On the cover
Aerial view of the Swan River, overlooking Point Walter. Over 137 fish species have been recorded in the river, of which 55 per cent are visitors from the ocean. It is a major nursery area for many marine fish species, blue swimmer crabs and king prawns.

Photo: Tourism Western Australia
Western Australia’s fisheries management strategies have one primary goal – *Fish for the future*. This means ensuring our fisheries are ecologically sustainable.

These strategies are part of an integrated approach to management that not only takes into account the impact of fishing by recreational, commercial and indigenous sectors – but also the effect of other human activities on the State’s ecosystems.

In Western Australia, all marine fishing is managed in four broad biological regions – the North Coast, Gascoyne Coast, West Coast and South Coast.

This publication provides a guide to the rules that apply to recreational fishing in the West Coast Bioregion – which runs from Black Point, east of Augusta, to the Zuytdorp Cliffs, north of Kalbarri (all land and water south of 27° South latitude and west of 115° 30' East longitude).
Research has revealed that key demersal species such as dhufish, pink snapper and baldchin groper are being overfished and catches need to be reduced by at least 50 per cent to ensure long-term sustainability.

The commercial sector has already delivered its catch reduction and it is now time for the recreational fishing community to play its part.

**New management changes for the recreational sector include:**

- New daily bag limit of two *High Risk* demersal scalefish and two pelagic fish. See page 5.
- Boat limit of two dhufish (six for charter boats).
- Compulsory possession of a ‘release weight’ when fishing for demersal scalefish. See page 10.

A review of the effectiveness of these measures was undertaken in late 2010.

**Boat limit for dhufish**

A boat limit of two dhufish applies in the West Coast Bioregion where two or more Recreational Fishing from Boat Licence holders are on board.

A boat limit of six dhufish applies on board a licensed charter boat.
### High Risk ‘Demersal’ Species

The West Coast Scalefish Closure applies to all species in this table – 15 October to 15 December (inclusive)

**Mixed daily bag limit – 2 per angler**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
<th>Minimum Legal Size</th>
<th>Bag Limit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cods</strong> (includes breaksea cod, harlequin fish, grey banded rock cod and Chinaman cod)</td>
<td>Family Serranidae</td>
<td>Epinephelus sp. (such as malabar cod and estuary cod) over 1,000 mm or 30 kg are protected (except grey banded rock cod)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaksea</td>
<td></td>
<td>Breaksea – 300 mm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estuary</td>
<td></td>
<td>Estuary – 400 mm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coral trout and coronation trout – combined</strong></td>
<td><em>Plectopomus</em> spp. and <em>Variola louti</em></td>
<td>Coral – 450 mm</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dhufish, Western Australian</strong></td>
<td><em>Glaucosoma hebraicum</em></td>
<td>500 mm</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Boat limit - 2 (6 on charter)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emperors (“nor’ west snapper”)</strong></td>
<td>Family Lethrinidae</td>
<td>Spangled – 410 mm Blue-lined (black snapper) – 320 mm Other emperors – 280 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foxfish and pigfish</strong></td>
<td><em>Bodianus</em> spp.</td>
<td>Not applicable.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Groper, baldchin and tuskfish</strong></td>
<td><em>Choerodon</em> spp.</td>
<td>Baldchin, blackspot &amp; blue tuskfish – 400 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Groper, western blue</strong></td>
<td><em>Achoerodus gouldii</em></td>
<td>500 mm. Protected in the Rottnest Island Reserve</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hapuku/bass groper and trevella</strong></td>
<td><em>Polyprion</em> spp. and Family Centrolophidae</td>
<td>Not applicable.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parrot fish</strong></td>
<td>Family Scaridae</td>
<td>Not applicable.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pink snapper</strong></td>
<td><em>Pagrus auratus</em></td>
<td>410 mm 500 mm (South of 31° degrees south latitude, just north of Lancelin)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Queen snapper (blue morwong)</strong></td>
<td><em>Nemadactylus valenciennesi</em></td>
<td>410 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Red snapper (includes bight redfish, nannygai and swallowtail)</strong></td>
<td><em>Centroberyx</em> spp.</td>
<td>300 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tropical snappers and sea perch (includes red emperor, mangrove jack, ruby snapper, job fish, stripey sea perch etc.)</strong></td>
<td>Family Lutjanidae</td>
<td>Red emperor – 410 mm Fingermark, mangrove jack and stripey sea perch – 300 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Must be landed whole.  
New fishing rules.
**‘PELAGIC’ SPECIES**

