

COMMERCIAL ABALONE FISHERY

OPERATIONAL INFORMATION PAPER
FOR THE 2019 FISHING YEAR

ISSUED: DECEMBER 2018

Department of Primary Industries,
Parks, Water & Environment
Wild Fisheries Management Branch



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Total allowable catch for 2019

The total allowable catch approved by the Minister for 2019 is 1,267 tonnes, distributed within the parts of the fishery (zones) as follows:

Zone	2019 TAC kgs	2019 TAC kgs/unit
Bass Strait Blacklip	91,000	26
Eastern Blacklip	252,000	72
Greenlip	108,500	31
Northern Blacklip	98,000	28
Western Blacklip	717,500	205
Total	1,267,000	362

Fishing Zones: 'Parts' of the fishery

Separating the fishery into different 'parts' is provided for in the *Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995*; these parts are commonly referred to in the industry as 'zones'.

Number of parts

For the 2019 fishing year, there are five parts of the fishery, as follow (Figure 1):

- eastern blacklip;
- western blacklip;
- northern blacklip;
- Bass Strait blacklip; and
- greenlip.

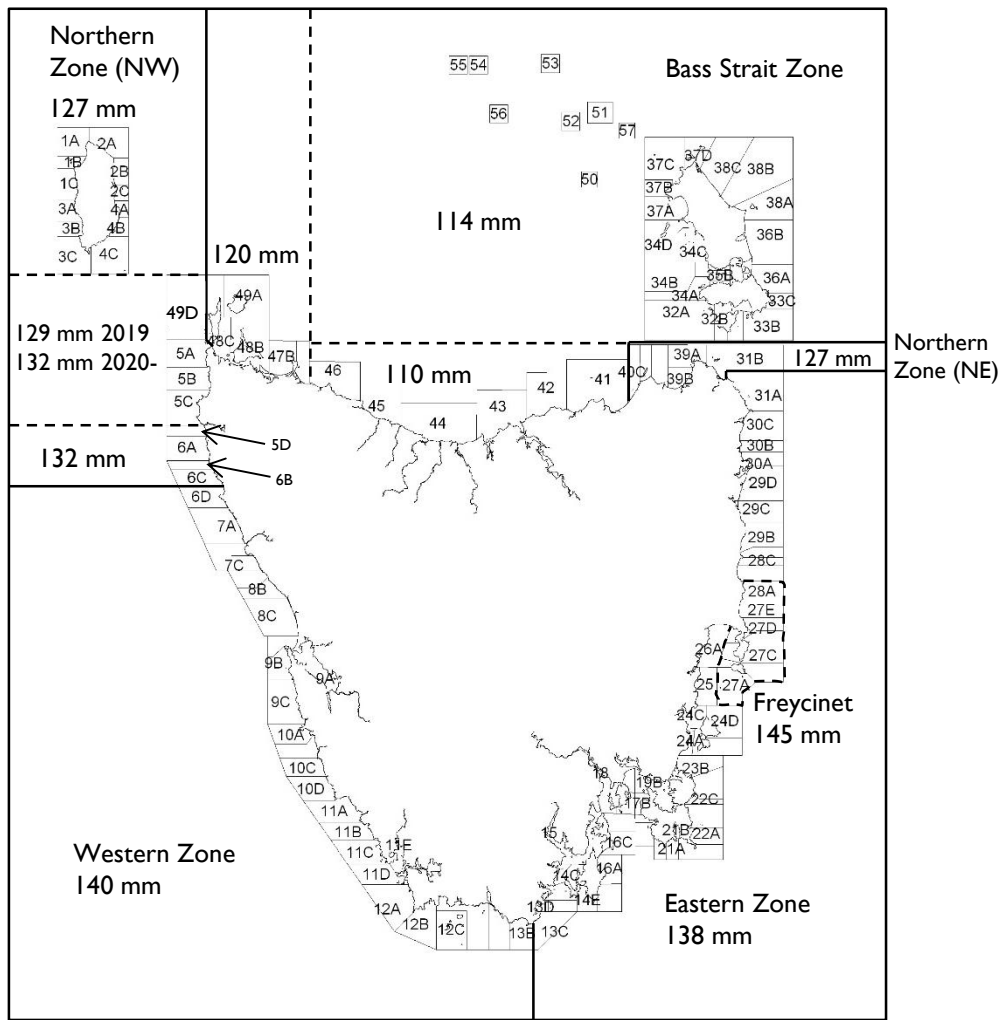


Figure 1 Commercial zones and size limit areas for blacklip abalone 2019 (solid line: zone and size limit boundary; dashed line: size limit boundary; please note, lines are illustrative only)

The Bass Strait zone has a recently introduced western boundary starting at the northernmost point of Woolnorth Point (Figure 2).

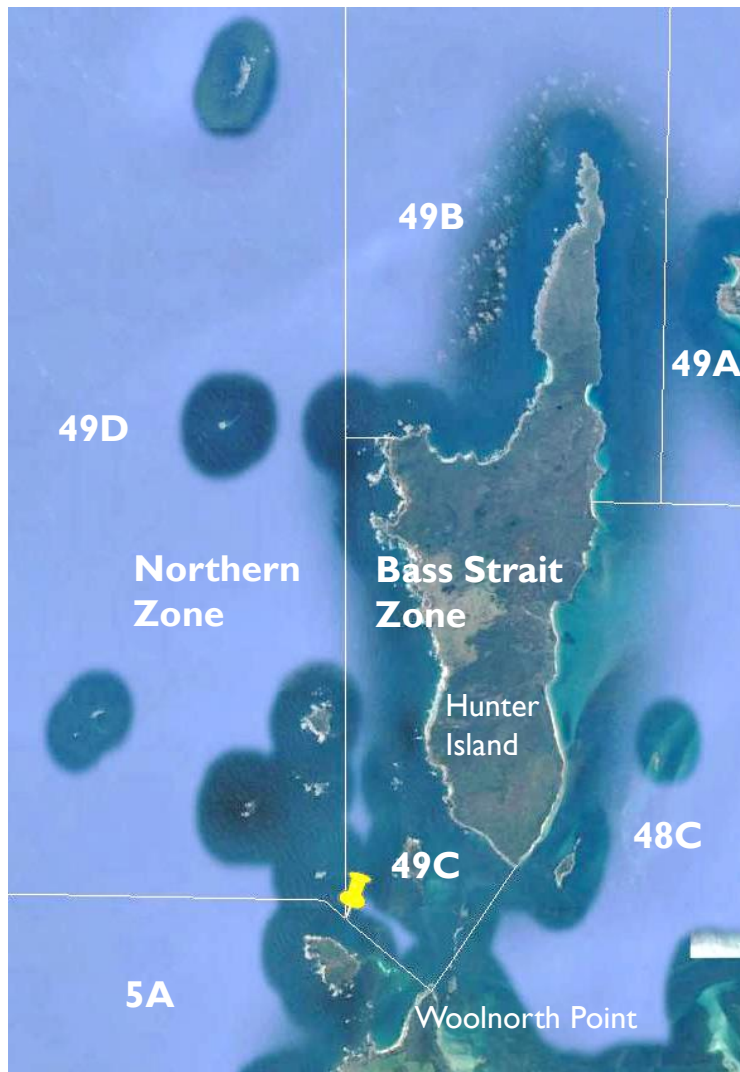


Figure 2 New zone and sub-block boundaries for Bass Strait and Northern zones for 2019; pinpoint shown is the point of latitude 40° 37' 14.40" South, longitude 144° 41' 37.87" East (please note, lines are illustrative only)

The boundary then runs approximately north-west to the point of latitude 40° 37' 14.40" South, longitude 144° 41' 37.87" East, then runs due north to the outer limit of State waters. Thus, Bird Island and Hunter Island are in the Bass Strait zone, and Trefoil Island, Brown Rocks, Nares Rocks, Steep Island and Albatross Island are in the northern zone. Please note that the former Albatross Island sub-block, 49D, has been enlarged to include Brown Rocks, Nares Rocks, Steep Island and Albatross Island in the northern zone. Sub-blocks 49B and 49C now relate to the western side of Hunter Island in the Bass Strait zone only. Sub-blocks 48C and 49A in the Bass Strait zone are unchanged. Sub-block 5A in the northern zone is unchanged.

Please note that three new ports have been designated for the enlarged Bass Strait zone, namely: Stanley; Smithton and Woolnorth Anchorage.

To facilitate dinghy fishing in the Furneaux Group, the area within a radius of 50 metres on the landward side from the high-tide mark closest to the point of launching or retrieving a fishing vessel from anywhere on Flinders Island is included in the list of designated ports.

Please note that the south-east boundary of the Bass Strait zone runs through Banks Strait. The Bass Strait zone does not include any northern zone blocks off north-east mainland Tasmania. A VMS is needed to bring blacklip abalone taken in the Bass Strait zone into the northern zone.

The northern zone is bounded down the west coast by Wild Wave River.

