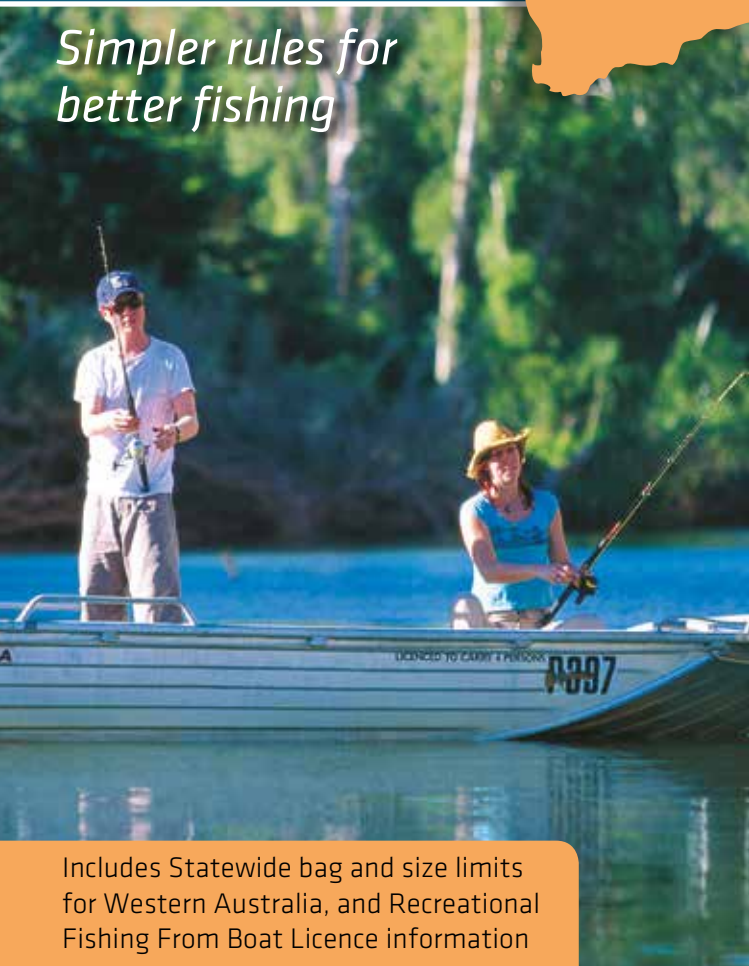




Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Fisheries**

Recreational fishing guide 2015

*Simpler rules for
better fishing*



Includes Statewide bag and size limits
for Western Australia, and Recreational
Fishing From Boat Licence information

PUBLISHED MARCH 2015

**BETTER
FISHERIES**

YOUR LICENCE FEES AT WORK

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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 an estimated 691,000 people fishing recreationally in WA, it is part of our lifestyle. It also makes a significant contribution to our economy and attracts thousands of visitors to regional WA each year.

With increasing fishing and environmental pressures, we need to manage our 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 of our aquatic resources.

Using this guide

Throughout this guide we identify when additional information is available. You can obtain it from:

- your local Department of Fisheries office – contact details can be found on the back of this guide; and
- the recreational fishing section of the Department of Fisheries website at www.fish.wa.gov.au/recfishing

Information is available on request in appropriate alternative formats including Braille, audio tape and disc.

Your licence fees at work

Each year, recreational fishing licence fees contribute about \$6.6 million to managing recreational fishers in Western Australia. The State Government contributes another \$13 million.



A tagged mulloway being prepared for release as part of a recreational fishing licence fee-funded stocking program at popular fishing locations on the mid-west coast. The program will also help assess the potential for mulloway restocking in the metropolitan area.

The revenue from recreational fishing licenses 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 and compliance.

Recreational fishing initiatives funded from licence fees include:

- artificial reefs and fish attracting devices (FADs);
- restocking projects for prawns, mulloway and barramundi;
- the future fisheries leaders program;
- research projects into popular recreational species such as blue swimmer crabs, black bream and squid; and
- the Statewide recreational fishing boat survey.

Changes to the rules

Focus on Australian herring

Due to environmental factors and fishing pressure, management action has been taken to reduce the Australian herring catch. **From 1 March 2015, the recreational bag limit for Australian herring has been reduced from 30 to 12 Statewide.** A closure to all commercial G-net traps is in place for the south coast. We will continue to monitor the Australian herring stock with a review of these management changes due before the end of 2016.

Fish backbones and 'wings' excluded from possession limit

The Statewide possession limit of 20 kg of fillets (10 kg at the Abrolhos Islands) has been modified to exclude fish backbones and wings (on the basis that the entire fillet has been removed). For more information about possession limits see page 36.

These new arrangements will allow fishers to maximise the use of the entire fish and also provide a further incentive to donate fish frames (skeletons with the head and guts intact) to our *Send Us Your Skeletons* research program (www.fish.wa.gov.au/frames), crucial for monitoring key fish stocks.

Additional protection for crabs

All fishers must release any undersize crab to the water before attempting to take another crab. In addition, all uncooked crabs must be kept in whole form, unless being prepared for immediate consumption.

Protection for smooth and black stingray species in the South Coast and West Coast bioregions

New regulations have been introduced to classify two stingray species – black and smooth stingrays – as protected fish in both the West Coast and South Coast bioregions of Western Australia.

