Recreational fishing guide
2017/18

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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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 your local Fisheries office or visit www.fish.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 almost 700,000 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:

- your local Fisheries office (see page 20); and
- the recreational fishing section of the Fisheries website at www.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 $8.5 million to managing recreational fishing in Western Australia. The State Government contributes another $11.5 million.

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.

Changes to the rules

Helping recreational rock lobster fishers

You must only be in possession of whole rock lobsters (immediately before consumption). However, you may now possess lobster tails (shell on) at your principal place of residence (which does not include a tent, vehicle, boat or caravan, unless you live permanently in the caravan).

Rock lobsters may only be transported whole. For this reason, you may not take stored tails away from your principal place of residence.

The specifications for lobster pots have been simplified. A pot must now not exceed 1,000 mm in diameter or width at its widest point and 500 mm in height.

Perth metropolitan southern garfish fishing closure

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.

Fishers are still able to take robust garfish from the closed area. Robust garfish (also known as ‘storm garfish’) can be identified by a dark blotch below the dorsal fin and a longer lower tail fin lobe than that of southern garfish (see illustration on page 10).

Notifying us when travelling to the Abrolhos

The master of a vessel is legally required to notify us before travelling to the Abrolhos Islands. Visit www.fish.wa.gov.au/visiting-the-abrolhos for more information and to notify us online, or contact your local Fisheries office.
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 18).

Finfish categories

For bag and size limits, finfish are categorised according to their aquatic environment (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).

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.

| 2 fish = 1 baldchin groper + 1 pink snapper | OR |
| 2 fish = 2 pink snapper (but no other demersal fish) |

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 14).

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 dhufish, blue swimmer crabs, mud crabs, squid, octopus, greenlip/brownlip abalone, cuttlefish and rock lobster (see bag and size limit tables on pages 4-12 for more information). Specific licences are required to take abalone and rock lobster.

To legally take the boat limit for dhufish, blue swimmer crabs, mud crabs, squid, octopus or cuttlefish on a powered vessel, there must be two or more people who hold a Recreational Fishing from Boat Licence (RFBL) on board. This includes boats used for recreational crabbing.

For example, in the West Coast Bioregion you can have a maximum of two dhufish and/or 20 blue swimmer crabs on board. But if the vessel is a powered boat, and only one person on board holds an RFBL, only the individual bag limit can be taken – one dhufish and/or 10 blue swimmer crabs.

For species without a specific boat limit, bag limits apply. A fisher who does not hold an RFBL can fish with the use of a powered boat if at least one person on board the boat has an RFBL. This is allowed provided the total catch of everyone on
board stays within the bag limit(s) of the one or more fishers who hold an RFBL.

Note: This only applies to the RFBL and not to other fishing licences.

The master of the boat must ensure these rules are followed. See page 16 for more information about the RFBL and other fishing licences.

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 14 for more information).

Recreationally caught fish cannot be transported unaccompanied (see page 14).

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 14).

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 Fisheries offices or participating retail stores.

