Scalefish Fishery Management Plan

Background to Proposed Amendments

June 2015
Summary

The Tasmanian Scalefish Fishery is managed under the provisions of the Fisheries (Scalefish) Rules 2004 which are due to expire on 31 October 2015. New rules need to be in place by 1 November 2015.

To inform the rule making process, the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE) has developed this background paper.

The draft Fisheries (Scalefish) Rules 2015 also referred to as the management plan, have been prepared for the 60 day public consultation period prescribed in the Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995. The draft rules can be viewed at www.fishing.tas.gov.au/scalefish-review.

Have Your Say

This background paper explains the proposed changes to the Scalefish Management Plan. Interested stakeholders should consider this document in conjunction with the draft Fisheries (Scalefish) Rules 2015.

There will be an opportunity for all stakeholders to discuss the proposals contained in this paper (or other issues that have not been included) with Department of Primary Industries, Parks Water and Environment (DPIPWE) fishery managers at information sessions held around the State during the week commencing Monday, 20 July 2015. Details of when and where will be available on the DPIPWE website at www.fishing.tas.gov.au/scalefish-review.

You are invited to provide written responses on the draft amendments contained in this paper from Monday, 22 June 2015 to midnight on Friday, 21 August 2015. Responses should be submitted using the form available for print out or directly online at www.fishing.tas.gov.au/scalefish-review. Short email responses will also be accepted.

To request a copy of the Background paper and response form or for any enquiries about the Rule making process please phone 1300 135 513.

Email    scalefishreview@dpipwe.tas.gov.au
Mail     DPIPWE – Scalefish Review
            GPO Box 44
            HOBART TAS 7001
Fax      03 6223 1539 (marked Attention: Scalefish Review)
Hand Deliver    DPIPWE, Wild Fisheries Management Branch
                Level 1, 1 Franklin Wharf
                HOBART TAS 7000

Responses must be received before midnight on 21 August 2015. Responses dealing with matters outside the scope of the Scalefish Fishery Management Plan (draft Rules) will not be considered.
Acknowledgement of Submissions

Respondents using the online response form will receive an automatic acknowledgement of receipt and a copy of the response form. Respondents using mail, facsimile or email submissions may make enquires to check the response has been received, however, the DPIPWE will not automatically send an acknowledgement.

What will happen to my comment?

All submissions will be considered by the DPIPWE, the Scalefish Fishery Advisory Committee (SFAC) and the Recreational Fishery Advisory Committee (RecFAC) after the public comment period has closed. The DPIPWE will then prepare a report for the Minister on all the submissions, SFAC’s and RecFAC’s recommendations and the DPIPWE’s final recommendations for changes to the management plan. This report will be publicly available following the Minister’s consideration. Names of respondents will be published in the report with personal information such as addresses and email addresses removed, unless otherwise requested.
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1. Introduction

The Tasmanian Scalefish Fishery includes diverse recreational and commercial fisheries in coastal waters that take a range of species using a variety of gear types including hooks, gillnets, fish traps and seine nets. It also includes use of scalefish fishing gear as part of a commercial fishing licence (rock lobster). The current Scalefish Fishery Management Plan, the Fisheries (Scalefish) Rules 2004, will expire on the 31 October 2015 and the new management plan (new Rules) needs to be in place by 1 November 2015.

The draft management plan reflects the general intent and long term policy of the existing management plan which is essential for the continuation of access rights for both the recreational and commercial sectors.

The issues included in this paper are based on those received after calling for public submissions in July 2013. The proposed changes are grouped and summarised in sections.

Representative bodies and the Fishery Advisory Committees provided input into identifying and understanding the issues raised and whether they should be developed further. The degree of support by these bodies for the proposals varied. The Department then sought the approval of the Minister to develop final proposals for consultation. So whilst these groups were involved in the initial stages, their input may not necessarily indicate support for the final proposal. Representative bodies will provide their formal comment during the 60 day public consultation period.