The northern boundary of the western part of the fishery is Wild Wave River.

Prior fishing report

Due to the change in size limit at Arthur River for 2019, the boundary of the northern **AREA** remains at Arthur River, whereas the northern **ZONE/PART** boundary has been moved south to Wild Wave River. The northern **AREA** relates to movement and reporting.

In divers' prior fishing report, divers are asked to state which **ZONE/PART** of the fishery they intend to fish.

By answering "**northern**", divers are indicating they intend to fish somewhere from Wild Wave River to Great Musselroe Bay, excluding the Bass Strait part of the fishery.

The next question asks divers who are fishing in the northern **AREA**, i.e., north of Arthur River, whether they intend to take abalone less than 132 mm. If divers are fishing north of Arthur River at 129 mm, the answer to this question is "**yes**". By answering "**yes**" divers may not enter the 132 mm area of the northern **ZONE/PART** of the fishery south of Arthur River, unless on a mother boat.

If divers are **NOT** fishing in the northern **AREA**, i.e., they are fishing south of Arthur River in the northern **ZONE/PART**, they should answer "**no**" they do not intend to fish in the northern **AREA** and take abalone less than 132 mm. By answering "**no**" divers may fish in the 132 mm area south of Arthur River in sub-blocks 5D, 6A, 6B and 6C only.

Finally, if a diver **IS** fishing in the northern **AREA** at 132 mm, i.e., they are fishing north of Arthur River at 132 mm, they should answer "**no**" they do not intend to take abalone less than 132 mm. By answering "**no**" divers may fish in the northern **AREA** at 132 mm north of Arthur River only.

Please note that it is thus not possible to fish at 132 mm both north and south of Arthur River on the same fishing trip.

Change to over-catch

If a diver goes into over-catch and does **NOT** transfer the abalone in the landing area or acquire additional quota within the quota period, and does **NOT** wish to dive in that zone again in that quota year, the diver must pay to the Crown an administrative penalty equal to the average beach price of that total excess catch for the first 10 per cent of over-catch, and twice the average beach price of that excess catch for between 10 and 20 per cent of over-catch, based on the last formally calculated beach price. An invoice will ordinarily be raised by the Department about February following the end of the quota period. **Please note that, should the diver elect to pay out the over-catch during the quota period, the diver is still not allowed to dive in that zone again in the quota period. Also note that, if a diver receives a financial administrative penalty relating to over-catch, the diver is not allowed to dive in that zone again in the quota period.**

Closure of some parts of the greenlip fishery

The commercial greenlip abalone fishery in State waters off the north-east and north-west coasts of Tasmania is being closed from 12:01 am 1 January 2019 to 11:59 pm 30 June 2019 in the interest of resource sustainability. The closure includes, in the north-west, fishing blocks 48 (excluding sub-block 48A), 49 and 5 and down the west coast, and in the north-east, blocks 31 and 39, and down the east coast.

Closure of the north-east blacklip fishery

The commercial blacklip abalone fishery in State waters off the north-east coast of Tasmania is being closed from 12:01 am 1 January 2019 to 11:59 pm 30 June 2019 as part of arrangements to control the total amount of blacklip abalone harvested in this area in the interest of resource sustainability. This closed area relates to commercial blacklip abalone fishing in fishing sub-blocks 31B, 39A and 39B only.

Closure of the eastern part of the fishery

The commercial blacklip abalone fishery in State waters off the east coast of Tasmania from Eddystone Point to Whale Head is being closed from 12:01 am 1 January 2019 until 11:59 pm 31 March 2019 in the interest of resource sustainability. The closure does not include sub-block 31A, which remains open at a size limit of 138 mm for the entire sub-block.

The reason for the closure is so that abalone in the warming waters of the east coast are left undisturbed during spawning.

Northern boundary of Freycinet 145 mm area

The northern boundary of the 145 mm area off the east coast around the Freycinet Peninsula remains the northern boundary of sub-block 28A in 2019, namely Peggys Point.

Taking abalone in a closed area

Please be aware that taking abalone in a closed area is a serious offence. Less than 100 kilograms of abalone taken illegally is all that is required to put a licence in jeopardy. The last page of this document is provided to assist you keep track of which sub-blocks have been closed during the year. Listed on the page are the known closures for 2019. Take this page and keep it with your dive docket books. As the Department notifies you of further closures during the year, note these on the page. Consult the page as needed.

Moreover, please note that the Department posts all closures on its website at:

<http://dpiwwe.tas.gov.au/sea-fishing-aquaculture/commercial-fishing/abalone-fishery/abalone-closures>

Please be aware that areas of the fishery may also be subject to biosecurity closures from time to time resulting, e.g., from harmful algal blooms. Any such closures may be viewed via the following:

Biosecurity Tasmania website:

<http://dpiwwe.tas.gov.au/biosecurity-tasmania/product-integrity/food-safety/seafood/shellfish-quality/harvest-area-status>

Department of Agriculture and Water Resources website:

<http://www.agriculture.gov.au/export/controlled-goods/fish/industry-advice-notice/2017>

Finally, please note that the holder of a fishing licence (abalone dive) can not, on a fishing trip, enter the water by swimming or diving in both an open and a closed part of the fishery for the same species.

All vessels over-nighting must have VMS

Any vessel used on a fishing trip that finishes on a day after it commenced must be fitted with a VMS that is registered and polling with the Department. (Vessels used from a mother boat need not have a VMS provided the mother boat is fitted with a VMS.) Should you wish to register a VMS with the Department, or check the status of your VMS, please telephone Angela Iles, Fisheries Compliance and Systems Officer, on 6165 3038.

All vessels over-nighting must make a prior landing report

The skipper of any vessel on a fishing trip that finishes on a day after it commenced must now make a prior landing report to the telephone reporting service. Divers need no longer make this report. The telephone number is as for all other reports (1800 773 243, in-dial 03 8199 7339). The prior landing report must be made no less than two hours prior to landing.

Any diver driving their fish to a processor must make a post fishing report

Any diver leaving the landing area with their fish to deliver them to a processor must make a post fishing report to the telephone reporting service, not a movement report. The telephone number is as for all other reports (1800 773 243, in-dial 03 8199 7339). Please note that, before leaving the landing area, part A of the commercial abalone dive docket must be complete; this will require weighing the fish using a certified set of scales.

Spare data loggers at certain police stations and vessels

Spare data loggers have now been placed with geographically strategic police stations throughout Tasmania as well as with certain police vessels. Should a diver need to access a spare set of loggers, as a short-term expediency, they should contact one of the offices or police vessels below. Please note that unless the need is urgent, the preference is that divers work with IMAS to address any issue with data loggers. On receiving any data loggers from a police station, divers must follow the written instructions that come with those data loggers in their entirety.

Police stations and vessels with spare data loggers:

- St Helens – 0417 374 144
- Stanley – 0408 144 059
- Strahan – 0409 405 642
- Hobart (Glenorchy) – 0427 655 557
- Currie – 0427 828 070
- Whitemark – 0428 417 857
- George Town – 0417 541 645
- Police Vessel Van Diemen – 0428 137 298, sat. phone 0011 8816 214 578 69
- Police Vessel Cape Wickham – 0437 981 874, sat. phone 0011 870 773 257 781

Biosecurity

Divers should acquaint themselves with the contents of the voluntary code of practice for biosecure fishing available on the Tasmanian Abalone Council Ltd's website (<http://tasabalone.com.au/>). For any enquiries, please telephone Travis Baulch, Abalone Biosecurity Officer, on 6165 3029.

Common boundaries

The lines forming common boundaries of the various parts/zones of the fishery are as follows (Figure 1):

Woolnorth Point: An imaginary line running from the northernmost point of Woolnorth Point to the point of latitude 40° 37' 14.40" South, longitude 144° 41' 37.87" East, then running due north to the outer limit of State waters.

Anderson Bay: An imaginary line beginning where the line of longitude 147° 27' 00" East meets the high-water mark of the north coast of the mainland of Tasmania in Anderson Bay, then running due north until its junction with the line of latitude 40° 39' South, then due east along that line of latitude to the limit of State waters.

Great Musselroe Bay: An imaginary line from the northern side of the mouth of the Great Musselroe River where Musselroe Bay enters Great Musselroe Bay then 100 metres off the shore around to the northern tip of Musselroe Point then due north up to latitude 40° 48' South then due east (i.e., you can launch inside the northern zone but fish south of Musselroe Bay in the eastern zone).

Whale Head: An imaginary straight line running due south from Whale Head (longitude 146° 52' 11" East).

Wild Wave River: An imaginary straight line running due west from the mouth of the Wild Wave River near Sandy Cape.

The parts/zones of the fishery

Eastern

The east and south-east coast from Great Musselroe Bay in the north to Whale Head in the south.

Western

The west and south-west coast from Wild Wave River in the north to Whale Head in the south.

Northern

The north-west and north-east coasts from Wild Wave River in the north-west to Great Musselroe Bay in the north-east but excluding the area of the Bass Strait zone.