**Mixed daily bag limit – 2 per angler**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPECIES</th>
<th>SCIENTIFIC NAME</th>
<th>MINIMUM LEGAL SIZE</th>
<th>BAG LIMIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barracuda</td>
<td><em>Sphyraena barracuda</em></td>
<td>Not applicable.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billfish – sailfish, spearfish, swordfish, marlins – combined</td>
<td>Families <em>Istiophoridae</em> and <em>Xiphiidae</em></td>
<td>Not applicable.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobia</td>
<td><em>Rachycentron canadus</em></td>
<td>750 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackerel – Wahoo, broad-barred (grey), narrow-barred Spanish and shark</td>
<td><em>Acanthocybium solandri</em>, <em>Scomberomorus semifasciatus</em>, <em>S. commerson</em> and <em>Grammatorcynus bicarinatus</em></td>
<td>Wahoo and narrow-barred – 900 mm Broad-barred – 750 mm Shark – 500 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahi mahi (dolphinfish)</td>
<td><em>Coryphaena hippurus</em></td>
<td>500 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samson fish/amberjack and yellowtail kingfish</td>
<td><em>Seriola</em> spp.</td>
<td>600 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trevally, giant and golden</td>
<td><em>Caranx ignobilis</em> and <em>Gnathanodon speciosus</em></td>
<td>Not applicable.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuna – southern bluefin, yellowfin and bigeye</td>
<td><em>Thunnus maccoyii</em>, <em>T. albacares</em> and <em>T. obesus</em></td>
<td>Not applicable.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MEDIUM RISK SPECIES**

**Whaler shark size limit change**

Due to overfishing of some whaler shark species, a maximum size limit of 700 mm (interdorsal fin length) applies to whaler sharks (Family *Carcharhinidae*) caught in the West Coast and South Coast Bioregions (see illustration).

This equates to a shark of about 1.8 metres total length. Importantly, sharks larger than this often have high concentrations of heavy metal compounds (including mercury) in their flesh and are not suitable for human consumption.

Common whaler sharks caught in the West Coast and South Coast bioregions include: dusky shark, bronze whaler, sandbar (thickskin) shark, bull shark, spinner shark and tiger shark.

* – Must be landed whole.

New fishing rules.
**MEDIUM RISK SPECIES**

*Mixed daily bag limit – 12 per angler*

Species generally mature at two to three years, are of moderate abundance, are highly targeted, and often use estuarine and inshore habitats extensively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPECIES</th>
<th>SCIENTIFIC NAME</th>
<th>MINIMUM LEGAL SIZE</th>
<th>BAG LIMIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bonito</strong> – leaping and oriental, and other tunas – combined</td>
<td>Family Scombridae</td>
<td>Not applicable.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bream</strong> – north-west, black and yellowfin – combined</td>
<td>Acanthopagrus spp.</td>
<td>250 mm Yellowfin – 300 mm</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bream</strong> – black (Swan-Canning rivers)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Only 2 black bream over 400 mm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cobbler</strong></td>
<td>Cnidoglanis macrocephalus</td>
<td>430 mm. Totally protected in the Swan-Canning rivers until 2017.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flathead and flounder</strong> – combined</td>
<td>Family Platyccephalidae and Pseudorhombus spp.</td>
<td>Flathead – 300 mm Flounder – 250 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goatfish</strong></td>
<td>Family Mullidae</td>
<td>Not applicable.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leatherjacket</strong></td>
<td>Family Monacanthidae</td>
<td>250 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mackerel, Australian spotted and Mackerel, Queensland school</strong> – combined</td>
<td>Scomberomorus munnroi &amp; Scomberomorus queenslandicus</td>
<td>500 mm</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mulloway</strong></td>
<td>Argyrosomus hololepidotus</td>
<td>500 mm</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salmon, Australian</strong></td>
<td>Arripis truttaceus</td>
<td>300 mm</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sharks and rays</strong> – combined</td>
<td>Class Chondrichthyes</td>
<td>Whaler sharks over 700 mm interdorsal fin length are protected. (For more Information see page 6)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Snook and pike</strong> – combined</td>
<td>Sphyraena spp. &amp; Dinolestes spp.</td>
<td>300 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tailor</strong></td>
<td>Pomatomus saltatrix</td>
<td>300 mm (Only 2 fish over 500 mm)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tarwhine</strong></td>
<td>Rhabdosargus sarba</td>
<td>250 mm</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trevally</strong> – silver (skippy), diamond, etc. – combined</td>
<td>Family Carangidae</td>
<td>Skipjack – 250 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trout, brown and rainbow</strong> – combined</td>
<td>Salmo trutta and Oncorhynchus mykiss</td>
<td>See separate brochure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whiting</strong> – King George</td>
<td>Sillaginodes punctata</td>
<td>280 mm</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whiting</strong> – yellowfin</td>
<td>Sillago schomburgkii</td>
<td>Not applicable.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Must be landed whole.
- Licence required – see separate brochure for details of fishing rules.
- Young salmon are sometime called 'salmon trout' by fishers.

New fishing rules.
## Low Risk Species

**Mixed daily bag limit – 30 per angler**

Species generally mature at one to two years, are of high abundance, distributed widely and generally pelagic. Species not listed have little known about their biology or abundance and are generally not targeted by anglers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPECIES</th>
<th>SCIENTIFIC NAME</th>
<th>BAG LIMIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian herring</td>
<td><em>Arripis georgianus</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dart</td>
<td><em>Trachinotus</em> spp.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garfish</td>
<td>Family <em>Hemirhamphidae</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longtom</td>
<td>Family <em>Belonidae</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackerel, blue (common)</td>
<td><em>Scomber australasicus</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milkfish</td>
<td><em>Chanos chanos</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mullet – sea and yellow-eye</td>
<td>Family <em>Mugilidae</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiting, southern school</td>
<td><em>Sillago</em> spp.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other unlisted species of fish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You can only take a combined maximum of 30 low risk fish. No size limits apply.

