Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

Recreational fishing guide
2020

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

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Important disclaimer

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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 almost 615,000 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 four 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

Information is available on request in appropriate alternative formats including Braille, audio tape and disc.
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 and compliance.

Recreational fishing initiatives funded from licence fees include:

• artificial reefs and fish attracting devices;
• restocking projects for prawns, mulloway and barramundi;
• 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 like this one at Dunsborough providing premium quality recreational fishing opportunities for small boat owners. Over the last five years, six of these recreational fishing-enhancing reefs have been installed throughout the state, all receiving funding from recreational fishing licence revenue.
Changes to the rules – 2019

Cockburn and Warnbro Sounds pink snapper spawning closure extension

To provide additional protection for spawning pink snapper, the date and area for the Cockburn and Warnbro sounds pink snapper spawning closure has been extended from 1 September to 31 January. The closure now runs north to Fremantle Fishing Boat Harbour and west to the inside of Five Fathom Bank (see map on page 50).

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.

New measures to protect South West blue swimmer crabs

All waters from the Swan River to Minninup Beach (15km south of Bunbury) are closed to crab fishing between 1 September and 30 November each year to help protect breeding stock.

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

The following changes to bag and boat limits will also apply from 1 December 2019:

**Swan and Canning River**
- bag limit 5
- boat limit 20

**Geographe Bay**
- bag limit 10 of which a maximum of 5 may be female
- boat limit 20 of which a maximum of 10 may be female
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.
Cooking and storing recreationally caught fish on commercial premises

New Regulations now allow recreationally caught fish to be stored and cooked at commercial premises that provide accommodation and meals, such as resorts and hotels.

The new rule allows tourists and holiday-makers 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 40 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.

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 to reach maturity to complete their breeding cycle. Measure all your fish and return undersize or excess fish alive to the water (see ‘care for your catch’ on page 56).
Finfish categories
For bag and size limits, finfish are categorised according to their aquatic environment (see diagram below).

- **200 mile Economic Exclusion Zone**
  The boundary of WA’s legal control of marine resources

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).

**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 netting).

For example, demersal finfish in the West Coast Bioregion has a total mixed bag limit of two fish.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2 fish = 1 baldchin groper + 1 pink snapper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 fish = 2 pink snapper (but no other demersal fish)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

For rules about fish kept and stored beyond 24 hours, see the finfish possession limits section (page 39).

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 at any one time. This limit applies regardless of how long the vessel is at sea.

Boat limits apply for blue swimmer crabs, mud crabs, squid, octopus, cuttlefish, greenlip/brownlip abalone, rock lobster and dhufish in the West Coast Bioregion. The boat limit for these species or species groups is calculated by multiplying the relevant daily bag limit by the
number of people on the boat, up to the maximum boat possession limit (see bag and size limit tables on pages 10-35 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 two people on board, and up to a maximum of 24 when there are three 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 take a daily bag limit. See pages 45-47 for information about other recreational fishing licence requirements.

Possession limits and transporting fish

A finfish possession limit is the maximum quantity of finfish – either whole or in pieces – that a person may have in their control/ownership (see page 39 for more information).

Recreationally caught fish cannot be transported unaccompanied (see page 41).

When filleting fish at sea, a minimum fillet length of 300 mm applies only to fish with a minimum size limit. Fish with a maximum size limit need to be landed whole (see page 41).

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 stores.
**Demersal finfish – bag and size limits**

**High vulnerability – long-lived and slow-growing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Minimum legal size</th>
<th>West Coast</th>
<th>Other Bioregions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baldchin groper</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Choerodon rubescens.</em> Additional closed seasons apply – see page 51</td>
<td>400 mm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tuskfish</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Choerodon</em> spp. (Pictured: Blackspot tuskfish)</td>
<td>Blackspot and blue tuskfish: 400 mm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Barramundi cod</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Cromileptes altivelis</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blue morwong</strong> (queen snapper)</td>
<td>410 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Nemadactylus valenciennes</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rockcods</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Ephinephelidae (Pictured top to bottom: Breaksea cod, goldspotted rockcod [Estuary cod], blackspotted rockcod [Malabar cod], western wirrah, harlequin fish). All species including eightbar grouper and Rankin cod except Chinaman rockcod</td>
<td>Goldspotted rockcod: 400 mm Breaksea cod: 300 mm Goldspotted and Blackspotted rockcod over 1,000 mm or 30 kg are protected Goldspotted and Blackspotted rockcod must be landed as whole fish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL mixed species daily bag limit per fisher**
This is the combined number of demersal finfish you can take (see page 8 for details).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>West Coast Bioregion</th>
<th>South Coast, Gascoyne, North Coast Bioregions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Closed season** - Applies to all demersal finfish in the West Coast Bioregion unless otherwise excepted. Also applies to some nearshore finfish - see pages 20-25