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 your local Fisheries office 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 Fisheries 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.)
**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>Baldchin groper</td>
<td><em>Choerodon rubescens. Additional closed seasons apply – see page 17</em></td>
<td>400 mm</td>
<td>2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuskfish*</td>
<td><em>Choerodon spp. (Pictured: Blackspot tuskfish)</em></td>
<td>Blackspot and blue tuskfish: 400 mm</td>
<td>2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barramundi cod</td>
<td><em>Cromileptes altivelis</em></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue morwong (queen snapper)</td>
<td><em>Nemadactylus valenciennesi</em></td>
<td>410 mm</td>
<td>2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cods*</td>
<td>Family Serranidae (Pictured top to bottom: Breaksea cod, estuary cod, Malabar cod, western wirrah, harlequin fish) All species including grey banded rockcod and Rankin cod except Chinaman cod Estuary cod: 400 mm Breaksea cod: 300 mm Estuary and Malabar cod over 1,000 mm or 30 kg are protected (recreational fishers only)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coral trout*</td>
<td><em>Plectropomus spp.</em> (Pictured top to bottom: Common coral trout, barcheek coral trout, vermicular cod)</td>
<td>450 mm</td>
<td>1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coronation trout</td>
<td><em>Variola louti</em></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhufish, West Australian</td>
<td><em>Glaucosoma hebraicum</em></td>
<td>500 mm West Coast: boat limit of 2 dhufish (6 on charter)</td>
<td>1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boarfish**†</td>
<td><em>Paristiopterus spp. (Pictured: Giant boarfish)</em></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dory, John†</td>
<td><em>Zeus faber</em></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dory, mirror†</td>
<td><em>Zenopsis nebulosa</em></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 16 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>Emperors and seabream</strong>&lt;sup&gt;†&lt;/sup&gt;&lt;br&gt;Family Lethrinidae&lt;br&gt;All species including <strong>spangled emperor</strong> (pictured), <strong>red throat</strong> and <strong>Robinson’s sea bream</strong> except <strong>blue-lined emperor</strong> (black snapper)</td>
<td>Spangled: 410 mm&lt;br&gt;Other emperor: 280 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emperor, blue-lined</strong> (black snapper)&lt;br<em>Lethrinus laticaudis</em></td>
<td>320 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foxfish</strong>&lt;sup&gt;†&lt;/sup&gt;&lt;br<em>Bodianus</em> spp..</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pigfish</strong>&lt;sup&gt;†&lt;/sup&gt;&lt;br<em>Bodianus</em> spp. (Pictured: <strong>Goldspot pigfish</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<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>Trevalla</strong>&lt;sup&gt;†&lt;/sup&gt;&lt;br&gt;Family Centrolophidae&lt;br&gt;(Pictured: <strong>Blue-eyed trevalla</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Red snapper</strong>&lt;sup&gt;‡&lt;/sup&gt; (Bright redfish – pictured, and swallowtail)&lt;br&gt;Family Berycidae</td>
<td>300 mm&lt;br&gt;#Except for the South Coast where you may take 8 <strong>Bright redfish</strong> and 8 <strong>swallowtail</strong>, PLUS 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;sup&gt;††&lt;/sup&gt;&lt;br&gt;<em>Glaucosoma</em> spp. (other than <strong>Glaucosoma hebraicum</strong> – West Australian dhufish)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pink snapper</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>Pagrus auratus</em>&lt;br&gt;Additional rules apply – see page 16 for details</td>
<td>500 mm&lt;br&gt;Applies in the West Coast Bioregion south of 31˚S latitude (just north of Lancelin) and in the inner gulfs of Shark Bay.&lt;br&gt;All other areas: 410 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 (Shark Bay)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tropical snappers and sea perch</strong>&lt;sup&gt;†&lt;/sup&gt;&lt;br&gt;Family Lutjanidae&lt;br&gt;All species including <strong>red emperor</strong> (top), <strong>crimson sea perch</strong>, <strong>scarlet sea perch</strong>, <strong>Chinaman fish</strong> (upper middle), <strong>jobfish</strong>, <strong>ruby snapper</strong> (lower middle) and <strong>goldband</strong> (bottom) except <strong>fingermark</strong>, <strong>mangrove jack</strong>, <strong>stripey seaperch</strong></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 16 for licence rules.<br>† May be taken during the closed season
Large pelagic finfish – bag and size limits

**Moderate vulnerability**

**TOTAL mixed species daily bag limit per fisher**
This is the combined number of large pelagic finfish you can take (see page 2 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.

### Statewide

**Species** | **Minimum legal size**
---|---
Webber | 600 mm
Samson fish | 600 mm
Yellowtail kingfish | 600 mm
Barracuda | N/A
Barracouta | N/A
Cobia | 750 mm
Gemfish | N/A
Mackerel, grey (broad barred) | 750 mm
Scomberomorus semifasciatus
Mackerel, school | 500 mm
Scomberomorus queenslandicus
Mackerel, shark | 500 mm
Grammatorcynus bicarinatus
Mackerel, Spanish (narrow barred) | 900 mm
Scomberomorus commerson
Mackerel, spotted | 500 mm
Scomberomorus munroi

### Species Minimum legal size

**Species** | **Minimum legal size**
---|---
Mahi Mahi (dolphinfish) | 500 mm
Coryphaena hippurus
Marlin* | N/A
Family Istiophoridae (Pictured: Blue marlin)
Individual species daily bag limit = 1
Sailfish | N/A
Istiophorus platypterus
Individual species daily bag limit = 1
Swordfish* | N/A
Family Xiphiidae
Individual species daily bag limit = 1
Sharks and rays | West and South Coast bioregions:
Class Chondrichthyes (Pictured: Gummy shark)
Whaler sharks max. size 700 mm (interdorsal fin length†)

† 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, bull shark and tiger sharks.

