Recreational fishing guide 2023

Includes Statewide bag and size limits for Western Australia, and Recreational Fishing from Boat Licence information.
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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 around 620,000 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

Please contact us to request information in alternative formats.
Changes to the rules – 1 February 2023

The following rule changes are designed to provide greater protection of our vulnerable demersal scalefish stocks in the West Coast Bioregion and assist in recovering stocks by 2030.

- A maximum of one bait or lure attached to a line can be used when fishing for demersal scalefish in the West Coast Bioregion.
- Extend the timing of the pink snapper spawning closure in Cockburn and Warnbro Sounds from 1 August to 31 January (inclusive).
- Realign the baldchin groper spawning closure at the Abrolhos Islands from 1 October to 31 December (inclusive).

Abrolhos Islands:
The following changes to bag and possession limits at the Abrolhos Islands contribute to the recovery of demersal scalefish stocks in the West Coast Bioregion;

- bag limit of one demersal scalefish
- possession limit of:
  - 5 kg of fillets from any species, plus 5 kg of fillets from large pelagic finfish. All fillets must have skin attached for identification purposes; OR
  - one day’s bag limit of whole fish.

Note: this does not apply to land-based line fishers, charter fishers, or commercial fishers.

- Demersal scalefish boat limit of four (excludes charter boats).
- Bag limit of two WA dhufish within the mixed species bag limit of two demersal scalefish in the West Coast Bioregion.
- Remove the WA dhufish boat limit.
- Remove size limits for WA dhufish, baldchin groper and breaksea cod.

Note: the west coast demersal scalefish boat limit applies within the Abrolhos Islands Fish Habitat Protection Area (FHPA). If you fillet your demersal scalefish, the boat possession limit still applies, and two fillets of fish equal one whole fish.

* to 28 March in 2024 to accommodate Easter
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 protected 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 ‘flick’ 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 not to return a fish 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 alive 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.

To minimise the effects of barotrauma, ‘prevention is better than cure’. To avoid catching undersize or excess fish, stop fishing once you’ve reached your bag or boat limit. Demersal fish species are particularly susceptible to barotrauma; and mortality levels as a result of barotrauma are known to increase with depth. Minimum size limits no longer apply to WA dhufish, baldchin groper and breaksea cod for this reason.

If you need to release a demersal fish, 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.

Shark depredation and mitigation

Shark depredation (or bite-offs) occur when a shark partially or completely consumes a fish caught by fishing gear before it can be landed. Shark bite-offs can have detrimental economic and social impacts on commercial, charter and recreational fishers across WA and developing mitigation measures is complex.

Some ways you can mitigate bite-offs:

• if depredation starts to occur, move fishing spots immediately.
• consider using deterrent devices to increase your chance of landing a fish.
• avoid areas known to be depredation hotspots as sharks can learn where to get an easy feed.
• use lures and jigs instead of bait as bait may attract more sharks.
• avoid catch and release fishing.
• don’t clean fish at sea, bring your fish waste back to land for composting.
Your licence fees at work

Each year, recreational fishing licence fees contribute about $8 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, education and compliance.

Recreational fishing initiatives funded from licence fees include:

- artificial reefs and Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs);
- restocking projects for marron, snapper and barramundi;
- the future fisheries leaders program;
- trout stocking;
- 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 to provide premium quality recreational fishing opportunities for small boat owners. Several have been installed throughout the state, all receiving funding from recreational fishing licence revenue.
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 with low or moderate post-release mortality to reach maturity to complete their breeding cycle.

Measure all fish with a size limit and return any undersize or otherwise protected fish to the water immediately upon capture, with the least possible injury (see ‘care for your catch’ on page 4).

Finfish categories
For bag and size limits, finfish are categorised according to their aquatic environment, although some finfish are present in multiple environments (see diagram below).

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 set netting).

For example, demersal scalefish in the West Coast Bioregion has a total mixed daily 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 scalefish)</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.