Bass Strait

The north coast and Bass Strait, including the Furneaux Group of islands, bounded in the west by an imaginary line running from the northernmost point of Woolnorth Point to the point of latitude 40° 37' 14.40" South, longitude 144° 41' 37.87" East, then running due north to the outer limit of State waters and in the east by an imaginary line beginning where the line of longitude 147° 27' 00" East meets the high-water mark of the north coast of the mainland of Tasmania in Anderson Bay, then running due north until its junction with the line of latitude 40° 39' South, then due east along that line of latitude to the limit of State waters.

Greenlip

Single zone for greenlip abalone with no geographic boundaries in State waters.

Single zone fishing

Single zone blacklip abalone fishing applies in the fishery. Fishers are able to take greenlip abalone on a trip in a blacklip zone as long as they fulfill all the requirements for both species. Requirements are as follow:

- Only one blacklip zone can be fished on a fishing trip.
- Divers nominate which blacklip zone is to be fished by prior fishing report and then can only fish that blacklip zone on that trip, including for greenlip abalone.
- Please note that, if part of a dive team that lands greenlip abalone, both divers must complete a greenlip dive docket regardless of whether he or she personally took any greenlip abalone.
- If fishing the eastern zone, fishers must not enter the waters, even on a vessel, of the western zone on that trip.
- For zones other than the northern zone and the Bass Strait zone, divers can start and finish a trip, but not dive, outside that zone.
- Regarding size limits, divers can not bring smaller fish into a larger size limit area unless on a mother boat with a VMS that is polling with the Department.

NB: Divers can only transfer excess abalone to, or receive excess abalone from, a diver who has been fishing in the same blacklip zone at the time of landing. Be aware that transfer of excess abalone can not be used to bring a diver below 20 per cent excess.

The whole amount of the excess must be transferred to only one other diver. Divers can not receive a transfer of excess abalone if that transfer would take their quota balance below zero.

Divers should be aware, also, that they may make a **changing part of the fishery report** to the reporting service provided they have not taken any abalone on the fishing trip at the time of making the report, no abalone is on the vessel and there has been no diving or swimming beneath the surface of the water on the fishing trip at the time of making the report.

If a diver is not going to undertake the fishing trip reported, the diver must lodge a **cancellation report**, provided the fishing trip has not been started, i.e., a dinghy has not been launched or a mother boat has not left port. The report must be lodged within two hours of when the fishing activity was to have started.

Note on cancellation reports: If a diver starts a fishing trip and does not dive, a docket must be completed for that fishing trip and all other normal reporting requirements followed.

Size Limits

Commercial blacklip

The following size limits apply to the commercial blacklip abalone fishery: 110 mm, 114 mm; 120 mm; 127 mm; 129 mm; 132 mm; 138 mm, 140 mm and 145 mm (Figure 1).

Boundaries

The lines forming the size limit areas are as follow:

Wild Wave River: Imaginary straight line due west of the mouth.

Arthur River: Imaginary straight line due west from the mouth.

Upper-west blacklip area: means the area of State waters adjacent to the upper-west coast of Tasmania enclosed by an imaginary line running from the northernmost point of Woolnorth Point to the point of latitude 40° 37' 14.40" South, longitude 144° 41' 37.87" east, then running due north to the line of latitude 40° 16' 58.41" South, then running due west to the line of longitude 144° 26' 18.11" East, then

running due south to the line of latitude 41° 21' 58.85" South, then running due east to the mouth of the Wild Wave River near Sandy Cape, and following the line of high water in a generally northerly direction to the point of commencement at Woolnorth Point.

Great Musselroe Bay:

From the northern side of the mouth of the Great Musselroe River where Musselroe Bay enters Great Musselroe Bay then 100 metres off the shore around to the northern tip of Musselroe Point then due north up to latitude 40° 48' South then due east, i.e., you can launch inside the northern zone but fish south of Musselroe Bay in the eastern zone (Figure 3).

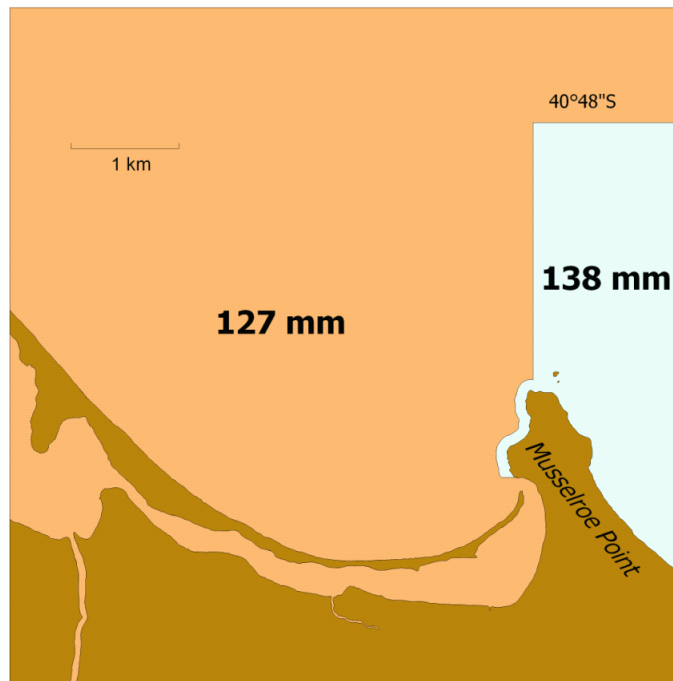


Figure 3 Great Musselroe Bay boundary delineating the northern (north-east) (127 mm) and the eastern parts/zones of the commercial abalone fishery

Whale Head:

A straight line running due south from Whale Head (longitude 146° 52' 11" East).

Anderson Bay:

A line beginning in Anderson Bay at longitude 147° 27' 00" East, then running due north until its junction with

the line of latitude 40° 39' South, then due east along that line of latitude to the limit of State waters.

Cowrie Point:

The line of longitude 145° 22' 42" East near Cowrie Point.

North coast blacklip area:

means the area of State waters adjacent to the north coast of mainland Tasmania bounded by an imaginary line starting at the point where the line of longitude 145° 22' 42" East meets the high-water mark near **Cowrie Point** and running due north along that line of longitude until its junction with the line of latitude 40° 39' 00" South, then due east along that line of latitude until its junction with the line of longitude 147° 27' 00" East and then due south along that line of longitude to the high-water mark of the north coast of the mainland of Tasmania in **Anderson Bay**.

Woolnorth Point:

An imaginary line running from the northernmost point of Woolnorth Point to the point of latitude 40° 37' 14.40" South, longitude 144° 41' 37.87" East, then running due north to the outer limit of State waters (western boundary of 120 mm blacklip size limit).

An imaginary line from the northernmost point of Woolnorth Point to the point of latitude 40° 37' 14.40" South, longitude 144° 41' 37.87" East, then running due north to the line of latitude 40° 16' 58.41" South, and running due west to the limit of State waters (southern boundary of 127 mm blacklip size limit for King Island).

The areas

110 mm area

110 mm applies along the central north coast between the Cowrie Point boundary and the Anderson Bay boundary, i.e., to the north coast blacklip area.

114 mm area

114 mm applies in part of Bass Strait, including the Furneaux Group of islands, between the Cowrie Point boundary and the Anderson Bay boundary.

120 mm area

120 mm applies in part of Bass Strait in blocks 47, 48 and 49A, 49B and 49C.

127 mm area

127 mm applies in the north-east between Great Musselroe Bay and the Anderson Bay boundary.

127 mm applies around King Island.

129 mm area

129 mm applies off the north-west coast from Arthur River north as far as Albatross Island.

132 mm area

132 mm applies between the Arthur River and the Wild Wave River.

138 mm area

138 mm applies on the east and south-east coasts between Great Musselroe Bay and Whale Head.

140 mm area

140 mm applies on the west and south-west coasts from Wild Wave River to Whale Head.

145 mm area

145 mm applies around the Freycinet Peninsula and up to Peggys Point at Bicheno in sub-blocks 26B, 26C, 26D, 27A, 27B, 27C, 27D, 27E and 28A.

Commercial greenlip

For the commercial greenlip abalone fishery, 145 mm applies Statewide except for:

- Waters around **King Island** where 150 mm applies (note that greenlip abalone smaller than 150 mm can not be taken into the 150 mm area).
- The **north coast greenlip area** where 132 mm applies (note that greenlip abalone smaller than 145 mm can not be taken or possessed on State waters outside the north coast greenlip area). Please note that the north coast greenlip area extends east as far as the eastern boundary of sub-block 41 in Anderson Bay. Greenlip abalone may be taken at 132 mm in sub-blocks 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47 and 48A (Perkins Bay) (Figure 4 and Figure 5).

