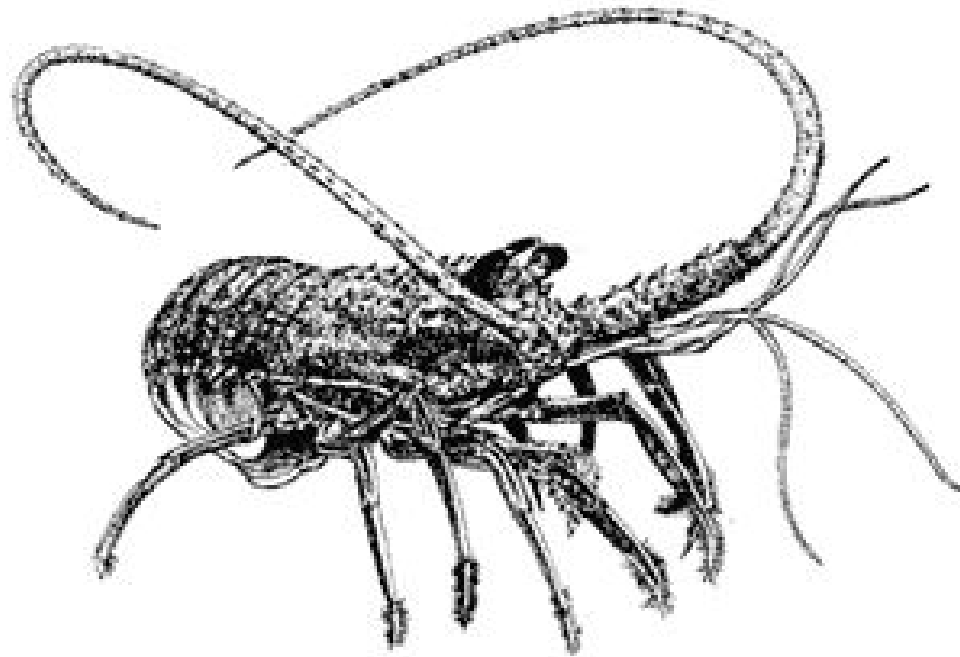


# Address by Stuart Smith to WRLC Congress 2009



**Stuart Smith CEO, Department of Fisheries**



# History

- For the last 25 years, the proportion of the stock taken has generally been high.
- As puerulus settlement went up and down catch went up and down 3-4 years later.
- The variations in settlement from year to year meant that on average, enough lobsters made it into the breeding stock to maintain it at acceptable levels.





# Low settlement implications (1)

- 2006-07 Low settlement.
- 2007-08 Very low settlement (second lowest on record).
- 2008-09 Lowest on record.
- Less catch available 3-4 years after settlement (starting 2009-10).
- Less lobsters entering the breeding stock stock 4-5 years after settlement.
- This will happen, even if there is good settlement this year.



## Low settlement implications (2)

Breeding stock is likely to decline to unacceptable levels in Zones A and C in medium term if further action is not taken.



# Low settlement implications (3)

As the cause of low settlement is unknown:

- Need additional protection for breeding stock in areas believed to be of particular importance (e.g. Big Bank).
- Adopt precautionary approach.

# Proposed management objective

*“Ensure the breeding stock is above the threshold, and there is a high probability of it still being above this level in five years time.”*



# Achieving reductions

- Reducing the number of pots.
- Reducing days fished.
- A combination of the above.





# RLIAC preliminary package

- 0.42 pot use all zones.
- Four consecutive days off (Fri – Mon) during the peaks (15 November – 14 January and 15 March – 14 April).
- Three consecutive days off during the remainder of the season.
- 77 mm minimum “whites” gauge (15 November – 31 January).
- 55 mm escape gaps throughout the entire season;
- 15 November season start.
- No summer closure in Zone B.
- Big Bank to remain closed.
- Review of management arrangements to take place in late January 2010 to determine the need for any changes to the above package.



# Determining 2009-10 management arrangements

- 31 July close of stakeholder submissions.
- 4 August RLIAC finalises advice.
- Minister to make decision following consideration of advice.



# Quota vs input controls

- Ongoing debate.
- Important issue but independent of sustainability.
- Expert panel reports commissioned by RLIAC and available on the DoF website

# Summary