## Protected Species

These species are totally protected and may not be taken. (*FRMR Schedule 2, FRMA Section 43*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPECIES</th>
<th>SCIENTIFIC NAME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cobbler</td>
<td><em>Cnidoglanis macrocephalus</em> (protected in the Swan-Canning rivers until 2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coral and live rock</td>
<td>Order <em>Scleractinia</em> See Order No.11 of 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great white shark</td>
<td><em>Carcharodon carcharias</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey nurse shark (under DEC legislation)</td>
<td><em>Carcharias taurus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groper, western blue</td>
<td><em>Achoerodus gouldii</em> (protected in the Rottnest Island Reserve)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humhead Maori wrasse</td>
<td><em>Cheilinus undulatus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leafy seadragon</td>
<td><em>Phycodurus eques</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potato cod</td>
<td><em>Epinephelus tukula</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland groper</td>
<td><em>Epinephelus lanceolatus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sawfish – all species</td>
<td>Family <em>Pristidae</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speartooth shark</td>
<td><em>Glyphis</em> spp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whale shark</td>
<td><em>Rhiniodon typus</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Species with no bag limit:
Baitfish (Families Atherinidae, Clupeidae and Engraulidae – pilchards, scaly mackerel, whitebait, anchovies and hardyheads) and feral freshwater species including carp, tilapia, goldfish and redfin perch have no bag limit.

Prohibitions on the take of totally protected species apply to both commercial and recreational fishers. Some species may also be protected under Commonwealth legislation – visit [www.environment.gov.au](http://www.environment.gov.au) for further information.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRUSTACEANS AND SHELLFISH</th>
<th>CRUSTACEANS</th>
<th>SCIENTIFIC NAME</th>
<th>MINIMUM LEGAL SIZE</th>
<th>BAG LIMIT</th>
<th>BOAT LIMIT#</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crab, blue swimmer (manna)</td>
<td>Portunus pelagicus</td>
<td>127 mm (carapace)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crab, mud – all species combined</td>
<td>Scylla spp.</td>
<td>Green – 150 mm Brown – 120 mm (carapace)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crab, Champagne</td>
<td>Hypothalassia acerba</td>
<td>92 mm</td>
<td>†</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crab, Crystal</td>
<td>Chaceon spp.</td>
<td>120 mm</td>
<td>†</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crab, Giant</td>
<td>Pseudocarcinus gigas</td>
<td>140 mm</td>
<td>†</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prawns, school and king</td>
<td>Family Penaeidae</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>9 litres</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock lobster – all species combined</td>
<td>Panulirus and Jasus spp.</td>
<td>See separate brochure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marron</td>
<td>Cherax tenuimanus and Cherax cainii</td>
<td>See separate brochure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All species not specifically mentioned – combined</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30 †</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOLLUSCS AND OTHER REEF ANIMALS</th>
<th>SCIENTIFIC NAME</th>
<th>MINIMUM LEGAL SIZE</th>
<th>BAG LIMIT</th>
<th>BOAT LIMIT#</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abalone, Roe’s</td>
<td>Haliotis roei</td>
<td>See separate brochure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abalone, greenlip and brownlip – combined</td>
<td>H. laevigata and H. conicopora</td>
<td>See separate brochure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ark shells, cockles, pipis, venus clams and all other species of edible molluscs not specifically mentioned – combined</td>
<td>Families Arcidae, Cardiidae, Donacidae and Veneridae</td>
<td>Trochus – 65 mm</td>
<td>2 litres (Shell on)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mussels</td>
<td>Family Mytilidae</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>9 litres (Shell on)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oysters</td>
<td>Family Ostreidae</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Razorshell</td>
<td>Family Pinnidae</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scallops</td>
<td>Family Pectinidae</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea urchins (closed season)</td>
<td>Class Echinoidea</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squid, cuttlefish and octopus – all species combined</td>
<td>Class Cephalopoda</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Licence required – see separate brochure for details of fishing rules.
- N/A – Not applicable.
- New fishing rules.
- † – Denotes species with a combined bag limit of 30.
- # – Only applies when two or more Recreational Fishing from Boat Licence holders are aboard.
Boat fishers must carry an appropriate ‘release weight’ device on board when line fishing for or landing demersal scalefish in the West Coast Bioregion. A release weight is not required where a boat is used exclusively for spearfishing. A release weight can help reduce the effects of barotrauma and maximize the fish’s chance of survival upon release.

**What is barotrauma?**

Barotrauma results from the sudden expansion of gases in the swim bladder and other organs when a fish does not have time to adjust to the rapid changes in water pressure as it is pulled to the surface.

Demersal, or ‘bottom-dwelling’, species such as baldchin groper, dhufish and cods, are particularly susceptible to pressure changes when pulled to the surface from depths of around 20 metres or more, and frequently succumb to the effects of barotrauma.

The most obvious symptoms of barotrauma include a bloated stomach, bulging or ‘popped’ eyes, the stomach protruding from the mouth or gills, and distended intestines. Even if released quickly, fish suffering from barotrauma may not be able to return to the bottom if their swim bladder remains inflated.

A release weight is designed to assist their return to the seabed and increase the survival rate of released fish.