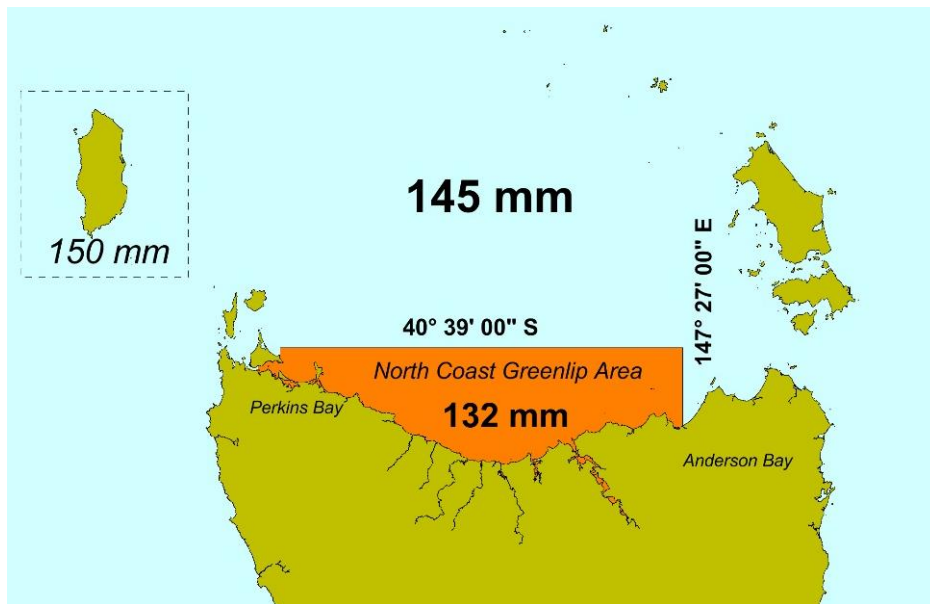


Figure 4 North coast greenlip area

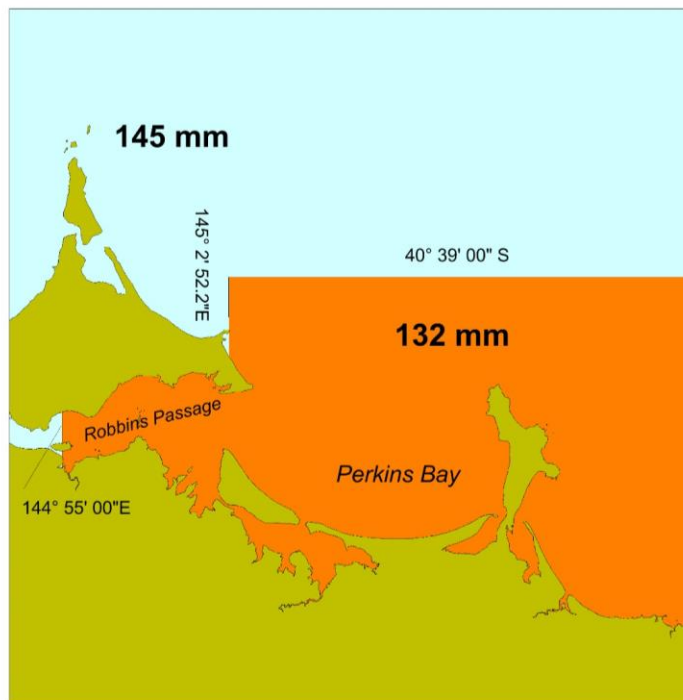


Figure 5 North coast greenlip area regarding Perkins Bay

Fishing in the northern zone

- The northern zone does not include the Bass Strait zone.

- You can fish greenlip on a northern zone fishing trip provided all the requirements for fishing blacklip (and greenlip) are fulfilled. If you fish the northern zone you can not fish any other blacklip zone on that trip.
- Due to the change in size limit at Arthur River for 2019, the boundary of the northern **AREA** remains at Arthur River, whereas the northern **ZONE/PART** boundary has been moved south to Wild Wave River. The northern **AREA** relates to movement and reporting.

In divers' prior fishing report, divers are asked to state which **ZONE/PART** of the fishery they intend to fish.

By answering "**northern**", divers are indicating they intend to fish somewhere from Wild Wave River to Great Musselroe Bay, excluding the Bass Strait part of the fishery.

The next question asks divers who are fishing in the northern **AREA**, i.e., north of Arthur River, whether they intend to take abalone less than 132 mm. If divers are fishing north of Arthur River at 129 mm, the answer to this question is "**yes**". By answering "**yes**" divers may not enter the 132 mm area of the northern **ZONE/PART** of the fishery south of Arthur River, unless on a mother boat.

If divers are **NOT** fishing in the northern **AREA**, i.e., they are fishing south of Arthur River in the northern **ZONE/PART**, they should answer "**no**" they do not intend to fish in the northern **AREA** and take abalone less than 132 mm. By answering "**no**" divers may fish in the 132 mm area south of Arthur River in sub-blocks 5D, 6A, 6B and 6C only.

Finally, if a diver **IS** fishing in the northern **AREA** at 132 mm, i.e., they are fishing north of Arthur River at 132 mm, they should answer "**no**" they do not intend to take abalone less than 132 mm. By answering "**no**" divers may fish in the northern **AREA** at 132 mm north of Arthur River only.

Please note that it is thus not possible to fish at 132 mm both north and south of Arthur River on the same fishing trip.

- Divers must start and finish trips either in the northern area (with provisions to allow mother boats to start and finish outside the area [see below]), or south of Arthur River in sub-blocks 5D, 6A, 6B and 6C.
- Divers must launch and retrieve either between the Arthur River and Great Musselroe Bay (unless on a mother boat), or south of Arthur River in sub-blocks 5D, 6A, 6B and 6C.

- Divers must not leave the northern area within a fishing trip (unless on a mother boat) or take fish or dive outside the northern area when on such a trip.

Fishing the northern zone at 127 mm

- Divers may fish the northern zone at 127 mm around King Island and in sub-blocks 31B, 39A, 39B, 40A, 40B and 40C.
- Divers must not take or possess any blacklip abalone less than 127 mm.
- Divers must launch and retrieve between Arthur River and Great Musselroe Bay (unless on a mother boat).

Fishing the northern zone at 129 mm

- Divers may fish the northern zone at 129 mm in sub-blocks 5A, 5B, 5C and 49D (see Figure 2 for new boundaries of sub-block 49D).
- Divers must not take or possess any blacklip abalone less than 129 mm.
- Divers must launch and retrieve between Arthur River and Great Musselroe Bay (unless on a mother boat).
- Divers may not enter the water south of Arthur River (unless on a mother boat).

Fishing the northern zone at 132 mm

- Divers may fish the northern zone at 132 mm in sub-blocks 5D, 6A, 6B and 6C.
- Divers must not take or possess any blacklip abalone less than 132 mm.
- Divers may launch and retrieve north or south of Arthur River.
- Divers must not take abalone north of Arthur River.

Mother boats in the northern area

Divers on a mother boat in the northern area

- All divers on a mother boat must nominate the same zone.

- If the mother boat starts the trip outside the northern area, intending to fish the northern area, the diver must complete the prior-fishing report before the vessel leaves port (prior-fishing reports should always be done before the diver commences the fishing trip).
- No fishing or diving may be undertaken before the mother boat enters the zone nominated to be fished.
- The trip must be completed within the northern area unless the leaving area requirements for mother boats set out below are fulfilled.

Mother boat operators in the northern area

- If starting a trip to fish the northern area from outside that area, the supervisor of the mother boat must complete a leaving port report to the telephone service before leaving port.
- No such report is required if starting the trip inside the area.
- No fishing may be undertaken before entering the northern zone, there must be no abalone on the vessel before entering the zone, and all dinghies must be securely fastened onboard the boat while travelling to the fishing zone.
- Mother boats can finish a northern fishing trip outside the northern area under the following conditions:
 1. the supervisor of the mother boat completes a leaving area report to the reporting service no less than two hours before leaving the area;
 2. on the east coast, the boat does not go south of St Helens Point other than in Georges Bay;
 3. if fishing the northern zone, mother boats can traverse through the western zone provided the boat does not go south of Strahan further than Yellow Bluff in Macquarie Harbour, but only with abalone of a legal minimum length of 132 mm or greater;
 4. the vessel is fitted with VMS that is operating according to Department procedure;
 5. all dinghies are securely fastened on the mother boat while in waters not in the northern area; and

6. the mother boat proceeds directly to port after leaving the northern area.

Note: these arrangements allow 127 mm fish to be taken out of the area at the eastern boundary to St Helens, and 132 mm fish to be taken to Strahan. These arrangements do not allow fish smaller than 132 mm to be taken to Strahan.

Note for starting and finishing a trip in the northern zone

The requirement to start and finish a fishing trip within the northern area boundaries allows both divers and mother boats to start and finish trips between Arthur River and Great Musselroe Bay, including those waters within the Bass Strait area. Divers may also start and finish a fishing trip south of Arthur River regarding sub-blocks 5D, 6A, 6B and 6C.

