



Monaro Acclimatisation Society Inc
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Sustainable future fishing for trout and native fish

State Wide Review of Pest Animal Management Natural Resources Commission

The Monaro Acclimatisation Society Inc (MAS) of NSW is a voluntary organisation primarily concerned with the development and maintenance of freshwater fisheries in the south-eastern sector of NSW. The MAS is a primary stakeholder with the NSW Department of Fisheries. The MAS has been in existence for over 70 years and participates with NSW Fisheries in: the stocking of fresh water lakes and rivers with trout and native fish, maintenance of habitat, and policy and legislation development that affects fishing in NSW. The MAS is the pre-eminent organization concerned with angler access to rivers and lakes for the Snowy Mountains / Monaro Region of NSW. The MAS has 19 Branches with over 600 members and is a foundation member of the NSW Council of Freshwater Anglers Inc.

The MAS participated in the aquatic pest focus group held in Sydney on 23 October 2015 by the natural Resources Commission. At that focus group the areas of research, education and communication were identified as the primary issues concerning aquatic pest management in NSW. While the MAS supports this approach we note that without adequate funding none of these primary issues will be resolved and as a result pests will continue to invade and damage the NSW aquatic environment.

The MAS notes there is a disparity between funding for terrestrial pests and aquatic pests. Funding for the control of terrestrial pests has a number of sources namely government, landholders through levies and land managers such as National Parks. This funding model allows for the employment of pest management specialists. The aquatic environment is severely underfunded in comparison and activity in managing aquatic pest species lags far behind the terrestrial effort.

At present, the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) is responsible for the management of our waterways and the pest fish that inhabit them. Government funding through the Department has been contracting since the introduction of the NSW Recreational Fishing Licence. The NSW Recreational Fishing Licence now makes up a large proportion of funding for the aquatic environment management and the employment of DPI staff.

The MAS would like to see replication of the terrestrial levy schemes to the aquatic environment, especially for the management of pest fish. We note that a number of organisations benefit significantly from the sale of water or the use of water, but unlike the terrestrial based industries they make little or no contribution to managing the pest species in the waterways that underpin their businesses. In most cases the building of their dams, irrigation canals and rechanneling of rivers has created a perfect environment for aquatic pest species.

The MAS proposes that an appropriate levy be placed on water extraction and/or use industries such as irrigators, water storage bodies, hydro power generators, mining and national parks. If this levy is modelled along the lines of contributions made to Local Land Services for terrestrial pest management the aquatic pest management effort will benefit from this additional funding source and these water intensive industries will make a long over-due contribution to aquatic pest management. The MAS does not see this levy extending to traditional farming such as sheep and cattle, but the MAS would support the levy being imposed on feedlot operators and the dairy sector as their water usage is higher than traditional grazing.

The MAS has not considered which department should administer the funds should this proposal be adopted. We note that NSW Fisheries, Department of Lands Natural Resources Commission or Local Land Services could all fill the role of aquatic pest species managers. Should this proposal be adopted the MAS suggests that further consultation be undertaken to identify which organisation is best placed to utilize this new funding in the most effective manner.

Currently, anglers make a significant contribution to pest management through the recreational fishing trusts but as it stands anglers are doing all the heavy lifting with government and industry making a smaller contribution than they should. We believe this levy will create a unique opportunity to provide a significant funding boost to aquatic pest management in NSW.

Steve Samuels
President
Monaro Acclimatisation Society Inc

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