



Department of  
**Primary Industries and  
Regional Development**

**Protect  
Grow  
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# Recreational fishing guide 2024



**Includes Statewide bag and size limits  
for Western Australia, and Recreational  
Fishing from Boat Licence information.**

February 2024

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This publication is to provide assistance or information. It is only a guide and does not replace the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994* or the *Fish Resources Management Regulations 1995*. It cannot be used as a defence in a court of law. The information provided is current at the date of printing but may be subject to change. For the most up-to-date information on fishing and full details of legislation contact select DPIRD offices or visit [dpird.wa.gov.au](http://dpird.wa.gov.au)

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# Fish for the future

Western Australia is home to some of the most exciting and varied recreational fishing opportunities in the world. With around 633,000 people fishing recreationally, it is part of our lifestyle. It also makes a contribution to our economy and attracts thousands of visitors to regional WA each year.

With growing fishing and environmental pressures, we need to manage our highly valued aquatic resources sustainably to ensure there are fish for the future. You can play your part by sticking to the rules, which are based on extensive research and monitoring.

Please note that **penalties apply** for fishing offences.

Interfering with another person's fishing gear or catch, selling recreationally caught fish and other similar offences can result in penalties of up to \$400,000, imprisonment for 4 years and loss of boats, vehicles and equipment. Offenders may also lose the privilege of engaging in a licensed fishing activity.

## Using this guide

Throughout this guide we identify when additional information is available. You can obtain it from:

- select DPIRD offices (see back cover); and
- the recreational fishing section of the DPIRD website at **[fish.wa.gov.au/recfishing](http://fish.wa.gov.au/recfishing)**

Please contact us to request information in alternative formats.

# New rules

## West Coast demersal scalefish

- Closed season for demersal scalefish in the West Coast bioregion:
  - 1 February to 28 March 2024 (inclusive)
  - 1 August to 15 September 2024 (inclusive)
  - 15 October to 15 December 2024 (inclusive)

**Note:** this does not apply to land-based line fishers, charter fishers or commercial fishers.

- A mixed species daily bag limit of 2 demersal scalefish, including WA dhufish (except coral trout, coronation trout and western blue groper have a daily bag limit of one).
- A boat limit of 4 demersal scalefish.
- Removal of size limits for WA dhufish, baldchin groper and breaksea cod.

**Note:** size limit remains for pink snapper.

- A maximum of one bait or lure per line when fishing for demersal scalefish.
- Cockburn and Warnbro Sounds pink snapper spawning closure 1 August to 31 January (inclusive).
- Abrolhos Islands baldchin groper spawning closure 1 October to 31 December (inclusive).
- Abrolhos Islands:
  - bag limit of one demersal scalefish;
  - possession limit of:
    - 5 kg of fillets from any species, plus 5 kg of fillets from large pelagic finfish (must have skin attached for identification purposes); OR
    - one day's bag limit of whole fish.

**Note:** the West Coast demersal scalefish boat limit applies within the Abrolhos Islands fish habitat protection area (FHPA). If you fillet your demersal scalefish, the boat possession limit still applies, and 2 fillets of fish equal one whole fish.

## **Abalone**

Fishing for greenlip abalone is closed in the area from Busselton Jetty to Shoal Cape (in Zone 3). See the Abalone recreational fishing guide for further information.

## **Metropolitan wire trace fishing**

Recreational fishing with wire trace is prohibited within 800 metres of all Perth metropolitan beaches from Tim's Thicket Beach (south of Mandurah) to 5 kilometres north of Two Rocks and all waters of the Swan and Canning rivers, waters in the Dawesville Channel up to the Port Bouvard Bridge, and waters in the Mandurah Estuary up to the Mandurah Estuary Bridge.

The restrictions have been put in place following ongoing community concerns around recreational shark fishing.

## **Southern Garfish**

From 1 March 2024, the take of southern garfish in Perth Metropolitan waters is now permitted following the ongoing recovery of the stock. A daily bag limit of 30 applies for the garfish group.

See the DPIRD website for further information.

# Care for your catch

You can help ensure there will be fish for the future by taking care of the fish you catch, and releasing all undersize or protected fish as carefully and as quickly as possible.

**Catching fish:** Gear up – by using the right fishing gear you will decrease the chance of injury to the fish and increase their chance of survival if released.

**Handling fish:** Be ready – by handling fish carefully, you can ensure a better chance of its survival if released and produce better eating quality for those you keep.

**Releasing fish:** Be prepared – by using the best techniques to release your fish you will increase their chance of survival, and that will mean more fish for the future.

**Keeping fish:** Know how – learn how to dispatch your fish, and how to keep it fresh and make the most of your catch by using every bit.

**Responsible fishing:** Be aware – you can do your part to ensure fish for the future by following the rules and responsible fishing guidelines.

Check out the Catch Care guide at [fish.wa.gov.au/catchcare](http://fish.wa.gov.au/catchcare) for further tips for what you can do on your next fishing trip to ensure fish for our future.



## **Do not high grade your catch**

Continuing to fish once you have reached your bag limit to later discard a small fish for any bigger fish caught, is known as 'high grading'. This practice results in more fish being removed from the fishery, placing unnecessary pressure on our fish stocks.

If you chose not to return a fish to the water immediately, you have taken that fish and it counts towards your daily bag limit.

## **Poisonous and venomous fish**

Some species have venomous spines or poisonous flesh. Handle any fish with caution and avoid direct contact with the fish's spines and gill plates.

Several WA fish species are highly poisonous to eat, such as members of the blowfish or pufferfish family.

## **Return captured blowfish to the water!**

If you catch a blowfish, return it immediately to the water. Blowfish play an important role in the ecosystem as scavengers, but if they're caught and left on the shore they pose a life threatening risk to dogs and other animals that may eat them.



## Barotrauma and using a release weight

The term 'barotrauma' refers to damage that occurs to fish when captured in deep water. Gases in a fish's body expand due to a sudden decrease in pressure, causing the stomach to push out through the mouth or gills and the eyes to appear popped out. Fish suffering from barotrauma may not be able to return to the bottom when released if their swim bladder remains inflated. Barotrauma may also damage the fish's internal organs, which may not be so noticeable.

To minimise the effects of barotrauma, 'prevention is better than cure'. To avoid catching undersize or excess fish, stop fishing once you've reached your bag or boat limit. Demersal fish species are particularly susceptible to barotrauma; and mortality levels as a result of barotrauma are known to increase with depth. Minimum size limits no longer apply to WA dhufish, baldchin groper and breaksea cod for this reason.

If you need to release a demersal fish, a release weight may help fish return to the ocean floor.

**Note:** If you are boat fishing for demersal species anywhere in WA, you must have a release weight on board.

A release weight is a weighted barbless hook that is attached to the fish's upper lip and designed to be easily detached by tugging the line once the fish is back on the seabed.



# Shark depredation and mitigation



Shark depredation (or bite-offs) occur when a shark partially or completely consumes a fish caught by fishing gear before it can be landed.

Shark bite-offs can have detrimental economic and social impacts on commercial, charter and recreational fishers across WA and developing mitigation measures is complex.

Some ways you can mitigate bite-offs:

- if depredation starts to occur, move fishing spots immediately.
- consider using deterrent devices to increase your chance of landing a fish.
- avoid areas known to be depredation hotspots as sharks can learn where to get an easy feed.
- use lures and jigs instead of bait as bait may attract more sharks.
- avoid catch and release fishing.
- don't clean fish at sea, bring your fish waste back to land for composting.

# Fishing licences

In WA, licences are required for:

- use of a powered boat to fish or to transport your catch or fishing gear to or from a land-based fishing location (Recreational Fishing from Boat Licence – RFBL);
- rock lobster;
- abalone;
- marron;
- South-west (south of 29°S) freshwater angling; and
- net fishing (set, haul and throw nets).

With the exception of the above, you do not require a licence to fish from the shore. Separate brochures covering 5 of the licensed recreational fisheries listed above are available from select DPIRD offices or the website.

Apply for a new licence, or renew an existing licence online through the DPIRD website. Alternatively, application forms are available from select DPIRD offices and the website.

**Note:** Fishing licences issued in other states are not valid in WA.

## Recreational Fishing from Boat Licence

You need a Recreational Fishing from Boat Licence (RFBL) for any fishing activity from a powered boat including:

- line fishing (handline, rod and line, squid jigging);
- catching crabs;

- spearfishing;
- catching octopus;
- dip-netting for prawns; and
- fishing by diving and/or snorkelling.

You require an RFBL for these fishing activities even if you are returning your catch to the water. You also require an RFBL when a powered boat is used to transport your catch or fishing gear to or from a land-based fishing location, including an island or sandbar. You must produce your licence when requested by a Fisheries and Marine Officer.

You don't need an RFBL if you are:

- fishing from a boat without a motor, such as a row boat;
- fishing from a licensed fishing tour operator's vessel or fishing charter boat;
- fishing with a person who holds an RFBL provided the total catch of everyone on board the boat stays within the bag limit(s) of the one or more fishers who hold an RFBL; OR
- taking part in a fishing activity for which you already hold a current licence, such as rock lobster or abalone fishing. For example, if you have a licence to fish for rock lobster and that is the only fishing activity that is taking place on the boat, you don't need an RFBL.

The RFBL database of boat fishers helps us determine who is fishing, where and what they are catching. This information assists us in managing our fisheries so there are fish for the future.

The RFBL covers a 12-month period from the date of issue. See page 8 for details on applying for or renewing your licence.

## Recreational fishing by Aboriginal people

If you are Aboriginal, you do not need a recreational fishing licence. This applies when you take fish from any waters in accordance with continuing Aboriginal tradition and the fish are taken only for you or your family to eat and not for a commercial purpose. All other fishing rules (including bag and size limits) still apply.

## Your licence fees at work

Each year, recreational fishing licence fees contribute about \$9 million to managing recreational fishing in Western Australia. The State Government contributes a similar amount.

The revenue from recreational fishing licences is spent on a range of projects that benefit recreational fishers, with 25 per cent set aside for new initiatives and 15 per cent going towards funding Recfishwest, WA's peak recreational fishing body, to represent the interests of the WA recreational fishing community. The rest is spent on recreational fishing management, research, education and compliance. Recreational fishing initiatives funded from licence fees include:

- artificial reefs;
- Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs);
- stocking projects for snapper, kingfish, barramundi, marron and freshwater trout;

- the future fisheries leaders program;
- research projects into popular recreational species such as blue swimmer crabs, black bream and squid; and
- the Statewide recreational boat fishing survey.



Recreational fishing licence fees contribute towards artificial reefs to provide premium quality recreational fishing opportunities for small boat owners. Several have been installed throughout the state, all receiving funding from recreational fishing licence revenue.