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>West Coast Bioregion</th>
<th>South Coast, Gascoyne, North Coast Bioregions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 Oct – 15 Dec (inclusive)</td>
<td>No demersal closed season in these Bioregions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Individual species daily bag limit per fisher**
This is the maximum number of individual species you may take within your total mixed bag limit.

* Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 46 for licence rules.
† May be taken during the closed season
### Demersal finfish – bag and size limits (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Minimum legal size</th>
<th>West Coast</th>
<th>Other Bioregions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coral trout</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Plectropomus</em> spp. (Pictured top to bottom: Common coral trout, barcheek coral trout, vermicular cod)</td>
<td>450 mm</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coronation trout</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Variola</em> spp.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dhufish, West Australian</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Glaucosoma hebraicum</em></td>
<td>500 mm</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Coast: boat limit of 2 dhufish (6 on charter)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boarfish</strong>†</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Paristiopterus</em> spp. (Pictured: Giant boarfish)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dory, John</strong>†</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Zeus faber</em></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dory, mirror</strong>†</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Zenopsis nebulosus</em></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emperors and seabream</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Lethrinidae</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All species including <em>spangled emperor</em> (pictured), <em>red throat</em> and <em>Robinson’s sea bream</em> except <em>grass emperor</em> (black snapper)</td>
<td><strong>Spangled</strong>: 410 mm Other emperor: 280 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emperor, grass</strong> (black snapper)</td>
<td></td>
<td>320 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Lethrinus laticaudis</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>320 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foxfish</strong>†</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bodianus</em> spp.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pigfish</strong>†</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bodianus</em> spp. (Pictured: Goldspot pigfish)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 46 for licence rules.
† May be taken during the closed season
## Demersal finfish – bag and size limits (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Minimum legal size</th>
<th>West Coast</th>
<th>Other Bioregions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hapuku</strong> &lt;br&gt; <em>Polyprion oxygeneios</em></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bass groper</strong> &lt;br&gt; <em>Polyprion americanus</em></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blue-eye trevalla(s)</strong> &lt;br&gt; Family Centrolophidae &lt;br&gt;(Pictured: Blue-eyed trevalla)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bight redfish</strong> &lt;br&gt;* (Nannygai, red snapper) – pictured, yelloweye redfish and swallowtail</td>
<td>300 mm &lt;br&gt;*Except for the South Coast where you may take 8 Bight redfish, 8 yelloweye redfish and 8 swallowtail, PLUS a mixed daily bag limit of 5 other demersal finfish</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pearl perch</strong> &lt;br&gt;*† &lt;br&gt; <em>Glaucosoma spp.</em> (other than <em>Glaucosoma hebraicum</em> – West Australian dhufish)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Snapper</strong> &lt;br&gt; <em>Pink snapper</em> &lt;br&gt; <em>Chrysophrys auratus</em> &lt;br&gt; Additional rules apply – see page 48 for details</td>
<td>500 mm &lt;br&gt;<strong>Applies in the West Coast Bioregion south of 31°S latitude (just north of Lancelin) and in the inner gulfs of Shark Bay.</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 (Shark Bay)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tropical snappers</strong> &lt;br&gt; Family Lutjanidae &lt;br&gt;All species including red emperor (top), crimson snapper, saddletail snapper, Chinaman fish (upper middle), jobfish, ruby snapper (lower middle) and goldband snapper (bottom) except golden snapper (fingermark), mangrove jack and stripey snapper</td>
<td>Red emperor: 410 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Western blue groper</strong> &lt;br&gt; <em>Achoerodus gouldii</em></td>
<td>500 mm</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 46 for licence rules. † May be taken during the closed season.
# Large pelagic finfish – bag and size limits