A number of additional issues were received during the call for issues that have not been incorporated into the draft Management Plan. They included:

- prohibiting recreational and/or commercial netting in specific locations of concern to the submitter;
- removing commercial licences with no recent catch history;
- increasing commercial gear allowances in Shark Refuge Areas;
- implementing restocking programs and
- reducing impact of nocturnal fishing activities on seabirds.

Additional issues were raised that are not legislative in nature—such as increasing post release survival of gamefish species. Where appropriate these may be considered in the future—in the policy document or may form part of the DPIWFE’s fisheries awareness activities.
2. Use of Fishing Gear

A variety of fishing methods and gear is used in the Tasmanian scalefish fishery. Various management tools and restrictions apply in order to meet the management objectives of sustainability, minimising environmental impact and reflecting community and social values.

2.1 Appropriate recreational fishing methods

From time to time there is community debate about the appropriateness of certain recreational fishing methods. Feedback is sought on developing a long term, general policy statement that captures the spirit of recreational scalefish fishing such as:

“Recreational fishing methods where the fisher is actively involved, or which are selective in the species and quantity caught, should be given preference over less discriminate methods where bycatch or excess fish are not released unharmed. As such, recreational angling will be encouraged, while the impacts of other gear will be managed irrespective of potential reductions in the gear usage.”

The current management plan does not have a minimum age for using scalefish gear. It is reasonable that a minor may use angling gear, however, it is unlikely they are able to safely use gillnets and set lines. It appears that some minors have licences merely to increase gear usage of accompanying adults. As the rules relating to the type of gear are relatively complex, it also raises enforcement issues associated with age and responsibility. A minimum age of 10 years applies to the recreational rock lobster fishery.

2.2 Gillnets

The current management plan has a complex regime of restrictions relating to the use of commercial and recreational gillnets, including rules about the areas of use, soak times and night time usage of commercial and recreational gillnets. The existing policy is to continue to identify and research netting practices and amend requirements to mitigate identified impacts. This review moves further in this direction, with a number of proposals addressing the impacts of gillnetting.

The outcomes of recent Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) research into gillnetting practices, bycatch species and bycatch species survivability¹ and recreational gillnet surveys², and also submissions received from wider stakeholder groups have been taken into account during preparation of these proposals.

Specific Comment

(i) What are your views on the policy statement about encouraging fishing methods in which recreational fishers are actively involved and are selective in the species and quantities caught?

(ii) Should there be a minimum age requirement for using and licencing of gillnets and set lines?


The report assessing gillnet practices states there is benefit in considering:

- reducing maximum soak times,
- closures around key penguin rookeries,
- reducing fishing pressure on bastard trumpeter,
- and developing codes of practice.

There continues to be range of views about gillnetting in Tasmania, with some submissions from non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and individuals proposing the removal of recreational gillnetting in Tasmania via either an immediate or staged phase out. They argue that gillnetting is not an acceptable method for recreational fishing, stating the method is indiscriminate and citing issues such as the potential for exceeding bag limits and catching fish of all sizes and types including protected species. For other Tasmanians, this is an important and valued recreational fishing practice allowed within increasingly strict operational restrictions including the ban on night netting introduced in 2004. Comment about recreational gillnetting can be made under the comment box in Section 2.1.

The proposals made now in this paper seek to further address these issues.

### 2.2.1 Gillnet use and compliance

Risk assessments indicate benefits for restricting netting between sunset and sunrise in order to minimise interactions with little penguins (see issue 2.1.2), as it is around this time when arriving and departing from their rookeries that these birds are most vulnerable to entanglements. Other seabirds may also be moving at these key times. It is proposed to further limit netting around sunset and sunrise from the current arrangements that prohibit gillnets to be set one hour before sunrise and to be removed one hour after sunset. The current night netting restrictions for the commercial fishery will remain unchanged. That is, commercial fishers (unless otherwise endorsed) must be in attendance of nets set between one hour after sunset and one hour after sunrise.

