

West Coast Demersal Scalefish Recovery

New management changes will be introduced to protect the future of demersal scalefish stocks in the West Coast Bioregion (Kalbarri to Augusta).

The changes being introduced are supported by the science and will meet the reduced catch limit of 375 tonnes to get demersal scalefish stocks back on track.

The 20 year recovery plan is due to conclude in 2030.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development will monitor the impact of the new management changes on stocks and will finalise the next stock assessment at the end of next year.

Changes for recreational fishers

On 1 February 2023, the following changes will commence, supported by an extensive education campaign:

Primary measures:

- Current two-month demersal closure extended to six months* for recreational fishers in the West Coast Bioregion, from:
 - 1 February to 31 March (inclusive);
 - 1 August to the beginning of the September / October school holidays;
- And end of the September / October school holidays to 15 December (inclusive)

**Note this does not apply to land based recreational line fishers who can now fish all year round*

**Different management rules will be used for fishing charters and commercial fishers*

Supporting measures:

- A boat limit of four demersal scalefish per vessel.
- A mixed species daily bag limit of two demersal scalefish (except coral trout, coronation trout and western blue groper).
- The dhufish boat limit has been removed, so an individual angler can catch up to two dhufish.
- Removal of size limits for WA dhufish, baldchin groper and breaksea cod to limit barotrauma.
- A maximum of one bait or lure per line can be used when fishing from a boat for demersal scalefish.
- Changes to Abrolhos Islands:
 - reduced bag limit of 1 demersal finfish;
 - reduced finfish possession limit of:
 - 5 kg of fillets from any species, plus 5 kg of fillets from large pelagic finfish (must have skin attached for identification purposes); or
 - One day's bag limit of whole fish.
- Shifting the timing of the Abrolhos Islands baldchin groper spawning closure to be 1 October to 31 December (inclusive).
- Extending the timing of the Cockburn and Warnbro Sounds pink snapper spawning closure to be 1 August to 31 January (inclusive).

Changes for charter fishers

From 1 February 2023, the charter fishery is subject to the same supporting measures as the recreational sector, except the demersal scalefish boat limit

From 1 July 2023, the following primary measures will commence for charter fishers:

- A demersal scalefish tag system for the charter fishery (one tag = one fish)
- Charter fishery open 12 months of the year (not including spawning closures).

Changes for commercial fishers

On 1 January 2023, the following changes will commence:

- Total allowable catch for the West Coast Demersal Scalefish Interim Managed Fishery will be reduced by 50 per cent.

On 1 February 2023, the following changes will commence:

- Voluntary Fisheries Adjustment Scheme to buy back West Coast Demersal Scalefish Interim Managed Fishery permits and entitlement.
- Removal of size limits for WA dhufish, baldchin groper and breaksea cod to reduce barotrauma
- Extending the timing of the Cockburn and Warnbro Sounds pink snapper spawning closure to be 1 August to 31 January (inclusive).
- Shifting the timing of the Abrolhos Islands baldchin groper spawning closure to be 1 October to 31 December (inclusive).
- Commercial fishing will remain closed along the Perth metro coast, from Lancelin to south of Mandurah.

Investing in recovery

We are investing **\$10 million** to support and monitor the recovery of west coast demersal scalefish stocks.

Key initiatives to be funded include:

- Voluntary buyback of commercial fishing licences
- Enhanced monitoring and research including digital reporting
- Expanding the juvenile pink snapper restocking program
- Expanding the State-wide Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) program
- A support package for charter operators to diversify tourism experiences.
- An expanded education and awareness program

Further information can be found at:

- ▶ www.fish.wa.gov.au
- ▶ www.wa.gov.au