- **Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group.** **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 16 for licence rules.
### Large pelagic finfish – bag and size limits (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Minimum legal size</th>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Minimum legal size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trevally, giant Caranx ignoblis</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Tuna, mackerel Euthynnus affinis</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trevally, golden Gnathanodon speciosus</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Tuna, skipjack Katsuwonis pelamis</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuna, big eye Thunnus obesus</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Tuna, southern bluefin Thunnus maccovyii</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuna, dogtooth Gymnosarda unicolor</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Tuna, yellowfin Thunnus albacares</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuna, longtail Thunnus tonggoi</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Wahoo Acanthocybium solandri</td>
<td>900 mm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Statewide**

TOTAL mixed species daily bag limit per fisher

3

**NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 16 for licence rules.
Nearshore/estuarine finfish – bag and size limits

**Species** | **Minimum legal size** | **Individual species daily bag limit**
--- | --- | ---
**Barramundi**<br>Lates calcarifer | 550 mm (Max. size 800 mm recreational fishers only) | 2<br>Possession limit = 2

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

**Bonito**<br>(all species) and **albacore tuna***<br>Cybiosarda elegans, Sarda orientalis (pictured), Thunnus aleluna | N/A | 8

**Catfish**, marine and estuarine<br>Families Ariidae and Plotosidae | **Estuarine cobbler** (pictured): 430 mm | 8

**Cod, Chinaman**<br>(Charlie Court)<br>Epinephelus rivulatus | N/A | 4

**Dart**<br>Trachinotus spp. | N/A | 8

**Fingermark**<br>Lutjanus johnii | 300 mm | 4

**Flathead**<br>Family Platyccephalidae | 300 mm | 8

**Flounder**<br>Pseudohombus spp.<br>(pictured: Smalltoothed flounder) | 250 mm | 8

**Javelinfish**<br>Family Haemulidae<br>(Pictured: Spotted javelinfish) | 300 mm | 8

**Sweetlips**<br>Family Haemulidae<br>(Pictured: Painted sweetlips) | 300 mm | 8

**Leatherjacket**<br>Family Monacanthidae<br>(Pictured: Six-spined leatherjacket) | 250 mm | 8

**Mulloway**<br>(caught primarily south of Exmouth Gulf)<br>Argyrosomus hololeptotus | 500 mm | 2

* Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 16 for licence rules.

For example, 16 fish = 8 tailor (individual species limit = 8), 4 Western Australian salmon (individual species limit = 4) and 4 snook.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Minimum legal size</th>
<th>Individual species daily bag limit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black jewfish</strong> <em>(northern mulloway)</em> <em>Protonibea diacanthus</em></td>
<td>700 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mangrove jack</strong> <em>Lutjanus argentimaculatus</em></td>
<td>300 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pike, long finned</strong> <em>Dinolestes lewini</em></td>
<td>300 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sea sweep</strong> <em>Scorpius aequipinnis</em></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Snook</strong> <em>(pictured)</em> <em>Family Sphyraenidae</em></td>
<td>300 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stripey seaperch</strong> <em>Lutjanus carponotatus</em></td>
<td>300 mm</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tailor</strong> <em>Pomatomus saltatrix</em></td>
<td>300 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Threadfin, giant</strong> <em>Polydactylus macrochir</em></td>
<td>450 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Threadfin, other species</strong> <em>Polydactylus spp., – other than Polydactylus macrochir</em> <em>(Pictured: Blue threadfin)</em></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trevally and queenfish</strong> <em>(all other species not specifically mentioned in these tables</em> *<em>except needleskin queenfish and yellowtail scad)</em> <em>Family Carangidae</em> <em>(Pictured top to bottom: Silver trevally (skipjack/skippy), queenfish)</em></td>
<td><strong>Silver trevally:</strong> 250 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tripletail</strong> <em>Lobotes surinamensis</em></td>
<td>300 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Western Australian salmon</strong> <em>Arripis truttaceus</em></td>
<td>300 mm</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whiting, King George</strong> <em>Sillaginodes punctata</em></td>
<td>280 mm</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wrasse and parrotfish</strong> <em>(all other species not specifically mentioned in these tables)</em> <em>Family Labridae</em> <em>(Pictured top to bottom: female western king wrasse, male western king wrasse)</em></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 16 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 2 for details).