Making gillnets identifiable with the requirement of the buoys at both ends to be marked with the fisher Unique Identifying Code (UIC) improves the ability/safety of Marine Police in identifying recreational gillnets. [The UIC is a gear user code issued as the licence number or, in the case of an Aboriginal person engaged in an Aboriginal activity, an approved identifying code.]

The following two proposals are intended to reduce risk of interactions and improve compliance for the current no night netting gillnetting restrictions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposal</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i)</td>
<td>Require recreational gillnets to be removed from the water one hour before sunset and not to be set prior to sunrise—excluding Macquarie Harbour where restricted night time netting is permitted. The current night netting restrictions for the commercial fishery will remain unchanged.; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii)</td>
<td>Each marker buoy on gillnets to have the unique identifying code (UIC) and type of gear code (‘G’ = Graball net, ‘M’ = mullet net).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2.2.2 Gillnet free areas – seabirds

The DPIPWE has identified key and iconic penguin colonies and is proposing to prohibit the use of gillnets (both recreational and commercial) adjacent to these key penguin colonies.

These netting restrictions, coupled with other existing and proposed management measures, are expected to have cumulative benefits in relation to reducing the impacts of gillnets and alleviating community concern.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Extend the Derwent River no gillnetting area to align with the current boundary for no mullet netting boundary from Dennes Point to Cape Direction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-10. Prohibit the setting of gillnets at Frederick Henry Bay (around Sloping Island and Spectacle Island), Neck Beach (Adventure Bay), Waubs Bay (Bicheno), Musselroe Bay, Low Head, Lillico Beach, Parsonage Point (Burnie), Godfreys Beach (Stanley), Bonnet Island (Macquarie Harbour entrance).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refer to Appendix 1 for proposed maps of these areas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3 Macquarie Harbour soak times

Overnight recreational gillnetting will be allowed to continue in Macquarie Harbour, but with proposed modifications.

The current night netting rules allow nets to be set for relatively long periods, i.e., from two hours before sunset until two hours after sunrise—particularly during long winter nights. There are indications these long soak times lead to fish wastage and bycatch mortalities (from sea lice and crab predation) of dog shark, skates and sharks captured in nets.

The impacts of recreational night time gillnetting in Macquarie Harbour would be minimised by confining recreational night netting to the period of the year when the nights are shorter and adjusting the sunset/sunrise netting provisions.

This will reduce recreational gillnet soak times while still allowing a reasonable period of sufficient light for recreational fishers to safely set and retrieve their nets. This will also mitigate the impact of recreational gillnetting on the endangered and threatened Maugan skate.

Note: Recreational gillnets can be set during the day (from sunrise to one hour before sunset) and this will be allowed all year round—providing the soak time restrictions (6 hours in non-Shark Refuge Areas) are adhered to.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Prohibit overnight recreational netting in Macquarie Harbour except during the period from 1 November to 30 April inclusive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Redefine the set times allowed for night nets to be from one hour before sunset to one hour after sunrise.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.4 Macquarie Harbour – extension to the south eastern no netting area.

A renowned wild sea-run brown trout fishery is located in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA). Anglers have requested the prohibition of gillnets in the south-eastern part of Macquarie Harbour to enhance angling opportunities around the Gordon River area.

Whilst the proposal is primarily for the protection of the introduced brown and rainbow trout, there are additional benefits for the protection of the endangered Maugean skate.

| Proposal | Extend the no gillnetting area (for recreational and commercial fishers) from the current boundary between Gordon Point and Charcoal Burns Bluff to a line between Coal Point and Steadman Point, which is the existing TWWHA boundary. Refer to Appendix 1 for map. |

2.5 Seine nets and other encircling nets

Seine nets are specifically designed to entrap fish in a small space and not mesh them, therefore maximising their condition and survival.

The draft rules clarify the difference between gillnets and beach seine nets by improving the description of a beach seine net in the rules. This has arisen from concern about recreational fishers using gillnets in the same manner as a beach seine net. Gillnets should not be actively dragged through the water or used to encircle fish, as fish are subject to being deeply meshed resulting in lower survivability of released fish (e.g. undersize or excess fish). Prohibiting the use of gillnets as encircling nets aims to reduce the risk of exceeding catch limits, fish wastage and bycatch.