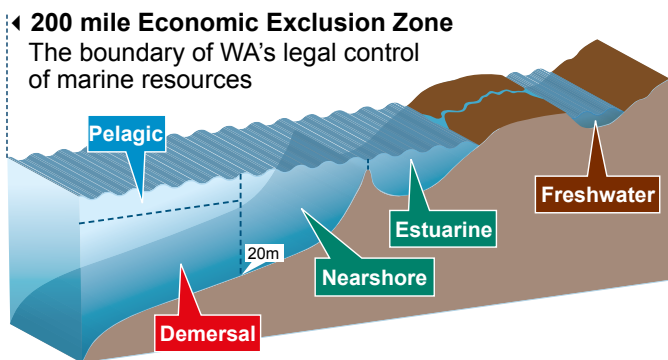
# Bag and size limits explained

Bag and size limits help ensure our aquatic resources remain sustainable for future generations. Bag limits assist in sharing the resource and contribute to the sustainable management of the State's fish stocks. Size limits allow fish with low or moderate post-release mortality to reach maturity to complete their breeding cycle.

Measure all fish with a size limit and return any undersize or otherwise protected fish to the water immediately upon capture, with the least possible injury (see 'care for your catch' on page 4).

## Finfish categories

For bag and size limits, finfish are categorised according to their aquatic environment, although some finfish are present in multiple environments (see diagram below).



In some cases there are rules that apply to specific biological regions – the North Coast Bioregion, Gascoyne Coast Bioregion, West Coast Bioregion and South Coast Bioregion (see map on page 13).



## Western Australia's marine bioregions



### Mixed species daily bag limit

This is the combined maximum number of fish of any species within one category (such as demersal or large pelagic) that a fisher may take or bring on to land in any 24-hour period (from midnight to midnight, except from midday to midday for marron, prawns and when recreationally set netting).

For example, demersal scalefish in the West Coast Bioregion has a total mixed daily bag limit of 2 fish.

**2 fish = 1 baldchin groper + 1 pink snapper**

**OR**

**2 fish = 2 pink snapper (but no other demersal scalefish)**

**Note:** Within the mixed daily bag limit, you cannot exceed the stated individual species limit (see below). For example, you may only take a maximum of one coral trout per day.

## Individual species daily bag limit

This is the maximum number of an individual species you may take within your total mixed species daily bag limit.

## Boat limit

A boat limit is the maximum number of fish of a species or group of species that may be on a boat or attached to a boat (including tender vessels) at any one time. **This limit applies regardless of how long the vessel is at sea.**

Boat limits apply statewide for **blue swimmer crabs, mud crabs, squid, octopus, cuttlefish, greenlip/brownlip abalone, rock lobster and in the West Coast Bioregion for demersal scalefish**. The boat limit for these species or species groups is calculated by multiplying the relevant daily bag limit by the number of licensed fishers on the boat, up to the maximum boat possession limit (see bag and size limit tables on pages 16–43 for more information). The master of the boat must ensure these rules are followed.

For example, the boat limit for western rock lobsters is 8 when there is one person on board, 16 when there are 2 people on board, and up to a maximum of 24 when there are 3 or more people on board the boat, regardless of how long the vessel is at sea. You must still hold a recreational rock lobster licence to fish for rock lobsters and only take a daily bag limit. See pages 8–10 for information about other recreational fishing licence requirements.

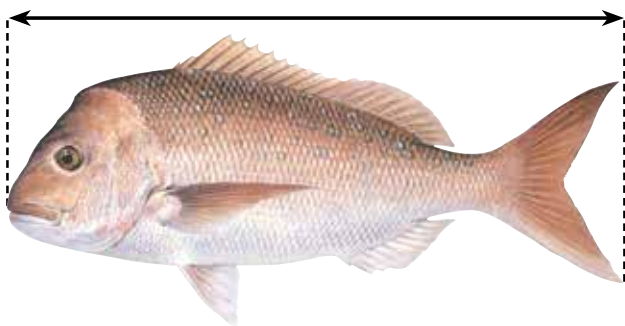
## Possession limits and transporting fish

A possession limit is the maximum quantity of fish that a person may have in their control/ownership. Possession limits apply to all finfish (see page 44), as well as rock lobster, marron and abalone (see bag and size limit tables).



Recreationally caught fish cannot be transported unaccompanied (see page 47).




## Size limits

To check if your catch is of a legal size, measure finfish from the point of the snout to the tip of the tail. Pick up a free fish ruler sticker from select DPIRD offices or participating retail outlets.



# Demersal scalefish – bag and size limits

|  | West Coast Bioregion  | Abrolhos Islands        | South Coast, Gascoyne, North Coast Bioregions  |
|--|---|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Release weight</b> required when line fishing for demersal scalefish anywhere in WA - see page 6  |   |                         |  |
| <b>TOTAL mixed species daily bag limit per fisher.</b> This is the combined number of demersal scalefish you can take (see page 13 for details).   | <b>2</b>  | <b>1</b>                | <b>5</b>                                       |
| <b>Boat limit</b> of 4 applies in the West Coast bioregion, including Abrolhos Islands. Charter boats excluded.  | <b>4</b>  |                         | <b>N/A</b>                                     |
| <b>Closed season</b> - Applies to all demersal scalefish in the West Coast Bioregion unless otherwise excepted. Does not apply to land-based line fishing, charter or commercial fishers.    | <b>🚫 Closed:</b> 1 Feb to 28 Mar 2024 (inclusive);<br>1 Aug to 15 Sep 2024 (inclusive);<br>15 Oct to 15 Dec 2024 (inclusive). |                         | No demersal closed season in these Bioregions. |
| <b>Individual species daily bag limit per fisher</b><br>This is the maximum number of individual species you may take within your total mixed bag limit.                                     | <b>Individual species daily bag limit</b>    |                         |  |
| <b>Species</b>   | <b>Minimum legal size</b>   |                         |  |
| <br><u>Baldchin groper</u><br><i>Choerodon rubescens</i> . Additional closed seasons apply – see page 57 | <b>N/A</b>  | <b>2</b>                | <b>1</b>                                       |
|  | <b>West Coast</b>   | <b>Abrolhos Islands</b> | <b>Other Bioregions</b>                        |
|  | <b>2</b>  | <b>1</b>                | <b>3</b>                                       |

|   |  |   |          |          |          |
|---|--|---|----------|----------|----------|
|   | <u>Tuskfish*</u><br><u>Choerodon</u> spp. (Pictured: <u>Blackspot tuskfish</u> )   | <u>Blackspot</u> and <u>blue tuskfish</u> : <b>400 mm</b>   | <b>2</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>3</b> |
|  | <u>Barramundi cod</u><br><u>Cromileptes altivelis</u>  | <b>N/A</b>  | <b>2</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>3</b> |
|  | <u>Blue morwong</u> (queen snapper)<br><u>Nemadactylus valenciennesi</u>   | <b>410 mm</b>   | <b>2</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>3</b> |
|  | <u>Rockcods*</u><br>Family Ephinephelidae and Serranidae<br>(Pictured top to bottom: <u>Breaksea cod</u> , <u>goldspotted rockcod</u> [Estuary cod], <u>blackspotted rockcod</u> [Malabar cod], <u>western wirrah</u> , <u>harlequin fish</u> ). All species including <u>eightbar grouper</u> and <u>Rankin cod</u> <b>except</b> <u>Chinaman rockcod</u> | <u>Goldspotted rockcod</u> : 400 mm<br><u>Goldspotted</u> and <u>Blackspotted rockcod</u> over 1,000 mm or 30 kg are protected<br><u>Goldspotted</u> and <u>Blackspotted rockcod</u> must be landed as whole fish | <b>2</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>3</b> |

\* Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 8–9 for licence rules.

# Demersal scalefish – bag and size limits (continued)





|  |  | West Coast         | Abrholhos Islands | Other Bioregions | Individual species daily bag limit |                   |                  |
|--|--|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| TOTAL mixed species daily bag limit per fisher                                       |  | 2                  | 1                 | 5                | West Coast                         | Abrholhos Islands | Other Bioregions |
| Species  |  | Minimum legal size |                   |                  |                                    |                   |                  |
|   | <u>Coral trout*</u><br><i>Plectropomus</i> spp.<br>(Pictured top to bottom: <a href="#">Common coral trout</a> , <a href="#">barcheek coral trout</a> , <a href="#">vermicular cod</a> ) | 450 mm             |                   |                  | 1                                  | 1                 | 1                |
|   | <u>Coronation trout</u><br><i>Variola</i> spp.   | N/A                |                   |                  | 1                                  | 1                 | 1                |
|   | <u>Dhuffish, West Australian</u><br><i>Glaucosoma hebraicum</i>  | N/A                |                   |                  | 2                                  | 1                 | 2                |
|  | <u>Boarfish**</u><br>Family Pentacerotidae (Pictured: <a href="#">Giant boarfish</a> )   | N/A                |                   |                  | 2                                  | 1                 | 3                |

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|    | <u>Dory. John</u> <sup>†</sup><br><i>Zeus faber</i>   | N/A   | 2 | 1 | 3 |
|  | <u>Dory. mirror</u> <sup>†</sup><br><i>Zenopsis nebulosus</i>   | N/A   | 2 | 1 | 3 |
|  | <u>Emperors and seabream</u> <sup>*</sup><br><i>Lethrinus</i> spp.<br>All species including <u>spangled emperor</u> (pictured), <u>red throat</u> and <u>Robinson's sea bream</u> <b>except grass emperor</b> (black snapper) | <u>Spangled</u> : 410 mm<br>Other emperor: 280 mm | 2 | 1 | 3 |
|  | <u>Emperor. grass</u> (black snapper/blue-lined emperor) <i>Lethrinus laticaudis</i>  | 320 mm  | 2 | 1 | 5 |
|  | <u>Foxfish</u> <sup>*</sup><br><i>Bodianus</i> spp.   | N/A   | 2 | 1 | 3 |
|  | <u>Pigfish</u> <sup>*</sup><br><i>Bodianus</i> spp. (Pictured: <u>Goldspot pigfish</u> )  | N/A   | 2 | 1 | 3 |

\* Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 8–9 for licence rules.





<sup>†</sup> May be taken during the closed season.