**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 (including tender vessels) at any one time. **This limit applies regardless of how long the vessel is at sea.**

Boat limits apply statewide for **blue swimmer crabs, mud crabs, squid, octopus, cuttlefish, greenlip/brownlip abalone, rock lobster and in the West Coast Bioregion for demersal scalefish.** 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 14–41 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 only take a daily bag limit. See pages 53–54 for information about other recreational fishing licence requirements.

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**Possession limits and transporting fish**
A possession limit is the maximum quantity of fish that a person may have in their control/ownership. Possession limits apply to all (see page 44), as well as rock lobster, marron and abalone (see bag and size limit tables).

Recreationally caught fish cannot be transported unaccompanied (see page 47).

**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 outlets.
# Demersal scalefish – bag and size limits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Minimum legal size</th>
<th>West Coast</th>
<th>Abrolhos Islands</th>
<th>South Coast, Gascoyne, North Coast Bioregions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baldchin groper <em>Choerodon rubescens</em></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuskfish <em>Choerodon</em> spp. (Pictured: Blackspot tuskfish)</td>
<td>Blackspot and blue tuskfish: 400 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barramundi cod <em>Cromileptes altivelis</em></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue morwong (queen snapper) <em>Nemadactylus valenciennesi</em></td>
<td>410 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockcods* Family Ephinephelidae and Serranidae (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 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>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Release weight required when line fishing for demersal scalefish – see page 6

* Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group.

**NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 53–54 for licence rules.

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**Boat limit of 4 applies in the West Coast Bioregion (Abrolhos Islands included)**

**TOTAL mixed species daily bag limit per fisher.** This is the combined number of demersal scalefish you can take (see page 11 for details).

**Closed season** - Applies to all demersal scalefish in the West Coast Bioregion unless otherwise excepted. Does not apply to land-based line fishing, charter or commercial fishers.

**Closed:** 1 Feb to 31 Mar (inclusive); 1 Aug to beginning of Sept/Oct school holidays; and end of Sept/Oct school holidays to 15 Dec (inclusive).

**Boat limit (excludes charter boats)**

**Individual species daily bag limit per fisher**

This is the maximum number of individual species you may take within your total mixed bag limit.

**Individual species daily bag limit**

This is the maximum number of individual species you may take within your total mixed bag limit.
### Demersal scalefish – bag and size limits (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Minimum legal size</th>
<th>West Coast</th>
<th>Abrolhos Islands</th>
<th>Other Bioregions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Coral trout**<sup>*</sup>  
*Plectropomus* spp.  
(Pictured top to bottom: Common coral trout, barcheek coral trout, vermicular cod) | 450 mm | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| **Coronation trout**  
*Variola* spp. | N/A | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| **Dhufish, West Australian**  
*Glaucosoma hebraicum* | N/A | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| **Boarfish**<sup>†</sup>  
Family Pentacerotidae (Pictured: Giant boarfish) | N/A | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| **Dory, John**<sup>†</sup>  
*Zeus faber* | N/A | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| **Dory, mirror**<sup>†</sup>  
*Zenopsis nebulosus* | N/A | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| **Emperors and seabream**<sup>*</sup>  
*Lethrinus* spp.  
All species including spangled emperor (pictured), red throat and Robinson’s seabream except grass emperor (black snapper) | Spangled: 410 mm  
Other emperor: 280 mm | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| **Emperor, grass** (black snapper/blue-lined emperor) *Lethrinus laticaudis* | 320 mm | 2 | 1 | 5 |
| **Foxfish**<sup>†</sup>  
*Bodianus* spp. | N/A | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| **Pigfish**<sup>†</sup>  
*Bodianus* spp. (Pictured: Goldspot pigfish) | N/A | 2 | 1 | 3 |

**NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 53–54 for licence rules.  
† May be taken during the closed season.

