



# SCUBA DIVERS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.

POST OFFICE BOX 3 DAW PARK S.A. 5941

20 June 1980

Mr. Richard Stevens,  
Director of Fisheries,  
G.P.O. Box 1625,  
ADELAIDE 5001

Dear Sir,

In 1976, a submission relating to the protection of the Blue Groper *Achoerodus gouldii* (Richardson) was made from the Scuba Divers Association of S.A. Inc. with support from the Australian Marine Sciences Association (S.A. Branch) for discussion at SARFAC. The following motion was carried at a meeting of that council on 17th February, 1977:

"The Council supports the proposed prohibition of the taking of Blue Groper, to prevent its wanton destruction."

As a result of this, the necessary protection was included in the Proposed Consolidated/Amended Proclamations under the Fisheries Act 1971 as amended, March 1978, p. 18.

It was 1967, nearly 10 years prior to this submission, that a group of diving scientists expressed concern at the urgency of the situation and the plight of the Blue Groper at the hand of spear fishermen (Sunday Mail, 18th February 1967, p. 79). At this time also, a call was made to the S.A. Government for aquatic reserves to be proclaimed.

In 1971, after the proclamation of seven aquatic reserves, South Australia was recognised as the leader in marine conservation in Australia; but of those seven reserves only two, Aldinga and Port Noarlunga, are reef environments. The Blue Groper had been eliminated from these areas. In recent years, the smaller juvenile green-groper have been sighted in these two aquatic reserves, but they can only be protected whilst they remain within the reserve boundaries. Another 20 years or more may elapse before these specimens attain full size. It is believed that this fish has a life span of some 50-60 years.

The states of New South Wales and Western Australia have taken measures to protect the Blue Groper from amateur fishermen and spear fishermen, and more recently, regulations have been extended to include professional fishermen. (See attached sheet)

With restrictions such as these in neighbouring states, some amateur fishermen and spear fishermen from interstate take the opportunity to hunt the fish in this state with even less regard for depletion of stocks than their South Australian counterparts.

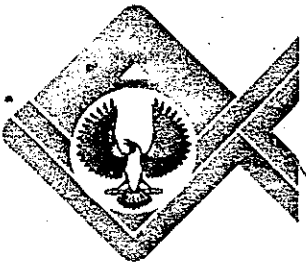
The original submission from this Association gave protection to the Blue Groper in the gulf areas and along the northern coast of Kangaroo Island. This, we understand, was generally accepted by members of AFIC, particularly those on the west coast of Eyre Peninsula where the species is more abundant.

The Scuba Divers Association of S.A. Inc. considers that immediate action should be taken to protect the Blue Groper. This does not seem an unreasonable request since the recent amendments to the Fisheries Act appear to have received greater attention than this matter which has been pending for 13 years.

Yours faithfully,

JENNY HISCOCK,  
SECRETARY

C.C. to Minister for the Environment  
Conservation Council



**DEPARTMENT OF**  
**FISHERIES**

G.P.O. Box 1671, Adelaide, South Australia 5001

25 Grenfell Street, Adelaide 5000. [REDACTED] Telex: 88422

Your ref.....

Our ref.....

Please refer to.....

Telephone No....2270421.....

16 July 1980

Ms. J. Hiscock,  
Secretary,  
Scuba Divers Association of  
South Australia Inc.,  
P.O. Box 3,  
DAW PARK, 5041

Dear Ms. Hiscock,

Thank you for your letter of 20 June 1980 on protection of the Blue Groper.

Recently the Fisheries Act was amended to give the Director powers to specify the species of fish which may be taken for sale. Licences issued for the coming year will list those species which the holder may take for sale and the Blue Groper will not be endorsed on any licence. Thus, the commercial trade in Blue Groper will be effectively prohibited in this coming licence year.

The Minister of Fisheries has requested the Joint Consultative Committee on the Jones Scale Fishery Report to reconvene and work through a number of proposals for further management of scale fisheries in South Australia and that Committee will work through the proposed amended and consolidated proclamations which were first circulated in 1978 to make them compatible with the recent policies on access to the marine scale fishery. SARFAC has two members on that Consultative Committee and the Minister will be expecting a final recommendation on recreational access to Blue Groper from this next series of Consultative meetings.

It is the Government's intention to protect the Blue Groper and the only question before us is whether it is necessary to protect it totally throughout South Australia or to make some allowance for accidental by-catch in commercial and recreational activity.

Yours sincerely,

(R.A. Stevens)  
DIRECTOR OF FISHERIES