## Demersal scalefish – bag and size limits (continued)

| Species   | Minimum legal size |                  |                  |  | Individual species daily bag limit |                  |                  |
|---|--------------------|------------------|------------------|--|------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
|   | West Coast         | Abrolhos Islands | Other Bioregions | TOTAL mixed species daily bag limit per fisher | West Coast                         | Abrolhos Islands | Other Bioregions |
| <br><u>Hapuku</u><br><i>Polyprion oxygeneios</i>   | N/A                |                  |                  | 2  | 2                                  | 1                | 3                |
| <br><u>Bass groper</u><br><i>Polyprion americanus</i>  | N/A                |                  |                  | 2  | 2                                  | 1                | 3                |
| <br><u>Blue-eye trevalla(s)</u> *<br>Family Centrolophidae<br>(Pictured: <a href="#">Blue-eyed trevalla</a> )  | N/A                |                  |                  | 2  | 2                                  | 1                | 3                |
| <br><u>Bight redfish</u> * ( <a href="#">Nannygai</a> , <a href="#">red snapper</a> ) –<br>pictured, <a href="#">yelloweye redfish</a> and <a href="#">swallowtail</a> | <b>300 mm</b>      |                  |                  |  | 2                                  | 1                | 8                |

\* In the South Coast Bioregion you may take 8 Bight redfish, 8 yelloweye redfish and 8 swallowtail, PLUS a mixed daily bag limit of 5 other demersal scalefish.



|   |  |   |   |   |                         |
|---|--|---|---|---|-------------------------|
|    | <u>Pearl perch</u> *<br><i>Glaucosoma</i> spp. (other than <i>Glaucosoma hebraicum</i> – <a href="#">West Australian dhufish</a> )   | N/A   | 2 | 1 | 3                       |
|  | <u>Snapper (Pink snapper)</u><br><i>Chrysophrys auratus</i><br>Additional rules apply – see pages 54–56 for details  | <b>500 mm</b><br>Applies in the West Coast Bioregion south of 31°S latitude (just north of Lancelin) and in the inner gulfs of Shark Bay. | 2 | 1 | <b>2</b><br>(Shark Bay) |
|  | <u>Tropical snappers</u> *<br>Family Lutjanidae<br>All species including <u>red emperor (top)</u> , <u>crimson snapper</u> , <u>saddletail snapper</u> , <u>Chinaman fish (upper middle)</u> , <u>jobfish</u> , <u>ruby snapper (lower middle)</u> and <u>goldband snapper (bottom)</u> <b>except</b> <u>golden snapper (fingermark)</u> , <u>mangrove jack</u> and <u>stripey snapper</u> | All other areas: <b>410 mm</b><br><br>Red emperor: <b>410 mm</b>  | 2 | 1 | 3                       |
|  | <u>Western blue groper</u><br><i>Achoerodus gouldii</i>  | <b>500 mm</b>   | 1 | 1 | 1                       |

\* Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 8–9 for licence rules.

# Large pelagic finfish – bag and size limits

Moderate vulnerability



Statewide












## TOTAL mixed species daily bag limit per fisher

# 3

This is the combined number of large pelagic finfish you can take (see page 13 for details).








For example, 3 fish = 2 Spanish mackerel and 1 Mahi Mahi OR 3 Spanish mackerel OR 2 Mahi Mahi and 1 yellowfin tuna.

| Species   | Minimum legal size | Species  | Minimum legal size |
|---|--------------------|--|--------------------|
| <br>Amberjack<br><i>Seriola dumerilii</i> | 600 mm             | <br>Mackerel, school<br><i>Scomberomorus queenslandicus</i> | 500 mm             |

|   |   |        |  |  |        |
|---|---|--------|--|--|--------|
|   | <u>Samsonfish</u><br><i>Seriola hippos</i>                  | 600 mm |   | <u>Mackerel, shark</u><br><i>Grammatorcynus bicarinatus</i>  | 500 mm |
|  | <u>Yellowtail kingfish</u><br><i>Seriola lalandi</i>        | 600 mm |  | <u>Mackerel, Spanish</u><br><i>Scomberomorus commerson</i>   | 900 mm |
|  | <u>Great barracuda</u><br><i>Sphyaena barracuda</i>         | N/A    |  | <u>Mackerel, spotted</u><br><i>Scomberomorus munroi</i>  | 500 mm |
|  | <u>Cobia</u><br><i>Rachycentron canadum</i>                 | 750 mm |  | <u>Mahi Mahi (dolphinfish)</u><br><i>Coryphaena</i> spp.   | 500 mm |
|  | <u>Barracouta (Gemfish)</u><br>Family Gempylidae            | N/A    |  | Billfish* ( <u>marlins</u> ,<br><u>sailfish</u> , <u>spearfish</u> )<br>Family Istiophoridae<br>(Pictured: <u>Blue marlin</u> )<br><b>Individual species</b><br><b>daily bag limit = 1</b> | N/A    |
|  | <u>Mackerel, grey</u><br><i>Scomberomorus semifasciatus</i> | 750 mm |  |  |        |

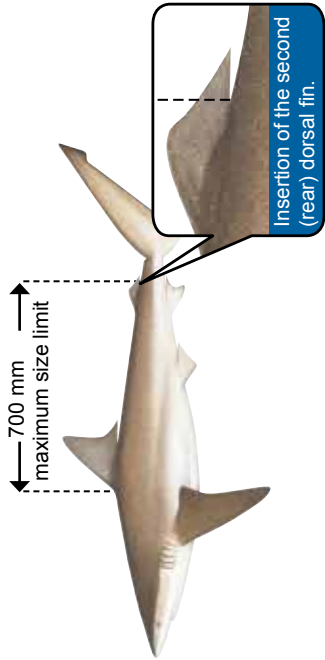
\* Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 8–9 for licence rules.






# Large pelagic finfish – bag and size limits (continued)

|   |  | Statewide   |                    |
|---|--|---|--------------------|
| TOTAL mixed species daily bag limit per fisher  |  | 3   |                    |
| Species   | Minimum legal size   | Species   | Minimum legal size |
| <br><u>Swordfish</u><br><i>Xiphias gladius</i><br>Individual species daily bag limit = 1     | N/A  | <br><u>Trevally, golden</u><br><i>Gnathanodon speciosus</i> | N/A                |
| <br><u>Sharks and rays</u><br>Class <i>Chondrichthyes</i><br>(Pictured: <u>Gummy shark</u> ) | West and South Coast Bioregions:<br><b>Whaler sharks</b><br>max. size 700 mm (interdorsal fin length†) | <br><u>Tuna, big eye</u><br><i>Thunnus obesus</i>           | N/A                |
| <br><u>Trevally, giant</u><br><i>Caranx ignobilis</i>                                       | N/A  | <br><u>Tuna, dogtooth</u><br><i>Gymnosarda unicolor</i>     | N/A                |
|   |  | <br><u>Tuna, longtail</u><br><i>Thunnus tonggol</i>        | N/A                |

† Whaler sharks: 'interdorsal fin length' is the measurement from the front of the first dorsal fin to the insertion of the second (rear) dorsal fin. Due to concentrations of heavy metals, large sharks over this length are unsuitable for human consumption.

Common whaler shark species include dusky shark, bronze whaler and bull sharks.



|  |  |        |
|--|--|--------|
|   | <u>Tuna, mackerel</u><br><i>Euthynnus affinis</i>        | N/A    |
|  | <u>Tuna, skipjack</u><br><i>Katsuwonis pelamis</i>       | N/A    |
|  | <u>Tuna, southern bluefin</u><br><i>Thunnus maccoyii</i> | N/A    |
|  | <u>Tuna, yellowfin</u><br><i>Thunnus albacares</i>       | N/A    |
|  | <u>Wahoo</u><br><i>Acanthocybium solandri</i>            | 900 mm |

**NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 8–9 for licence rules.

# Nearshore/estuarine finfish – bag and size limits

Moderate vulnerability



Photo: Shannon Conway


Statewide

## TOTAL mixed species daily bag limit per fisher

This is the combined number of nearshore/estuarine finfish you can take (see page 13 for details).

# 16

For example, 16 fish = 8 tailor (individual species limit = 8), 4 Western Australian salmon (individual species limit = 4) and 4 snook.





| Species   | Minimum legal size  | Individual species daily bag limit       |
|---|---|--|
|  <p><u>Barramundi</u><br/><i>Lates calcarifer</i></p> | <p><b>550 mm</b><br/>(Max. size <b>800 mm</b> must be landed as whole fish)</p> | <p><b>2</b><br/>Possession limit = 2</p> |

|   |   |  |                 |
|---|---|--|-----------------|
|   | <p>Bream, black (pictured top), tarwhine (pictured bottom), northwest black, western yellowfin, etc.*<br/>Acanthopagrus spp., <i>Rhabdosargus sarba</i></p> | <p><b>250 mm</b><br/><u>Western yellowfin</u>: <b>300 mm</b><br/>(Only <b>2 black bream</b> over <b>400 mm</b> in Swan and Canning rivers)</p> | <p><b>6</b></p> |
|  | <p><u>Bonito</u> (all species) and <u>albacore</u>*<br/><i>Cybiosarda elegans</i>, <i>Sarda orientalis</i> (pictured),<br/><i>Thunnus alalunga</i></p>      | <p><b>N/A</b></p>  | <p><b>8</b></p> |
|  | <p><u>Catfish and Estuary Cobbler</u><br/>Families Ariidae and Plotosidae</p>   | <p><u>Estuary cobbler</u> (pictured): <b>430 mm</b></p>  | <p><b>8</b></p> |
|  | <p><u>Rockcod</u>, <u>Chinaman</u> (Charlie Court)<br/><i>Epinephelus rivulatus</i></p>   | <p><b>N/A</b></p>  | <p><b>4</b></p> |
|  | <p><u>Dart</u>*<br/><i>Trachinotus</i> spp.</p>   | <p><b>N/A</b></p>  | <p><b>8</b></p> |
|  | <p><u>Golden snapper</u> (<u>fingermark</u>)<br/><i>Lutjanus johnii</i></p>   | <p><b>300 mm</b></p>   | <p><b>4</b></p> |

\* Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 8–9 for licence rules.