**What is a release weight?**

A commonly used release weight is a weighted barbless hook attached either to an existing fishing rig, or used on a rod and reel or handline specifically set aside for releasing deep-water fish. The release weight is used to return deep-water species such as dhufish back to the seabed as quickly as possible, helping to reverse the effects of barotrauma.
How do I use a release weight?

The release weight is attached to the upper jaw of the fish and is designed to be easily detached by tugging the line once the fish is back on the seabed.

**Single operator – small fish only**

- Attach the release weight through the upper jaw of the fish.
- Hold the body of the fish in one hand and in the other hold the rod or handline (with the release weight attached) ready for free spool.
- Gently but quickly lower the fish into the water and let the attached line run free as the fish is released.
- Once the fish reaches the bottom, tug the line to detach the release weight.

**Two operators – recommended for large fish**

- Whilst one person supports the body of the fish, the other attaches the release weight to the upper jaw.
- Gently lower the fish into the water and operate the rod or handline as the fish is released.

❗ *Note: in order to maximise survival rates of released fish, it is strongly recommended that handling be kept to a minimum and contact with the fish’s eyes and gills is avoided. More information on release weight usage and details on proper fish handling can be found at [www.recfishwest.org.au](http://www.recfishwest.org.au)*

Where can I buy a release weight?

There are several stockists of release weights in Western Australia, including boating, fishing and camping stores. For a full list of retail outlets, go to [www.recfishwest.org.au](http://www.recfishwest.org.au) or phone Recfishwest on (08) 9246 3366.
In WA, licences are required for the following:

- Recreational Fishing from Boat – **NEW 2 March, 2010**;
- Rock Lobster;
- Abalone;
- Marron;
- South-West Freshwater Angling; and
- Net Fishing (set, haul and throw nets)

The rules for fishing under a Recreational Fishing from Boat Licence in the West Coast region can be found in this guide. See separate brochures for details of fishing rules for the remaining licensed recreational fisheries listed above.

You may apply for a licence at Department of Fisheries’ offices or Australia Post. Alternatively, you can purchase or renew your licence online, 24 hours a day, seven days a week at [www.fish.wa.gov.au](http://www.fish.wa.gov.au)

All revenue from recreational fishing licences is placed in a recreational fishing trust fund and used to protect and conserve our vulnerable fish stocks, helping ensure a healthy future for recreational fishing throughout the state.

**Recreational Fishing from Boat Licence**

To help improve the management of WA’s recreational fisheries, a Recreational Fishing from Boat Licence will be required from 2 March, 2010 for any general fishing activity carried out with the use of a powered vessel. A 'powered vessel' is any boat fitted with a propulsion motor, including motorised yachts.

You must produce your licence if fishing from a powered vessel when requested by a Fisheries and Marine Officer.

The expanded licensing system will provide a database of boat fishers across WA which will assist in determining who is fishing, where they are fishing and what they are catching.
Through the new licensing system, recreational fishers will be making an added contribution to the effective management of the resource that they so highly value.

Examples of where the new licence is required when fishing from a powered boat include:

- line fishing (handline, rod and line, squid jigging);
- catching crabs;
- spearfishing;
- catching octopus; and
- dip-netting for prawns.

In addition, you will be required to have a licence where fish, crabs or shellfish are taken by wading or other non-boat based activities, but when you have used a powered boat to reach your immediate fishing location.

**What activities don’t require a Recreational Fishing from Boat Licence?**

A person fishing from a boat without a motor fitted (such as a kayak or dinghy without a motor) will not need a Recreational Fishing from Boat Licence.

A Recreational Fishing from Boat Licence will not be required when an existing licensed fishing activity (such as rock lobster or abalone fishing) is the only activity undertaken on that trip. If, however, for example, a rock lobster fisher also fishes by line on the same trip, a Recreational Fishing from Boat Licence would be required to cover the line fishing activity.

Unlicensed fishers can fish in the company of a licensed boat fisher provided they stay within the licensed fisher’s bag limit. The take of fish by all persons on a boat must not exceed the total bag and boat limits of fishers holding Recreational Fishing from Boat Licences.

It is the licensed boat fishers' responsibility to ensure that the total take of fish on a boat does not exceed their bag limit.
Fishing from Charter Boats

Fishers are not required to hold a Recreational Fishing from Boat Licence when fishing from a licensed charter boat. The charter sector contributes to the cost of managing recreational fishing through licence fees and charter catch and participation information is provided through compulsory log book returns.

CLOSED SEASONS

Demersal Scalefish – West Coast Bioregion

15 October – 15 December (inclusive)

The take or landing of demersal scalefish (listed on page 5) is prohibited within the West Coast Bioregion during the closed season. If you catch a demersal scalefish from a boat or from shore in the West Coast Bioregion during the closed season you must return it to the water as soon as possible.
Unlike the Cockburn Sound pink snapper closure and the Abrolhos Island baldchin groper closure, which are designed to protect aggregations of spawning fish, the demersal scalefish closure is one of several new management measures designed to reduce the recreational catch of West Coast demersal scalefish species by at least 50 per cent. While, the closure coincides with a period of high fishing activity, it does exclude peak holiday periods.

**Pink Snapper – Cockburn and Warnbro Sounds**

**1 October – 31 January**

Cockburn Sound is the site of the largest known aggregations of pink snapper in the West Coast region and is thought to be critical to the maintenance of adequate breeding stocks of these long-lived and slow-growing fish.

