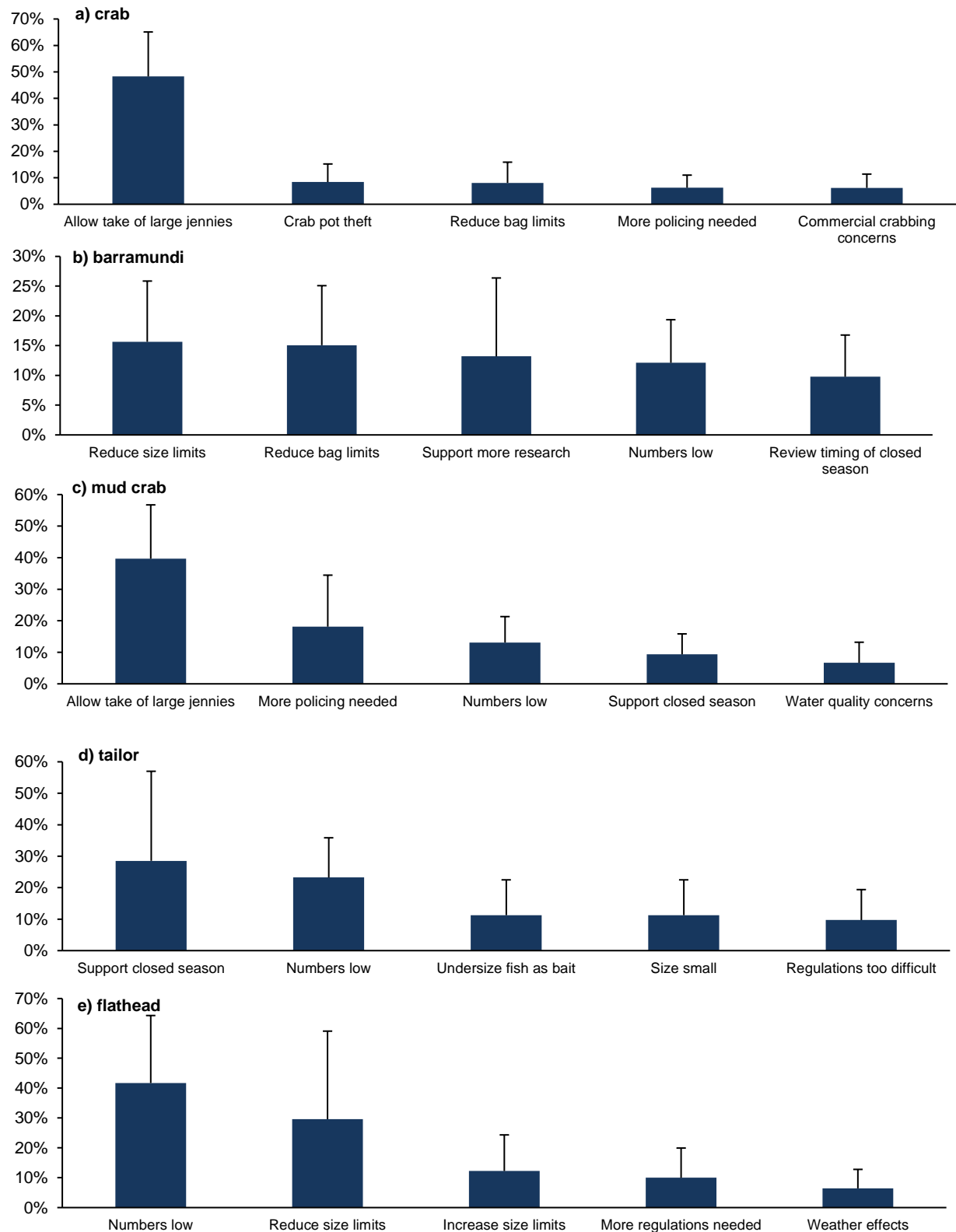
Figure 20: Science and research comments



Particular species

Fishers commented on a number of particular species, mostly regarding regulations. The five most commonly mentioned species were crabs (generally), barramundi, mud crab, tailor and flathead (Figure 21).

Figure 21: Top 5 comments for (a) crab, (b) barramundi, (c) mud crab, (d) tailor and (e) flathead.



Summary

The feedback received from the recreational fishers was wide ranging and will be used to guide future sustainable fisheries management and improve current operations. As was the case with the statewide recreational fishing survey reports, more information was collected than can be presented in this report. Any requests for additional data can be made by contacting the Fisheries Queensland customer support line 13 25 23 or accessing our web page www.fisheries.qld.gov.au.

Fisheries Queensland values the feedback it receives from its stakeholders and appreciates the time taken by them to voluntarily contribute to the management of our resources

References

Webley, J. A. C., K. McInnes, D. Teixeira, A. Lawson, and R. Quinn. 2015. Statewide Recreational Fishing Survey 2013-14, Fisheries Queensland, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Queensland Government.