# Nearshore/estuarine finfish – bag and size limits (continued)

|   |
|---|
| <b>Statewide</b>                                      |
| <b>TOTAL mixed species daily bag limit per fisher</b> |
| <b>16</b>   |

| Species   |  | Minimum legal size | Individual species daily bag limit |
|---|--|--------------------|------------------------------------|
|  | <u>Flathead</u> <sup>*</sup><br><i>Platycephalus</i> spp.  | <b>300 mm</b>      | <b>8</b>                           |
|  | <u>Flounder</u> <sup>*</sup><br>Families Pleuronectidae, Bothidae and Paralichthyidae<br>(Pictured: Smalltoothed flounder) | <b>250 mm</b>      | <b>8</b>                           |
|  | <u>Javelinfin</u> <sup>*</sup><br>Family Haemulidae (Pictured: <a href="#">Spotted javelinfin</a> )                        | <b>300 mm</b>      | <b>8</b>                           |
|  | <u>Sweetlips</u> <sup>*</sup><br>Family Haemulidae (Pictured: <a href="#">Painted sweetlips</a> )                          | <b>300 mm</b>      | <b>8</b>                           |



|   |  |                       |   |
|---|--|-----------------------|---|
|   | <b>Leatherjacket*</b><br>Family Monacanthidae<br>(Pictured: <a href="#">Six-spined leatherjacket</a> ) | 250 mm                | 8 |
|  | <b>Mulloway</b> (caught primarily south of Exmouth Gulf)<br><i>Argyrosomus japonicus</i>               | 500 mm                | 2 |
|  | <b>Black jewfish</b><br><i>Protonibea diacanthus</i>   | 700 mm                | 2 |
|  | <b>Mangrove jack</b><br><i>Lutjanus argentimaculatus</i>   | 300 mm                | 2 |
|  | <b>Pike longfin</b><br><i>Dinolestes lewini</i>  | 300 mm                | 8 |
|  | <b>Sea sweep</b><br><i>Scorpiis aequipinnis</i>  | N/A                   | 4 |
|  | <b>Snook</b> and striped barracuda<br><i>Sphyraena novaehollandiae</i> and <i>S. obtusata</i>          | <u>Snook</u> : 300 mm | 8 |





\* Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 8–9 for licence rules.

# Nearshore/estuarine finfish – bag and size limits (continued)

Statewide

TOTAL mixed species daily  
bag limit per fisher

**16**

| Species  |  | Minimum legal size                  | Individual species daily bag limit |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
|   | <u>Striped snapper</u><br><i>Lutjanus carponotatus</i>   | 300 mm                              | 4                                  |
|   | <u>Tailor</u><br><i>Pomatomus saltatrix</i>  | 300 mm<br>(Only 2 fish over 500 mm) | 8                                  |
|   | <u>Threadfin, king</u><br><i>Polydactylus macrochir</i>  | 450 mm                              | 2                                  |
|  | <u>Threadfin</u> , other species*<br>Family Polynemidae – other than <i>Polydactylus macrochir</i> (Pictured: <a href="#">Blue threadfin</a> ) | N/A                                 | 4                                  |

|   |  |  |                  |
|---|--|--|------------------|
|   | <p><u>Trevally</u> and <u>queenfish</u> (all other species not specifically mentioned in these tables* <b>except</b> needleskin queenfish and <u>yellowtail scad</u>)<br/>Family Carangidae (Pictured top to bottom: <u>Silver trevally</u> (skipjack/skippy), <u>queenfish</u>)</p> | <p><u>Silver trevally</u>: <b>250 mm</b></p> | <p><b>8</b></p>  |
|  | <p><u>Tripletail</u><br/><i>Lobotes surinamensis</i></p>   | <p><b>300 mm</b></p>                         | <p><b>2</b></p>  |
|  | <p><u>Western Australian salmon</u><br/><i>Arripis truttaceus</i></p>  | <p><b>300 mm</b></p>                         | <p><b>4</b></p>  |
|  | <p><u>Whiting, King George</u><br/><i>Sillaginodes punctata</i></p>  | <p><b>280 mm</b></p>                         | <p><b>12</b></p> |
|  | <p><u>Wrasse (Subfamily Labrinae)</u> and <u>parrotfish</u> (Subfamily Scarinae) (all other species not specifically mentioned in these tables)* (Pictured top to bottom: <u>female western king wrasse</u>, <u>male western king wrasse</u>)</p>                                    | <p><b>N/A</b></p>                            | <p><b>8</b></p>  |

\* Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 8–9 for licence rules.

# Freshwater finfish – bag and size limits



Statewide

## TOTAL mixed species daily bag limit per fisher

This is the combined number of freshwater finfish you can take (see page 13 for details).

# 4

### Species

### Minimum legal size



Trout, rainbow (pictured top), brown (pictured bottom)  
Oncorhynchus mykiss and Salmo trutta  
 (see our *Recreational freshwater angling guide* for more details)

300 mm



Catfish and freshwater cobbler  
 Families Plotosidae and Ariidae  
 (see our *Recreational freshwater angling guide* for more details)

N/A



Striped perch (all freshwater species)  
Family Terapontidae (Pictured: Sooty grunter *Hephaestus fuliginosus*)

Sooty grunter: 250 mm  
Other: N/A

**NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 8–9 for licence rules.



Freshwater pest species

Families Cyprinidae and Cichlidae, such as carp, tilapia, cichlids and goldfish, and redfin perch (*Perca fluviatilis*, pictured). No bag limit – it is recommended that they are not returned to the water and are humanely euthanased with dead fish not left on the shore.

# All other species of finfish – bag and size limits



Statewide

## TOTAL mixed species daily bag limit per fisher

This is the combined number of all other unlisted species of fish (not in the previous four categories or in the protected species table) you can take.

# 30

No minimum size limits apply to these species.  
This category excludes baitfish and feral freshwater species.

### Species includes



Australian herring  
*Arripis georgianus*

20



Blue mackerel  
*Scomber australasicus*

30



Whiting (excluding King George)\*  
Family Sillaginidae (Pictured: Yellowfin whiting)

30

### Individual species daily bag limit

|   |  |                  |
|---|--|------------------|
|   | <p><b>Garfish*</b><br/>Family Hemiramphidae<br/>(Pictured top to bottom: southern garfish, robust garfish)</p> | <p><b>30</b></p> |
|  | <p><b>Mullet*</b><br/>Family Mugilidae (Pictured: <a href="#">Yelloweye mullet</a>)</p>                        | <p><b>30</b></p> |



\* Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 8–9 for licence rules.

## Baitfish

|   |   | Daily bag limit  |
|---|---|--|
| Species   |   |  |
|  | <p><b>Baitfish</b> – <a href="#">sardine</a>, <a href="#">anchovy</a> and <a href="#">hardy head</a> (pictured top)<br/>Families Clupeidae, Engraulidae and Atherinidae<br/>(<a href="#">mulies</a>, <a href="#">whitebait</a>, <a href="#">scaly mackerel</a> – pictured bottom)</p> | <p>A combined daily bag limit of<br/><b>9 litres</b></p> |

**NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 8–9 for licence rules.

# Crustaceans – bag and size limits



| Species   |   | Minimum legal size         | Daily bag limit   | Boat limit   |
|---|---|----------------------------|---|--|
|  | <a href="#">Freshwater Prawn (Cherabin)</a><br><i>Macrobrachium</i> spp.  | N/A                        | 9 litres  | N/A  |
|  | <a href="#">Crab, blue swimmer<sup>#</sup></a><br><i>Portunus armatus</i> ; and <i>P. pelagicus</i> (See pages 8–10, 49–51 & 58–59 and our recreational crabbing guides for more details about closed seasons and other specific rules that apply to these species) | 127 mm<br>(carapace width) | 20<br><br>West Coast: 10<br><br>Geographe Bay: 10 of which no more than 5 may be female | 40<br>(At least two people must be on board)<br><br>West Coast: 20<br>(At least two people must be on board)<br><br>Geographe Bay: 20 of which no more than 10 may be female<br>(At least two people must be on board) |
|   |   |                            | Swan and Canning Rivers: 5  | Swan and Canning Rivers: 20<br>(At least four people   |



|   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
|   | <p><u>Crab, mud</u> (all species combined)<br/><u>Scylla</u> spp.<br/>(Pictured: <a href="#">Brown mud crab</a>)</p>  | <p>Green: <b>150 mm</b><br/>Brown: <b>120 mm</b><br/>(carapace width)</p>     | <p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>10</b><br/>(At least <b>two</b> people must be on board)</p> |
|  | <p><u>Marron</u><sup>#</sup><br/><u>Cherax</u> spp. (See our <a href="#">Recreational fishing for marron guide</a> for more details about closed seasons, possession limits and other specific rules that apply to these species)</p> | <p><b>80 mm</b><br/>(carapace length)<br/>Trophy waters:<br/><b>90 mm</b></p> | <p><b>8</b></p> <p>Trophy waters: <b>5</b></p> <p><b>N/A</b></p>                   |
|  | <p><u>Prawns</u> (all species combined)<sup>#</sup><br/>Family Penaeidae (Pictured: <a href="#">Western king prawn</a>) (See page 52 for more details)</p>  | <p><b>N/A</b></p>   | <p><b>9 litres</b></p> <p><b>N/A</b></p>   |

<sup>#</sup> Closed seasons apply. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 8–9 for licence rules.

## Crustaceans – bag and size limits (continued)

|   | Species  | Minimum legal size  | Daily bag limit   | Boat limit |
|---|--|---|---|------------|
|  <p data-bbox="401 1666 474 1797"> <a href="#">Redclaw</a><br/> <i>Cherax quadricarinatus</i> </p>   | <p data-bbox="412 967 443 1033">N/A</p>  | <p data-bbox="355 159 505 814">Pest species, including <a href="#">yabbies</a>, have no bag or boat limit. It is recommended that they are not returned to the water but are humanely euthanased.</p> |   |            |
|  <p data-bbox="655 1415 961 1797"> <b>Rock lobster</b> (all species)<br/> <i>Panulirus</i> and <i>Jasus</i> spp.<br/>           (Possession limit of 24 rock lobster per person applies - see our <a href="#">Recreational fishing for rock lobster guide</a> for more details about specific rules that apply to these species) (Pictured: <a href="#">western rock lobster</a>)         </p> | <p data-bbox="728 945 883 1109"> <b>76 mm</b><br/> <a href="#">Southern rock lobster</a>:<br/> <b>98.5 mm</b> </p> | <p data-bbox="707 508 852 836"> <b>8</b><br/>           of which no more than <b>4</b> may be tropical lobsters.         </p>   | <p data-bbox="697 290 925 476"> <b>24</b><br/>           of which no more than <b>12</b> may be tropical lobsters<br/>           (At least <b>three</b> people must be on board)         </p> |            |



Other crustacean species not specifically mentioned (combined) (Pictured: [Gilgie](#))

N/A






10









N/A

Pest species, including [yabbies](#), have no bag or boat limit. Do not return to the water.