**Species** | **Minimum legal size** | **Species** | **Minimum legal size**
---|---|---|---
**Amberjack**<br>Seriola dumerili | 600 mm | **Mackerel, school**<br>Scomberomorus queenslandicus | 500 mm
**Samsonfish**<br>Seriola hippos | 600 mm | **Mackerel, shark**<br>Grammatorcynus bicarinatus | 500 mm
**Yellowtail kingfish**<br>Seriola lalandi | 600 mm | **Mackerel, Spanish**<br>Scomberomorus commerson | 900 mm
**Great barracuda**<br>Sphyraena barracuda | N/A | **Mackerel, spotted**<br>Scomberomorus munroi | 500 mm
**Barracouta**<br>Thyrsites atun | N/A | **Mahi Mahi** (dolphinfish)<br>Coryphaena spp. | 500 mm
**Cobia**<br>Rachycentron canadum | 750 mm | **Marlin**<br>Family Istiophoridae (Pictured: Blue marlin)<br><br>Individual species daily bag limit = 1 | N/A
**Gemfish**<br>Rexea solandri | N/A | **Sailfish**<br>Istiophorus platypterus<br><br>Individual species daily bag limit = 1 | N/A
**Mackerel, grey**<br>Scomberomorus semifasciatus | 750 mm

**TOTAL mixed species daily bag limit per fisher**

This is the combined number of large pelagic finfish you can take (see page 8 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.

* Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 46 for licence rules.
### Large pelagic finfish – bag and size limits (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Minimum legal size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Swordfish**  
*Xiphias gladius*  
*Individual species daily bag limit = 1* | N/A |
| **Sharks and rays**  
*Class Chondrichthyes*  
(PIctured: **Gummy shark**) | West and South Coast Bioregions: **Whaler sharks** max. size **700 mm** (interdorsal fin length†) |
| **Trevally, giant**  
*Caranx ignobilis* | 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.

| Statewide |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| **TOTAL mixed species daily bag limit per fisher** | **3** |

**NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 46 for licence rules.
# Nearshore/estuarine finfish – bag and size limits

**Species** | **Minimum legal size** | **Individual species daily bag limit**
--- | --- | ---
**Barramundi**  
*Lates calcarifer* | 550 mm  
(Max. size 800 mm must be landed as whole fish) | 2  
Possession limit = 2

**Bream, black**  
(pictured top), **tarwhine**  
(pictured bottom), **northwest black**, **western yellowfin**, etc.  
*Acanthopagrus* spp., **Rhabdosargus sarba** | 250 mm  
**Western yellowfin**: 300 mm  
(Only 2 black bream over 400 mm in Swan and Canning rivers) | 6

**Bonito** (all species) and **albacore**  
*Cybiosarda elegans, Sarda orientalis* (pictured),  
*Thunnus aestival* | N/A | 8

**Catfish and Estuary Cobbler**  
Families Ariidae and Plotosidae | **Estuary cobbler** (pictured): 430 mm | 8

**Rockcod, Chinaman†**  
(Charlie Court)  
*Epinephelus rivulatus* | N/A | 4

**Dart†**  
*Trachinotus* spp. | N/A | 8

**Golden snapper†**  
(fingermark)  
*Lutjanus johnii* | 300 mm | 4

**TOTAL mixed species daily bag limit per fisher**

This is the combined number of nearshore/estuarine finfish you can take (see page 8 for details).