It is illegal to be in possession of pink snapper while fishing in the waters of Cockburn and Warnbro Sounds during the closed season. However, pink snapper taken outside of the Sounds may be transported through, and landed within, Cockburn and Warnbro Sound during the closed season.
Baldchin Groper – Abrolhos Islands

1 November – 31 January

The take, landing or possession of baldchin groper is prohibited within the Abrolhos Islands Fish Habitat Protection Area during the closed season. Baldchin groper is a species unique to WA. These fish aggregate in shallow areas in the Abrolhos system to spawn, as the water temperature rises.
Blue Swimmer Crabs

*Peel-Harvey Estuary – Closed season, 1 September to 31 October*

The Peel Inlet, including the channel entrance, Harvey Estuary and Dawesville Cut are closed to all crab fishing during this period. The spring fishing closure protects crab breeding stocks, and allows female crabs to spawn before the fishery reopens.

*Cockburn Sound – Closed season, 1 May to 14 December*

Cockburn Sound is closed to all crab fishing during this period (see map on page 15).

Prawns

*Swan and Canning Rivers* – Closed to prawn hand trawls from 1 August to 31 October.

*Murray and Serpentine Rivers, Yunderup Canals* – Closed to prawning 1 July to 30 November.

Gastropod Molluscs and Sea Urchins

*Cape Bouvard – Wedge Island*

*Greenough River – Flat Rocks*

No fishing within 800 metres of the high water mark for any gastropod molluscs (i.e. single shelled molluscs such as whelks, turban shells, top shell, periwinkles, baler shells and giant conch shells) or sea urchins other than during the West Coast Zone abalone season. Marine conservations areas are generally closed. The 800 metre closure extends to all waters surrounding offshore islands.
Marine conservation areas play an important part in conserving our marine ecology and protecting biodiversity. These include marine nature reserves, marine parks, fish habitat protection areas and various fishing closures. In addition to the general fishing rules in this guide, most of these areas contain sanctuary zones and have special rules that apply to fishing within them. **It should be noted where reference is made to rock lobster and abalone, seasonal rules apply.**
A brief summary of the main fishing rules is provided here. For full details of permitted activities and zones, refer to the relevant visitor’s guide. Marine Parks guides are available from the Department of Environment and Conservation. Fish Habitat Protection Area information is also available from the Department of Fisheries.

Kalbarri Blue Holes Fish Habitat Protection Areas
(FRMR Part 9A, Division 3)
- All fishing is prohibited.
- Using a motor boat is prohibited.

Abrolhos Islands Fish Habitat Protection Area
(FRMA Notice Numbers 388, 389, 637, 646, 695. FRMR Regulations Schedule 2, part 2)
The Abrolhos Islands are one of WA’s most important and sensitive marine ecosystems. In addition to the rules that apply generally to the West Coast Bioregion, special fishing rules apply in this unique area. These include:
- Baldchin groper (Choerodon rubescens): A fishing closure applies from 1 November to 31 January. It coincides with spawning aggregations and is aimed at protecting breeding fish.
- Samson fish (Seriola hippos) and yellowtail kingfish (Seriola lalandi) are protected in the anchorage areas of inhabited islands.
- Western rock lobster (Panulirus cygnus) may only be taken in pots. At the islands, the season opens on 15 March and closes on 30 June. You can find full details in the Recreational Fishing Guide – Rock Lobsters guide provided with your fishing licence.
- Reef Observation Areas – closed to fishing. Lobster potting is permitted.
- A possession limit per person of 10 kg of fillets of finfish or one day’s bag limit of whole fish or fish trunks.
- A ban on the use of gill nets, long lines, drop lines and set lines.
- Live coral is totally protected.
See the Abrolhos Islands Visitor’s Guide for full details about visiting the islands (www.fish.wa.gov.au).

**Jurien Bay Marine Park**  
*FRMA Order No. 18 of 2005*
- Sanctuary zones – closed to all fishing.
- Special purpose and scientific reference zones - closed to some types of fishing.

**Lancelin Island Fish Habitat Protection Areas**  
*FRMR Part 9A, Division 2*
- All fishing is prohibited.
- Using jet skis and anchoring boats is prohibited.

**Marmion Marine Park**  
*FRMA Order No. 6 of 1999, Order No. 3 of 2004*
- Sanctuary zones – closed to all fishing.
- No spearfishing or gidgies within 1,800 metres of the high water mark. No compressed-air spearfishing seaward of 1,800 metres.
- You may take abalone, rock lobster, squid, octopus, cuttlefish, blue swimmer crabs and sand crabs.
- All other molluscs and sea urchins are totally protected.
- Watermans Reef Observation Area - line fishing from the shore only.

**Cottesloe Fish Habitat Protection Areas**  
*FRMR Part 9A, Division 1*
- You may take rock lobster and fish for finfish by line. You may also take abalone, but only north of Cottesloe Groyne. All other fishing is prohibited.
- Releasing blood or offal is prohibited.
- Using jet skis and anchoring boats is prohibited.