# Closed seasons apply. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 8–9 for licence rules.

# Molluscs and other invertebrates – bag and size limits

| Species   |  | Minimum legal size   | Daily bag limit                       | Boat limit   |
|---|--|----------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
|  | <p><u>Abalone, Roe's<sup>#</sup> <i>Haliotis roei</i></u> (See our <a href="#">Recreational fishing for abalone guide</a> about closed seasons, possession limits and other specific rules that apply to this species)</p>   | <p><b>60 mm</b></p>  | <p><b>20</b></p>                      | <p><b>N/A</b></p>  |
|   |  |                      | <p>West Coast: <b>15</b></p>          |  |
|  | <p><u>Abalone, greenlip <i>Haliotis laevisgata</i> (pictured)/brownlip <i>Haliotis conicopora</i> (combined)*</u> (See our <a href="#">Recreational fishing for abalone guide</a> about closed seasons, possession limits and other specific rules that apply to this species)</p> | <p><b>140 mm</b></p> | <p><b>5</b></p>                       | <p><b>10</b><br/>(At least <b>two</b> people must be on board)</p> |
|  | <p><u>Ark shells, cockles and pipis</u> (pictured) and venus clam (combined)<br/>Families Arcidae, Donacidae and Veneridae</p>   | <p><b>N/A</b></p>    | <p><b>2 litres</b></p>                | <p><b>N/A</b></p>  |
|  | <p><u>Clams</u><br/><i>Tridacna</i> spp.</p>   | <p><b>N/A</b></p>    | <p><b>2</b></p>                       | <p><b>N/A</b></p>  |
|  | <p><u>Mussels</u><br/>Family Mytilidae</p>   | <p><b>N/A</b></p>    | <p><b>9 litres</b><br/>(shell on)</p> | <p><b>N/A</b></p>  |

|   |   |                   |         |  |
|---|---|-------------------|---------|--|
|   | <u>Oysters</u><br>Family Ostreidae (Pictured: <a href="#">Native oyster</a> ) Recreational harvesting of pearl oysters ( <i>Pinctada maxima</i> ) is prohibited                           | N/A               | 20      | N/A  |
|  | <u>Razorshell</u><br>Family Pinnidae  | N/A               | 20      | N/A  |
|  | <u>Scallops</u><br>Family Pectinidae  | N/A               | 20      | N/A  |
|  | <u>Sea urchins</u> <sup>#</sup><br>Class Echinoidea   | N/A               | 20      | N/A  |
|  | <u>Specimen shell</u> ( <a href="#">cowries</a> , <a href="#">bailer shell</a> , <a href="#">conch</a> ) (combined)<br>Families Cypraeidae, Volutidae and Strombidae                      | N/A               | 10      | N/A  |
|  | <u>Squid</u> , <u>cuttlefish</u> and <u>octopus</u> (combined)<br>Family Cephalopoda<br>(Refer to the website for further information on octopus trigger traps)                           | N/A               | 15      | 30<br>(At least two people must be on board) |
|  | <u>Bloodworms</u> (bait)  | N/A               | 1 litre | N/A  |
|  | <u>Other molluscs and invertebrate species</u> not mentioned above, including snails, periwinkle, limpet, turban, mud whelk and trochus (combined) (Pictured: <a href="#">Mud whelk</a> ) | Trochus:<br>65 mm | 10      | N/A  |

**#** Closed seasons and additional rules apply. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 8–9 for licence rules.



# Protected species

These species are protected and may NOT be taken



Grey nurse shark  
*Carcharias taurus*



White shark  
*Carcharodon carcharias*



Speartooth shark  
*Glyphis* spp.



Whale shark  
*Rhincodon typus*



Potato rockcod  
*Epinephelus tukula*



Queensland groper  
*Epinephelus lanceolatus*



Humphead Maori wrasse  
*Cheilinus undulatus*



Common seadragon  
*Phyllopteryx taeniolatus*

Sawfish – all species  
Family Pristidae



Rays and skates – Hamelin Bay  
**Protection Area only**  
All ray and skate species are protected in Hamelin Bay.



Black stingray (left)  
*Dasyatis thetidis* and smooth stingray (right)  
*Dasyatis brevicaudata*  
Protected from recreational fishing in the South Coast and West Coast Bioregions.



Coral and live rock  
Order Scleractinia  
(Pictured: *Goniopora tenuidens*)



Leafy seadragon  
*Phycodurus eques*



Native freshwater fish species  
(from top to bottom)  
Balston's pygmy perch  
*Nannatherina balstoni*,  
western trout minnow  
*Galaxias truttaceus*,  
mud minnow  
*Galaxiella munda*,  
black-stripe minnow  
*Galaxiella nigrostriata*,  
pouch lamprey  
*Geotria australis*,  
salamanderfish  
*Lepidogalaxias salamandroides*,  
little pygmy perch  
*Nannoperca pygmaea*



# Finfish possession limits

The finfish possession limit is the maximum quantity of finfish – either whole or in pieces – that a person may have in their control/ownership.

The following general finfish possession limit applies anywhere throughout WA, except in the specific situations outlined below.

- 10 kg of fillets from any species, plus 10 kg of fillets of large pelagic finfish such as mackerel, tuna and shark (**must have skin attached** for identification purposes); OR
- 10 kg of fillets and one day's bag limit of whole fish or fish trunks; OR
- 2 days' bag limit of whole fish or fish trunks.

**Note:** You may accumulate up to 20 kg of fillets of any species (no skin required) at your principal place of residence.

## Exceptions to the general finfish possession limit

### Overnight charter trip

The finfish possession limit if you are on, or have just completed, an extended fishing tour involving overnight accommodation on a charter boat and the fish were taken during the course of the tour, is;

- 20 kg of fillets of any species; OR
- 10 kg of fillets and one day's bag limit of whole fish or fish trunks; OR
- 2 days' bag limit of whole fish or fish trunks.

**Note:** All fish must be labelled with the person's full name, the name of the charter boat and the date that the tour ended.



## **Abrolhos Islands**

The finfish possession limit at the Abrolhos Islands (including charter passengers) is;

- 5 kg of fillets from any species, plus 5 kg of fillets from large pelagic finfish (must have skin attached for identification purposes); OR
- one day's bag limit of whole fish.

**Note:** the west coast demersal scalefish boat limit applies within the Abrolhos Islands FHPA. If you fillet your demersal scalefish, the boat possession limit still applies, and 2 fillets of fish equal one whole fish.

## **Shark Bay's Freycinet Estuary**

The finfish possession limit in the Freycinet Estuary Management zone is;

- 5 kg of fillets (all species, not just snapper); OR
- one day's bag limit of whole fish or fish trunks.

For more information and a map, visit the DPIRD website.

## **Lalang-garram / Camden Sound Marine Park**

The finfish possession limit in the Jungulu Special Purpose Zone is;

- 1 whole fish; OR
- 2 fillets of fish.

## **Barramundi**

The possession limit for barramundi, when not at your principal place of residence, is:

- 2 whole barramundi, OR
- 4 fillets of barramundi.

## **Other information**

‘Fillet’ means any particular piece of a finfish, other than a whole fish, fish trunk, head, tail, fin, backbone or wing. For the head, tail, fin, backbone or wing to be excluded from the possession limit they must be entirely removed from the fillet.

‘Trunk’ means a fish that has had its head and tail removed.

For storage purposes, a large pelagic fish can be cut into two pieces and still be considered one whole fish.

The following baitfish are not included in the finfish possession limit: hardyhead (Atherinidae), sardines/pilchards (Clupeidae), whitebait (Engraulidae), garfish (Hemiramphidae) and mullet (Mugilidae). Commercially purchased fish are not included, but you may be asked for proof of purchase.

Some species have a specific possession limit (see bag and size limit tables on pages 16–43).

Unless it can be proven otherwise, you are assumed to be in possession/control of the fish if you are using/in control of a vessel, vehicle, refrigerator, freezer, icebox or other storage device in which fish are found.

## **Labelling stored fish**

If the quantity of fish stored in a single container/ freezer exceeds one person’s possession limit, or if the fish were taken as part of an extended charter fishing tour, the fish must be clearly labelled with the name of the owner(s), the name of the charter boat and the date the tour ended if applicable.

Labels, of at least 75 mm long and 25 mm wide, must be securely attached to each container or package of fish. The full name of the owner must

be legibly written on the label and be clearly visible for inspection.

Labels are not needed if:

- You are within your daily bag limit and still on your fishing trip.
- The fish are in the possession and under the direct physical control of the person who took the fish and are not stored with anyone else's fish (unless the fish were taken as part of an extended charter fishing tour - see above).

## Landing filleted or processed fish

Fish can be carried at sea and landed:

- as **fillets with skin on**;
- trunked with skin on; OR
- whole (can be gutted and gilled).

Unless they are being prepared for immediate consumption or being eaten, goldspotted rockcod (estuary cod), blackspotted rockcod (Malabar cod) and barramundi (which all have a maximum size limit) must be carried whole at sea, on estuaries and on rivers, and landed whole (although can be gutted and gilled).

If filleting your fish at sea, 2 fillets or pieces of fish equals one whole fish for the purpose of enforcing bag and boat limits.

**Note:** These rules also apply if you are returning from an island.

## Transporting of unaccompanied fish

Unaccompanied recreationally caught fish, no matter what the species, (including rock lobsters, crabs, prawns, marron and abalone etc.) cannot be transported by commercial couriers (or by any other person). You must accompany your fish if transporting it by land, sea or air.

# Cooking and storing recreationally caught fish on commercial premises

Recreationally caught fish can be stored and cooked at commercial premises that provide accommodation and meals, such as resorts and hotels.

This allows tourists and holiday-makers who are staying at the premises to have their recreationally caught fish cooked by a chef in their accommodation's restaurant.

The restaurant may charge for the storage and preparation of the fish, but cannot on-sell any of that fish or its parts to other people.

A general prohibition on recreationally caught fish (including invertebrates like lobster and abalone) being on commercial premises where fish are purchased, sold, processed, transported or where aquaculture is undertaken still applies to all commercial premises other than those that provide accommodation and meals.

All recreationally caught fish stored on commercial premises must be labelled with the owner's full name and address – see page 46 for more details on labelling requirements. The fish must not be stored in the same fridge, freezer, icebox or similar as any commercially caught fish.

Standard possession limits also apply to fish stored at your accommodation.

# Crabs, prawns and molluscs

## Crabs

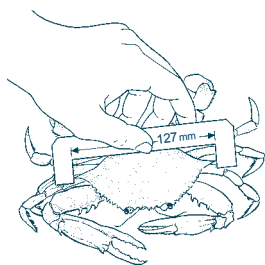
You can legally catch crabs by:

- hand;
- wire hook – you can use a hand-held blunt wire hook to catch crabs. Hooks must not be capable of piercing the crab;
- drop net – they must be no wider than 1.5 metres in diameter. There is a maximum limit of 10 drop nets per person or 10 drop nets per boat, regardless of how many people are aboard; OR
- scoop net – using hand-held rigid (e.g. wire) scoop nets. These must be bowl-shaped, made of rigid mesh that is not capable of entangling a crab, have an internal diameter no bigger than 375 mm, and a depth of no more than 210 mm.

Catching crabs by any method other than those listed above is illegal.

## How to measure a crab

Crabs must be measured across the widest part of the shell, from tip to tip of the carapace spikes.