**Release weight required when line fishing for demersal scalefish – see page 6**

* Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group.
## Demersal scalefish – bag and size limits
### (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Minimum legal size</th>
<th>West Coast</th>
<th>Abrolhos Islands</th>
<th>Other Bioregions</th>
<th>TOTAL mixed species daily bag limit per fisher</th>
<th>Individual species daily bag limit</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>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bass groper</strong>&lt;br&gt; <em>Polyprion americanus</em></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></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>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bight redfish</strong>&lt;br&gt; (Nannygai, red snapper) – pictured, yelloweye redfish and swallowtail</td>
<td><strong>300 mm</strong>&lt;br&gt; <em>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 scalefish</em></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pearl perch</strong>&lt;br&gt; <em>Glaucosoma</em> spp. (other than <em>Glaucosoma hebraicum</em> – West Australian dhufish)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Snapper</strong> (Pink snapper)&lt;br&gt; <em>Chrysophrys auratus</em>&lt;br&gt; Additional rules apply – see pages 58–61 for details</td>
<td><strong>500 mm</strong>&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: <strong>410 mm</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(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><strong>Red emperor: 410 mm</strong>&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Western blue groper</strong>&lt;br&gt; <em>Achoerodus gouldii</em></td>
<td><strong>500 mm</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Release weight required when line fishing for demersal scalefish – see page 6
* Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group.

**NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 53–54 for licence rules.
## Large pelagic finfish – bag and size limits

**Statewide**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Minimum legal size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total mixed species daily bag limit per fisher</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is the combined number of large pelagic finfish you can take (see page 11 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Minimum legal size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amberjack</strong> <em>Seriola dumerili</em></td>
<td>600 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Samsonfish</strong> <em>Seriola hippos</em></td>
<td>600 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yellowtail kingfish</strong> <em>Seriola lalandi</em></td>
<td>600 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Great barracuda</strong> <em>Sphyraena barracuda</em></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cobia</strong> <em>Rachycentron canadum</em></td>
<td>750 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Barracouta (Gemfish)</strong> Family Gempylidae</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mackerel, grey</strong> <em>Scomberomorus semifasciatus</em></td>
<td>750 mm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Minimum legal size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mackerel, school</strong> <em>Scomberomorus queenslandicus</em></td>
<td>500 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mackerel, shark</strong> <em>Grammatorcynus bicarinatus</em></td>
<td>500 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mackerel, Spanish</strong> <em>Scomberomorus commerson</em></td>
<td>900 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mackerel, spotted</strong> <em>Scomberomorus munroi</em></td>
<td>500 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mahi Mahi</strong> <em>(dolphinfish)</em> <em>Coryphaena spp.</em></td>
<td>500 mm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Billfish** *(marlins, sailfish, spearfish)* Family Istiophoridae

(Pictured: Blue marlin)

**Individual species daily bag limit = 1**

* Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 53–54 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>Swordfish</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Trevally, golden</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Xiphias gladius</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gnathanodon speciosus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual species</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>daily bag limit = 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharks and rays</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tuna, big eye</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Class Chondrichthyes</em></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Thunnus obesus</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Pictured: Gummy shark)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West and South</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tuna, dogtooth</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coast Bioregions:</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Gymnosarda unicolor</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whaler sharks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>max. size 700 mm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(interdorsal fin length†)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trevally, giant</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Tuna, longtail</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Caranx ignoblis</em></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Thunnus tonggol</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 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.

† 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.

**NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 53–54 for licence rules.

### TOTAL mixed species daily bag limit per fisher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Maximum size limit

- 700 mm maximum size limit

- Insertion of the second (rear) dorsal fin.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Minimum legal size</th>
<th>Individual species daily bag limit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **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 alelunga** | 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 |

*Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group. NOTE: If fishing from a boat, see page 53–54 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><strong>Flathead</strong> †</td>
<td>300 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Platycephalus spp.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flounder</strong> †</td>
<td>250 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families Pleuronectidae, Bothidae and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paralichthyidae</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Pictured: Smalltoothed flounder)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Javelinfish</strong> †</td>
<td>300 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Haemulidae (Pictured: Spotted javelin fish)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sweetlips</strong> †</td>
<td>300 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Haemulidae (Pictured: Painted sweetlips)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leatherjacket</strong> †</td>
<td>250 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Monacanthidae</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Pictured: Six-spined leatherjacket)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mulloway</strong> (caught primarily south of Exmouth Gulf)</td>
<td>500 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Argyrosomus japonicas</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black jewfish</strong></td>
<td>700 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Protonibea diacanthus</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mangrove jack</strong></td>
<td>300 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Lutjanus argentimaculatus</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pike, longfin</strong></td>
<td>300 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Dinolestes lewini</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sea sweep</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Scorpius aequipinnis</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Snook</strong> and striped barracuda</td>
<td>300 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sphyraena novaehollandiae</em> and <em>S. obtusata</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 53–54 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><strong>Stripy snapper</strong> Lutjanus carponotatus</td>
<td>300 mm</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tailor</strong> Pomatomus saltatrix</td>
<td>300 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Threadfin, king</strong> Polydactylus macrochir</td>
<td>450 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Threadfin, other species</strong> Family Polynemidae – other than Polydactylus macrochir (Pictured: Blue threadfin)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trevally and queenfish</strong> (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)</td>
<td><strong>Silver trevally:</strong> 250 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tripletail</strong> Lobotes surinamensis</td>
<td>300 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Western Australian salmon</strong> Arripis truttaceus</td>
<td>300 mm</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whiting, King George</strong> Sillaginodes punctata</td>
<td>280 mm</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wrasse (Subfamily Labrinae) and parrotfish</strong> (Subfamily Scarinae) (all other species not specifically mentioned in these tables) (Pictured top to bottom: female western king wrasse, male western king wrasse)</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 53–54 for licence rules.
## Freshwater finfish – bag and size limits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Minimum legal size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL mixed species daily bag limit per fisher</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong> Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is the combined number of freshwater finfish you can take (see page 11 for details).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Trout, rainbow** (pictured top), **brown** (pictured bottom)  
  *Oncorhynchus mykiss* and *Salmo trutta*  
  (see our *Recreational freshwater angling guide* for more details)  
  **300 mm**

- **Catfish and freshwater cobbler**  
  Families Plotosidae and Ariidae  
  (see our *Recreational freshwater angling guide* for more details)  
  **N/A**

- **Striped perch** (all freshwater species)  
  Family Terapontidae (Pictured: **Sooty grunter** *)Hephaestus fuliginosus*): **250 mm**

**NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 53–54 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

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.

30

No minimum size limits apply to these species. This category excludes baitfish and feral freshwater species.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species includes</th>
<th>Individual species daily bag limit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australian herring</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Arripis georgianus</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blue mackerel</strong></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Scomber australasicus</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whiting (excluding King George)</strong></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Family Sillaginidae (Pictured: Yellowfin whiting)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Garfish</strong></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Family Hemiramphidae</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Pictured top to bottom: southern garfish, robust garfish)</td>
<td>Perth metropolitan southern garfish closure – see page 61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mullet</strong></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Family Mugilidae (Pictured: Yelloweye mullet)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bag limit applies to each individual species in this group. NOTE: If fishing from a boat, see page 53–54 for licence rules.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Baitfish

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

*NOTE: If fishing from a boat, see page 53–54 for licence rules.*
### Crustaceans – bag and size limits