**Shoalwater Islands Marine Park**  
*FRMA Order No. 3 of 2004 and Order No. 5 of 2010*
- All molluscs are totally protected (except mussels, abalone, squid, cuttlefish and octopus).
Rottnest Island Reserve
(FRMA Order No. 4 of 2007)

Protected areas

1. **West End** – Trolling is permitted. Line fishing from the shore and reef platform in the designated area is permitted. All other types of fishing are prohibited.

2. **Kingston Reef** – All fishing prohibited.

3. **Armstrong Bay** – Line fishing from the shore and reef platform in the designated area is permitted. All other types of fishing are prohibited.

4. **Green Island** – Line fishing from the Green Island Jetty is permitted. All other types of fishing are prohibited.

5. **Parker Point** – All fishing prohibited.

**Fishing rules**

- **Closed to net fishing within 800m of the HWM and 200m of Dyer Island.**
- **Closed to spearfishing within 800m of the HWM east from Pt Clune and Salmon Point, and within 200m of the HWM west from Salmon Point and Point Clune and around Dyer Island.**

Rottnest Island and the surrounding marine waters are contained in a reserve for public recreation and conservation. A marine management strategy has been developed by the Rottnest Island Authority to ensure the unique marine environment of this special area is preserved and enhanced for future generations.

- All molluscs and sea urchins are totally protected within 800 metres of the high water mark (except abalone, cuttlefish, squid and octopus).
Blue groper is totally protected in reserve waters. Refer to the Rottnest Island Authority for more details on fishing closures.

Other fishing closures

- **Heirisson Island** (Swan River). Lakes on the island downstream of the causeway are closed to all fishing *(FRMA Order No. 10 of 2007)*.
- **Lake Clifton** (Mandurah). Closed to all fishing *(FRMA Order No. 6 of 1996)*.
- **Busselton Jetty Observatory**. Closed to all fishing in the defined area *(FRMA Order No. 20 of 2004)*.
- **Yallingup Reef Observation Area**. All shellfish, reeftop animals, crustaceans, seahorses and sea plants are protected within a 400-metre radius of the mouth of Yallingup Brook. You may only take squid, cuttlefish, rock lobster and blue swimmer crabs in this area *(FRMA Notice No. 725, 1995)*.
- **Cowaramup Bay Reef Observation Area** (Gracetown). You may catch finfish, abalone, rock lobster, blue swimmer crabs, cuttlefish and octopus. All other species are protected *(FRMA Order No. 9 of 1998)*.
- **HMAS Perth wreck site**. Closed to fishing within 250 metres of the intersection of 35°04.788' south latitude and 117°58.068' east longitude *(FRMA Order No. 6 of 2002)*.
- **HMAS Swan wreck site**. Closed to fishing within 200 metres of the intersection of 33°33.06' south latitude and 115°05.947' east longitude *(FRMA Order No. 4 of 1998)*.
- **Lena wreck site**. Closed to fishing within 400 metres of the intersection of 33°20.578' south latitude and 115°33.895' east longitude *(FRMA Order No. 3 of 2007)*.
- **Saxon Ranger wreck site**. Closed to fishing within the defined site – commencing at 32°19.67' south latitude and 115°42.37' east longitude, then east to the intersection of 115°42.25' east longitude, then north to the intersection of 32°19.55' south latitude; then east to the intersection of 115°42.37' east longitude, then south to the commencement point *(FRMA Order No. 23 of 2005)*.
- **South Tomi wreck site**. Closed to fishing within the defined site – commencing at 28°43.968' south latitude and 114°33.392' east longitude, then east to the intersection of 114°33.206' east longitude, then north to the intersection of 28°43.752' south latitude, then east to the intersection of 114°33.392' east longitude, then south to the commencement point *(FRMA Order No. 22 of 2005)*.
Each of the four biological regions (bioregions) in WA has its own suite of fishing rules, although some rules such as possession limits and legal sizes may apply Statewide. If you transport fish across a regional boundary, the rules that apply are those which relate to the bioregion in which you are checked by a Fisheries and Marine Officer – not the bioregion in which you caught the fish.

**How to measure a fish**
*(FRMR Regulation 151, Schedule 8)*

Fish should be measured in a ‘natural’ position, i.e. tail not distorted (the tail should be laid flat). Most finfish are measured from the point of the snout to the tip of the tail.

**Fishing for crabs**
*(FRMR Part 4A, Division 2, Reg. 64L)*

You may only catch crabs by the following methods:

- **by hand**; or
- **by wire hook**: A hand-held blunt wire hook may be used to catch crabs. Hooks must not be capable of piercing the crab; or
- **by drop net**: Drop nets must not exceed 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
- **by scoop net**: Hand-held wire or plastic scoop nets must be hemispherical, constructed 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.

In Western Australia you may not catch crabs by using:

- Crab traps, pots or any dilly nets which trap or entangle the catch; or
- Fishing or prawning nets.
How to measure a crab  
*(FRMR Regulation 151, Schedule 8)*

Crabs are measured across the widest part of the shell, from tip to tip of the carapace spikes.

**Totally protected crabs**  
*(FRMR Schedule 2, Part 2, Division 1. Reg. 12)*

- Undersize and ‘berried’ (egg-carrying) crabs are totally protected. They must be returned to the water within five minutes of catching them.
- You may not pull any drop net before protected crabs are released to the waters from which they were taken.

