

FAQ's

What species are included in the West Coast demersal scalefish closures?

A list of all demersal scalefish species which cannot be taken during the closures is contained in the Recreational fishing guide, see fish.wa.gov.au/guide

Do all demersal scalefish have an individual bag limit of two in the West Coast Bioregion?

A mixed species daily bag limit of two demersal scalefish applies to all species, except for coral trout, coronation trout and western blue groper which still have an individual bag limit of one.

What can I fish for during the demersal closures?

You can continue to fish all year round in the West Coast Bioregion for nearshore and estuarine finfish species (such as herring and whiting), large pelagic species (such as mackerel and mahi mahi), as well invertebrate species such as squid, octopus and rock lobster.

Do the demersal scalefish closures apply to shore based line fishers?

No, shore based line fishers can fish for demersal scalefish in the West Coast Bioregion all year round.

Be aware that spearfishing (from a boat, or from shore), and fishing from a kayak, or similar vessels are not permitted during the demersal scalefish closure.

Please note that the Cockburn and Warnbro Sounds pink snapper spawning closure and Abrolhos Islands baldchin groper spawning closure applies to all fishers, including recreational (including shore based), commercial, and charter fishers.

Will licence fees be revised?

No, the Recreational Fishing from a Boat Licence (RFBL) is required for state-wide boat fishing and provides opportunities to explore a wide range of recreational fishing experiences available in Western Australia in addition to fishing for demersal scalefish in the West Coast Bioregion.

What are the implementation dates and when will the management changes be reviewed?

- All recreational measures: 1 February 2023
- Charter quota system: 1 July 2023 (in line with licensing period)
- Commercial fishing hours reduction: 1 January 2023 (in line with licensing period)

In accordance with the Harvest Strategy, two review processes will assess the success of new management arrangements.

- **Every year**, each sector's catch will be reviewed against total catch limits.
- **Every three years**, following a stock assessment, a more detailed review will be undertaken to determine if the resource is on track for recovery or if further management action is required.

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For more West Coast demersal information, visit fish.wa.gov.au/demersal

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New fishing rules in the West Coast Bioregion



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From 1 February 2023 management changes have been implemented to assist the recovery of demersal scalefish in the West Coast Bioregion.

The West Coast Bioregion runs from Black Point, east of Augusta, to the Zuytdorp Cliffs, north of Kalbarri (all land and water south of 27° S and west of 115° 30' E).



What are the main rule changes?

Recreational

- The current two-month demersal scalefish closure extended to six months*, from:
 - 1 February to 31 March (inclusive);
 - 1 August to the beginning of the September/October school holidays each year (i.e. 22 Sept 2023); and
 - end of the September/October school holidays each year (i.e. 9 Oct 2023) to 15 December (inclusive).

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

- A boat limit of four demersal scalefish.

Recreational and Charter

- A mixed species daily bag limit of two demersal scalefish, including dhufish (except coral trout, coronation trout and western blue groper daily bag limit of one).
- Removal of dhufish boat limit, an individual angler can catch up to two dhufish.
- A maximum of one bait or lure per line when recreationally fishing for demersal scalefish in the West Coast Bioregion.
- Abrolhos Islands:
 - daily bag limit of one demersal scalefish;
 - finfish possession limit of:
 - 5kg of fillets from any species, plus 5kg of fillets from large pelagic finfish (must have skin attached for identification purposes); OR
 - one day's bag limit of whole fish.

Charter

On 1 July 2023, a demersal scalefish catch quota system will commence in the West Coast Bioregion. This will allow charter fishing for demersal scalefish for 12 months of the year (except for spawning closures) while managing catch to a sustainable level.

Commercial

- Total allowable catch for the commercial scalefish sector reduced by 50%.
- Reduced fishing hours for the West Coast Demersal Scalefish (Line) Fishery (commenced 1 January 2023).
- Voluntary Fisheries Adjustment Scheme to buy back West Coast Demersal Scalefish (Line) Fishery entitlement.

Supporting measures for all sectors:

On 1 February 2023, the following changes commenced:

- Removal of size limits for dhufish, baldchin groper and breaksea cod.
 - Note:** applies statewide
- Extend the timing of the Cockburn and Warnbro Sounds pink snapper spawning closure to occur from 1 August to 31 January (inclusive).
- Shift the timing of the Abrolhos Islands baldchin groper spawning closure to occur from 1 October to 31 December (inclusive).
- We are investing \$10 million to support and monitor the recovery of west coast demersal scalefish stocks.

"These changes, supported by the science, will help meet the reduced catch limit of 375 tonnes to get recovery of demersal scalefish stocks back on track."