



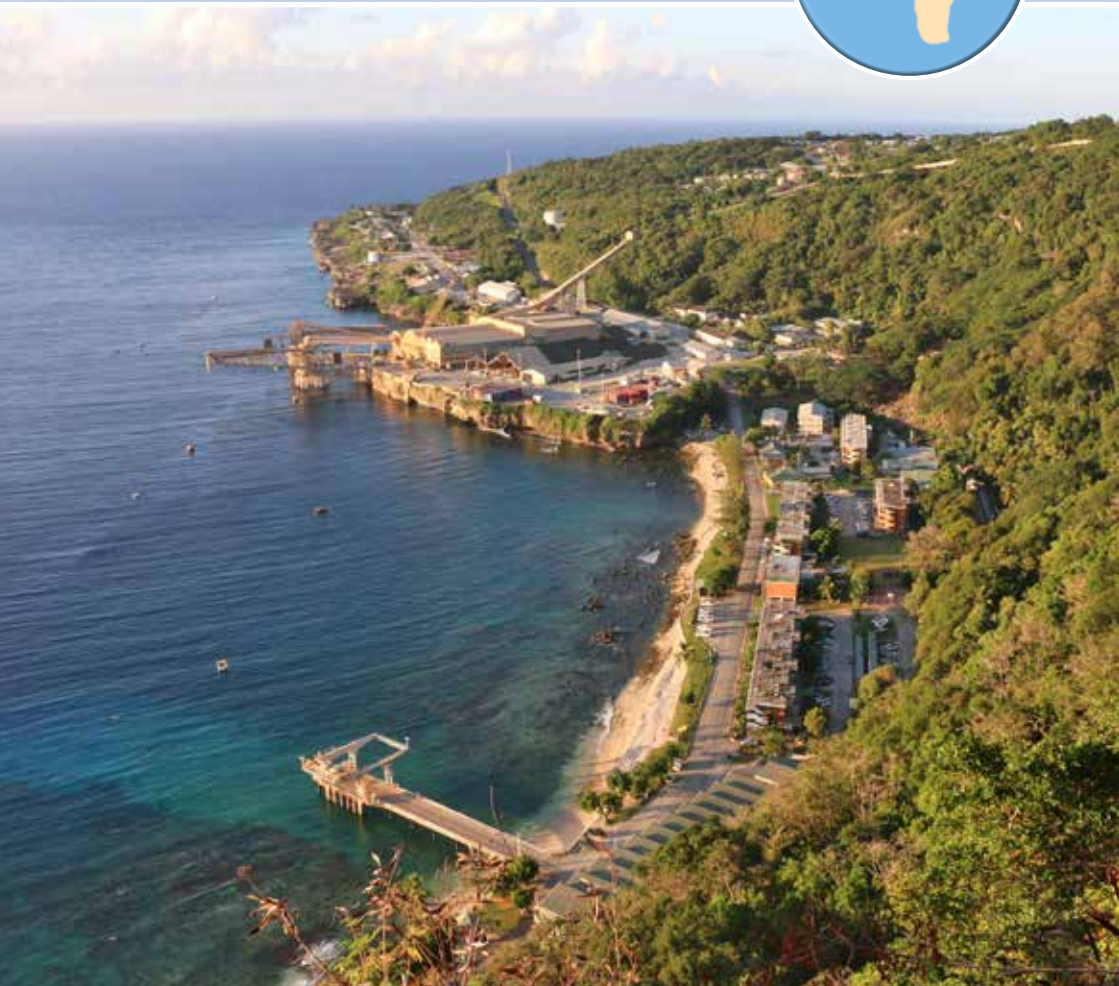
Government of Western Australia  
Department of Fisheries



Australian Government  
Department of Infrastructure  
and Regional Development

# Proposed rules for sustainable fishing

*Christmas Island*



## What's new?

The Department of Fisheries has entered into a new Service Delivery Arrangement with the Commonwealth for the period 2015 to 2019, and will be focusing on introducing recreational fishing rules.

New legislation that establishes special rules to ensure sustainable recreational fishing on Christmas Island has been drafted, and will be provided to the Commonwealth Minister for consideration.

A Fisheries and Marine Officer, Wade Kingsley, will be visiting Christmas Island to explain the rules and to make sure the community understands their importance for the future of fishing on the Island.

Wade will be happy to answer any questions you may have about the fishing rules, and is looking forward to meeting members of the Christmas Island community. Please feel free to say “Hi” and have a chat when you see him on the island.

## Fish for the future

The Western Australian Department of Fisheries is responsible for managing fisheries in the Indian Ocean Territories under an agreement with the Commonwealth Government.

The Department's role is to ensure that fish stocks at Christmas Island remain sustainable so that the Christmas Island community can continue to enjoy recreational fishing into the future.