Black and smooth stingrays tend to stay in one area and can be inquisitive. Commonly aggregating around fish cleaning stations, they have a high tourism value.

If caught, these stingrays must be returned to the water as soon as possible.



Notifying us when travelling to the Abrolhos Islands

The master of a vessel must notify the Department of Fisheries before travelling to the Abrolhos Islands – contact your local Department of Fisheries Office or visit www.fish.wa.gov.au for more information.

Protection for native freshwater species

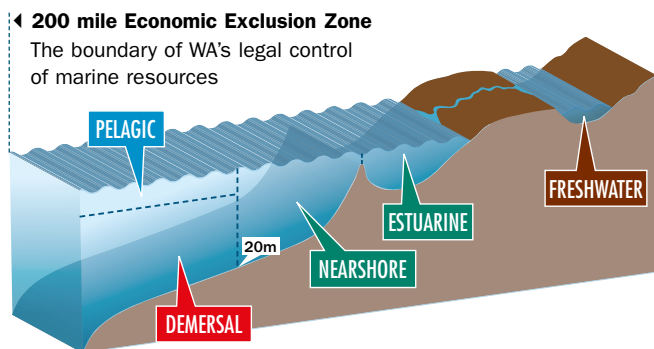
A number of native freshwater fish species are now totally protected from fishing – see page 35 for more details. While these species are generally not taken or deliberately targeted by recreational fishers, their stocks are vulnerable and require protection under fisheries legislation.

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 to reach maturity to complete their breeding cycle. Measure all your fish and return undersize or excess fish alive to the water (see 'care for your catch' on page 50).

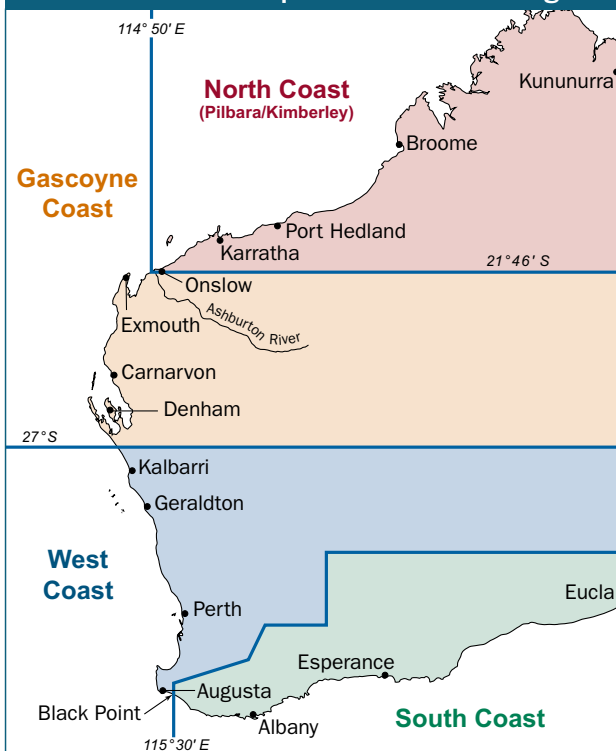
Finfish categories

For bag and size limits, finfish are categorised according to their aquatic environment (see diagram below).



In some cases there are rules that apply to specific biological regions – the North Coast Bioregion, Gascoyne Coast Bioregion, West Coast Bioregion and South Coast Bioregion (see page 6).

Western Australia's aquatic resources bioregions



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 netting).

For rules about fish kept and stored beyond 24 hours, see the finfish possession limits section (page 36).

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

In addition to bag limits there are also boat limits. 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 at any one time. On day trips in powered boats, there must be two or more Recreational Fishing from Boat Licence (RFBL) holders on board to take a boat limit.

For example, if three RFBL holders are fishing from a boat for demersal finfish in the West Coast Bioregion they could have a maximum of two dhufish on board only, plus four other demersal species. Similarly, if four licensed fishers are crabbing from a vessel in the West Coast Bioregion they could have a maximum of 20 blue swimmer crabs on board.

Unlicensed fishers can fish if at least one person on board has an RFBL, provided the total catch of everyone on board stays within the bag limit of the one or more licensed boat fishers. It is the master of the boat's responsibility to ensure this rule is followed.

Note: This only applies to the RFBL and not to other fishing licences.

Possession limits and transporting fish

A finfish possession limit is the maximum quantity of finfish – either whole or in pieces – that a person may have in their control/ownership (see page 36 for more information).

Recreationally caught fish cannot be transported unaccompanied using a commercial courier (see page 38).

When filleting fish at sea, a minimum fillet length applies only to fish with a minimum size limit. Fish with a maximum size limit need to be landed whole (see page 37).

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 Department of Fisheries offices or participating retail stores.



The FishWatch phone line provides a quick and easy way to report sightings or evidence of:

- illegal fishing;
- aquatic pests; and
- aquatic diseases (including fish kills).



Illegal fishing

Illegal fishing could include someone netting in the river, exceeding their bag or possession limits, taking undersize fish, fishing in a closed area or having more fishing gear in the water than they should.