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

---

* Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group.  † Cannot be taken during the West Coast demersal finfish closed season. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 46 for licence rules.
## Nearshore/estuarine finfish – bag and size limits (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Minimum legal size</th>
<th>Individual species daily bag limit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flathead’ * Platycephalus spp.</td>
<td>300 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flounder’ Families Pleuronectidae, Bothidae and Paralichthyidae (Pictured: Smalltoothed flounder)</td>
<td>250 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Javelinfish’ Family Haemulidae (Pictured: Spotted javelinfish)</td>
<td>300 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweetlips’ Family Haemulidae (Pictured: Painted sweetlips)</td>
<td>300 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leatherjacket’ Family Monacanthidae (Pictured: Six-spined leatherjacket)</td>
<td>250 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulloway (caught primarily south of Exmouth Gulf) Argyrosomus japonicas</td>
<td>500 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black jewfish Protonibea diacanthus</td>
<td>700 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangrove jack† Lutjanus argentimaculatus</td>
<td>300 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pike, longfin Dinolestes lewini</td>
<td>300 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea sweep Scorpis aequipinnis</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snook and striped barracuda Sphyraena novaehollandiae and S. obtusata</td>
<td>300 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group. † Cannot be taken during the West Coast demersal finfish closed season. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 46 for licence rules.
## Nearshore/estuarine finfish – bag and size limits (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Minimum legal size</th>
<th>Individual species daily bag limit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Striped snapper**<sup>†</sup>  
*Lutjanus carponotatus* | 300 mm | 4 |
| **Tailor**  
*Pomatomus saltatrix* | 300 mm  
(Only 2 fish over 500 mm) | 8 |
| **Threadfin, king**  
*Polydactylus macrochir* | 450 mm | 2 |
| **Threadfin, other species**<sup>†</sup>  
Family Polynemidae – other than *Polydactylus macrochir* (Pictured: Blue threadfin) | N/A | 4 |
| **Trevally and queenfish** (all other species not specifically mentioned in these tables except needleskin queenfish and yellowtail scad)  
Family Carangidae (Pictured top to bottom: Silver trevally (skipjack/skippy), queenfish) | **Silver trevally**: 250 mm | 8 |
| **Tripletail**  
*Lobotes surinamensis* | 300 mm | 2 |
| **Western Australian salmon**  
*Arripis truttaceus* | 300 mm | 4 |
| **Whiting, King George**  
*Sillaginodes punctata* | 280 mm | 12 |
| **Wrasse (Subfamily Labrini) and parrotfish** (Subfamily Scarinae) (all other species not specifically mentioned in these tables)<sup>†</sup> (Pictured top to bottom: female western king wrasse, male western king wrasse) | N/A | 8 |

* Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group.  
† Cannot be taken during the West Coast demersal finfish closed season. 
**NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 46 for licence rules.
## Freshwater finfish – bag and size limits

### TOTAL mixed species daily bag limit per fisher

This is the combined number of freshwater finfish you can take (see page 8 for details).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Minimum legal size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trout, rainbow</strong> (pictured top), <strong>brown</strong> (pictured bottom) <em>Oncorhynchus mykiss</em> and <em>Salmo trutta</em> (see our <em>Recreational freshwater angling guide</em> for more details)</td>
<td>300 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Catfish and freshwater cobbler</strong> Families Plotosidae and Ariidae (see our <em>Recreational freshwater angling guide</em> for more details)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Striped perch</strong> (all freshwater species) Family Terapontidae (Pictured: Sooty grunter)</td>
<td>Sooty grunter (<em>Hephaestus fuliginosus</em>): 250 mm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 46 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

**Species includes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species includes</th>
<th>Individual species daily bag limit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Australian herring**  
*Arripis georgianus* | **12** |
| **Blue mackerel**  
*Scomber australasicus* | **30** |
| **Whiting (excluding King George)***  
Family Sillaginidae (Pictured: Yellowfin whiting) | **30** |
| **Garfish***  
Family Hemiramphidae  
(Pictured top to bottom: southern garfish, robust garfish) | **30**  
Perth metropolitan southern garfish closure – see page 52 |
| **Mullet***  
Family Mugilidae (Pictured: Yelloweye mullet) | **30** |

* Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 46 for licence rules.

## Baitfish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Daily bag limit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Baitfish** – *sardine, anchovy* and *hardy head* (pictured top)  
Families Clupeidae, Engraulidae and Atherinidae  
(*mulies, whitebait, scaly mackerel* – pictured bottom) | **A combined daily bag limit of 9 litres** |

**NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 46 for licence rules.
# Crustaceans – bag and size limits

**NOTE:** Statewide possession limit of 24 rock lobster per person.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Minimum legal size</th>
<th>Daily bag limit</th>
<th>Boat limit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Freshwater Prawn (Cherabin)</strong> <em>Macrobrachium spp.</em></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>9 litres</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crab, blue swimmer</strong> <em>Portunus armatus; and P. pelagicus</em> (See pages 42-43 &amp; 51-52 and our recreational crabbing guides for more details)</td>
<td>127 mm (carapace width)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40 (At least two people must be on board)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crab, mud</strong> (all species combined) <em>Scylla spp.</em> (Pictured: Brown mud crab)</td>
<td>Green: 150 mm Brown: 120 mm (carapace width)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10 (At least two people must be on board)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marron</strong> <em>Cherax spp.</em> (See our <a href="#">Recreational fishing for marron guide</a> for more details about specific rules that apply to these species)</td>
<td>80 mm (carapace length)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prawns</strong> (all species combined) <em>Family Penaeidae</em> (Pictured: Western king prawn) (See page 44 for more details)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>9 litres</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NEW from 1/12/2019*

- Geographe Bay: 10 of which no more than 5 may be female
- Geographe Bay: 20 of which no more than 10 may be female (At least two people must be on board)

*NEW from 1/12/2019*

- Swan and Canning Rivers: 5
- Swan and Canning Rivers: 20 (At least four people must be on board)

# Closed seasons apply. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 46 for licence rules.
## Crustaceans – bag and size limits (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Minimum legal size</th>
<th>Daily bag limit</th>
<th>Boat limit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Redclaw</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>Cherax quadricarinatus</em></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pest species, including yabbies, have no bag or boat limit. It is recommended that they are not returned to the water but are humanely euthanased.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Rock lobster**<br>(all species)<br>*Panulirus* and *Jasus* spp. | 76 mm<br>*Southern rock lobster:<br>98.5 mm | 8<br>of which no more than 4 may be tropical lobsters. | 24<br>of which no more than 12 may be tropical lobster<br>(At least three people must be on board) |
| (See our [Recreational fishing for rock lobster guide](#) for more details about specific rules that apply to these species)<br>(Pictured: *western rock lobster*) |

| **Other crustacean species** not specifically mentioned (combined)<br>(Pictured: *Gilgie*) | N/A | 10 | N/A |
| Pest species, including yabbies, have no bag or boat limit. Do not return to the water. |

*NOTE:* Statewide possession limit of 24 rock lobster per person.

*NOTE:* If fishing from a boat, see page 46 for licence rules.

# Closed seasons apply.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Minimum legal size</th>
<th>Daily bag limit</th>
<th>Boat limit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abalone, Roe's</strong> <em>Haliotis roei</em> (See our <a href="#">Recreational fishing for abalone guide</a> about specific rules that apply to this species)</td>
<td>60 mm</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abalone, greenlip</strong> <em>Haliotis laevigata</em> (pictured)/<strong>brownlip</strong> <em>Haliotis conicopora</em> (combined)* (See our <a href="#">Recreational fishing for abalone guide</a> about specific rules that apply to this species)</td>
<td>140 mm</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10 (At least two people must be on board)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ark shells, cockles and pipis</strong> (pictured) and venus clam (combined) Families Arcidae, Donacidae and Veneridae</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2 litres</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clams</strong> <em>Tridacna</em> spp.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mussels</strong> Family Mytilidae</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>9 litres (shell on)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oysters</strong> Family Ostreidae (Pictured: <a href="#">Native oyster</a>) Recreational harvesting of pearl oysters (<em>Pinctada maxima</em>) is prohibited</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Razorshell</strong> Family Pinnidae</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scallops</strong> Family Pectinidae</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sea urchins</strong>*</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specimen shell (cowries, bailer shell, conch)</strong> (combined) Families Cypraeidae, Volutidae and Strombidae</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Squid, cuttlefish</strong> and <strong>octopus</strong> (combined) Family Cephalopoda (Refer to the website for further information on octopus trigger traps)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30 (At least two people must be on board)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bloodworms</strong> (bait)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1 litre</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other molluscs and invertebrate species</strong> not specifically mentioned (combined) (Pictured: <a href="#">Mud whelk</a>)</td>
<td>Trochus: 65 mm</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Closed seasons and additional rules apply. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 46 for licence rules.
### Protected species