<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</em> spp.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>9 litres</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crab, blue swimmer</strong> <em>Portunus armatus</em>; and <em>P. pelagicus</em> (See pages 53–54 &amp; 56-57 and our recreational crabbing guides for more details about closed seasons and other specific rules that apply to these species)</td>
<td>127 mm (carapace width)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40 (At least two people must be on board)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>West Coast: 10 (At least two people must be on board)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Geographe Bay: 10 of which no more than 5 may be female</td>
<td>Geographe Bay: 20 of which no more than 10 may be female (At least two people must be on board)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Swan and Canning Rivers: 5</td>
<td>Swan and Canning Rivers: 20 (At least four people must be on board)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crab, mud</strong> (all species combined) <em>Scylla</em> spp. (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</em> spp. (See our <a href="#">Recreational fishing for marron guide</a> for more details about closed seasons, possession limits and other specific rules that apply to these species)</td>
<td>80 mm (carapace length) Trophy waters: 90 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prawns</strong> (all species combined)** (Pictured: <a href="#">Western king prawn</a>) (See page 51 for more details)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>9 litres</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*# Closed seasons apply. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 53–54 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>Pest species, including <em>yabbies</em>, have no bag or boat limit. It is recommended that they are not returned to the water but are humanely euthanased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rock lobster</strong>&lt;br&gt;(<em>Panulirus</em> and <em>Jasus</em> spp.)</td>
<td>76 mm&lt;br&gt;<em>Southern rock lobster</em>:&lt;br&gt;98.5 mm</td>
<td>8&lt;br&gt;of which no more than 4 may be tropical lobsters.&lt;br&gt;24&lt;br&gt;of which no more than 12 may be tropical lobsters&lt;br&gt;(At least three people must be on board)</td>
<td>10</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></td>
<td>Pest species, including <em>yabbies</em>, have no bag or boat limit. Do not return to the water.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Closed seasons apply. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 53–54 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><strong>Abalone, Roe’s</strong> <em>Haliotis roei</em> (See our <a href="#">Recreational fishing for abalone guide</a> about closed seasons, possession limits and other 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)<em>#</em> (See our <a href="#">Recreational fishing for abalone guide</a> about closed seasons, possession limits and other 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 pips</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: Native oyster) 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>*#* Class Echinoidea</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 and 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 mentioned above, including snails, periwinkle, limpet, turban, mud whelk and trochus (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 53–54 for licence rules.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protected species</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grey nurse shark</strong></td>
<td><em>Carcharias taurus</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White shark</strong></td>
<td><em>Carcharodon carcharias</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speartooth shark</strong></td>
<td><em>Glyphis spp.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whale shark</strong></td>
<td><em>Rhincodon typus</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sawfish</strong></td>
<td><em>Family Pristidae</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rays and skates</strong></td>
<td><em>Hamelin Bay Protection Area only</em></td>
<td>All ray and skate species are protected in Hamelin Bay.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black stingray</strong> (left)</td>
<td><em>Dasyatis thetidis</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>smooth stingray</strong> (right)</td>
<td><em>Dasyatis brevicaudata</em></td>
<td>Protected from recreational fishing in the South Coast and West Coast Bioregions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coral and live rock</strong></td>
<td><em>Order Scleractinia</em></td>
<td>(Pictured: <em>Goniopora tenuidens</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potato rockcod</strong></td>
<td><em>Epinephelus tukula</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Queensland groper</strong></td>
<td><em>Epinephelus lanceolatus</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Humphead Maori wrasse</strong></td>
<td><em>Cheilinus undulatus</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Common seadragon</strong></td>
<td><em>Phyllopterxy taeniolatus</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leafy seadragon</strong></td>
<td><em>Phycodurus eques</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Native freshwater fish species</strong></td>
<td>(from top to bottom)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balston’s pygmy perch</strong></td>
<td><em>Nannatherina balstoni</em>, <em>western trout minnow</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Galaxias truttae</em>, <em>mud minnow</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Galaxiella munda</em>,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>black-stripe minnow</strong></td>
<td><em>Galaxiella nigrostriata</em>,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pouch lamprey</strong></td>
<td><em>Geotria australis</em>,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>salamanderfish</strong></td>
<td><em>Lepidogalaxias salamandroides</em>,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Nannoperca pygmaea</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></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 diseases; and
• fish kills.

