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WWF wants to buy out the seafood industry, says QSIA

THE environmental activist group WWF has been accused of misusing market power to try to shut down significant sections of the Queensland commercial fishing industry.

“I understand WWF has now bought three net-fishing licences and intends to buy more,” Queensland Seafood Industry Association (QSIA) President Keith Harris said today.

“Commercial fishing licence numbers in Queensland are frozen, so when a licence is not used it cannot be replaced.

“Of course, WWF is not using the licences and so premium wild-caught local seafood like barramundi and threadfin salmon is being taken out of the market, at a cost to wholesalers, retailers and consumers.

“WWF is a multi-national organisation with hundreds of millions of dollars of income which includes public donations every year and has the capacity to shut down commercial fishing by stealth if it continues to outbid genuine commercial fishermen who would otherwise buy these licences.

“The Queensland Government needs to step in and put a stop to it so the flow of local seafood can be maintained to consumers and fishing licences kept in the hands of those that will use them.”

Mr Harris said WWF was philosophically opposed to fishing and would end all fishing operations in the State if it had sufficient funds available. They probably already have the funds.

“WWF has campaigned relentlessly to close down fishing wherever possible, including using political influence to shape fisheries policies, but is now taking a more direct route of buying up licences and binning them.,” Mr Harris said.

“This will potentially distort the market for fishing licences, reduce the flow of premium wild-caught seafood and erode confidence in Queensland fisheries management.”

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