These species are protected and may **NOT** be taken

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Grey Nurse Shark" /></td>
<td>Grey nurse shark</td>
<td><em>Carcharias taurus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image2" alt="White Shark" /></td>
<td>White shark</td>
<td><em>Carcharodon carcharias</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Speartooth Shark" /></td>
<td>Speartooth shark</td>
<td><em>Glyphis spp.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Whale Shark" /></td>
<td>Whale shark</td>
<td><em>Rhincodon typus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Sawfish" /></td>
<td>Sawfish – all species</td>
<td>Family Pristidae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Rays and Skates" /></td>
<td>Rays and skates – Hamelin Bay Protection Area only</td>
<td>All ray and skate species are protected in Hamelin Bay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image7" alt="Black Stingray" /></td>
<td>Black stingray (left)</td>
<td><em>Dasyatis thetidis</em> and <strong>smooth stingray</strong> (right)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image8" alt="Coral and Live Rock" /></td>
<td>Coral and live rock</td>
<td>Order Scleractinia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image9" alt="Potato Rockcod" /></td>
<td>Potato rockcod</td>
<td><em>Epinephelus tukula</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image10" alt="Queensland Groper" /></td>
<td>Queensland groper</td>
<td><em>Epinephelus lanceolatus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image11" alt="Humphead Maori Wrasse" /></td>
<td>Humphead Maori wrasse</td>
<td><em>Cheilinus undulatus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image12" alt="Common Seadragon" /></td>
<td>Common seadragon</td>
<td><em>Phyllopteryx taeniolatus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image13" alt="Leafy Seadragon" /></td>
<td>Leafy seadragon</td>
<td><em>Phyllopteryx eques</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image14" alt="Native Freshwater Fish Species" /></td>
<td>Native freshwater fish species (from top to bottom)</td>
<td><strong>Balston’s pygmy perch</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FishWatch – 1800 815 507

The FishWatch phone line provides a quick and easy way to report sightings or evidence of:

- illegal fishing;
- aquatic pests; and
- aquatic diseases (including fish kills).

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, 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
To help keep WA's waters pest and disease free, please practise good vessel maintenance and thoroughly clean and dry all boating and fishing gear before fishing another waterway or area. You can help protect our waters by reporting aquatic pests, diseases and fish kills to FishWatch or through WA PestWatch on our website, the free WA PestWatch app, our Biosecurity Branch on 6551 4444 or your local DPIRD office. Please note where, when and what you saw including the location (GPS co-ordinates if possible), photographs and numbers of pests or affected fish. (If you collect samples, please report it to FishWatch immediately.)

Finfish possession limits
The maximum quantity of finfish (includes scalefish, sharks and rays) you may have in your possession – either whole or in pieces – is:

- 20 kg of fish fillets; or
- 10 kg of fish fillets and one day’s bag limit of whole fish or fish trunks; or
- two days’ bag limit of whole fish or fish trunks.

At the Abrolhos Islands the possession limit is:

- 10 kg of fish fillets; or
- one day’s bag limit of whole fish or fish trunks.

For more information see our Abrolhos Islands Information Guide available from select offices.

In Shark Bay’s Freycinet Estuary Management Zone, the possession limit is:

- 5 kg of fish 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 or holiday accommodation sites inside the zone.

‘Fillet’ means any particular piece of a finfish, other than a whole fish, fish trunk, head, tail, fin, backbone or wing. For these pieces 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.

These limits apply throughout WA, including permanent and temporary places of residence. 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 10-35).

**Note:** 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, the fish must be clearly labelled with the name of the owner(s).

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.

**Landing filleted or processed fish**

Fish with a minimum size limit 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).

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 (although can be gutted and gilled), on estuaries and on rivers and landed whole.

Fish without a size limit can be carried at sea and landed:

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

**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, cannot be transported by commercial couriers (or any other person). You must accompany your fish if transporting it by land, sea or air.
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 – hand-held wire or plastic scoop nets 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.
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 two 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 (see below).

**GREEN MUD CRAB**
- Claw spines large and distinct
- More than one prominent sharp spine on the elbow

**BROWN MUD CRAB**
- Claw spines reduced or blunt prominences
- One small blunt spine or no spines at all on the elbow
Freshwater prawns (Cherabin) found in the North Coast Bioregion

Can be legally caught using:
• no more than six drop nets;
• a single pole snare;
• a single hand-scoop net; or
• a single throw net that is no longer than three 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 four 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.