You can also submit a report online to crimestopperswa.com.au/organisation-report/fishwatch/

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 or make a report online, note:

• How many people you saw.
• Who they were. Did you hear/know any of their names?

Aquatic pests, diseases and fish kills

To help keep WA’s waters pest and disease free, please practice 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, through WA PestWatch on our website, via the free WA PestWatch app, our Biosecurity Branch on 1300 374 731 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.)

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.
Finfish possession limits

The finfish possession limit is the maximum quantity of finfish – either whole or in pieces – that a person may have in their control/ownership. The following general finfish possession limit applies anywhere throughout WA, except in the specific situations outlined on pages 44–45.

• 10 kg of fillets from any species, plus 10 kg of fillets of large pelagic finfish such as mackerel, tuna and shark (must have skin attached for identification purposes); OR

• 10 kg of fillets and one day’s bag limit of whole fish or fish trunks; OR

• 2 days’ bag limit of whole fish or fish trunks.

Note: You may accumulate up to 20 kg of fillets of any species (no skin required) at your principal place of residence.

Exceptions to the general finfish possession limit

Overnight charter trip
The finfish possession limit if you are on, or have just completed, an extended fishing tour involving overnight accommodation on a charter boat and the fish were taken during the course of the tour, is;

• 20 kg of fillets of any species; OR

• 10 kg of fillets and one day’s bag limit of whole fish or fish trunks; OR

• 2 days’ bag limit of whole fish or fish trunks.

Note: All fish must be labelled with the person’s full name, the name of the charter boat and the date that the tour ended.

Abrolhos Islands
The finfish possession limit at the Abrolhos Islands (including charter passengers) is;

• 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.

Note: the west coast demersal scalefish boat limit applies within the Abrolhos Islands FHPA. If you fillet your demersal scalefish, the boat possession limit still applies, and two fillets of fish equal one whole fish.

Shark Bay’s Freycinet Estuary
The finfish possession limit in the Freycinet Estuary Management zone is;

• 5 kg of 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.

Lalang-garram / Camden Sound Marine Park
The finfish possession limit in the Jungulu Special Purpose Zone is;

• 1 whole fish; OR

• 2 fillets of fish.
**Other information**

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

For storage purposes, a large pelagic fish can be cut into two pieces and still be considered one whole fish.

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 14–41). 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, or if the fish were taken as part of an extended charter fishing tour, the fish must be clearly labelled with the name of the owner(s), the name of the charter boat and the date the tour ended if applicable.

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 (unless the fish were taken as part of an extended charter fishing tour - see above).

**Landing filleted or processed fish**

Fish can be carried at sea and landed:
- as fillets with skin on;
- trunked with skin on; 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, on estuaries and on rivers, and landed whole (although can be gutted and gilled).

If filleting your fish at sea, two fillets or pieces of fish equals one whole fish for the purpose of enforcing bag and boat limits.

**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, (including rock lobsters, crabs, prawns, marron and abalone etc.) cannot be transported by commercial couriers (or by any other person). You must accompany your fish if transporting it by land, sea or air.
Cooking and storing recreationally caught fish on commercial premises

Recreationally caught fish can be stored and cooked at commercial premises that provide accommodation and meals, such as resorts and hotels. This allows tourists and holiday-makers who are staying at the premises 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 46 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.

Crabs, prawns and mollusc

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 – using hand-held rigid (e.g. wire) scoop nets. These 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.
Cleaning crabs

It is recommended to remove the head, guts (mustard) and gills from blue swimmer crabs caught in the Swan and Canning rivers before freezing, cooking or eating them, to prevent potential for a biotoxin produced by Alexandrium, a type of alga.

Toxic algal bloom events have been detected in the Swan and Canning rivers at elevated levels previously, and could become an annual occurrence. Alexandrium cysts exist in the rivers sediment and climatic conditions can activate their next life stage, so a bloom can occur relatively quickly.