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

**NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 16 for licence rules.

### All other species of finfish – bag and size limits

### 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.

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

* Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 16 for licence rules.

### Baitfish

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

**NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 16 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>Cherabin</strong>&lt;br&gt;Macrobrachium spp.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>9 litres</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crab, blue swimmer</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>Portunus armatus</em>; formerly <em>P. pelagicus</em>&lt;br&gt;(See pages 14-15 &amp; 17 and our recreational crabbing guides for more details)</td>
<td>127 mm (carapace width)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>West Coast: 10</td>
<td>West Coast: 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crab, mud</strong>&lt;br&gt;(all species combined)&lt;br&gt;<em>Scylla</em> spp.&lt;br&gt;(Pictured: <em>Brown mud crab</em>)</td>
<td>Green: 150 mm (carapace length)&lt;br&gt;Brown: 120 mm (carapace width)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marron</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>Cherax</em> spp.&lt;br&gt;(See our Recreational fishing for marron guide for more details about specific rules that apply to these species)</td>
<td>80 mm (carapace length)&lt;br&gt;Trophy waters: 90 mm</td>
<td>8&lt;br&gt;Trophy waters: 5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prawns</strong>&lt;br&gt;(all species combined)&lt;br&gt;Family Penaeidae&lt;br&gt;(Pictured: <em>Western king prawn</em>)&lt;br&gt;(See page 15 for more details)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>9 litres</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Redclaw</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>Cherax quadricarinatus</em></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rock lobster</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>Panulirus</em> and <em>Jasus</em> spp.&lt;br&gt;(See our Recreational fishing for rock lobster guide for more details about specific rules that apply to these species)&lt;br&gt;(Pictured top to bottom: <em>western rock lobster</em>, <em>ornate rock lobster</em>)</td>
<td>76 mm&lt;br&gt;<em>Southern rock lobster</em>: 98.5 mm</td>
<td>8&lt;br&gt;of which no more than 4 may be tropical lobsters.&lt;br&gt;NEW</td>
<td>24&lt;br&gt;of which no more than 12 may be tropical lobsters.&lt;br&gt;(At least three licensed fishers must be on board actively fishing to take the boat limit.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other crustacean species</strong>&lt;br&gt;not specifically mentioned (combined)&lt;br&gt;(Pictured: <em>Gilgie</em>)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Closed seasons apply. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 16 for licence rules.
<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>Abalone, Roe’s* Haliotis roei (See our Recreational fishing for abalone guide about specific rules that apply to this species)</td>
<td>60 mm</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abalone, greenlip Haliotis laevigata (pictured)/brownlip Haliotis conicopora (combined)* (See our Recreational fishing for abalone guide about specific rules that apply to this species)</td>
<td>140 mm</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ark shells, cockles and pipis (pictured) (combined) Families Arcidae, Cardiidae and Donacidae</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2 litres</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clams Tridacna spp.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mussels Family Mytilidae</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>9 litres (shell on)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oysters Family Ostreidae (Pictured: Native oyster) Recreational harvesting of pearl oysters (Pinctada maxima) is prohibited</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Razorshell Family Pinnidae</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scallops Family Pectinidae</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea urchins* Class Echinoidea</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specimen shell (cowries, volutes, conch) (combined) Families Cypraeidae, Volutidae and Strombidae</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squid, cuttlefish and octopus (combined) Family Cephalopoda (Refer to the website for further information on octopus trigger traps)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloodworms (bait)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1 litre</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other molluscs and invertebrate species not specifically mentioned (combined) (Pictured: Mud whelk)</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 16 for licence rules.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protected species</th>
<th>These species are protected and may NOT be taken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grey nurse shark</strong></td>
<td><em>Carcharias taurus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White shark</strong></td>
<td><em>Carcharodon carcharias</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speartooth shark</strong></td>
<td><em>Glyphis spp.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whale shark</strong></td>
<td><em>Rhincodon typus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sawfish – all species</strong></td>
<td>Family Pristidae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rays and skates – Hamelin Bay Protection Area only</strong></td>
<td>All ray and skate species are protected in Hamelin Bay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black stingray (left)</strong></td>
<td><em>Dasyatis thetidis</em> and <strong>smooth stingray (right)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dasyatis brevicaudata</strong></td>
<td>Protected from recreational fishing in the South Coast and West Coast bioregions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coral and live rock</strong></td>
<td>Order Scleractinia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(pictured: <em>Goniopora tenuidens</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potato cod</strong></td>
<td><em>Epinephelus tukula</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Queensland groper</strong></td>
<td><em>Epinephelus lanceolatus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Humphead Maori wrasse</strong></td>
<td><em>Cheilinus undulatus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weedy seadragon</strong></td>
<td><em>Phyllopteryx taeniolatus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leafy seadragon</strong></td>
<td><em>Phycodurus eques</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Native freshwater fish species</strong></td>
<td>(from top to bottom)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balston’s pygmy perch</strong></td>
<td><em>Nannatherina balstoni</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>western trout minnow</strong></td>
<td><em>Galaxias truttaceus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>mud minnow</strong></td>
<td><em>Galaxiella munda</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>black-stripe minnow</strong></td>
<td><em>Galaxiella nigrostriata</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pouched lamprey</strong></td>
<td><em>Geotria australis</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>salamanderfish</strong></td>
<td><em>Lepidogalaxias salamandroides</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>little pygmy perch</strong></td>
<td><em>Nannoperca pygmaea</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 Fisheries offices.

