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For immediate release 11 March 2007

Long tail tuna afforded protection

“The Australian Government has finally delivered on its commitment to declare longtail tuna (*Thunnus tonggol*) a recreational only species. Whilst it is 2 ½ yrs since the announcement was made, just prior to the 2004 election, it is very pleasing to see this finally reach an acceptable conclusion” John Harrison CEO of Recfish Australia said today.

“With commercial catch limits set for both the Eastern and Western Tuna & Billfish Fisheries (ETBF & WTBF) we can now be certain that this species of tuna will not follow the same over-exploitation path that other tuna and tuna like species have.”

“The strict total allowable catch (TAC) limits means that the species will not be subject to concentrated targeted effort by the commercial fleets. The commercial catch of longtail will effectively be as a bycatch when they are fishing for other species and this will be at very low levels.”

“We can now be confident that this fantastic sport fish will be available for generations of recreational fishers to enjoy which is terrific news.”

“It is 8 years since the first steps were taken by the recreational fishing sector to get this species listed or treated as a recreational only. In 1999 the Amateur Fishermen’s Association of the NT made the first approaches to the government on longtail tuna. The wheels of government turn slowly however in this case the wait has been worth it and we can look forward to at least one species of tuna not being subject to commercial fishing pressure.” Mr Harrison concluded.

End

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