**Deep sea crabs**  
*(FRMR Part 5, Division 5A)*

- Deep sea crabs must be landed whole.
- You may not possess any part of a deep sea crab unless the part is being consumed or being prepared for immediate consumption.

**Fishing for prawns**  
*(FRMR Part 4, Division 6, Reg.39)*

You may only catch prawns by the following methods:

- Single hand dip net or single hand scoop net.
- Single prawn hand-trawl (drag) net. Nets must not be more than four metres long with a mesh of not less than 16 mm, and must not be attached to a boat or set.

**Areas closed to prawn hand-trawls**  
*(FRMR Part 4A, Division 3, Reg 64NA)*

You may not use or leave unattended a prawn hand trawl net in:

- the Harvey Estuary and its tributaries;
- the Peel inlet and its tributaries;
- the Channel Entrance to the Peel Inlet;
- the Dawesville Cut;
• the Leschenault Estuary;
• the Swan River within 100 metres of any part of the Pelican Point Nature Reserve; or within 100 metres of the Milyu Nature Reserve.

**Fishing closures – seasons, areas, gear types**
*(FRMA S43)*

Fishing activities may be prohibited by type, area, time or class of person, for example, many areas of the State are permanently closed to netting. Some areas are closed to line fishing during spawning seasons. Some fisheries are closed at specified times of the year.

**Daily bag limits**
*(FRMA S50)*

A daily bag limit is the maximum number of fish of a species, or a group of species, that a person engaged in fishing may take or bring on to land in any 24-hour period commencing at midnight (except for marron, prawns and fish caught by netting – midday to midday). These are shown in the ‘Bag and Size Limits’ section.

**Finfish possession limits**
*(FRMA S51, FRMR Part 4, Division 3)*

A finfish possession limit is the maximum quantity of finfish – either whole or in pieces – that you may have in your possession (control/ownership) in WA. This is:

• 20 kg of fillets of fish; or
• 10 kg of fillets of fish and one day’s bag limit of whole fish or fish trunks; or
• two days’ bag limit of whole fish or fish trunks.

⚠️ **NOTE:** These limits now apply throughout WA, including permanent places of residence. The following baitfish are not included in the finfish possession limit: hardyheads (Atherinidae), sardines/pilchards (Clupeidae), whitebait (Engraulidae), garfish (Hemirhamphidae) and mullet (Mugilida). Commercially purchased fish are not included, but you may be asked for proof of purchase.
Special rules apply in the Abrolhos Islands Fish Habitat Protection Area (see marine conservation areas).

Some species may have a specific possession limit (see bag and size limit tables).

**Labelling your stored fish**  
*(FRMR Part 4, Division 4)*

You may not exceed the possession limit for any fish. If the quantity of fish stored in a single container/freezer exceeds one person’s possession limit, the fish must be clearly labelled with the name of the owner/s.

Labels must be securely attached to each container or package of fish, and be at least 75 mm long and 25 mm wide.

The full name of the owner must be legibly written on the label and be clearly visible for inspection.

Labels are not needed if:

- Fish have been taken on a day-trip.
- The fish are in the possession and under the direct physical control of the person who took the fish, and stored only with fish taken by the same person.

⚠️ **Who ‘owns’ the fish?** In the absence of evidence to the contrary, a person using or in control of a vessel, vehicle, refrigerator, freezer, icebox, or other storage device in which fish are found is taken to be in possession of the fish. A person who provides payment to a courier business for the transportation of fish, is regarded as being in possession of the fish until the fish are received.

**Landing filleted or processed fish**  
*(FRMR Part 4, Division 2)*

The enforcement of fishing rules, such as bag, possession and size limits, relies on the ability of Fisheries and Marine Officers to count and measure fish.

In general, boat anglers returning from a day-trip are asked to land their fish whole so that they are in a form that can be measured and counted.
However, for the convenience of anglers, Fisheries’ regulations provide for some processing at sea. The way in which fish are processed is linked back to compliance with bag and size limits.

**Special Risk** species must always be landed whole on a day trip. These are shown in the ‘Bag and Size Limits’ section. They may be filleted after a lawful overnight stay on an island.

**High Risk Demersal, Pelagic** and **Medium Risk** species (see ‘Bag and Size Limits’ section) may be landed as a ‘trunk’ (i.e. with head and tail removed) or as fillets, provided that the skin and scales are attached for identification purposes, and the piece of fish is:

- at least 30 cm in length;
- packaged flat;
- packaged so that it is easily accessible for measurement and identification; and
- where frozen, able to be measured and identified without being thawed.

**Low Risk** species may be filleted or trunked at sea and the pieces landed, provided the skin is attached.

⚠️ **Note:** Two fillets are considered to be equal to one whole fish.

**Extended trips and overnight stays**

*FRMR Part 4, Division 2, 3, Regulation 15*

Following a lawful overnight stay on an island, a person may bring fillets of any length onto the mainland, provided the fish were brought onto the island and kept there while the person stayed there overnight. A lawful overnight stay on an island is a period of at least five hours, up to and past midnight. Persons, who have been at sea or stayed on any island for more than one day, may land no more than the possession limit of whole (or trunked) fish or filleted fish.

⚠️ **NOTE:** Overnight stays are not permitted on many islands – check with local authorities for details.
**Landing Molluscs**  
*(FRMR Part 4, Division 6, Regulation 42)*

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. This does not apply if you are about to eat the mollusc or use it as bait.

