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## Fishing Decree to address licence woes in Fiji

By Online Editor  
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A new Decree known as the Offshore Fisheries Management decree will now see those who feel that they have been wrongfully denied of a fishing license to appeal their case to Fiji's Minister for Fisheries.

This was revealed during a SeaWeb presentation conducted by Fisheries Department Enforcement officer Alitia Bainivalu.

Bainivalu in her presentation said the new decree which came into effect this year has broadened the Department of Fisheries responsibilities than what they in the past and has given them more powers to address fishing issues.

"The new OFMD updates are part of Fiji's previous Fisheries Act (Cap 158) that addressed offshore fish species and brings the government in line with International treaties and regulations," Bainivalu said.

The new Decree gives the Fiji Fisheries Department much more responsibility for regulating and controlling offshore fisheries than in the past She said in addition the new Decree has established an Advisory Council with representatives from Fishing industry, NGO's and government.

"The Council will issue opinions and make recommendations regarding Offshore Fisheries which the Government must pay attention to," she said.

She said the Fisheries Minister can designate certain fisheries for management if they are important to the national interest and if management measures are needed to ensure their sustainable use. "If it does so, then it must adopt Fisheries Management Plans for those fisheries.

The management plan should include the current status of the fishery, assessment of the risk of exploiting that fishery, specify any management measures to be applied and protect the fishing interests of artisanal, subsistence and small scale fishers."

She also said all Fiji fishing vessels, and vessels used for sport or recreational fishing should comply with any requirements for a license or authorization.

The Department is also looking forward to the promulgation of two more decrees known as the Inshore Fisheries Management Decree and the Aquaculture Fisheries Management Decree.

SOURCE: FIJI LIVE/PACNEWS

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