Recreational Sea Fishing Guide 2019-20

1 November 2019 - 31 October 2020

Wild Fisheries Management Branch
Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment
Is your catch legal size?

There are no excuses for undersize fish.

Rulers and gauges available free from Service Tasmania shops.
Welcome to the 2019/20 Recreational Sea Fishing Guide.

As a keen salt and fresh water angler, I am delighted to be the Minister responsible for fisheries and am enjoying working with the recreational fishing community to deliver on the Hodgman Liberal Government’s commitments to the sector.

Fishing is a key part of the Tasmanian way of life. For many of us, catching a feed of fish with friends and family is a treasured part of life.

The results of the latest survey of recreational fishers show that over 100,000 of us take to the water to go fishing every year. The survey results are used to sustainably manage our fisheries and provide essential information about the social and economic benefits of recreational fishing to the Tasmanian community.

The Government continues to progress commitments to support recreational sea fishers including:

- Funding to Councils to improve access to jetties across the State;
- The replacement of derelict jetties around the very popular Georges Bay area;
- Improving boat and trailer parking at popular facilities including Coles Bay, Swansea and Pirates Bay;
- Funding for artificial reef structures and new Fish Aggregation Devices (FADs) to provide a new range of fishing opportunities for recreational fishers; and
- Continued funding to our marine research partner, the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies, to ensure robust science is behind our decision making.

As these and other commitments continue to roll-out, the Government will work with recreational anglers on a new Tasmanian Recreational Sea Fishing Strategy to address issues important to Tasmanians anglers such as fishing rules and access, research and funding.

Your input and experience will help outline a sustainable future for recreational fishing in our state and I look forward to continuing to work with you.

I wish you the best for the coming fishing season.

Guy Barnett MP
Minister for Primary Industries and Water
Abalone Rule Changes
New recreational abalone rules now apply including:
• regional bag and boat limits;
• reduced catch limits;
• new specifications for tools to measure and remove abalone;
• allowing the consumption of one abalone at sea;
• a ban on night fishing; and
• restricting the age for abalone licence holders to 10 years and older.
See page 32.

Female Rock Lobster Size Limit increased in North West
The recreational size limit for female rock lobster has increased to 120mm in the North West zone (waters bounded in the south at latitude 42°S on the West Coast and in the north by a line running northward at Point Sorell). See page 36.

In other state waters, the female size limit remains at 105mm.

Northern Calamari Spawning Closure
2019: Tasmania’s north coast closed from 1-31 October to protect spawning squid including calamari. The closure area applies from Cape Grim east to Cape Naturaliste.

2020: The closure areas and dates will be reviewed based on Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) research findings. Confirmation about closures applying in 2020 will be available by mid-2020.

See www.fishing.tas.gov.au or follow Fisheries Tasmania Facebook for maps and more information.

Report Black Spots in Flathead
Caught any flathead with black spots in the flesh? Use the online form at www.blackfilletproject.com.au to report it to IMAS scientists who continue to monitor the occurrence of melanisation in Tasmanian fish species.
East Coast Stock Rebuilding Strategy

The strategy continues to limit the total commercial and recreational catch of rock lobster in the East Coast Stock Rebuilding Zone between Eddystone Point and Tasman Head.

The aim is to return rock lobster stocks to above 20% of the unfished biomass by 2023. IMAS report on the stock status each year then management adjustments are considered to keep the rebuilding on track.

Recreational fishers are already experiencing better catch rates. If the stock rebuilding remains on track this should lead to a more resilient fishery in the future.

Do your part by sticking to catch limits and valuing your East Coast catch. Consider voluntarily limiting your total season catch in the ECSRZ to fewer than 10 lobsters.

Long Spined Sea Urchin Threat

77% of respondents to the recent rock lobster and abalone survey indicated they were aware of the long spined sea urchin threat to important East Coast rocky reef systems.

Strategies to tackle the threat of the urchins include:

• Biological: rebuilding and translocating rock lobster stocks;
• Market-based: subsidising new commercial markets for the urchin;
• Physical: eradication by culling and liming, commercial processing of urchin waste.

2018-19 Season Snapshots

Rock lobster

More than 18,000 people held the following rock lobster licences in 2018-19:
• 15,200 pot
• 8,600 dive; and
• 4,400 ring.

The annual IMAS survey of rock lobster licensees for the period 1 November 2018 to 30 April 2019 reported:
• An estimated total catch of 70,100 rock lobster equating to 75 tonnes.
• 62% of the total catch was taken by potting, 37% by diving and 1% by rings.
• The average catch rate was 0.96 lobsters per day with daily harvest rates for diving (1.67 lobster) more than double that for pots (0.74 lobster).
• 72% of the catch (by weight) was taken from the East Coast, 18% North Coast and 10% from the West Coast.

The catch in the East Coast Stock Rebuilding Zone was estimated at 49 tonnes, 20% over the notional amount for the recreational fishery in this area.

Abalone

There were 11,000 recreational abalone licence holders. The survey reported 45,000 abalone (21 tonnes) were taken between 1 November 2018 to 30 April 2019.

62% of the catch (13 tonnes) was taken between Eddystone Point and Southport. The average catch rate was 4.5 per day.

Read the IMAS survey report at: www.fishing.tas.gov.au/recreational-fisheries-research
Recreational Fishing Survey
The survey provides an overview of recreational fishing in Tasmania during 2017-18 including catch and participation. It also delivers social and economic information about attitudes to managing our fisheries, the quality of fishing and how much fishers spend.

The survey is conducted by IMAS using funding from Fishwise (sea fishing licence fees) and the Inland Fisheries Service.

The latest recreational fishing survey found that in 2017-18:

- almost one in four Tasmanians (around 106,000 people) went fishing at least once.
- Participation in fishing increased in all regions of the state.
- Highest numbers of fishers are in 45-59 age group.
- Over half the state’s fishing (53%) was off the east and south east coasts.
- Twice as many males as females went fishing.
- $19 M was spent on fishing and diving gear, tackle, ice and bait.

What’s being caught?
Catches of key recreational scalefish for 2017-18:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Caught</th>
<th>Released</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flathead</td>
<td>1.7 million</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian salmon</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bream</td>
<td>27,100</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garfish</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bastard trumpeter</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Striped trumpeter</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Flathead
- Flathead remains the most popular fish with 735,000 kept.
- 67% of all recreationally caught scalefish are flathead.
- 56% of all flathead are released.

Calamari
- 40,000 calamari are caught by recreational fishers.
- 9% of calamari are released.

How is survey information used?
Catch estimates are used in stock assessments together with commercial catch data to sustainably manage Tasmania’s fisheries.

Catch trends, the size of the recreational catch relative to the commercial sector and issues important to recreational fishers are considered when sustainability concerns are raised.

Scalefish Stock Status Report
Of the 20 species assessed in the 2017/18 Scalefish Fishery Assessment, sustainability concerns were indicated for the following species:

- Sand flathead
- Southern calamari
- Blue warehou
- Southern garfish
- Southern bluefin tuna
- Bastard trumpeter
- Striped trumpeter

Fishers will be kept informed about future research and management responses for these species.