



Shark Bay pink snapper frequently asked questions

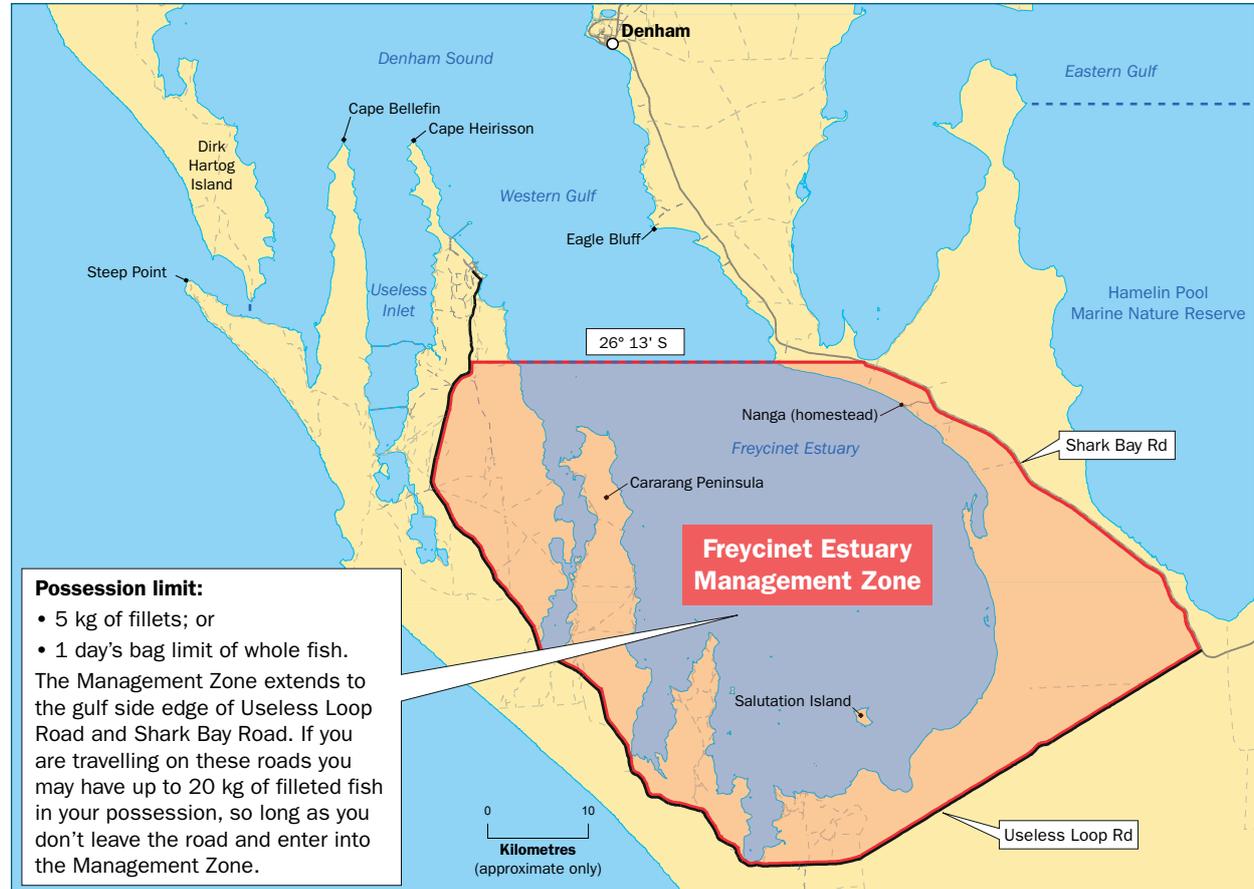
Following the recovery of pink snapper stocks in Shark Bay's inner gulfs, new recreational fishing rules have been introduced in 2016.

What are the main rule changes?

From January 2016, the 70 cm maximum size limit for inner gulf pink snapper and the requirement to land pink snapper in whole form no longer applies. This will provide recreational fishers the opportunity to catch a 'trophy' size pink snapper and to process fish while at sea in accordance with the Statewide filleting rules (see following pages).