Before you call, note:

- **How** many people you saw.
- **Who** they were. Did you hear/know any of their names?
- **What** they were doing.
- **Where** it happened; the nearest known landmark or intersection of the closest road.
- **What** type of equipment, cars or boats, registration numbers and descriptions.
- **When** it happened – time and date. Is it something that is happening right now, while you are making a report, or was it something you observed previously?

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 your local Department of Fisheries office.

Demersal finfish – bag and size limits

High vulnerability – long-lived and slow-growing




TOTAL mixed species daily bag limit per fisher

This is the combined number of demersal finfish you can take (see page 6 for details).

Closed season

West Coast Bioregion

2

 15 Oct – 15 Dec (inclusive)

South Coast, Gascoyne, North Coast bioregions








5

No demersal closed season in these bioregions.

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

Species		Minimum legal size	West Coast	Other bioregions
	Baldchin groper <i>Choerodon rubescens</i> . Additional closed seasons apply – see page 45	400 mm	2	3
	Tuskfish* <i>Choerodon</i> spp. (Pictured: Blackspot tuskfish)	Blackspot and blue tuskfish: 400 mm	2	3
	Barramundi cod <i>Cromileptes altivelis</i>	N/A	2	3
	Blue morwong (queen snapper) <i>Nemadactylus valenciennesi</i>	410 mm	2	3
	Boarfish <i>Paristioporus</i> spp. (Pictured: Giant boarfish)	N/A	2	3
	Cods* Family Serranidae (Pictured top to bottom: Breaksea cod, estuary cod, Malabar cod) All species including grey banded rockcod, Rankin cod and harlequin fish except Chinaman cod	Estuary cod: 400 mm Breaksea cod: 300 mm Estuary and Malabar cod over 1,000 mm or 30 kg are protected (recreational fishers only)	2	3
	Coral trout* <i>Plectropomus</i> spp. (Pictured top to bottom: Coral trout, barcheek coral trout, vermicular cod)	450 mm	1	1







* See page 5 for an explanation of how bag limits apply to groups of species. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 41 for licence rules.

Demersal finfish – bag and size limits (continued)

		TOTAL mixed species daily bag limit per fisher		Individual species daily bag limit	
		West Coast	Other bioregions	West Coast	Other bioregions
		2	5		
Species		Minimum legal size		West Coast	Other bioregions
	Coronation trout <i>Variola louti</i>	N/A		1	1
	Dhufish, West Australian <i>Glaucosoma hebraicum</i>	500 mm West Coast: boat limit of 2 dhufish (6 on charter)		1	1
	Dory, John <i>Zeus faber</i>	N/A		2	3
	Dory, mirror <i>Zenopsis nebulosa</i>	N/A		2	3
	Emperors and seabream* Family Lethrinidae All species including spangled emperor (pictured), red throat and Robinson's sea bream except blue-lined emperor (black snapper)	Spangled: 410 mm Other emperor: 280 mm		2	3
	Emperor, blue-lined (black snapper) <i>Lethrinus laticaudis</i>	320 mm		2	5
	Foxfish* <i>Bodianus</i> spp.	N/A		2	3
	Pigfish* <i>Bodianus</i> spp. (Pictured: Goldspot pigfish)	N/A		2	3
	Hapuku <i>Polyprion oxygeneios</i>	N/A		2	3
	Bass groper <i>Polyprion americanus</i>	N/A		2	3

* See page 5 for an explanation of how bag limits apply to groups of species. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 41 for licence rules.

Demersal finfish – bag and size limits (continued)

		TOTAL mixed species daily bag limit per fisher		Individual species daily bag limit	
		West Coast	Other bioregions	West Coast	Other bioregions
		2	5		
Species		Minimum legal size		West Coast	Other bioregions
	Trevalla Family Centrolphidae (Pictured: Blue-eyed trevalla)	N/A		2	3
	Red snapper* (Bight redfish – pictured, and swallowtail) Family Berycidae	300 mm #Except for the South Coast where you may take 8 Bight redfish and 8 swallowtail, PLUS mixed daily bag limit of 5 other demersal finfish.		2	N/A#
	Pearl perch <i>Glaucosoma</i> spp. (other than <i>Glaucosoma hebraicum</i> – West Australian dhufish)	N/A		2	3
	Pink snapper* <i>Pagrus auratus</i> Additional rules apply – see page 45 for details	500 mm Applies in the West Coast Bioregion south of 31°S latitude (just north of Lancelin) and in the inner gulfs of Shark Bay. Shark Bay only: max. size 700 mm		2	2 (Shark Bay)
		All other areas: 410 mm		2	3
	Tropical snappers and sea perch* Family Lutjanidae All species including red emperor (top), crimson sea perch , scarlet sea perch , Chinaman fish (upper middle), jobfish , ruby snapper (lower middle) and goldband (bottom) except fingermark , mangrove jack , stripey seaperch	Red emperor: 410 mm		2	3
	Western blue groper <i>Achoerodus gouldii</i>	500 mm		1	1

* See page 5 for an explanation of how bag limits apply to groups of species. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 41 for licence rules.

Large pelagic finfish – bag and size limits

Moderate vulnerability











Statewide







TOTAL mixed species daily bag limit per fisher

This is the combined number of large pelagic finfish you can take (see page 6 for details).