**Fishing gear**  
*(FRMR Part 4A, Division 2, Regulation 44, 64C, 64E)*

*RodS, lines and hooks* – Recreational anglers may have a maximum of three hooks or three gangs of hooks per line. Shore-based anglers may use a maximum of two fishing lines. Rods and lines must be attended.

*Spearfishing* – is generally permitted in ocean waters, except in marine conservation reserves where fishing on compressed air is often prohibited. See marine park guides (available from the Department of Environment and Conservation) for details. All inland waters (rivers, tributaries and dams) are closed to spearfishing.

*Fishing nets* – most of the State is closed to set and haul netting. See the 'Recreational Fishing Guide - Net Fishing' for details.

**Protecting fish and their habitats**

A number of activities are explicitly prohibited in order to protect fish and their habitats in key environments.

Legal recreational fishing gear methods are defined in fisheries regulations (see above). Everything else is illegal.  
*(FRMA Notice Numbers 462, 527, 677, Order 11 of 2007. FRMR Regulations 144, 145)*

In particular you may not:

- use fish traps or ‘pots’ of any kind (except lobster pots);
- use dredges;
- obstruct any bay, inlet, river, creek or any tidal or inland waters so that fish are enclosed, left stranded, destroyed or wasted;
- be in possession of explosives or noxious substances (for example, fish poisons) on WA waters;
- ‘jag’ fish with baitless hooks;
- use commercial fishing gear of any kind;
• attach fish hooks to lobster pots, anchors and anchor lines or moorings; or
• fish for live or dead coral or ‘live rock’.

⚠️ **NOTE:** Many fishing tackle stores carry gear that is manufactured outside Western Australia and may not conform to WA legal requirements. In particular the use of crab traps, ‘witches hats’, collapsible ‘opera house’ traps or any nets that entangle the catch are illegal in WA waters. Check before you make a purchase.

### Illegal selling of fish (FRMA S75 and S222, FRMR S121(2))

The sale of recreationally-caught fish is illegal. Penalties imposed on offenders include monetary fines as high as $25,000. In addition, a penalty of 10 times the prescribed value of the fish that are the subject of the offence is mandatory.

In some cases, penalties of up to one-year imprisonment may also apply.

---

### FISH SAFELY – THE OCEAN CAN BE TREACHEROUS

All fishers need to exercise care when fishing from the shore and be properly prepared when fishing from a boat.

Boat users are also reminded to ensure the seaworthiness of their boats and that they are carrying the correct safety gear. This includes packing life jackets, a distress beacon (EPIRB), marine radio transceiver, flares, an effective anchor and line, bailer or bilge pump, fresh water, first aid kit, rope, tool kit, torch, signalling mirror, a fire extinguisher and an alternative power source/spare motor.

Conditions can change quickly. If you are going to an unfamiliar location, treat the ocean with respect. Carry a chart of the area where you intend to fish, study it, and familiarize yourself with positions of the navigational aids and hazards in the area concerned.
Check the weather forecast and watch out for unexpected changes. Being sensible and doing the right thing will help ensure your fishing trip will be a safer one.


WA Coastal Marine Warnings: **1300 659 223**

WA Marine Service: **1900 926 150**

Volunteer Sea Rescue groups use VHF channels 16 and 67, 27 MHz channel 88 and HF channel 2182.

Before you leave, tell someone about your boating plans. Notify them immediately if these change during the voyage. Always report in when you return.

---

**ABOUT THIS GUIDE**

The information in this guide is current at the date of printing, but may change. Separate guides are available for licensed fisheries.

For the most up-to-date information on fisheries and fishing rules in plain English, check the Department of Fisheries’ website at [www.fish.wa.gov.au](http://www.fish.wa.gov.au) or contact the Department before going fishing. For legislation, a link from the website will take you to the State Law Publisher.

You should be aware that all fishing activities may be subject to optical surveillance by Fisheries and Marine Officers. Breaking recreational fishing rules may result in an infringement notice or legal action being initiated against you. Fines for recreational fishing offences may be as high as $5,000 plus up to 10 times the dollar value of the species.
RECFISHWEST — REPRESENTING YOUR FISHING FUTURE

Recfishwest is the government-recognised peak recreational fishing body and your voice whenever decisions that affect our fisheries, or access to them, are being made.

Visit www.recfishwest.org.au to find out more or telephone (08) 9246 3366.

SEND US YOUR SKELETONS
HELP ENSURE THERE’S FISH FOR THE FUTURE

You can win a host of great fishing prizes by donating your fish frames (filleted skeletons with their heads and guts intact) to the Department’s finfish research team.

The team needs frames of Western Australian dhufish, pink snapper and baldchin groper caught by recreational fishers in the West Coast Bioregion. Herring, tailor, whiting (all species) and garfish are also required from the West Coast Bioregion and the South Coast Bioregion (east of Augusta to the WA/SA border).

Frames are essential to help the Department assess the status of our fisheries. By analysing data from the frames the Department can help ensure there are fish for the future.

If you donate your frames with the required information you will be entered into quarterly prize draws for some fabulous fishing prizes. To find out how and where to drop off your frames, visit www.fish.wa.gov.au/frames for more information or ring 9203 0111.