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

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

For more information and a map, visit the Fisheries website or Denham District Office (see back cover) 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 tail and head 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 4-13).

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, estuary cod, 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).

Cherabin (freshwater prawns 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 your local Fisheries office.

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 your local Fisheries office or the website. For the RFBL, the details are below.

Apply for a new licence, or renew an existing licence online at the Fisheries website. Alternatively, application forms are available from Fisheries 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 (see page 2 for more information); 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 and costs $35 or $17.50 for concessions. See page 16 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 or landing of demersal finfish (listed on pages 4-5) 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 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 reduce the recreational catch in this area by at least 50 per cent. This reduction was required following independently reviewed research that showed demersal species, like dhufish, pink snapper and baldchin groper, were being overfished.

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

Pink snapper

Shark Bay: An important breeding aggregation area for pink snapper. The following seasonal closures apply.
• Eastern Gulf: Closed season 1 May – 31 July (inclusive).
• Freycinet Estuary: Closed season 15 August – 30 September (inclusive).

More information and maps are available from your local Fisheries office or the website.
Cockburn and Warnbro sounds: Closed season 1 October – 31 January (inclusive).

Cockburn Sound is the site of the largest known aggregations of pink snapper in the West Coast Bioregion and is critical for sustaining adequate breeding stocks of these long-lived and slow-growing fish.

It is illegal to be in possession of pink snapper while fishing in the waters of Cockburn and Warnbro sounds during the closed season. However, pink snapper taken outside the sounds may be transported through, and immediately landed, within the area during the closed season.

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 16), 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.

Peel-Harvey Estuary: Closed season 1 September – 31 October (inclusive).

The Peel Inlet (including the channel entrance), Harvey Estuary, Dawesville Cut and all man-made waterways are closed to all crab fishing during this period.

The closures protect crab breeding stocks, allowing females to spawn.

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.

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 3).

- 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 your local Fisheries office 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 your local Fisheries office or the website.

- Release weights – required if fishing for demersal species in the West Coast Bioregion (see page 19). 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.


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: www.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 www.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 www.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).

www.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 www.redmap.org.au or the phone app.
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.

1. Web
Go to www.fish.wa.gov.au for rules covering more than 180 fish species.

2. App
The free Recfishwest app provides access to the rules even if you’re out of phone range.

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