3

For example, 3 fish = 2 Spanish mackerel and 1 Mahi Mahi
OR 3 Spanish mackerel OR 2 Mahi Mahi and 1 yellowfin tuna.

Species	Minimum legal size
 Amberjack <i>Seriola dumerili</i>	600 mm
 Samson fish <i>Seriola hippos</i>	600 mm
 Yellowtail kingfish <i>Seriola lalandi</i>	600 mm
 Barracuda <i>Sphaena barracuda</i>	N/A
 Barracouta <i>Thysites atun</i>	N/A
 Cobia <i>Rachycentron canadum</i>	750 mm
 Gemfish <i>Rexea solandri</i>	N/A
 Mackerel, grey (broad barred) <i>Scomberomorus semifasciatus</i>	750 mm







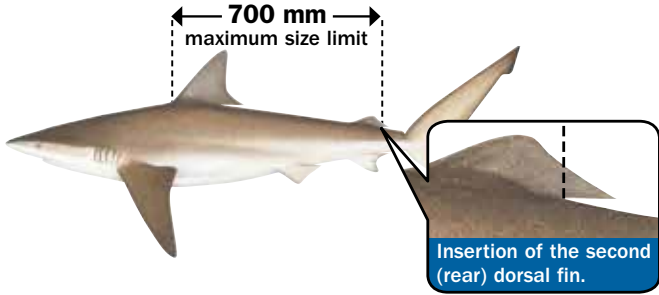







Species	Minimum legal size
 Mackerel, school <i>Scomberomorus queenslandicus</i>	500 mm
 Mackerel, shark <i>Grammatocyne bicarinatus</i>	500 mm
 Mackerel, Spanish (narrow barred) <i>Scomberomorus commerson</i>	900 mm
 Mackerel, spotted <i>Scomberomorus munroi</i>	500 mm
 Mahi Mahi (dolphinfish) <i>Coryphaena hippurus</i>	500 mm
 Marlin Family Istiophoridae (Pictured: Blue marlin) Individual species daily bag limit = 1	N/A

NOTE: If fishing from a boat, see page 41 for licence rules.

Large pelagic finfish – bag and size limits (continued)

Statewide

TOTAL mixed species
daily bag limit per fisher**3**

Species		Minimum legal size	Species	Minimum legal size
	Sailfish <i>Istiophorus platypterus</i> Individual species daily bag limit = 1	N/A		Trevally, giant <i>Caranx ignobilis</i> N/A
	Swordfish Family Xiphiidae Individual species daily bag limit = 1	N/A		Trevally, golden <i>Gnathanodon speciosus</i> N/A
	Sharks and rays Class <i>Chondrichthyes</i> (Pictured: Gummy shark)	West and South Coast bioregions: Whaler sharks max. size 700 mm (interdorsal fin length†)		Tuna, big eye <i>Thunnus obesus</i> N/A
<p>† 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.</p> <p>Common whaler shark species include dusky shark, bronze whaler, bull shark and tiger sharks.</p> 				Tuna, dogtooth <i>Gymnosarda unicolor</i> N/A
				Tuna, longtail <i>Thunnus tonggol</i> N/A
				Tuna, mackerel <i>Euthynnus affinis</i> N/A
				Tuna, skipjack <i>Katsuwonis pelamis</i> N/A
				Tuna, southern bluefin <i>Thunnus maccoyii</i> N/A
				Tuna, yellowfin <i>Thunnus albacares</i> N/A
				Wahoo <i>Acanthocybium solandri</i> 900 mm

NOTE: If fishing from a boat see page 41 for licence rules.

Nearshore/estuarine finfish – bag and size limits

Moderate vulnerability

Photo: Shannon Conway









Statewide

TOTAL mixed species daily bag limit per fisher

This is the combined number of nearshore/estuarine finfish you can take (see page 6 for details).

16

For example, 16 fish = 8 tailor (individual species limit = 8), 4 Western Australian salmon (individual species limit = 4) and 4 snook.













Species		Minimum legal size	Individual species daily bag limit
	Barramundi <i>Lates calcarifer</i>	550 mm (Max. size 800 mm recreational fishers only)	2 Possession limit = 2
	Bream, black (pictured top), silver (tarwhite) (pictured bottom), northwest black, yellowfin , etc.* <i>Acanthopagrus</i> spp., <i>Rhabdosargus sarba</i>	250 mm Yellowfin: 300 mm (Only 2 black bream over 400 mm in Swan and Canning rivers)	6
	Bonito (all species) and albacore tuna * <i>Cybiosarda elegans</i> , <i>Sarda orientalis</i> (pictured), <i>Thunnus alalunga</i>	N/A	8
	Catfish, marine and estuarine Families Ariidae and Plotosidae	Estuarine cobbler (pictured): 430 mm – totally protected in Swan and Canning rivers	8
	Cod, Chinaman (Charlie Court) <i>Epinephelus rivulatus</i>	N/A	4
	Dart * <i>Trachinotus</i> spp.	N/A	8

* See page 5 for an explanation of how bag limits apply to groups of species. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 41 for licence rules.