However, if any diving is undertaken, or any fish are taken in the Bass Strait zone, this constitutes a Bass Strait trip not a northern zone trip and all the requirements for fishing the Bass Strait zone apply (both zones can not be fished on the same trip).

In other words, if undertaking a northern zone trip, it is illegal to undertake any diving, or to take any abalone in the Bass Strait zone. No abalone below 127 mm can be taken or possessed on a northern zone trip launching or retrieving in the Bass Strait zone.

For divers, these arrangements mean they can start a northern trip within the Bass Strait area without a leaving port report and finish a trip in the Bass Strait area without a leaving area report or a VMS being required.

Fishing in the Bass Strait zone

Please note that compliance with Commonwealth requirements is needed to transit any Commonwealth marine reserve, a number of which come to within three nautical miles of the Tasmanian coast. For example, compliance is almost certainly required to dive in the Northern Bass Strait Region in respect of the Beagle Commonwealth Marine Reserve.

Please be aware that class approvals have now replaced general approvals. That is, commercial fishing operations are now allowed through a single class approval. Under the class approval there is no need for commercial fishers to register to be approved. The class approval sets out the Network management zones where commercial fishing can occur, fishing methods that can be used, and the conditions that commercial fishers need to follow when fishing in the South-east Commonwealth Marine Reserves Network. It is important that commercial fishers make themselves aware of the

conditions contained in the class approval and comply with these conditions when operating in the South-east Commonwealth Marine Reserves Network.

For those operating a vessel with a VMS, there is a free geo-fencing service available.

Details are on the Commonwealth website at:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/topics/marine/marine-reserves/south-east/management>

Fishing in the north coast blacklip area

Commercial fishing for blacklip abalone in blocks 41-46 is at 110 mm.

110 mm blacklip abalone can not be possessed west of Cowrie Point.

Operational restrictions

- Single blacklip zone fishing applies in the Bass Strait zone (you can fish greenlip on the same trip provided all the requirements for fishing blacklip and greenlip abalone are fulfilled).
- Divers must start and finish trips in the Bass Strait zone (with some provisions to allow mother boats to start and finish trips outside the zone [see below]).

To fish the Bass Strait zone

- In the prior fishing report, divers must nominate that they will fish the Bass Strait zone.
- Divers must depart from and return to a designated port within the Bass Strait area (unless on a mother boat). Please note that three new ports have been designated for the enlarged area, namely:

Stanley; Smithton and Woolnorth Anchorage.

- On a fishing trip in the Bass Strait area, divers must not leave the Bass Strait area (unless on a mother boat) or take fish or dive outside the Bass Strait area.

Mother boats in the Bass Strait zone

Divers on a mother boat in the Bass Strait zone

- All divers on a mother boat must nominate the same zone.

- If the mother boat starts the trip outside the Bass Strait area intending to fish the Bass Strait zone, divers must complete the prior fishing report before the vessel leaves port (prior-fishing reports should always be done before the diver commences the fishing trip).
- No fishing or diving may be undertaken before the mother boat enters the Bass Strait zone.
- The trip must be completed within the Bass Strait area unless the leaving area requirements for mother boats described below are fulfilled.
- No fishing or diving on the trip can be undertaken after leaving the Bass Strait zone.

Mother boat operators in the Bass Strait zone

- If starting a trip to fish the Bass Strait zone from outside that zone, the supervisor of the mother boat must complete a leaving port report to the telephone service before leaving port.
- No such report is required if starting the trip inside the zone.
- No fishing may be undertaken before entering the Bass Strait zone, there must be no abalone on the vessel before entering that zone, and all dinghies must be securely fastened onboard the boat while travelling to the Bass Strait zone.
- Mother boats can finish a Bass Strait trip outside the Bass Strait zone under the following conditions:
 1. there is no possession of blacklip abalone smaller than 110 mm;
 2. the supervisor of the mother boat completes a leaving area report to the reporting service no less than two hours before leaving the zone;
 3. on the east coast, the boat does not go south of St Helens Point except in the waters of Georges Bay;
 4. the vessel is fitted with VMS that is operating according to Department procedure;

5. all dinghies are securely fastened on the mother boat while in waters not in the Bass Strait zone; and
6. the mother boat proceeds directly to port after leaving the Bass Strait zone.

Vessel monitoring systems and designated ports in the Bass Strait zone

The holder of a fishing licence (abalone dive) must not undertake a fishing trip on a fishing vessel during which the holder takes, or intends to take, blacklip abalone in the Bass Strait part of the fishery unless:

- That vessel is fitted with an operating vessel monitoring system; or
- That vessel is transported on and operates from a mother boat fitted with an operating vessel monitoring system; transportation includes to and from areas of fishing as well as the carriage, storage and transportation to the port of unloading of all abalone taken by that holder on that fishing trip; in other words, dinghies without a VMS can be used from a mother boat fitted with a VMS (note that the mother boat must transport and unload all the abalone taken); or
- That vessel departs from and returns to a designated port; where:

“designated port” means:

- Killiecrankie on Flinders Island;
- North East River on Flinders Island;
- Lady Barron on Flinders Island;
- Bridport;
- Tam O’Shanter Bay (Lulworth);
- Georgetown;
- Low Head;
- Beauty point;
- Port Sorell;
- Devonport;
- Burnie;
- Wynyard;
- Sisters Beach;
- Stanley;
- Smithton;
- Woolnorth Anchorage; and
- the area within a radius of 50 metres on the landward side from the high-tide mark closest to the point of launching or retrieving a fishing vessel from anywhere on Flinders Island.

Thus, vessels, i.e., licensed dinghies, that depart from and return to one of the designated ports do not require a VMS. Vessels not departing from and returning to one of the designated ports require a VMS.

Note: Once the supervisor of a fishing licence (vessel) is directed to fit a VMS, it is an offence to operate the vessel without the VMS operating. If the VMS ceases to operate, the supervisor must notify the Department immediately. The supervisor must take reasonable technological steps to ensure that he or she is alerted if the VMS ceases to operate.

Leaving sub-blocks 5D, 6A, 6B or 6C with 132 mm abalone

Divers may leave sub-blocks 5D, 6A, 6B or 6C either north or south with abalone taken in sub-blocks 5D, 6A, 6B or 6C at a shell length of 132 mm or greater, provided in the south they are on a mother boat and go no further than of an imaginary line running due west from Cape Sorell to the limit of State waters. From Cape Sorell, divers are also allowed in the waters of the Channel into Macquarie Harbour as well as in Macquarie Harbour itself which allows access to Strahan.

Research areas

Bay of Fires Research Area

Includes all waters off the east coast of Tasmania bounded in the north by the line of latitude 40° 59' 40" South and in the south by the line of latitude 41° 12' 30" South (from Eddystone Point to the southern end of Taylors Beach) (Figure 6).

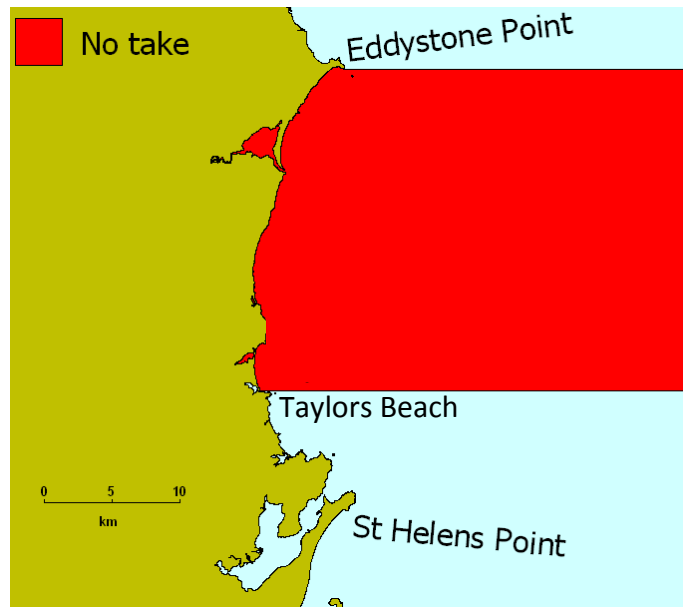


Figure 6 Bay of Fires Research Area

This research area represents the whole of sub-blocks 30B and 30C and is closed to commercial abalone fishing. The Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) supervised some structured commercial fishing in sub-blocks 30B and 30C in 2013, 2014 and 2017. The preliminary conclusion from this fishing is that the area presently does not contain commercial quantities of abalone. The area remains closed while consideration is given to its status. Sub-block 30A is open to commercial fishing except for in the Elephant Rock Research Area.

George III Rock Research Area

George III Rock research area is defined to be the waters within an imaginary circle having a radius of 500 metres and centred at George III Rock, where George III Rock

means the rock situated at latitude 43° 30' 36" South and longitude 146° 58' 58" East (approximately two nautical miles north-east of Eliza Point) (Figure 7).