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 five of the licensed recreational fisheries listed above are available from select DPIRD offices or the website. For the RFBL, the details are below.
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 45 for details on buying or renewing your licence.

**Closed seasons and protected areas**

**Seasonal closures**

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

**Demersal finfish**

Demersal finfish live on or near the ocean floor usually in depths of more than 20 metres.

**West Coast Bioregion:** Closed season 15 October – 15 December (inclusive). Fishing for demersal finfish resumes on 16 December.

The take, possession on a boat or landing of certain demersal and nearshore finfish (listed on pages 10-15 and 20-25) is prohibited within the West Coast Bioregion (north of Kalbarri to east of Augusta) during this period. If you catch a demersal finfish from a boat or from shore in this area during the closed season you must return it to the water as soon as possible.

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 finfish closure is one of several management measures
to contain the recreational catch in this area. This measure was required following independently reviewed research that showed demersal species, like dhufish, snapper (pink snapper) and baldchin groper, were being overfished.

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

**Snapper (pink snapper)**

Shark Bay and Cockburn Sound are known to be important breeding aggregation areas for snapper (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.
The following closed seasons apply:

- **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).
Cockburn and Warnbro sounds: Closed season 1 September – 31 January (inclusive).

NEW start date and extended closed area.

Closed to pink snapper fishing 1 September – 31 January
It is illegal to fish for pink snapper, or be in possession of pink snapper while fishing in these closed waters during the closed seasons. 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 areas may be transported through as long as no line fishing is undertaken.

More information and maps are available from select DPIRD offices or the website.

**Baldchin groper**

**Abrolhos Islands:** Closed season 1 November – 31 January (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.

**Note:** The take or landing of baldchin groper at the Abrolhos Islands is also prohibited during the West Coast Bioregion closed season for demersal finfish (see page 47), beginning on 15 October.

**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.

**NEW Swan River to Minninup Beach:** Closed season 1 September – 30 November (inclusive)

All waters, rivers and estuaries from the Swan River to Rich Road at Minninup beach (15km south of Bunbury) are closed to all crab fishing during this period (see map on page 5).

The closure protects breeding stocks across the
blue swimmer crab resource in the South West, particular when they are mated and vulnerable to capture. This improves the resilience and ensures ongoing performance of our highly valued crab resource into the future.

**Southern garfish**

**Metropolitan waters:** Closed until further notice.

Taking southern garfish (also known as ‘southern sea garfish’) is prohibited in Perth’s Metropolitan waters between 31° south just north of Lancelin and 33° south (near Lake Preston/Myalup) until further notice to protect the breeding stock. The closure has been introduced to ease fishing pressure on southern garfish and allow them to rebuild.

**Marine protected areas**

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

Marine reserves, which include marine nature reserves, marine parks and marine management areas, are managed by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA). Information about marine reserves is available from DBCA offices and their website at [dbca.wa.gov.au](http://dbca.wa.gov.au).

In addition to these marine reserves, there are a number of fish habitat protection areas and other closed areas which are managed by DPIRD.

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 three baits or lures on each line. Shore-based fishers may use a maximum of two fishing lines. Rods and lines must be attended. Note: To catch barramundi, you are only permitted to use a single rod, reel and line or a single hand-held line.

• 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. 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 38).

• Spearfishing – generally allowed in ocean waters, except in some marine protected areas and around dive wrecks. Further information on specific restrictions in marine protected areas is available from select DPIRD offices or the website.

• 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.

• 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 for demersal species in the West Coast Bioregion (see page 56-59). Also recommended when fishing for demersal species in other regions.
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 traps or ‘pots’ of any kind (except lobster pots and octopus trigger traps – see the website for further information);

• use dredges;

• obstruct any bay, inlet, river, creek or any tidal or inland waters so that fish are enclosed, left stranded, destroyed or wasted;

• be in possession of 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.

Fishing safety

Boat fishing safety
You need to take care when fishing from the shore and be properly prepared when fishing from a boat. Check the seaworthiness of your boat and that you have the right safety gear, including life jackets, distress beacon (EPIRB), marine radio transceiver, flares, 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.
Conditions can change quickly. If you are going to an unfamiliar location, treat the ocean with respect. Carry a chart of the area where you intend to fish; study it, and familiarise yourself with the position of navigational markers and potential hazards.