The proposed recreational fishing rules take community views into account and have been developed in consultation with island community members.

The fish populations in island waters are limited in size, and depend for their abundance on local breeding populations or the irregular migration of adult fish and drifting eggs and larvae from populations elsewhere in the Indian and Pacific oceans. Some fish and eggs follow ocean currents many thousands of kilometres to reach the island, and only the lucky and the toughest survive the journey. In some years none survive, while in others some may make the journey successfully.

The Department believes that the trust and support of the island community for the rules is essential if recreational fishing at Christmas Island is to have a bright future. These rules aim to manage the amount of fish that can be taken by individuals at any one time or transported off the island.

If the island's fish stocks are overfished, it may take many decades for the fish populations to recover – if at all.

The proposed recreational fishing rules are set out in this brochure. Keep a copy of this brochure in your fishing bag, tackle box or car as a handy reference. Remember – the future of recreational fishing is in your hands.

## Proposed fishing rules

The proposed recreational fishing rules include:

- Bag limits
- Protected species
- Filleting at sea
- Fishing gear controls
- Export possession limits

## Bag limits

A 'bag limit' is the amount of fish that one person may catch and keep in one day (a 24-hour period, from midnight to midnight).

Bag limits are grouped (combined) to apply to different types of fish, according to their life history and place in the oceanic web of life. For example, surface-dwelling fish that are free-swimming and often migratory are known as 'pelagic' species. These fish are generally caught by trolling or surface fishing using lures or floating baits. They include fish such as wahoo, tuna, and marlin.

Bottom-dwelling fish such as cod, snappers and trevally are known as 'demersal' species. These fish are usually resident and tend to live in a limited area. They are generally caught using heavy sinkers and pater-noster ('dropper') rigs with bait or soft plastics.

Bag limits may apply to a combined group of fish or a single species within a group.

For example, there will be a combined daily bag limit of four pelagic fish, which could be made up of a maximum of one dogtooth tuna plus three other pelagic fish (e.g. two wahoo and one mahi mahi).

Crustaceans will be considered as a separate group.

There is no limit for species not listed in the tables.

## PELAGIC SPECIES

SPECIES	SCIENTIFIC NAME	SPECIES BAG LIMIT	COMBINED BAG LIMIT 4
<b>Wahoo</b>	<i>Acanthocybium solandri</i>		
<b>Tuna</b> (excluding dogtooth tuna)	<i>Thunnus</i> sp		
<b>Dogtooth tuna</b>	<i>Gymnosarda unicolour</i>	1	
<b>Mahi Mahi</b> (Dolphinfish)	<i>Coryphaena</i> spp.		
<b>Billfish</b> (including sailfish and marlin) and <b>Swordfish</b>	Families Istiophoridae and Xiphiidae		
<b>Barracuda</b>	Family Sphyraenidae		

## DEMERSAL SPECIES

SPECIES	SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMBINED BAG LIMIT 16
<b>Cod</b> combined (excluding coral trout and other protected species)	Family Epinephelidae	
<b>Snappers and emperors</b>	Family Lutjanidae and Family Lethrinidae	
<b>Sepat, red and black</b>	Family Berycidae and Family Bramidae	
<b>Trevally</b>	Family Carangidae	

## CRUSTACEAN SPECIES

SPECIES	SCIENTIFIC NAME	SPECIES BAG LIMIT
<b>Lobsters</b>	<i>Panulirus</i> spp.	4

## Totally protected species

### PROTECTED SPECIES

Protected species may not be taken, and if caught will need to be released back into the water immediately.


SPECIES	SCIENTIFIC NAME
<b>Coral trout</b>	<i>Plectropomus</i> spp.
<b>Humpheaded maori wrasse</b>	<i>Cheilinus undulates</i>
<b>Humpheaded parrotfish</b>	<i>Bolbometopon muricatum</i>
<b>White banded cod</b>	<i>Anyperodon leucogrammicus</i>
<b>Clams</b>	<i>Tridacna</i> spp.
<b>Sharks and rays</b>	Class Chondrichthyes
<b>Whale sharks</b>	<i>Rhincodon typus</i>
<b>Potato cod</b>	<i>Epinephelus tukula</i>
<b>Queensland groper</b>	<i>Epinephelus lanceolatus</i>
<b>Coral and live rock</b>	Order Scleractinia
<b>Berried</b> (egg-carrying) <b>crabs</b> and <b>lobster</b>	Subphylum Crustacea

## Filleting at sea

You will be able to carry fish at sea and land it:

- whole (can be gutted and gilled);
- trunked (i.e. with head and tail removed), with skin and scale on; or
- filleted, with skin and scale on.

The fish will need to be packaged so that it is easily accessible for identification. If frozen, it will also need to be packaged so that it can be identified without being thawed. This will not apply if you are on a boat and the fish is being consumed or being prepared for immediate consumption.