Figure 7 George III Rock Research Area

In the George III Rock research area, a person must not:

- (a) take any fish by diving or swimming under water;
- (b) enter the waters of the area for the purpose of diving or swimming under water; or
- (c) anchor a vessel.

Inner Sister Island Research Area

Includes waters adjacent to the western side of Inner Sister Island in the Furneaux Group of Islands bounded in the north by the line of latitude $39^{\circ} 41' 8''$ South, in the south by the line of latitude $39^{\circ} 42' 6''$ South, in the east by the western shore of Inner Sister Island between those two lines of latitude forming the northern and southern boundaries, and in the west by an imaginary line 500 metres from the high water mark of the shore of Inner Sister Island running between those 2 lines of latitude forming the northern and southern boundaries (Figure 8).



Figure 8 Inner Sister Island Research Area

The following restrictions apply:

- (a) taking any fish by diving or swimming underwater is prohibited; and
- (b) entering the waters of those areas for the purpose of diving or swimming underwater is prohibited.

Swan Island Research Area

For commercial abalone divers, the research area includes waters adjacent to the east coast of Swan Island off the north-east coast of Tasmania within an area bounded by an imaginary line starting from the point of latitude $40^{\circ} 43' 49.22''$ South and longitude $148^{\circ} 8' 0.22''$ East running due west to the first point of land on the east coast of Swan Island, then following the high tide mark in a generally south-easterly direction along the coast to the point on the east coast of Swan Island that is due north-west of the point of latitude $40^{\circ} 44' 16.28''$ South and longitude $148^{\circ} 7' 16.04''$ East, then due south-east to that point, then in a generally north-easterly direction 500 metres from the high tide mark of Swan Island to the point of origin. (Figure 9).

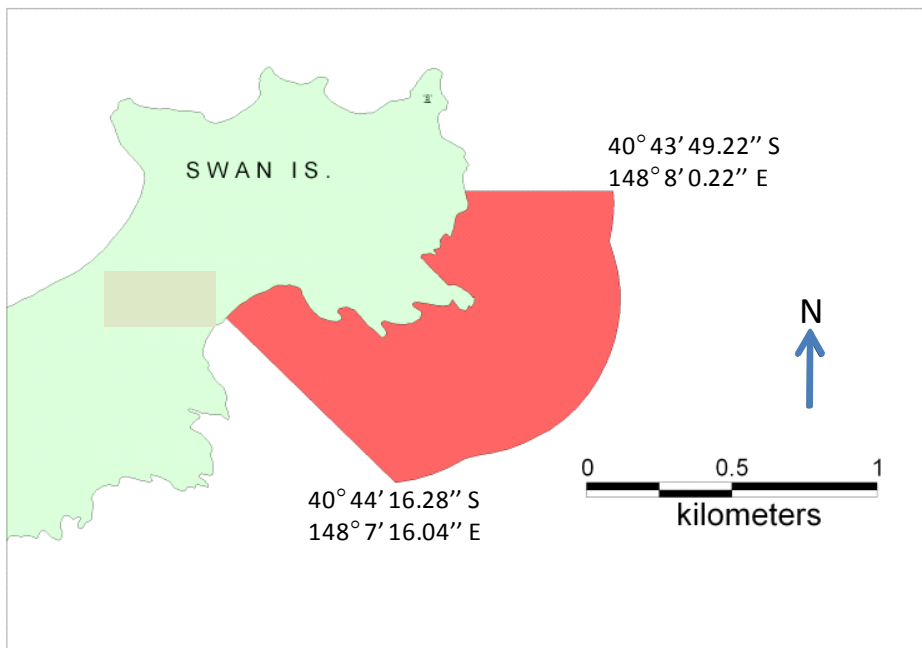


Figure 9 Swan Island Research Area

The following restrictions apply:

- (c) taking any fish by diving or swimming underwater is prohibited; and
- (d) entering the waters of those areas for the purpose of diving or swimming underwater is prohibited.

Doughboys Research Area

Includes waters adjacent to the west coast of Tasmania near Cape Grim around The Doughboys bounded in the north by the line of latitude $40^{\circ} 40' 12''$ South and in the east by the line of longitude $144^{\circ} 40' 54''$ East and in the south by the line of latitude $40^{\circ} 40' 32''$ South and in the west by the line of longitude $144^{\circ} 39' 59''$ East (Figure 10).

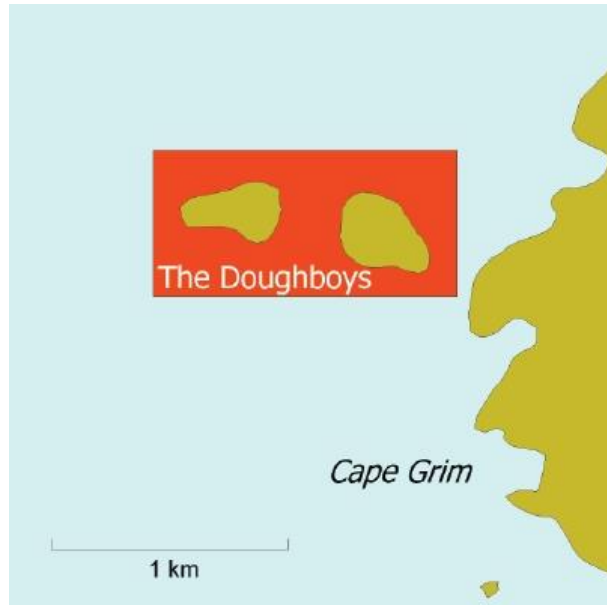


Figure 10 The Doughboys Research Area

The following restrictions apply:

- (e) taking any fish by diving or swimming underwater is prohibited; and
- (f) entering the waters of those areas for the purpose of diving or swimming underwater is prohibited.

Waterwitch Reef Research Area

Includes the part of State waters adjacent to the west coast of King Island around Waterwitch Reef bounded in the north by the line of latitude $39^{\circ} 53' 00''$ South and in the east by the line of longitude $143^{\circ} 48' 50''$ East and in the south by the line of latitude $39^{\circ} 54' 00''$ South and in the west by the line of longitude $143^{\circ} 47' 50''$ East (Figure 11).

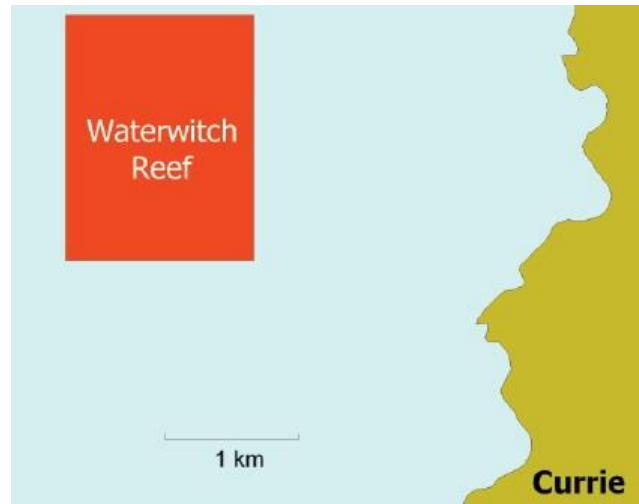


Figure 11 Waterwitch Reef Research Area

The following restrictions apply:

- (g) taking any fish by diving or swimming underwater is prohibited; and
- (h) entering the waters of those areas for the purpose of diving or swimming underwater is prohibited.

Elephant Rock Research Area

The Research Area commences at the intersection of the high-water mark and the line of Latitude 41° 15' 9.0" South then to the point latitude 41° 14' 47.6" South, longitude 148° 20' 16.0" East; then to the point latitude 41° 14' 48.1" South, longitude 148° 20' 38.5" East; then to the point latitude 41° 15' 26.51" South, longitude 148° 20' 41.4" East; then due west along the line of latitude 41° 15' 26.51" South to the high-water mark (Figure 12).

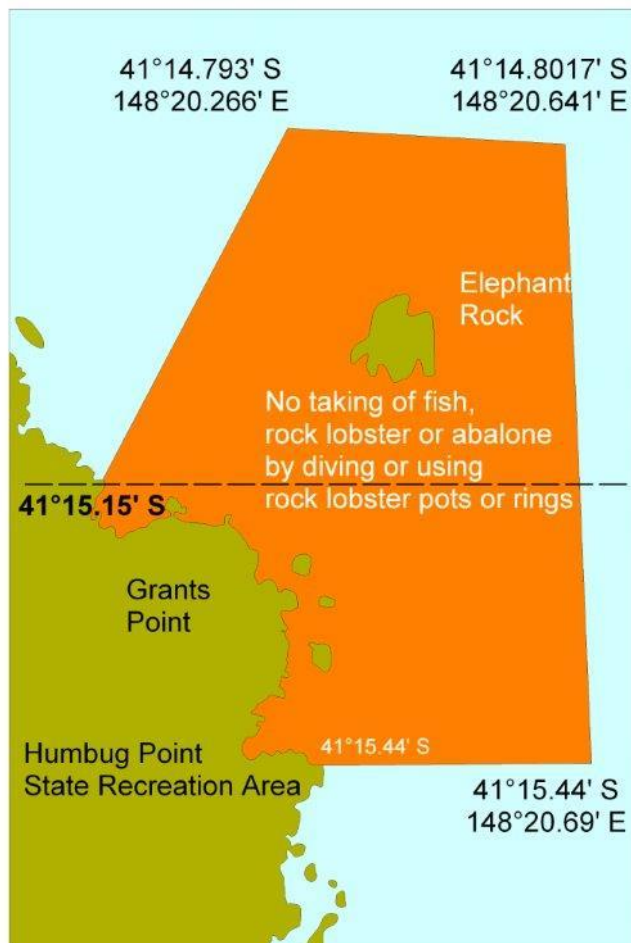


Figure 12 Elephant Rock Research Area

No fishing by diving is allowed in the research area.