In a previous review of netting, the intent to ban all nets in Georges Bay was not fully implemented through the drafting of the rules, as beach seine and bait nets were not prohibited. Subsequently, the prohibition was introduced through a public notice. The intention is to now reflect the full intent of no netting in Georges Bay by banning the use of beach seine, bait nets and cast nets in Georges Bay in the management plan. These are considered to be minor administrative changes, and comment is welcome under that section.

2.5.1 Robbins Passage – seine nets

Robbins Passage offers some niche recreational fishing opportunities (such as bluespotted and rock flathead) that warrant specific protection. Gillnetting is prohibited but extending this ban to include seine netting will assist in protecting these species. This will also introduce consistency across all rivers/estuaries/inlets for no netting.

| Proposal | Prohibit the use of commercial and recreational seine nets in Robbins Passage. |
2.6 Recreational set lines
Licensed recreational fishers and Aboriginal fishers can currently use set lines (droplines and longlines) with up to 30 hooks. In addition, up to four set line fishers can join their lines together when using their gear in waters deeper than 150 metres, yielding set lines with a total of 120 hooks. IMAS published a report on the recreational set line fishery describing the general fishing practices, target species, and general areas of set line use in 2012. The number of hooks currently permitted potentially allows the capture of fish numbers above bag and possession limits. There are also bycatch and wastage concerns as no soak times apply to this type of fishing gear.

Set line use is prohibited in some rivers, shark refuge areas and many lagoons, bays and embayments around the State. The proposal is to extend these restrictions to prohibit the use of set lines in rivers and embayments not already excluded from this fishing method.

There are three proposals related to recreational set line use. These include reducing the number of hooks, prohibiting night time use and the prohibiting setting in certain embayments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Reduce the number of hooks that can be used on recreational set lines from 30 to 15.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Limit the soak times of recreational set lines by prohibiting their use from one hour before sunset to sunrise—in line with proposed night netting restrictions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Prohibit set lines in the Leven, Forth, Mersey and Musselroe Rivers, Ansons Bay, Macquarie Harbour, and the Southport no netting area in the western side of the bay.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.7 Use of Spears
Recreational fishers take a range of species by spear. Restrictions on spearing passive and vulnerable scalefish species such as boarfish and bream, and restricting the use of spears in several northwest river mouths have been in place for many years.

2.7.1 Banded Morwong and Striped Trumpeter – spearing restrictions
The recreational fishing experience needs to be balanced against the stock status, vulnerability to capture and the ability for fishers to accurately determine what constitutes legal sized fish before spearing fish. The long standing management measure of a ‘slot size limit’ for banded morwong also increases the risk of accidentally spearing a non-legal size fish.

Both banded morwong and striped trumpeter have declining stock trends and are susceptible to spearing.

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The proposal to prohibit the spearing of several fish species while using compressed air was raised during the initial consultation stage. Given the status and vulnerability of these species, it is appropriate to consider an outright ban on spearing these species.

### 2.7.2 Spearing Area management

Spearing is banned in rivers and around the mouths of Inglis, Leven and Mersey Rivers. It is understood that these were implemented to address irresponsible fishing behaviours of spearing sea run trout and sting rays in the mid-nineties.

The proposal is to open up these areas to allow the recreational spearing of flounder in the Inglis, Leven and Mersey Rivers. The prohibition of spearing other species in these rivers will be maintained.

### 2.8 Auxiliary fishing gear (apparatus)

Recreational fishers are increasingly adopting new fishing methods and gear. The uptake of fishing electronics (e.g. integrated GPS, sonar, sounders) and auxiliary fishing gear (e.g. electric reels, remote controlled rafts) is rapidly increasing as these devices become more affordable. This, combined with the knowledge transfer associated with the internet and social media, is contributing to an increase in the efficiency and diversification of the recreational fishing sector.