Nearshore/estuarine finfish – bag and size limits (continued)

Statewide

TOTAL mixed species daily
bag limit per fisher**16**










Species		Minimum legal size	Individual species daily bag limit
	Fingermark <i>Lutjanus johnii</i>	300 mm	4
	Flathead * Family Platycephalidae	300 mm	8
	Flounder * <i>Pseudorhombus</i> spp. (Pictured: Smalltoothed flounder)	250 mm	8
	Javelinfinch * Family Haemulidae (Pictured: Spotted javelinfinch)	300 mm	8
	Sweetlips * Family Haemulidae (Pictured: Painted sweetlips)	300 mm	8
	Leatherjacket * Family Monacanthidae (Pictured: Six-spined leatherjacket)	250 mm	8
	Mulloway (caught primarily south of Exmouth Gulf) <i>Argyrosomus hololepilotus</i>	500 mm	2
	Black jewfish (northern mulloway) <i>Protonibea diacanthus</i>	700 mm	2
	Mangrove jack <i>Lutjanus argentimaculatus</i>	300 mm	2
	Pike, long finned <i>Dinolestes lewini</i>	300 mm	8
	Sea sweep <i>Scorpiis aequipinnis</i>	N/A	4
	Snook (pictured), seapike * Family Sphyraenidae	Snook, striped barracuda: 300 mm	8

* See page 5 for an explanation of how bag limits apply to groups of species. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 41 for licence rules.

Nearshore/estuarine finfish – bag and size limits (continued)

Statewide

TOTAL mixed species daily
bag limit per fisher**16**

Species		Minimum legal size	Individual species daily bag limit
	Stripey seaperch <i>Lutjanus carponotatus</i>	300 mm	4
	Tailor <i>Pomatomus saltatrix</i>	300 mm (Only 2 fish over 500 mm)	8
	Threadfin, giant <i>Polydactylus macrochir</i>	450 mm	2
	Threadfin, other species* <i>Polydactylus</i> spp. – other than <i>Polydactylus macrochir</i> (Pictured: Blue threadfin)	N/A	4
	Trevally and queenfish (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)	Skipjack: 250 mm	8
	Tripletail <i>Lobotes surinamensis</i>	300 mm	2
	Western Australian salmon <i>Arripis truttaceus</i>	300 mm	4
	Whiting, King George <i>Sillaginodes punctata</i>	280 mm	12
	Wrasse and parrotfish (all other species not specifically mentioned in these tables*) Family Labridae (Pictured top to bottom: female western king wrasse, male western king wrasse)	N/A	8

* See page 5 for an explanation of how bag limits apply to groups of species. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 41 for licence rules.

Freshwater finfish – bag and size limits






Statewide

TOTAL mixed species daily bag limit per fisher

This is the combined number of freshwater finfish you can take (see page 6 for details).

4

Species	Minimum legal size
 <p>Trout, rainbow (pictured top), brown (pictured bottom)* <i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i> and <i>Salmo trutta</i> (see our <i>Recreational South-West Freshwater Angling Guide</i> for more details)</p>	300 mm
 <p>Freshwater cobbler* Family Plotosidae (see our <i>Recreational South-West Freshwater Angling Guide</i> for more details)</p>	N/A
 <p>Grunter (all freshwater species)* Family Terapontidae (Pictured: Sooty grunter)</p>	Sooty grunter (<i>Hephaestus fuliginosus</i>): 250 mm

* See page 5 for an explanation of how bag limits apply to groups of species. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 41 for licence rules.

All other species of finfish – bag and size limits








Statewide

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.

Species includes		Individual species daily bag limit
	Australian herring <i>Arripis georgianus</i> New individual species daily bag limit for Australian herring.	12
	Blue mackerel <i>Scomber australasicus</i>	30
	Whiting (excluding King George)* Family Sillaginidae (Pictured: Yellowfin whiting)	30
	Garfish * Family Hemirhamphidae (Pictured: Southern sea garfish)	30
	Mullet Family Mugilidae (Pictured: Yelloweye mullet)	30

* See page 5 for an explanation of how bag limits apply to groups of species. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 41 for licence rules.









Baitfish and feral freshwater species

Species	Daily bag limit
 Baitfish – sardine, anchovy and hardy head Families Clupeidae, Engralidae and Atherinidae (mulies, whitebait, scaly mackerel – pictured)	A combined daily bag limit of 9 litres
 Feral freshwater species such as carp, tilapia, goldfish and redfin perch (pictured) Families Cyprinidae and Cichlidae and <i>Perca fluviatilis</i>	No bag limit – do not return to the water. Dispatch humanely.

NOTE: If fishing from a boat, see page 41 for licence rules.














Crustaceans – bag and size limits

NOTE: Statewide possession limit of 24 rock lobster per person.