North Bay Research Area

Includes State waters commencing at the intersection of the high-water mark and the line of longitude 147° 56' 47.4" East to the point of longitude 147° 56' 47.4 East / latitude 42° 52' 17.6" South to the point of longitude 147° 57' 38.3" East / latitude 42° 51' 55.1" South then due south to the high-water mark (Figure 13).

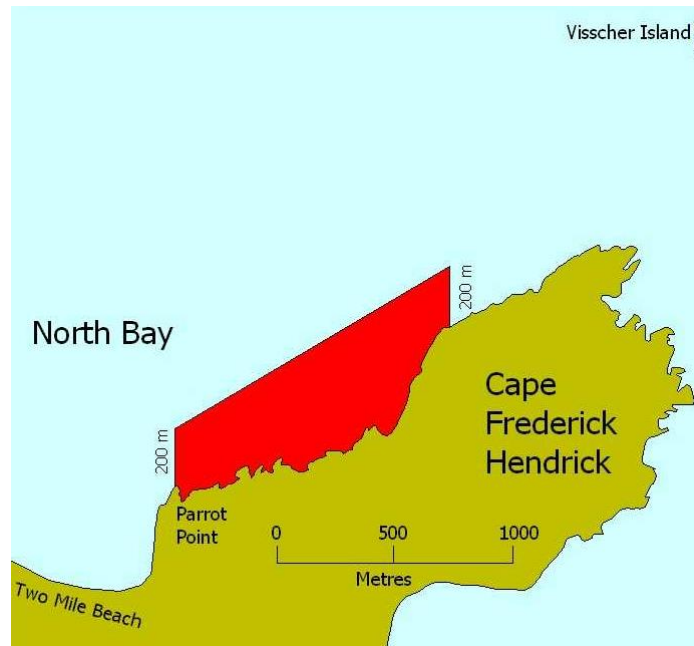


Figure 13 North Bay Research Area

No fishing by diving is allowed in the research area.

Processors

All processors of wild abalone must hold a current fish processing licence authorised to process wild abalone.

Receiving small fish

Processors receiving blacklip abalone from the northern blacklip area or the Bass Strait area are required to separate and mark fish as described below.

Northern blacklip area

Processors receiving blacklip abalone from the northern blacklip area must transport and store abalone before processing in bins or containers marked with the words “northern area” or with a red tag marked with the words “northern area”.

Bass Strait area

Processors receiving blacklip abalone from the Bass Strait area must transport and store abalone before processing in bins or containers marked with the words “Bass Strait area” or with a red tag marked with the words “Bass Strait area”.

Marine farmed abalone

All processors of marine farmed abalone must hold a current fish processing licence authorised to process marine farmed abalone. Provided all necessary reporting requirements are fulfilled, processors may then receive, possess and process from marine farms abalone that are less than the minimum size in the wild fishery. All abalone received from a marine farm are to be stored separately in appropriately labelled containers prior to processing. Processors should consult the *Fisheries (Processing and Handling) Rules 2010* for rules pertaining to the necessary processor requirements for marine farmed abalone.

Biosecurity

Processors should acquaint themselves with requirements relating to treatment of abalone live-holding discharge water (telephone Travis Baulch, Abalone Biosecurity Officer, 6165 3029).

Margin for error (over-catch)

A system exists to accommodate over-catch where care has been taken to catch no more than the positive quota balance for that zone at the time, noting that all abalone taken above the size limit must be landed.

Please note that you may only fish quota added to your entitlement if you have received confirmation from the Department that the quota has been added either by receipt of the fishing licence (abalone dive) which indicates the quota units have been authorised or by contacting the Department during business hours. You must not fish any such quota if you have not received confirmation.

Please note, all commercial abalone divers must hold a current fishing licence (personal) to take abalone. The fishing licence (personal) has a fixed expiry date of 31st August annually. It is an offence to take abalone for commercial purposes if the diver does not hold a current fishing licence (personal).

A diver (or diving team) may fish to the quota limit on his /her/their FLAD but with a provision for a margin of error on a trip. This margin is 20 per cent of the positive quota balance for that zone at the time. That is, the diver (diving team) may land up to an additional 20 per cent of his/her/their positive quota balance.

Divers (diving teams) are required to fish to the actual quota held with the error allowance being only a provision to accommodate a difference between the estimated and actual weights taken.

The diver (diving team) then has a number of choices as to how to deal with that excess catch. The diver or diving team can only use one of the following options. **A combination of options can not be used.**

First, the diver (or diving team) can 'transfer' the **whole amount** of excess abalone to one other diver only, who is also completing a commercial abalone fishing trip at the same landing area. The receiving diver must have enough positive quota balance to cover the **total amount** of abalone. Blacklip abalone transfers may only occur between divers who have fished in the same zone.

Only abalone which is in excess of a diver's (or diving team) positive quota balance (by less than 20 per cent) may be transferred to another diver. The total amount of excess abalone must be transferred to only one other diver, a diver cannot transfer part of the over-catch. Be aware that receiving of transferred abalone can not take that diver into a negative quota balance. A

diving team must exhaust the total amount of their combined quota balance before an over-catch can be recorded.

Note, if a diver transfers an amount of excess abalone that is more than 20% (this is outside the over-catch options in the Rules) **the diver who took the abalone will still be required to pay the administrative penalty for the excess abalone as if they themselves landed the excess abalone.**

Both divers must complete separate abalone transfer docket for the amount of abalone involved. The pink copy of that docket is then forwarded to the Department with the relevant pink Dive Docket.

The transfer must take place before Part A of the Dive Docket is completed, and no abalone from either diver can leave the landing area before both divers have completed their transfer docket. The current requirements of when Part A of the Dive Docket must be completed determines the 'window of opportunity' within which excess abalone can be transferred to another diver.

Under this scenario, both divers complete their own Dive Docket as usual. Both divers record their own personal catch and effort information in the fishing details section. However, for reporting against quota in the rest of the docket, the divers indicate the amount they are deducting off their quota. That is, the recipient diver records the amount he or she caught plus the amount he or she is given, and the diver giving the abalone records an amount calculated by subtracting the amount he or she gives away from their catch.

The second option available to the diver (or diving team) with excess catch (which does not exceed the 20 per cent limit) is to keep the excess abalone and cover the entire excess amount with extra quota (in one administrative transaction) within the quota period.

That is, the diver has until the end of the year to get additional quota units specified on the dive licence against which the total excess catch will be reconciled. Under this scenario, the full amount of abalone is reported on the Dive Docket and a negative quota balance results.

The over-catch amount will be reconciled against the next quota unit(s) assigned on the dive licence. Thus, the onus is on the diver to identify which unit(s) is/are to be used or else reconciliation will occur regarding the first unit(s) entered, noting that when a number of quota units are authorised at the same time, the excess will be allocated to quota units in listed, usually numerical, order unless otherwise requested.

If a diver does not acquire additional quota within the quota period, and does **NOT** wish to dive in that zone again in that quota year, the diver must pay to the Crown an

administrative penalty equal to the average beach price of that total excess catch for the first 10 per cent of over-catch, and twice the average beach price of that excess catch for between 10 and 20 per cent of over-catch, based on the last formally calculated beach price. **Please note that, should the diver elect to pay out the over-catch during the quota period, the diver is still not allowed to dive in that zone again in the quota period.**

A diver can not dive in a zone with a negative quota balance; that deficit must be addressed through acquisition of additional quota (within the quota period).

NB: This restriction also includes diving as part of a dive team. No member of a dive team can dive in a zone where they have a negative quota balance.

There are also provisions for the last trip each year in each zone.