 **NOTE:** Two fillets are considered to be equal to one whole fish for the purpose of bag limits.

## Fishing gear controls

### *No set or haul net fishing*

Set and haul net fishing will be prohibited at Christmas Island.

### *Landing net*

Recreational fishers will be permitted to use a hand-held landing net (often used to collect flying fish) with a hoop or ring up to 1 m in diameter.

### *Throw (or cast) nets*

Recreational fishers will be permitted to use a throw (or cast) net. The throw (or cast) net must be no more than 3 m in radius, and have a mesh size of no more than 25 mm.

### *Rods and lines*

Shore-based recreational fishers will be able to use a maximum of two fishing lines. Rods and lines must be attended.

### *Fishing for lobster*

Fishers will be permitted to take lobster. However, they will not be allowed to use pointed instruments (e.g. gidgies, spearguns, fish hooks) to catch them.

### *Other prohibited fishing gear*

Recreational fishers will not be able to:

- use fish traps;
- use dredges;
- obstruct any bay, inlet or any waters so that fish are enclosed, left stranded, destroyed or wasted;

- be in possession of explosives or noxious substances on the waters of Christmas Island; or
- attach fish hooks to anchors, anchor lines or moorings.

### ***Spearfishing***

Spearfishing with the use of compressed air (such as scuba) will be prohibited in the waters around Christmas Island because spearfishing is a highly selective fishing method that can have a major impact on the sustainability of resident reef species.

All spearfishing is already prohibited in the waters of the Christmas Island National Park.

All spearfishing will also be prohibited in the waters of Flying Fish Cove from the jetty to Smith Point.

## **Export possession limits – Christmas Island airport**

The most important management goal is to ensure that fish stocks at Christmas Island remain sustainable. Exporting fish to other places results in enormous pressure on the limited stocks available. A limit on the type and quantity of seafood that can be taken off Christmas Island will help to keep fishing pressure at a reasonable level and ensure that the benefits from island fish stocks are enjoyed by those on Christmas Island.

The type and quantity of fish and seafood that a person may have in their possession at Christmas Island airport will be limited.

### ***Type of seafood – tuna and wahoo only***

While in the area of the Christmas Island airport the only type of seafood that a person will be allowed to have in their possession is tuna and wahoo.

You will not be permitted to have any other type of seafood including lobsters, crabs, snapper or any other types of fish.

### ***Quantity of seafood***

A person will not be allowed to have more than a total of 5 kg of tuna and wahoo combined in their possession at the airport.

When in the airport area, the fish must:

- have the skin attached;
- be packaged flat;

- be packaged so it is easily accessible for identification; and
- if frozen, be identifiable without being thawed.

**!** **Note:** These restrictions will not apply to fish caught by a licensed commercial fisher (you will need to show proof of purchase such as a receipt), aquacultured fish, and fish taken under an authority to fish for scientific purposes.

## Transporting of unaccompanied fish

Recreationally caught fish cannot be transported by commercial couriers or freight. If your recreationally caught fish is being moved by land, sea or air you must accompany your fish.

## Possession limits – Christmas Island (other than the airport)

The same possession limits that are in place on mainland Western Australia will also apply to the Indian Ocean Territories.

The maximum quantity of finfish – either whole or in pieces – that each person will be allowed to have in their possession (control/ownership) on Christmas Island (except at the airport) is:

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

This possession limit will not apply to commercially purchased fish (although you may be asked for proof of purchase).

## Recreationally caught fish may not be sold

You may not sell or barter fish to restaurants or other people unless you have a valid commercial fishing licence.

At Christmas Island there are three commercial fishers who have obtained a licence from the Department and have invested in commercial fishing boats.

There are arrangements in place, such as limits on their catch and reporting of their catch, to ensure the commercial catch at Christmas Island is within sustainable limits.

## Sanctuary areas for resident fish – a conversation for the future

The Department will be talking to the community about the need for closed areas to further protect demersal species at Christmas Island.

## No size limits, boat limits or licences

In recognition of the unique deep-water nature of Christmas Island fishing, and the need for island-specific recreational fishing management arrangements, no size limits for fish will apply at Christmas Island. However, the Department continues to strongly encourage fishers to release small-sized fish taken in shallow water so they can grow and reproduce before they are taken.

There will be no boat limits when fishing at Christmas Island, but each fisher must remain within their daily bag limit.

Fishing licences will not be required for recreational fishing in the territorial waters of Christmas Island.

## Further information

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### **NORTHERN REGIONAL OFFICE & BROOME DISTRICT OFFICE**

Port of Pearls House, 401 Port Drive  
Broome WA 6725

T: (08) 9193 8600

IndianOceanTerritories@fish.wa.gov.au

[www.fish.wa.gov.au/IOTs](http://www.fish.wa.gov.au/IOTs)

*Fish for the future*

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