	Species	Minimum legal size	Daily bag limit	Boat limit
	Cherabin <i>Macrobrachium</i> spp.	N/A	9 litres	N/A
	Crab, blue swimmer[#] <i>Portunus pelagicus</i> (See pages 38 and 46 for more details)	127 mm (carapace width)	20	40
			West Coast: 10	West Coast: 20
	Crab, mud (all species combined) <i>Scylla</i> spp. (Pictured: Brown mud crab)	Green: 150 mm Brown: 120 mm (carapace width)	5	10
	Marron[#] <i>Cherax</i> spp. (See our <i>Recreational Fishing for Marron Guide</i> for more details about specific rules that apply to these species)	80 mm (carapace length) Trophy waters: 90 mm	8 Trophy waters: 5	N/A
	Prawns (all species combined) [#] Family Penaeidae (Pictured: Western king prawn) (See page 40 for more details)	N/A	9 litres	N/A
	Redclaw <i>Cherax quadricarinatus</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Rock lobster (all species combined) [#] <i>Panulirus</i> and <i>Jasus</i> spp. (Pictured: Western rock lobster) (See our <i>Recreational Fishing for Rock Lobster Guide</i> for more details about specific rules that apply to these species)	76 mm Maximum size limits for female lobsters also apply in some areas (see our <i>Recreational Fishing for Rock Lobster Guide</i> for more details). Southern rock lobster: 98.5 mm	8	24 At least three licensed fishers must be on board actively fishing to take the boat limit.
	Other crustacean species not specifically mentioned (combined) (Pictured: Gilgie)	N/A	10	N/A
			Yabbies have no bag or boat limit. Do not return to the water.	

[#] Closed seasons apply. **NOTE:** If fishing from a boat, see page 41 for licence rules.

Molluscs and other invertebrates – bag and size limits

Species		Minimum legal size	Daily bag limit	Boat limit
	Abalone, Roe's[#] <i>Haliotis roei</i> (See our <i>Recreational Fishing for Abalone Guide</i> about specific rules that apply to this species)	60 mm	20	N/A
			West Coast: 15	
	Abalone, greenlip <i>Haliotis laevis</i> (pictured)/ brownlip <i>Haliotis conicopora</i> (combined) [#] (See our <i>Recreational Fishing for Abalone Guide</i> about specific rules that apply to this species)	140 mm	5	10
	Ark shells, cockles and pipis (pictured) Families Arcidae, Cardiidae and Donacidae	N/A	2 litres	N/A
	Clams <i>Tridacna</i> spp.	N/A	2	N/A
	Mussels Family Mytilidae	N/A	9 litres (shell on)	N/A
	Oysters Family Ostreidae (Pictured: Native oyster) Recreational harvesting of pearl oysters (<i>Pinctada maxima</i>) is prohibited	N/A	20	N/A
	Razorshell Family Pinnidae	N/A	20	N/A
	Scallops Family Pectinidae	N/A	20	N/A
	Sea urchins[#] Class Echinoidea	N/A	20	N/A
	Specimen shell (cowries, volutes, conch) Families Cypraeidae, Volutidae and Strombidae	N/A	10	N/A
	Squid, cuttlefish and octopus (combined) [#] Family Cephalopoda (Refer to the website for further information on octopus trigger traps)	N/A	15	30
	Bloodworms (bait)	N/A	1 litre	N/A
	Other molluscs and invertebrate species not specifically mentioned (combined) (Pictured: Mud whelk)	Trochus: 65 mm	10	N/A

[#] Closed seasons and additional rules apply.



Protected species

These species are protected and may NOT be taken



Grey nurse shark
Carcharius taurus



White shark
Carcharodon carcharias



Spartooth shark
Glyphis spp.



Whale shark
Rhincodon typus



Sawfish – all species
Family Pristidae



Rays and skates – Hamelin Bay Protection Area only
All ray and skate species are protected in Hamelin Bay.



Black stingray (left)
Dasyatis thetidis and **smooth stingray** (right)
Dasyatis brevicaudata
Protected from recreational fishing in the South Coast and West Coast bioregions.



Coral and live rock
Order Scleractinia
(Pictured: *Goniopora tenuidens*)



Potato cod
Epinephelus tukula



Queensland groper
Epinephelus lanceolatus

Juvenile



Humphead Maori wrasse
Cheilinus undulatus



Weedy seadragon
Phyllopteryx taeniolatus



Leafy seadragon
Phycodurus eques



Native freshwater fish species
(from top to bottom)



Balston's pygmy perch
Nannatherina balstoni,



western trout minnow
Galaxias truttaceus,



mud minnow
Galaxiella munda,



black-stripe minnow
Galaxiella nigrostriata,



pouched lamprey
Geotria australis,



salamanderfish
Lepidogalaxias salamandroides,

little pygmy perch
Nannoperca pygmaea

Finfish possession limits

The maximum quantity of finfish (includes scalefish, sharks and rays) you may have in your possession – either **whole or in pieces** – is:

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

At the Abrolhos Islands the possession limit is:

- 10 kg of fish fillets; or
- one day's bag limit of whole fish or fish trunks.

'Fillet' means any particular piece of a finfish, other than a whole fish, fish trunk, head, tail, fin, backbone or wing. For these pieces 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 more information see our *Abrolhos Islands Information Guide* available from Department of Fisheries offices or the website.

These limits apply throughout WA, including permanent and temporary places of residence. 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 10 – 33).

Note: 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, the fish must be clearly labelled with the name of the owner(s).

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.

Landing filleted or processed fish

Fish with a minimum size limit can be carried at sea and landed:

- as fillets, skin and scale on, a minimum 30 cm length;
- trunked, skin and scale on, a minimum 30 cm length; or
- whole (can be gutted and gilled).