Each diver will conduct one final trip in each zone. Again, for abalone up to 10 per cent in excess of the positive quota balance at the time, payment to the Crown of an administrative penalty will be required for the average beach price of that abalone. For abalone between 10 per cent to 20 per cent in excess, a payment of twice the average beach price will be required. The average beach price of the fish will be calculated from the beach price for the last quarter of the year. The amount of the administrative penalty will be communicated in the new quota year (divers can commence fishing the new quota year). Divers must pay the Crown the total amount of the administrative penalty within 30 days of notification. Failure to do so may result in prosecutorial action being commenced. If the diver does not wish to fish that zone again in that year, the negative quota balance will remain and will become the last trip for that year, and a letter detailing the administrative penalty to address the over-catch will be generated in the new quota year under the last trip provisions.

The possibility of a diver having a negative quota balance raises issues for the transfer of dive licences and replacement of licence supervisors. Licences will not be transferred until any outstanding negative quota balance is addressed by either acquisition of additional quota within the quota period or by payment of the administrative penalty. Similarly, a change of supervisor will not be approved until a negative quota balance is rectified.

There is provision for a financial administrative penalty in lieu of prosecution regarding a less than 20 kilograms amount of over-catch greater than 20 per cent or an amount of over-catch between 20 per cent and 30 per cent. Please note that the administrative penalty is an amount equal to twice the last beach price for the entire amount of excess abalone up to the maximum of 30 per cent, not just for the percentage greater than 10 per cent or greater than 20 per cent. **Please note that the diver will not be allowed to dive in that zone again in the quota period.**

For amounts greater than 30 per cent, the diver will be liable for the financial administrative penalty for the amount of excess up to 30% and be liable to prosecution for any amount over 30% (Figure 14). **Please note that the diver will not be allowed to dive in that zone again in the quota period.**

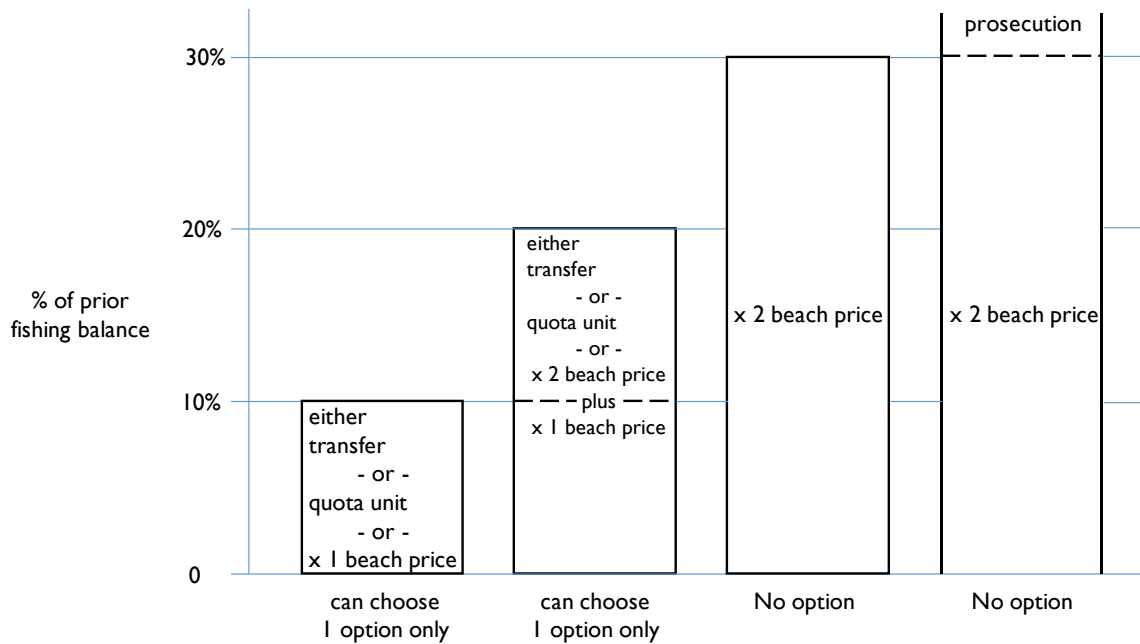


Figure 14 Over-catch steps

Share diving (team diving)

Note that divers do NOT have to form a diving team if they are simply working from the same vessel on a fishing trip. In such cases, divers should keep their catch separate for purposes of size limit policing and quota reconciliation.

Members of a diving team, on the other hand, are authorised on a fishing trip to take quota specified on the licences of the team members combined. Divers should still keep their catch identifiably separate for purpose of size limit policing.

The framework for share diving is as follows:

- The unit is defined as a 'diving team'.
- The diving team arrangement applies for one fishing trip.
- A team may comprise of a maximum of two divers.
- A diving team must be formed **PRIOR** to the divers commencing the diving trip. Divers must declare that they have formed a diving team when making

their prior fishing report. Divers must remain in a diving team for the duration of the diving trip.

- Any over-catch notwithstanding, the team may not take on a fishing trip more than the amount authorised in total for the team; both divers are responsible for the amount taken.
- The **total amount** of over-catch taken by a diving team must be dealt with by **only one** of the abovementioned options.
- Neither diver can enter into over-catch if the other diver has a positive quota balance; i.e., all combined quota must be exhausted before either diver can enter into over-catch.
- A diving team must be defined by each diver completing a separate diving team docket.
- Diving team dockets must be completed before each trip starts; the docket is sent to the Department with the relevant Dive Docket for the trip.
- To form a new or different team, the existing trip must be finished, all abalone must be landed and dive dockets completed. A new dive docket and fishing trip are then commenced.
- Members of the team each complete his or her Dive Docket; each diver completes his or her own catch and effort activity for the amount they take, the catch of the team must be recorded on the Dive Docket, and all abalone caught combined must be attributed to one or both licences, according to which licence(s) the quota is to be decremented.
- Both divers forming a dive team must be physically able and equipped to dive.
- Both divers must participate in the diving activity.
- Team divers must start the fishing trip on the same vessel and all abalone taken must be landed from that vessel.
- Team divers must dive and catch from the same vessel or dinghy, including if operating on a mother boat.
- No minimum amount of quota is needed on either licence, but neither diver can commence a fishing trip with a negative quota balance for that part of the fishery.
- **Over-catch is calculated from the combined total of quota authorised to BOTH licences. One diver can not avail themselves on any of the over-catch provisions if the other diver still has quota authorised on their licence.**

Sustainable Catch Targets

Fishing effort needs to be distributed across the fishery to reduce the likelihood of localised overfishing. Each year, therefore, a number of areas in the fishery have catch caps applied to them. When an area is to be closed due to its cap having been reached, divers and processors will be informed in writing by e-mail. If you have not provided your e-mail address to the Department, you should do so.

Please note that, as a matter of course, notice of closures is now being texted to you by the Tasmanian Abalone Council Ltd, and the Department is posting all closures on its website (<http://dpiwwe.tas.gov.au/sea-fishing-aquaculture/commercial-fishing/abalone-fishery/abalone-closures>).

GPS and depth loggers mandatory

All divers are required to carry and use the working GPS and depth loggers registered to them by the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS). Without either of the loggers, divers cannot commence a fishing trip. Should any problem be experienced with either of the loggers, telephone **0408 301 367** to talk with a technician during business hours prior to the trip commencing. Outside business hours, use this number to leave a voice message. Importantly, if you have departed on a fishing trip and a fault occurs, and you can not reach a technician, SMS your message; you will receive an automatic SMS reply which provides a record that you have notified IMAS of the fault. With this SMS reply, you may undertake **ONE** fishing trip only; the fault must be rectified or a replacement logger obtained to undertake any subsequent trips. IMAS will respond to your message as soon as possible.

It is an offence punishable by heavy penalties for a diver to take abalone on a commercial abalone dive trip without an operating data logger.

Additional Information

For further information please contact:

- Wild Fisheries Management Branch (03) 6165 3033.
- For licensing and quota authorization enquiries (03) 6165 3000.
- For docket book and quota balance enquiries (03) 6165 3000.

2019 SUB-BLOCK CLOSURES

BLACKLIP:

East coast: the commercial blacklip abalone fishery in State waters off the east coast of Tasmania from Eddystone Point to Whale Head is being closed from 12:01 am 1 January 2019 until 11:59 pm 31 March 2019 in the interest of resource sustainability. The closure does not include sub-block 31A, which remains open at a size limit of 138 mm for the entire sub-block.

North-east: the commercial blacklip abalone fishery in State waters off the north-east coast of Tasmania is being closed from 12:01 am 1 January 2019 to 11:59 pm 30 June 2019 as part of arrangements to control the total amount of blacklip abalone harvested in this area in the interest of resource sustainability. This closed area relates to commercial blacklip abalone fishing in fishing sub-blocks 31B, 39A and 39B only.

GREENLIP:

North-east and north-west coasts: the commercial greenlip abalone fishery in State waters off the north-east and north-west coasts of Tasmania is being closed from 12:01 am 1 January 2019 to 11:59 pm 30 June 2019 in the interest of resource sustainability. The closure includes, in the north-west, fishing blocks 48 (excluding sub-block 48A), 49 and 5 and down the west coast, and in the north-east, blocks 31 and 39, and down the east coast.