Consumption of affected blue swimmer crabs may be dangerous. If you become ill after eating crabs or mussels, seek medical attention.

Visit fish.wa.gov.au/alerts for more information.

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.

![Identification diagram of green and brown mud crabs]

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.

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.

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**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 53 for details on applying for or renewing your licence.

Closed seasons and protected areas

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

Demersal scalefish
Demersal scalefish live on or near the ocean floor usually in depths of more than 20 metres, although they can be found in other areas.

West Coast Bioregion:
Closed: 1 February to 31 March (inclusive); 1 August to the beginning of the September / October school holidays; (22 September 2023) and end of the September / October school holidays (9 October 2023) to 15 December (inclusive).
The take, possession on a boat or landing of certain demersal scalefish (listed on pages 14–19) is prohibited within the West Coast Bioregion (north of Kalbarri to east of Augusta) during this period. If you accidentally catch a demersal scalefish from a boat in this area during the closed season you must return it to the water as soon as possible. You may not take, possess or land demersal scalefish during the closure from kayak or similar vessel or by spearfishing (including shore-based spearfishing). This closure does not apply to land-based line fishers, charter fishers, or commercial fishers.

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 scalefish closure is one of several management measures designed to manage the recreational catch to sustainable levels. This measure was required following independently reviewed research that showed demersal species, like dhufish, snapper (pink snapper) and baldchin groper, were not recovering fast enough. The seasonal closure and other management measures will be periodically reviewed as new stock assessment and catch information becomes available.

**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.

**Swan River to Minninup Beach:**
Closed season 1 September – 30 November (inclusive).
All waters, rivers and estuaries from the Swan and Canning rivers to Minninup Beach (15km south of Bunbury) are closed to all crab fishing between 1 September and 30 November each year (see map on page 57).
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.
**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 Sound’s pink snapper spawning closure has been extended from 1 August 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 59).

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.

This closure applies to all recreational, charter and commercial fishers.

**Note:** The take or landing of pink snapper in the Cockburn and Warnbro Sounds is also prohibited during the West Coast Bioregion closed season for demersal scalefish (see page 55).
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. Being in possession of or landing pink snapper in the Shark Bay areas is not permitted during the closure.

The following closed seasons apply in the Gascoyne Coast Bioregion:

- **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).

Baldchin groper

**Abrolhos Islands:**

Closed season 1 October - 31 December (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. This closure applies to all recreational, charter and commercial fishers.

**Note:** The take or landing of baldchin groper at the Abrolhos Islands is also prohibited during the West Coast Bioregion closed season for demersal scalefish (see page 55).

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

Fish habitat protection areas and other closed areas are managed by DPIRD.

Inshore marine reserves are managed by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA). Information is available from DBCA offices and their website at dbca.wa.gov.au

Offshore marine parks are managed by Parks Australia and information is available from their website at parksaustralia.gov.au

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 one bait or lure on each line in the West Coast Bioregion when fishing for demersal scalefish, three baits or lures on each line in all other areas and for other categories of fish.

- **Shore-based fishers** may use a maximum of two fishing lines. Rods and lines must be attended.

- **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. It is also illegal to interfere with any other type of fishing or aquaculture gear not owned by the person. 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 42).

- **Spearfishing** – generally allowed in ocean waters, except in some marine protected areas, around dive wrecks and during the demersal scalefish closures in the West Coast Bioregion. Spearfishing is prohibited in the Ningaloo Marine Park between Tantabiddi Well and Winderabandi Point. Spearfishing for rockcod (Families Epinephelidae and Serranidae) and wrasse (Subfamily Labrinae) is also prohibited in all other waters of the Ningaloo Marine Park. 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 (fish.wa.gov.au/Documents/recreational_fishing/licences/rec_licence_netting.pdf) for details, available from select DPIRD offices or the website.