Unless they are being prepared for immediate consumption or being eaten, the following species (which all have a maximum size limit) must be carried whole at sea (although can be gutted and gilled), on estuaries and on rivers and landed whole:

- estuary cod;
- Malabar cod;
- barramundi; and
- pink snapper in the inner gulfs of Shark Bay.

Fish without a size limit can be carried at sea and landed:

- filleted, skin on;
- trunked, skin on; or
- whole (can be gutted and gilled).

Note: These rules also apply if you are returning from an island.

Transporting of unaccompanied fish

Unaccompanied recreationally caught fish *cannot* be transported by commercial couriers. You must accompany your fish if transporting it by land, sea or air.

Crabs, prawns and molluscs

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.

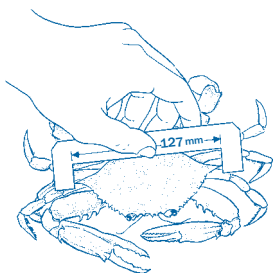
OR

- **Scoop net** – hand-held wire or plastic scoop nets 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.

Totally protected crabs

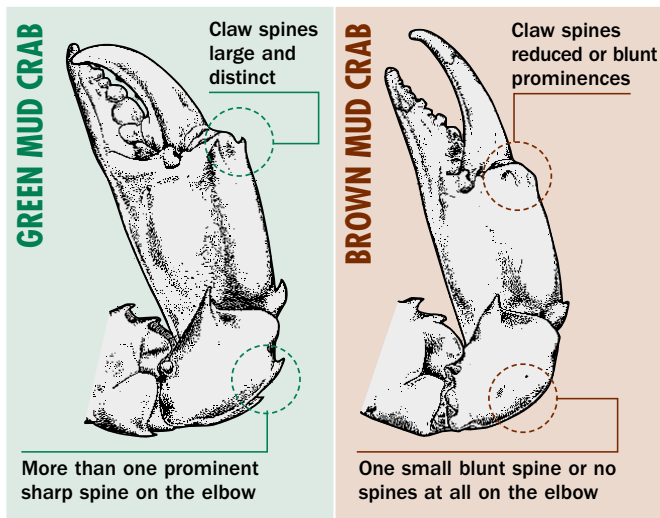
Undersize or 'berried' (egg-carrying, see picture) crabs are totally protected. They must be returned to the water immediately.



You must release any protected crabs you have caught before attempting to catch another crab.

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 (see page 40).



Cherabin (freshwater prawns 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 your local Department of Fisheries office or the website.

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.

Bycatch such as crabs and seahorses must be returned immediately to the water when fishing for prawns.

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;
- 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.

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;
- rock lobster;
- abalone;
- marron;

- South-West 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.

Recreational Fishing from Boat Licence details are below. Separate brochures covering the other licensed recreational fisheries listed above are available from your local Department of Fisheries office or the website.

Apply for a new licence, or renew an existing licence online at the Department of Fisheries website. Alternatively, application forms are available from Department of Fisheries offices and the website.

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 jiggling);
- 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 (see 'bag and boat limits' below).
- 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 and costs \$30 or \$15 for concessions. See page 42 for details on buying or renewing your licence.

Bag and boat limits

Unlicensed fishers can fish if one or more people on board has an RFBL, provided the total catch of everyone on board stays within the bag limit of the licensed fishers. It is the master of the boat's responsibility to ensure this rule is followed.

Note: This only applies to the RFBL, not to other recreational fishing licences.

In addition to bag limits, there are boat limits. To legally take the boat limit on a powered vessel, there must be two or more RFBL holders on board. This includes boats used for recreational crabbing. The boat operator must ensure this rule is followed.

Note: If you are boat fishing for demersal species in the West Coast Bioregion you must carry a release weight on board (see page 51).

Closed seasons and protected areas

Seasonal closures

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

Demersal finfish

Demersal finfish live on or near the ocean floor usually in depths of more than 20 metres.

West Coast Bioregion: Closed season 15 October – 15 December (inclusive). Fishing for demersal finfish resumes on 16 December.

The take or landing of demersal finfish (listed on pages 10 – 15) is prohibited within the West Coast Bioregion (north of Kalbarri to east of Augusta) during this period. If you catch a demersal finfish from a boat or from shore in this area 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 finfish closure is one of several management measures to reduce the recreational catch in this area by at least 50 per cent. This reduction was required following independently reviewed research that showed demersal species, like dhufish, pink snapper and baldchin groper, were being overfished.

The seasonal closure and other management measures will be reviewed as the latest stock assessment and catch information becomes available.

Pink snapper

Shark Bay: An important breeding aggregation area for pink snapper. The following seasonal closures apply.

- **Eastern Gulf:** Closed season 1 May – 31 July (inclusive).
- **Freycinet Estuary:** Closed season 15 August – 30 September (inclusive). Fishers **must obtain a tag** to take pink snapper in the estuary. A limited number of tags is issued each year.

More information and maps are available from your local Department of Fisheries office or the website.

Cockburn and Warnbro sounds: Closed season 1 October – 31 January (inclusive).

Cockburn Sound is the site of the largest known aggregations of pink snapper in the West Coast Bioregion and is critical for sustaining 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 the sounds may be transported through, and immediately landed, within the area during the closed season.

Baldchin groper

Abrolhos Islands: Closed season 1 November – 31 January (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.

