

## New Rules to Save High-Risk Fish

A plan designed to protect key fish stocks from over-fishing has been recommended by the WA Fisheries Department. Recreational fishermen will be banned from catching dhufish, pink crimson or red snapper, baldchin groper and breaksea cod for four months during the species' peak spawning period. Research shows stocks of the so-called 'vulnerable five' could start to collapse by 2010 unless urgent action was taken to reduce the total commercial and amateur catch by 50%.

In a bid to restrict a public backlash, a six-week period coinciding with the Christmas school holidays would be exempt from the proposed seasonal closure.



Dhufish

However, in the case of dhufish, some people doubt that even a total closure of the fishery may not result in the recovery of the species in the short term because of the species' highly sporadic success in breeding and growth.



Pink Snapper

The recreational catch of dhufish has risen from 125 tonnes in 1996-97 to 186 tonnes in 2005-06, despite the introduction of bag limits. The pink snapper catch jumped from 25 tonnes to 40 tonnes over the same period. There are believed to be over 80,000 recreational boats in WA.

Mr Ford said it was important to strike a balance between protecting fish stocks and allowing people to have access to the water. The metropolitan fishing zone was closed on a permanent basis to commercial fishermen last November.

### Questions

1. Briefly describe the costs and benefits of commercial and recreational fishermen of the 'vulnerable five' fish species.
2. Discuss the nature of the externalities that result from over-fishing of the 'vulnerable five' fish species.
3. What is the government's solution to the problem of over-fishing? What alternative policies could the government adopt?
4. What is being referred to by economists when they talk about 'the tyranny of the commons'? Is this an example of this situation?



Baldchin Groper