## Keeping crabs

All uncooked crabs must be kept in whole form, unless being prepared for immediate consumption.

## Cleaning crabs

It is recommended to remove the head, guts (mustard) and gills from **blue swimmer** crabs caught in the Swan and Canning rivers before freezing, cooking or eating them, to prevent potential for a biotoxin produced by *Alexandrium*, a type of alga.

Toxic algal bloom events have been detected in the Swan and Canning rivers at elevated levels previously, and could become an annual occurrence. *Alexandrium* cysts exist in the rivers sediment and climatic conditions can activate their next life stage, so a bloom can occur relatively quickly.

Consumption of affected **blue swimmer** crabs may be dangerous. If you become ill after eating crabs or mussels, seek medical attention.

Visit [fish.wa.gov.au/alerts](http://fish.wa.gov.au/alerts) for more information.

## Totally protected crabs

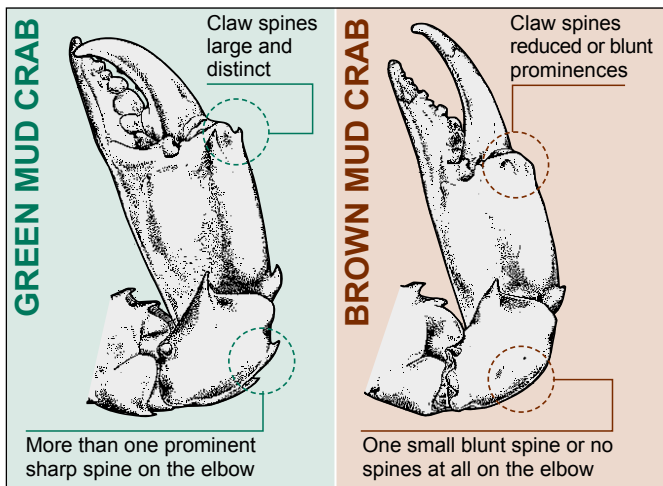
Undersize or 'berried' (egg-carrying, see picture) crabs are totally protected. They must be returned to the water immediately.



You must release any protected crabs you have caught before attempting to catch another crab.

## Identifying mud crabs

The 2 species of mud crab caught in WA are the green mud crab and the brown mud crab. You need to be able to tell them apart as they have different legal sizes.



## Freshwater prawns (Cherabin) found in the North Coast Bioregion

Can be legally caught using:

- no more than 6 drop nets;
- a single pole snare;
- a single hand-scoop net; OR
- a single throw net that is no longer than 3 metres (measured from the centre retrieval line to the lead line) and a mesh of not more than 25 mm.

For rules relating to fishing for redclaw (freshwater crayfish) in Lake Kununurra visit select DPIRD offices.

## Prawns

Can be legally caught using:

- single hand-dip net;
- single hand-scoop net;
- single hand-throw net.  
**Note:** throw nets are not permitted in some areas such as the Swan and Canning rivers – see our Recreational net fishing guide for details; OR
- single prawn hand-trawl (drag) net that is not more than 4 metres across with a mesh of not less than 16 mm, and must not be attached to a boat or set.

Any crabs caught when fishing for prawns must be returned to the water immediately.

You may not use, or leave unattended, a prawn hand-trawl net in these areas (all in the West Coast Bioregion):

- Harvey Estuary and its tributaries;
- Peel Inlet and its tributaries;
- Peel Inlet channel entrance;
- Dawesville Cut;
- Leschenault Estuary and its tributaries; and
- Swan River within 100 metres of any part of the Pelican Point Nature Reserve; or within 100 metres of the Milyu Nature Reserve.

## Landing molluscs

All edible molluscs (except oysters) must be landed whole and kept in the shell until you are more than 200 metres inland from the high water mark.

**Note:** It is illegal to use abalone as bait due to the risk of spreading disease.



# Closed seasons and protected areas

## Seasonal closures

Seasonal spawning closures provide additional protection for fish species that are vulnerable during times when they aggregate (group together) to reproduce. Large-scale effort closures are used to reduce the total time spent fishing and therefore the total number of fish captured.

## Demersal scalefish

Demersal scalefish live on or near the ocean floor usually in depths of more than 20 metres, although they can be found in other areas.

### **West Coast Bioregion:**

Closed:

- 1 February to 28 March 2024 (inclusive)
- 1 August to 15 September 2024 (inclusive)
- 15 October to 15 December 2024 (inclusive)

It is prohibited to fish for, take, possess on a boat or land certain demersal scalefish (listed on pages 16-21) within the West Coast bioregion (from Kalbarri to Augusta) during this period. If you accidentally catch a demersal scalefish from a boat in this area during the closed season you must return it to the water as soon as possible. You may not take, possess or land demersal scalefish during the closure from kayak or similar vessel or by spearfishing (including shore-based spearfishing).

This closure does not apply to land-based line fishers, charter fishers, or commercial fishers.

Unlike the Cockburn Sound snapper (pink snapper) closure and the Abrolhos Island baldchin groper closure, which are designed to protect aggregations of spawning fish, the demersal scalefish closure is one of several management measures designed to manage the recreational catch to sustainable levels. This measure was required following independently reviewed research that showed demersal species, like dhufish, pink snapper and baldchin groper, were not recovering fast enough.

The seasonal closure and other management measures will be periodically reviewed as new stock assessment and catch information becomes available.

### **Pink snapper - spawning closures:**

Shark Bay and Cockburn Sound are known to be important breeding aggregation areas for pink snapper stocks in the Gascoyne and West Coast bioregions. Providing protection for these aggregations is critical for sustaining adequate breeding stock of these long lived and slow growing fish.

### **Cockburn and Warnbro Sounds:**

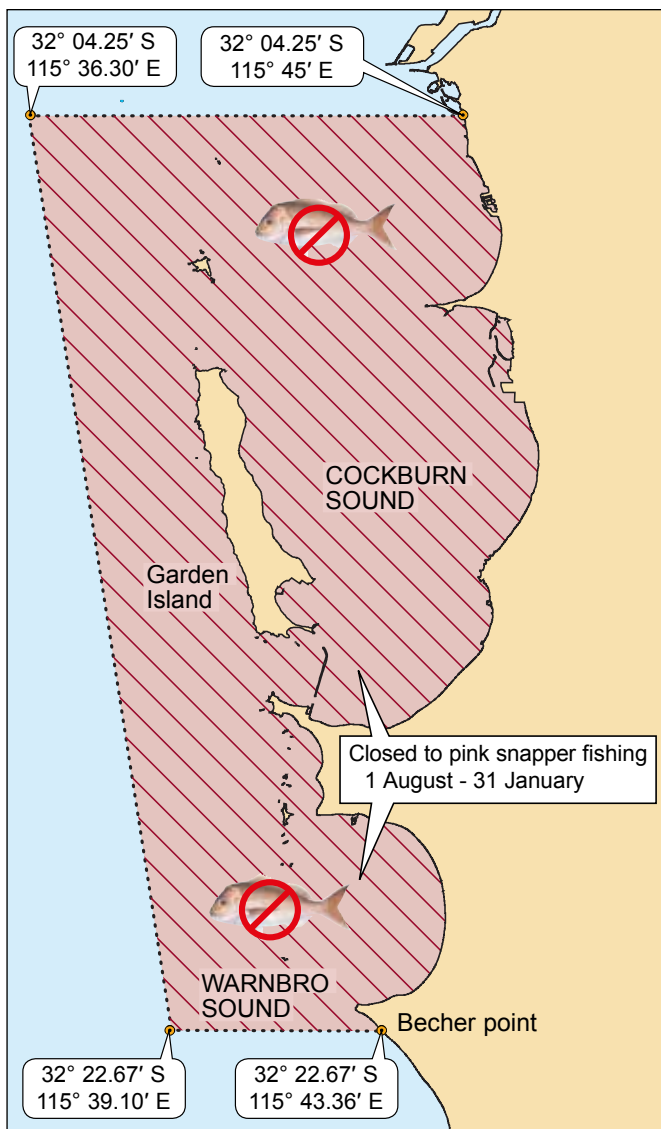
To provide protection for spawning pink snapper, Cockburn and Warnbro Sounds (see map on page 55) are closed from 1 August to 31 January (inclusive).

It is illegal to fish for pink snapper, or be in possession of pink snapper while line fishing, in the closed waters during the closed season. Line fishing for other species from a boat is allowed as long as there is no pink snapper on board.

However, pink snapper taken outside the closed area may be transported through the closure area as long as no line fishing is undertaken.

This closure applies to all recreational, charter and commercial fishers.

**Note:** The take or landing of pink snapper in the Cockburn and Warnbro Sounds is also prohibited during the West Coast bioregion closed season for demersal scalefish (see page 53).

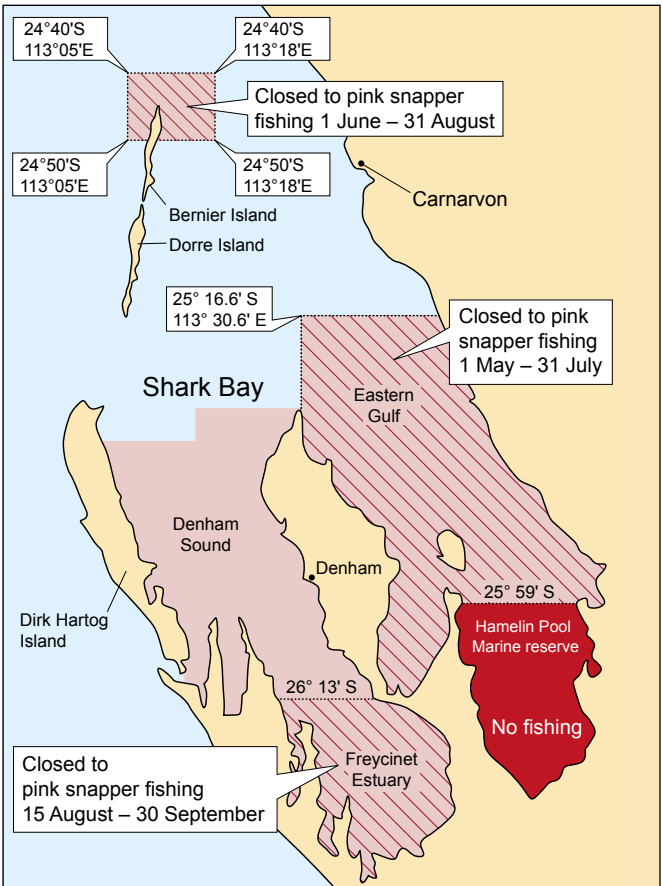


## Shark Bay:

The take of pink snapper is prohibited in the Shark Bay areas during the closed seasons. It is also prohibited to transport pink snapper through or land pink snapper in the closed areas during the closed seasons.