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. Visit www.fish.wa.gov.au for further information.

Peel-Harvey Estuary: Closed season
1 September – 31 October (inclusive).

The Peel Inlet (including the channel entrance), Harvey Estuary, Dawesville Cut and all man-made waterways are closed to all crab fishing during this period.

The closures protect crab breeding stocks, allowing females to spawn.

Marine protected areas

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

Marine reserves, which include marine nature reserves, marine parks and marine management areas, are managed by the Department of Parks and Wildlife. Information about marine reserves is available from Parks and Wildlife offices and their website at www.dpaw.wa.gov.au.

In addition to these marine reserves, there are a number of fish habitat protection areas and other closed areas which are managed by the Department of Fisheries.

Further information about fishing activity allowed in all marine protected areas is available from your local Department of Fisheries office 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 three baits or lures on each line. Shore-based fishers may use a maximum of two fishing lines. Rods and lines must be attended.
- **Spearfishing** – generally allowed in ocean waters, except in some marine protected areas and around dive wrecks. Further information on specific restrictions in marine protected areas is available from your local Department of Fisheries office or the website. All inland waters (rivers, tributaries and dams) are closed to spearfishing.
- **Haul, set and throw fishing nets** – most of the State is closed to set and haul netting. See our *Recreational Net Fishing Guide* for details, available from your local Department of Fisheries office or the website.
- **Release weights** – required if fishing for demersal species in the West Coast Bioregion (see page 51). Also recommended when fishing for demersal species in other regions.

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 traps or ‘pots’ of any kind (except lobster pots and octopus trigger traps – see the website for further information);
- 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);
- '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 are illegal in WA waters. Check before you make a purchase.

Illegally selling fish

It is against the law to sell recreationally caught fish. Penalties include fines as high as \$80,000. There is also a mandatory penalty of up to 10 times the prescribed value of the fish in question.

In some cases, penalties of up to one-year's imprisonment may apply as well.

Fishing safety

Boat fishing safety

You need to take care when fishing from the shore and be properly prepared when fishing from a boat. Check the seaworthiness of your boat and that you have the right safety gear, including life jackets, 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.

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 someone about your boating plans.
- Notify them immediately if plans change during the voyage.
- Always report in when you return.

Bureau of Meteorology:

www.bom.gov.au/weather/wa

Department of Transport – marine information:

www.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 channels 16 and 67, 27 MHz channel 88 and HF channel 2182. Full details: www.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 (see page 53).

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 excess 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 'kick' 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.

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 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.

Using a release weight

A release weight is a weighted barbless hook for releasing deep-water fish suffering from ‘barotrauma.’

Gases in the fish’s body expand due to a sudden decrease in pressure, causing the fish’s stomach to push out through its mouth or gills and its eyes to appear popped out. Fish suffering from barotrauma may not be able to return to the bottom when released if their swim bladder remains inflated.

Boat fishers should use a release weight to release demersal fish to reduce the effects of barotrauma and maximise their chance of survival.



Photo courtesy of Recfishwest

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

Note: If you are boat fishing for demersal species in the West Coast Bioregion you must have a release weight on board. You don't need a release weight if a boat is used exclusively for spearfishing.

For more information on release weights, contact Recfishwest (see page 53).

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 the website 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).

www.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.

True blue swimmer supporters

Assist with our research into blue swimmer crabs in the Swan-Canning Estuary, Leschenault Inlet and Geographe Bay. You can help by providing us with details of your crab catches, including size, numbers and location of crabs.

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 www.redmap.org.au or the phone app.

Catch the fishing news

Have the latest WA recreational fishing news delivered straight to your inbox – subscribe to the Department's *Catch!* e-newsletter at www.fish.wa.gov.au/catch



Recfishwest – representing your fishing future

Recfishwest is recognised by the State Government as the peak body for recreational fishing in WA. This organisation represents the voice of recreational fishers wherever decisions affecting our fisheries, or access to them, are made.



www.recfishwest.org.au (08) 9246 3366

General disclaimer

This publication is to provide assistance or information. It is only a guide and does not replace the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994* or the *Fish Resources Management Regulations 1995*. It cannot be used as a defence in a court of law. The information provided is current at the date of printing but may be subject to change. For the most up-to-date information on fishing and full details of legislation contact your local Department of Fisheries office or visit www.fish.wa.gov.au

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customerservice@fish.wa.gov.au
ABN: 55 689 794 771

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88 – 90 Stead Rd
Albany WA 6330
(08) 9845 7400

BROOME DISTRICT OFFICE (and Northern Regional Office)

Port of Pearls House
401 Port Drive
Broome WA 6725
(08) 9193 8600

BUNBURY DISTRICT OFFICE

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Bunbury WA 6230
(08) 9721 2688

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48A Bussell Highway
Busselton WA 6280
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59 Olivia Terrace
Carnarvon WA 6701
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DENHAM DISTRICT OFFICE

Knight Terrace
Denham WA 6537
(08) 9948 1210

ESPERANCE DISTRICT OFFICE

Bandy Creek Boat Harbour
Esperance WA 6450
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10 Maley Street
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14 Capo D'Orlando Drive
South Fremantle WA 6162
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69 – 75 Connell Rd
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39 Northside Drive
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Fish for the future