Also from January, the Freycinet tag lottery system has been replaced with the Freycinet Estuary Management Zone (see map below) in which a new possession limit of 5 kg of finfish fillets or one day's bag limit of whole fish applies.

Note: The possession limit applies to all species of fish, not just pink snapper.



How is the Freycinet tag lottery affected by the new rules?

The tag lottery has been replaced by the new rules outlined on page 1, so tags are no longer required to take pink snapper in Freycinet Estuary.

If I catch a ‘trophy’ fish, can we discard the smaller one we caught earlier and keep the bigger one?

All fish that have been retained are considered to have been taken as part of a person’s daily bag limit. Discarding a smaller fish for a bigger one is not a responsible use of the resource and may result in a person exceeding their daily bag limit if they have already taken the daily bag limit of two pink snapper.

What happens if the fish I catch isn’t 5 kg, or if my fish weighs over 5 kg?

The 5 kg possession limit applies to any fillets of finfish you have in your possession in the Freycinet Estuary Management Zone, not to whole fish. So, as long as the fish you catch are not under the minimum size limit, you are entitled to be in possession of up to your daily bag limit of whole fish regardless of how much they weigh. For pink snapper, a daily bag and possession limit of two fish per fisher applies.

Why does the 5 kg fillet possession limit in the Freycinet Estuary Management Zone apply to all fish and not just pink snapper?

The Freycinet Estuary is being managed as a ‘low take’ area. This management approach is designed to provide high quality recreational fishing experiences in a ‘wild’ and unspoilt environment. The emphasis is on enjoying catching and eating fresh fish and not accumulating large quantities of fish.

What happens if I have 1 kg of fillets at my camp in the Freycinet management zone and want to catch more fish?

It is a person’s responsibility to stay within their possession limit. If a person already has 1 kg of fillets in their possession, they can continue to fish and accumulate up to the possession limit of 5 kg of filleted fish.

It should be noted that the possession limit applies to each person regardless of if they actually caught the fish. For example, while in the Freycinet Estuary Management Zone, a party of three people can accumulate up to 15 kg of fillets of fish (5 kg each) regardless of who actually caught the fish, provided each person stays within their daily bag limit.

Why have the new rules been introduced now?

Pink snapper stocks in Shark Bay’s inner gulfs were overfished in the 1990s, prompting a major long-term recovery program. After two decades of intensive stock monitoring and

strong management measures, with support from recreational and commercial fishers, the stocks have now recovered to above the program's targeted levels. As a result, the recreational fishing rules have been relaxed to give more fishers access to this iconic fishery and a better chance of taking a 'trophy' pink snapper, while ensuring the stocks remain at above sustainable levels.

What are the rules around filleting and processing my catch out on the water?

Fish with a minimum size limit, such as pink snapper, can be carried at sea and landed:

- as fillets, skin and scale on, a minimum 30 cm length;
- trunked, skin and scale on a minimum 30 cm length; or
- whole (can be gutted and gilled).

Fish without a size limit, such as whiting, can be carried at sea and landed:

- filleted, skin on;
- trunked, skin on; or
- whole (can be gutted and gilled).

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

Can I bring fish I have caught in Denham Sound or the Eastern Gulf into the Freycinet Management Zone?

Yes, however the possession limit of one day's bag limit of whole fish or 5 kg of filleted fish applies in the Freycinet Estuary Management Zone regardless of where the fish were taken.

Can I travel on the Shark Bay Road or the Useless Loop Road with more than 5 kg of filleted fish?

Yes, the Freycinet Estuary Management Zone extends to the gulf side edge of Useless Loop Road and Shark Bay Road. If you are travelling on these roads (from Dirk Hartog Island or Steep Point, for example) the 20 kg Statewide possession limit applies, so long as you don't leave the road and enter into the Management Zone.

What is the Department of Fisheries doing to ensure the pink snapper stocks don't get overfished again in the inner gulfs?