The following closed seasons apply in the Gascoyne Coast bioregion:

- Northern Bernier Island: Closed season 1 June – 31 August (inclusive).
- Eastern Gulf: Closed season 1 May – 31 July (inclusive).
- Freycinet Estuary: Closed season 15 August – 30 September (inclusive).



## Baldchin groper

### **Abrolhos Islands:**

Closed season 1 October - 31 December (inclusive).

Taking, landing or possessing baldchin groper is prohibited within the Abrolhos Islands Fish Habitat Protection Area during the closed season. These fish aggregate in shallow areas in the Abrolhos area to spawn as the water temperature rises.

This closure applies to all recreational, charter and commercial fishers.

**Note:** The take or landing of baldchin groper at the Abrolhos Islands is also prohibited during the West Coast Bioregion closed season for demersal scalefish (see page 53).

## Blue swimmer crabs

### **Cockburn Sound:**

Closed until further notice.

The Cockburn Sound crab fishery was closed in May 2014 after research showed a significant decline in the number of crabs. The fishery will **remain closed** until stocks recover.

### **Swan River to Minninup Beach:**

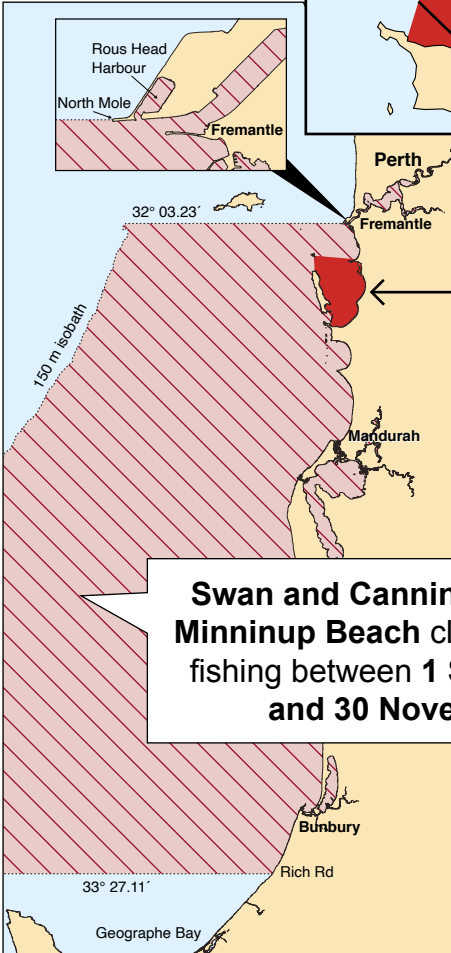
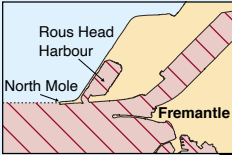
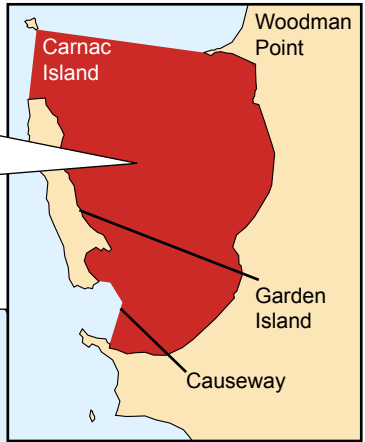
Closed season 1 September – 30 November (inclusive).

All waters, rivers and estuaries from the Swan and Canning rivers to Minninup Beach (15km south of Bunbury) are closed to all crab fishing between 1 September and 30 November each year (see map on page 59).

These management measures will help protect breeding stocks across the blue swimmer crab resource in the South West, particularly when they are mated and vulnerable to capture. This will improve the resilience and ensure ongoing performance of our highly valued crab resource into the future.

It is illegal to fish for blue swimmer crabs or be in possession of blue swimmer crabs in the closed areas during closed seasons.

**Cockburn Sound closed to crab fishing year round**



**Swan and Canning rivers to Minninup Beach closed to crab fishing between 1 September and 30 November**

## Marron

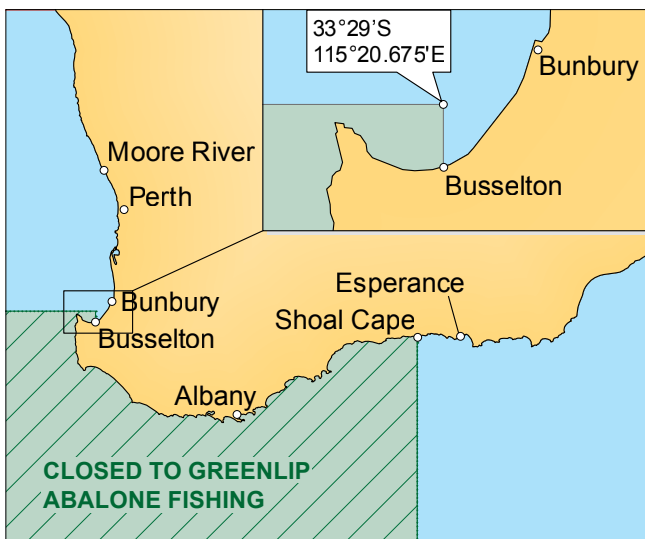
The recreational marron fishing open season is from 12 noon, 8 January 2024 to 12 noon, 5 February 2024. See the Marron Recreational Fishing Guide at [fish.wa.gov.au/Documents/recreational\\_fishing/licences/rec\\_licence\\_marron.pdf](https://fish.wa.gov.au/Documents/recreational_fishing/licences/rec_licence_marron.pdf) for further information.

## Abalone and urchin

Recreational fishers may only fish for or take abalone and sea urchin in the open season. For seasons and locations see the Abalone Recreational Fishing Guide at [fish.wa.gov.au/Documents/recreational\\_fishing/licences/rec\\_licence\\_abalone.pdf](https://fish.wa.gov.au/Documents/recreational_fishing/licences/rec_licence_abalone.pdf)

### Greenlip abalone:

Recreational fishing for greenlip abalone is closed in the area from Busselton Jetty to Shoal Cape (in Zone 3). Commercial fishing for greenlip abalone is also prohibited in the same area.





## Marine protected areas

Marine protected areas include fish habitat protection areas, other fishing closures such as wreck sites and marine reserves which include marine nature reserves, marine parks and marine management areas. Most of these areas are subject to additional rules.

Fish habitat protection areas and other closed areas are managed by DPIRD.

Inshore marine reserves are managed by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA). Information is available from DBCA offices and their website at **[dbca.wa.gov.au](http://dbca.wa.gov.au)**

Offshore marine parks are managed by Parks Australia and information is available from their website at **[parksaustralia.gov.au/marine](http://parksaustralia.gov.au/marine)**

Further information about fishing activity allowed in all marine protected areas is available from select DPIRD offices or the website.

# General fishing rules

## Fishing gear

Legal fishing gear is outlined below; everything else is illegal.

- **Rods, lines and hooks** – you can only use a maximum of one bait or lure on each line in the West Coast Bioregion when fishing for demersal scalefish, 3 baits or lures on each line in all other areas and for other categories of fish.
- **Shore-based fishers** may use a maximum of 2 fishing lines. Rods and lines must be attended.
- **Rock lobster pots** – fishers (including divers) must not remove from the water or interfere with any rock lobster pot that does not belong to them. It is also illegal to interfere with any other type of fishing or aquaculture gear not owned by the person. Fishers who come across someone else's pot that appears snagged or with unmarked floats or without a rope and float attached, are encouraged to record the GPS coordinates and report it to a Fisheries officer or through FishWatch (see page 65).
- **Spearfishing** – all inland waters (rivers, tributaries and dams) are closed to spearfishing. However, the use of a hand spear (gidgie) is permitted to take estuarine cobbler in estuaries. Spearfishing is generally allowed in ocean waters, except in some marine protected areas, around dive wrecks and during the demersal scalefish closures in the West Coast bioregion. Spearfishing is prohibited in the Ningaloo

Marine Park between Tantabiddi Well and Winderabandi Point. Spearfishing for rockcod (Families Epinephelidae and Serranidae) and wrasse (Subfamily Labrinae) is also prohibited in all other waters of the Ningaloo Marine Park.

Spearfishing while diving under compressed air is prohibited in the Shark Bay Marine Park.

Further information on specific restrictions in marine protected areas is available from select DPIRD offices or the website.

- **Haul, set and throw fishing nets** – most of the State is closed to set and haul netting. See our Recreational Net Fishing Guide for details, available from select DPIRD offices or the website.
- **Release weights** – required if fishing by line from a boat for demersal scalefish species statewide (see page 6).



## Protecting fish and their habitats

To protect fish and their habitats in key environments, some activities are banned.

In particular you are not allowed to:

- use fish/opera house traps or 'pots' of any kind (except lobster pots, octopus trigger traps and complying drop net for marron and crabs – see the website for further information);
- use berley containing any blood, flesh, offal or skin from a mammal or from a bird;
- use dredges;
- obstruct any bay, inlet, river, creek or any tidal or inland waters so that fish are enclosed, left stranded, destroyed or wasted;
- carry on, or in, a boat, any explosives or noxious substances (for example, fish poisons);
- 'jag' (deliberately foul-hook) fish;
- use commercial fishing gear of any kind;
- use set-lines; OR
- attach fish hooks to lobster pots, anchors and anchor lines or moorings.

**Note:** Fishing tackle stores may carry gear that does not meet WA legal requirements. In particular, the use of crab traps, 'opera house' traps and bait jigs with more than three hooks is illegal in WA waters. Check before you make a purchase.

# FishWatch – 1800 815 507

The FishWatch phone line provides the quickest and most efficient way to report sightings or evidence of:

- illegal fishing;
- aquatic pests and diseases; and
- fish kills.

You can also submit other reports online to [crimestopperswa.com.au/organisation-report/fishwatch/](http://crimestopperswa.com.au/organisation-report/fishwatch/)

Reports made to Crimestoppers are not monitored outside normal working hours or on weekends.

## Illegal fishing or activity

Illegal fishing or activity could include someone netting in the river, exceeding their bag or possession limits, taking undersize fish, fishing in a closed area, having more fishing gear in the water than they should, or illegally selling recreationally caught fish.

Before you call FishWatch or make a report online, note:

- **How** many people you saw.
- **Who** they were. Did you hear/know any of their names?
- **What** they were doing.
- **Where** it happened; the nearest known landmark or intersection of the closest road.
- **What** type of equipment, cars or boats, registration numbers and descriptions.



- **When** it happened – time and date. Is it something that is happening right now, while you are making a report, or was it something you observed previously?