- **Release weights** – required if fishing by line from a boat for demersal scalefish species statewide (see page 6).
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/opera house traps or ‘pots’ of any kind (except lobster pots, octopus trigger traps and complying drop net for marron and crabs – see the website for further information);
- use berley containing any blood, flesh, offal or skin from a mammal or from a bird;
- use dredges;
- obstruct any bay, inlet, river, creek or any tidal or inland waters so that fish are enclosed, left stranded, destroyed or wasted;
- carry on, or in, a boat, any 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

Make sure you are properly prepared when fishing from a boat.

Check your boat is seaworthy and that the motor and other equipment is in good working order. Check your safety gear is correct and accessible, including 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. It is strongly suggested lifejackets are worn while on the water as it increases the chance of survival in an emergency.

Note: New rules for recreational boating are being introduced in 2023. Check with the Department of Transport for the latest information.

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 of your intended trip plan;
- notify them immediately if plans change during the voyage;
• always report in when you return; OR
• log on and log off with the local volunteer marine rescue.

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

**Abalone safety**

Fishing for abalone can also be dangerous. Study the waves before you get into the water and keep an eye on the swell while fishing – it is easy to be injured on reefs.

Wear protective footwear and a wetsuit or light clothing that will not become too heavy when wet.

If you are unsure whether conditions are too rough, don’t go in. For more safety tips, visit mybeach.com.au/safety-rescue-services/coastal-recreation/abalone/

**Dive safety**

Diving on compressed air or free diving is a popular way to fish for species such as rock lobster, abalone and finfish. Follow these tips when diving to ensure you come home safely.
• Always dive with a buddy and never dive alone.
• Know your own ability and don’t take unnecessary risks.
• Use a dive flag.
• Watch out for boats and jet skis.
• Wear a shark deterrent device.

More important advice about dive safety is also available from recfishwest.org.au

**Shark safety**

**Switch on your Sea Sense** and stay informed of shark activity information by downloading the SharkSmart WA app or checking the SharkSmart website and Surf Life Saving WA Twitter feed.

Help others stay informed, report shark sightings to Water Police on 9442 8600.

Shark sightings are posted to SharkSmart and sent to land managers so beaches can be closed if needed.

Follow our Sea Sense safety tips when using the water.

Remember, not all sharks are tagged or sightings reported. Visit sharksmart.com.au for more information.
Beach Emergency Numbers
The Beach Emergency Numbers (BEN) system – is a coding system that aims to improve emergency response times by installing signs with unique codes at public beach access points. These signs provide specific location information, vital when emergency services are deployed in the event of a shark sighting, attack or other beach emergencies.

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 fish.wa.gov.au 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). 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.
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.

Go to fish.wa.gov.au/rules for rules covering more than 180 fish species. Use the interactive maps to discover information about marine protected areas and common species by region.

The free Recfishwest app provides access to the rules even if you’re out of phone range and has an easy fish identification feature.

Grab a copy or download from fish.wa.gov.au/guide

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.
Visit our website to find out about some great fishing initiatives.

recfishwest.org.au

Check out our, free, upgraded fishing rules app!
Contact us

1300 374 731 (1300 DPIRD1)
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Albany Office
444 Albany Highway,
Albany WA 6330
(08) 9845 7400

Broome Office
401 Port Drive,
Broome WA 6725
(08) 9193 8600

Busselton Office
48A Bussell Highway,
Busselton WA 6280
(08) 9752 2152

Carnarvon Office
262 South River Road,
Carnarvon WA 6701
(08) 9956 3333

Fremantle Office
14 Capo D’Orlando Drive,
South Fremantle WA 6162
(08) 9432 8000

Geraldton Office
20 Gregory Street,
Geraldton WA 6530
(08) 9956 8555

Hillarys Office
39 Northside Drive,
Hillarys WA 6025
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107 Breakwater Parade,
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