We are continuing with our comprehensive monitoring program of the inner gulf pink snapper stocks. In addition, we are developing innovative new methods to assess catch rates in the inner gulfs to ensure the stocks remain sustainable under the new management arrangements.

Additional fishing rules information

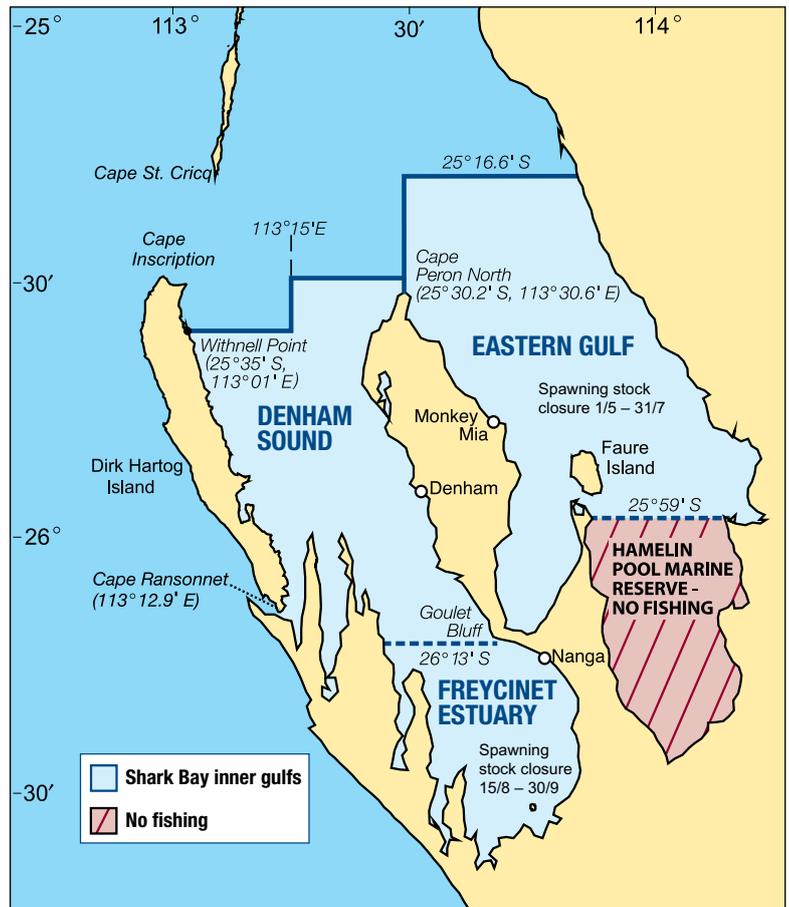
Closed seasons

Eastern Gulf:

- Pink snapper closed season 1 May – 31 July. Taking, landing or possessing pink snapper is prohibited in the Eastern Gulf during the closed season to protect them while they are spawning.

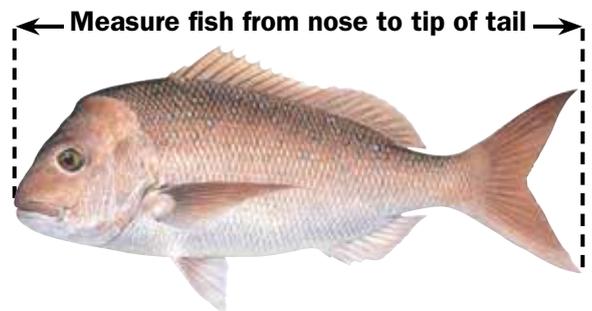
Freycinet Estuary:

- Pink snapper closed season 15 August – 30 September. Taking, landing or possessing pink snapper is prohibited in the Freycinet Estuary during the closed season to protect them while they are spawning.



Bag and size limits

- Bag limit of 2 pink snapper per fisher per day.
- Minimum size 50 cm.



Fishing from a boat

You need a Recreational Fishing from Boat Licence (RFBL) to fish from a powered boat. Unlicensed fishers can fish if one or more people on board have an RFBL, provided the total catch of everyone on board stays within the bag limit of the licensed fisher/s.

Further information

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