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 your boating plans.
• Notify them immediately if plans change during the voyage.
• Always report in when you return.

Bureau of Meteorology:
bom.gov.au/wa

Department of Transport – marine information:
transport.wa.gov.au/imarine

WA Coastal Marine Warnings: 1300 659 223
WA Marine Service: 1900 926 150

Volunteer Sea Rescue: These groups use VHF channel 16 and HF channel 4125. Full details and alternative channels: 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
Shark safety

**Keep informed** by checking the SharkSmart Shark Activity Map before you use the water. The map provides ‘real time’ information on reported sightings and tagged shark detections, plus access to current alerts and warnings. Remember, not all sharks are tagged or sightings reported, so follow our SharkSmart safety tips when using the water. Visit [sharksmart.com.au](http://sharksmart.com.au) for more information.

**Report shark sightings** to Water Police on 9442 8600 as soon as possible. This information is posted to the Shark Activity Map, and sent to authorities so beaches can be closed if needed.

Care for your catch

**Releasing fish and catch care**

You can help ensure there will be fish for the future by taking care of the fish you catch, and releasing all undersize or excess fish as carefully and as quickly as possible. To ensure a fish’s healthy return to the water:

- Avoid deep-hooking fish by using an appropriate size and pattern of hook, and avoid treble hooks. Consider using barbless hooks or crushing hook barbs using a pair of pliers.
- Use long-nosed pliers to remove hooks. But if gut-hooked, leave the hook in place and cut the line as close to the mouth or eye of the hook as possible before releasing the fish.
- If possible avoid lifting fish from the water to unhook them. Use a knotless landing net or place a wet rag under the fish’s stomach to support its vital organs.
- Use a wet rag or wet your hands to handle fish.
- Treat fish gently to reduce stress and injury to fragile scales and protective slime.
• Release fish as soon as possible.
• Revive spent fish by holding them from above, behind the head, moving them through the water repeatedly until they ‘kick’ showing they are ready to be released.

If you intend to eat the fish, store your catch out of the sun in either a seawater ice slurry (one bucket of seawater to two of ice) in an esky, or a damp open-weave bag.

Don’t discard a smaller fish for a bigger one
If you choose to keep a fish and not return it to the water immediately, you have taken that fish and it counts towards your daily bag limit. Discarding a smaller retained fish for a bigger one is known as ‘high-grading’.

High-grading is not a responsible use of our fish resources – and if you have already taken your daily bag limit, it will result in you exceeding the 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!
Please do not leave any dead or dying blowfish you catch on the shore where you are fishing – put them back in the water instead. Discarded blowfish are poisonous and pose a threat to dogs, other animals and small children who might pick them up and put them in their mouths.
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. Barotrauma may also damage the fish’s internal organs, which may not be so noticeable.

Demersal fish species are particularly susceptible to barotrauma; and mortality levels as a result of barotrauma are known to increase with depth.

To minimise the effects of barotrauma, ‘prevention is better than cure’. To avoid catching undersize or excess fish, it is best to stop fishing once you’ve reached your bag limit.

When a demersal fish is to be released, a release weight may help to reduce the effects of barotrauma.
Fish suffering from barotrauma may not be able to return to the bottom when released if their swim bladder remains inflated.

A release weight is a weighted barbless hook for releasing deep-water fish suffering from barotrauma. It 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.

**Note:** If you are boat fishing for demersal species in the West Coast Bioregion you must have a release weight on board. You don’t need a release weight if a boat is used exclusively for spearfishing.
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 the website and search under ‘volunteers’.

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).

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fish.wa.gov.au/frames

Anglers log books
Use the log book we provide to record your ocean, estuary or freshwater fishing activities. Your information will assist scientists with a number of projects.

Fish tagging
Scientists tag and release fish to better understand population structure, movement, growth and mortality. We need people to report recaptures.

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 or the phone app.
Recfishwest
Love your fishing? So do we!
As the peak body for rec fishing, our purpose is to ensure great fishing experiences for all in the WA community forever.
See what we do to make your fishing better.

Recfishwest.org.au

HELP KEEP EVERYONE SAFE
Report shark sightings to Water Police on
9442 8600
Sharksmart.com.au