Your reports are treated in strict confidence.

We recommend **you do not** approach anyone you think is involved in illegal activity relating to fish or fishing.

If you don't wish to contact us through FishWatch you can pass information to select DPIRD offices or to Fisheries officers.

## **Aquatic pests, diseases and fish kills**

You can help protect our waters by reporting aquatic pests, diseases and fish kills to:

- FishWatch (report samples immediately)
- WA PestWatch on our website or via the free app
- Biosecurity Branch on 1300 374 731
- Your local DPIRD office.

Note where, when, and what you saw including the location (GPS coordinates if possible), photographs and numbers of pests or affected fish.

Practice good vessel maintenance and thoroughly clean and dry all boating and fishing gear before fishing another waterway or area.

It is important not to use seafood meant for human consumption as bait, especially imported raw or non-local prawns bought from supermarkets or fishmongers, or dispose of crustacean waste in or near waterways to prevent unwanted diseases entering WA waters.

# Fishing safety

## Boat fishing safety

Make sure you are properly prepared when fishing from a boat.

Check your boat is seaworthy and that the motor and other equipment is in good working order.

Check your safety gear is correct and accessible, including distress beacon (EPIRB or PLB), marine radio transceiver, flares or EVDS, effective anchor and line, bailer or bilge pump, fresh water, first aid kit, rope, toolkit, torch, signalling mirror, fire extinguisher and alternative power source/spare motor.

Lifejackets (Level 100 or higher) are required to be carried on all vessels and worn if your registrable vessel is less than 4.8 m in length in unprotected waters. It is recommended lifejackets are worn at all times while on the water as it increases the chance of survival in an emergency.

**Note:** New rules for recreational boating have been introduced in 2023. Check with the Department of Transport for the latest information on [transport.wa.gov.au/imatech/what-safety-equipment-do-i-need.asp](https://www.transport.wa.gov.au/imatech/what-safety-equipment-do-i-need.asp)

Check the weather forecast, tide predictions and watch out for unexpected changes. Take the time to plan your trip to make sure it's a safe one.

Before you leave:

- tell a responsible person of your intended trip plan
- notify them immediately if plans change during the voyage

- always report in when you return
- log on and log off with the local volunteer marine rescue
- use the Deckee app.

**Bureau of Meteorology:** [bom.gov.au/wa](http://bom.gov.au/wa)

**Department of Transport – marine information:**  
[transport.wa.gov.au/imarine](http://transport.wa.gov.au/imarine) or contact  
[edboat@transport.wa.gov.au](mailto:edboat@transport.wa.gov.au)

**WA Coastal Marine Warnings:** 1300 659 223

**WA Marine Service:** 1900 926 150

**Marine Rescue:** These groups use VHF channel 16 and HF channel 4125. Full details and alternative channels: [vmrwa.org.au](http://vmrwa.org.au)

## Rock fishing safety

Fishing from rocks can be particularly dangerous. A number of fishers in WA have drowned in recent years after being swept off rocks by large or unexpected waves. If you intend to fish from rocks:

- wear a life jacket;
- never fish alone;
- observe where you plan to fish before you actually start; and
- wear appropriate footwear.

Further important advice about rock fishing safety is available from [recfishwest.org.au](http://recfishwest.org.au)

## Abalone safety

Fishing for abalone can also be dangerous. Study the waves before you get into the water and keep an eye on the swell while fishing – it is easy to be injured on reefs.

Wear protective footwear and a wetsuit or light



clothing that will not become too heavy when wet. If you are unsure whether conditions are too rough, don't go in. For more safety tips, visit [mybeach.com.au/safety-rescue-services/coastal-recreation/abalone/](https://mybeach.com.au/safety-rescue-services/coastal-recreation/abalone/)



## Dive safety

Diving on compressed air or free diving is a popular way to fish for species such as rock lobster, abalone and finfish. Follow these tips when diving to ensure you come home safely.

- Always dive with a buddy and never dive alone.
- Know your own ability and don't take unnecessary risks.
- Use a dive flag.
- Watch out for boats and jet skis.
- Wear a shark deterrent device.

More important advice about dive safety is also available from [recfishwest.org.au](https://recfishwest.org.au)

## Shark safety

**Switch on your Sea Sense** and stay informed of shark activity information by downloading the SharkSmart WA app or checking the SharkSmart website and Surf Life Saving WA Twitter feed.

Help others stay informed, **report shark sightings to Water Police on 9442 8600**.

Shark sightings are posted to SharkSmart and sent to land managers so beaches can be closed if needed.

Follow our Sea Sense safety tips when using the water.

Remember, not all sharks are tagged or sightings reported. Visit **sharksmart.com.au** for more information.

## Beach Emergency Numbers

The Beach Emergency Numbers (BEN) system – is a coding system that aims to improve emergency response times by installing signs with unique codes at public beach access points.

These signs provide specific location information, vital when emergency services are deployed in the event of a shark sighting, attack or other beach emergencies.

In an emergency dial 000  
and quote the information below

Mettams Pool

**ST46**

Address: Beach access steps opposite 279 West Coast Dr

Suburb: North Beach

Nearest intersection: West Coast Dr and Lynn St



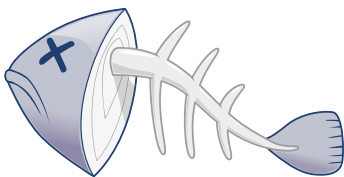
Help keep everyone safe.  
Report shark sightings  
to Water Police on 9442 8600.  
[SHARKSMART.COM.AU](http://SHARKSMART.COM.AU)

# Get involved!

You can give something back and help ensure there will be fish for the future by assisting some of our research programs. For more information on these opportunities visit [fish.wa.gov.au/volunteering](https://fish.wa.gov.au/volunteering)

## Send us your skeletons

You can help with vital long-term monitoring of our valuable fish stocks by sending us your fish frames (skeletons with the heads and guts intact). You can drop your fish frames (fresh or frozen) at our offices or participating stores visit [fish.wa.gov.au/frames](https://fish.wa.gov.au/frames)



## FishCatchWA™

Report your west coast demersal catches using the FishCatchWA™ tool on the ServiceWA app.

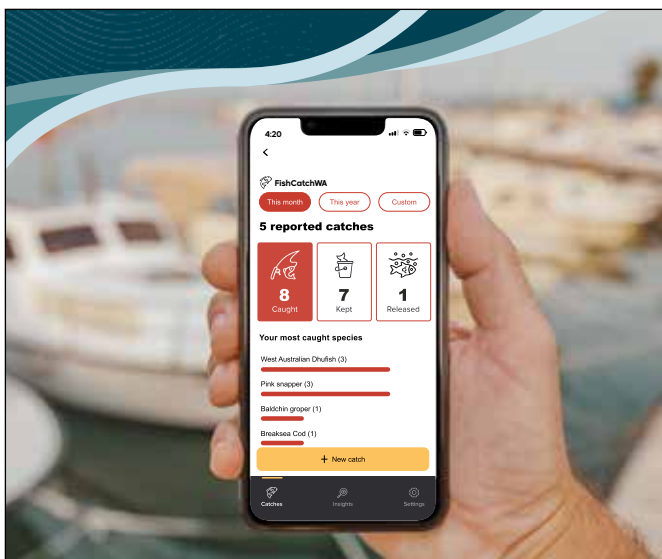
[fish.wa.gov.au/fishcatchwa](https://fish.wa.gov.au/fishcatchwa)

## Fish tagging

Scientists tag and release fish to better understand population structure, movement, growth and mortality. We need people to report recaptures of tagged fish via the free FishTagWA app or to 08 9203 0111.

## Redmap

Help scientists determine whether marine species are on the move due to warming oceans. Report photos of any unusual marine species to the Redmap website [redmap.org.au](https://redmap.org.au) or the phone app.



# FishCatchWA™

## A new tool for your tacklebox

Record your demersal catch and support the recovery of our West Coast demersal stocks.



Record your West Coast demersal catch quickly and easily



Get insights on your demersal catch



Provide timely data and contribute to the science

Check out the FishCatchWA™ tool on the ServiceWA app or download it today



Report shark sightings  
to Water Police on  
**9442 8600**

Download the  
SharkSmart WA app

SWITCH  
ON YOUR  
SEA SENSE 

**SHARKSMART.COM.AU**

**Join Recfishwest's  
Cast of Thousands!**



Recfishwest represents WA's 700,000 recfishers' rights and interests and champion sustainability, safety, research and the environment. Best of all we help keep the fun in fishing!



**JOIN OUR CAST OF THOUSANDS TODAY AS A  
RECFISHWEST MEMBER AND HELP US MAKE FISHING  
BETTER!**



Scan the QR code or visit [Recfishwest.org.au](http://Recfishwest.org.au)  
for more information!



[www.Recfishwest.org.au](http://www.Recfishwest.org.au)

# Hook up to the rec fishing rules

It's easy to keep up to date with Western Australia's recreational fishing rules. Whether it's for bag and size limits, seasonal closures or licences, all the rules are at your fingertips.



Go to **[fish.wa.gov.au/rules](https://fish.wa.gov.au/rules)** for rules covering more than 180 fish species. Use the interactive maps to discover information about marine protected areas and common species by region.



The free Recfishwest app provides access to the rules even if you're out of phone range and has an easy fish identification feature.



Grab a copy or download from **[fish.wa.gov.au/guide](https://fish.wa.gov.au/guide)**



# Contact us

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1300 374 731 (1300 DPIRD1)

[enquiries@dpird.wa.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@dpird.wa.gov.au)

## **Albany Office**

444 Albany Highway,  
Albany WA 6330  
08 9845 7400

## **Broome Office**

401 Port Drive,  
Broome WA 6725  
08 9193 8600

## **Busselton Office**

48A Bussell Highway,  
Busselton WA 6280  
08 9752 2152

## **Carnarvon Office**

262 South River Road,  
Carnarvon WA 6701  
08 9956 3333

## **Fremantle Office**

14 Capo D'Orlando Drive,  
South Fremantle WA 6162  
08 9432 8000

## **Geraldton Office**

69-75 Connell Road,  
Geraldton WA 6530  
08 9920 8400

## **Hillarys Office**

39 Northside Drive,  
Hillarys WA 6025  
08 9203 0111

## **Mandurah Office**

107 Breakwater Parade,  
Mandurah Ocean Marina  
Mandurah WA 6210  
08 9583 7800

[dpird.wa.gov.au](http://dpird.wa.gov.au)

ABN: 18 951 343 745

**FISHWATCH**



**REPORT**  
▶ Illegal fishing  
▶ Pests and diseases  
▶ Fish kills  
**1800-815-507**  
24 HOUR REPORTING



Scan to report  
illegal fishing