Fisheries management can address some of these issues by defining the type of gear allowed to be used by recreational fishers. This will address the confusion on whether certain types of gear are allowed to be used and serve as a base to address increasing fishing efficiencies, effort or user interactions.

The proposal is to define what auxiliary fishing gear is and to introduce restrictions for certain gear types. Auxiliary fishing gear is defined as any apparatus used to deploy or retrieve fishing line, other than a manually operated fishing rod and line or handline. This includes motorised or power assisted reels and devices such as balloons, kites, rafts, and downriggers that assist with the deployment and retrieval of a fishing line.

Feedback is particularly sought on whether gear, such as electric or motorised fishing raft systems or remote drone systems deploying lines should be allowed. Risks associated with the usage of these systems include:

- entanglement of lines and snagging with other gear (some deploy lines (up to 2000 m));
- ghost fishing of lost lines; and
- interaction with other users and swimmers.

The proposal would define and allow the use of auxiliary fishing gear, however further considerations could exclude remote and motorised [beach] fishing systems and drone fishing. License requirement proposals for electric reels and other specialised fishing gear are discussed in section 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposal</th>
<th>1. Prohibit the spearing of banded morwong and striped trumpeter.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Allow the recreational spearing of flounder in the Inglis, Leven and Mersey Rivers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2.9 Bait pumps and bait traps (non-commercial)

Bait pumps are not explicitly allowed in the current management plan however, their use is entrenched amongst some recreational fishers for gathering some forms of bait. The proposal is to define this gear and limit the amount of bait that can be harvested (Refer to Section 3 Non-commercial catch limits). Although these devices are hand operated, small and used relatively infrequently in Tasmania, it may be prudent to consider restricting their use in sensitive areas. Input on area restrictions is sought.

A bait pump will be defined as a hand operated device with a barrel, of less than 85 mm in diameter, which is inserted into the sand to extract burrowing shrimp, marine worms and other invertebrate species. A sieve can be used in conjunction with the pump.

Bait traps are used to catch bait fish and only legal sized fish can be retained. The gear has had size descriptions, including mesh sizes (10-40 mm) for many years.

| Proposal | (i) Define and allow non-commercial bait pumps.  
| | (ii) Unattended non-commercial bait traps will now require a buoy or tag attached marked with the gear type code “BT” and the user’s surname, initials, year of birth and postcode.  |
| Comment Sought | Specific comment is sought on whether the use of non-commercial bait pumps should be excluded from certain areas? If so, which areas and why?  |
2.10 Berley and bait use

Bait or berley (produced by scattering baits for the production of bait plumes) is used to attract fish—particularly tunas and shark. Although a common sense approach and fisheries education addresses many of the issues associated with this practice, restrictions will minimise the wastage of valuable fish resources, prevent adverse user interactions and address biosecurity risks.

2.10.1 Using berley as an attractant for shark and other species

The Department consulted\(^4\) on the use of berley for shark cage diving in 2012 proposing a ban on the use of berley to attract sharks and fish for any purpose other than fishing, and ban the use of any berley that contains mammal flesh, blood or offal (other than pellets).

It is now proposed to implement the berley restrictions within the scalefish fishery management plan.

The aim is to minimise interactions with humans and sharks and associated issues with using large quantities of mammal blood. In addition it will discourage any commercial shark cage diving operations using berley and habituating shark populations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Prohibit the use of berley to attract sharks and fish for any purpose other than fishing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Prohibit the use of any berley that contains mammal flesh, blood or offal (other than pellets).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.10.2 Restricting the use of certain fish species for bait and burley

In the spirit of maximising the use of fish resources, skipjack tuna, albacore tuna and yellowtail kingfish will be added to the list of fish species of which only the heads and frames may be used as bait in rings, traps and pots (as listed on page 40 of the Recreational Sea Fishing Guide). A minor rule amendment will ensure that only the heads and frames of these listed fish can be used as berley.

As a biosecurity measure the current prohibition for certain commercial operations selling salmonids\(^5\) for bait will be incorporated into the management plan and expanded to prohibit the sale or use of any part of a salmonid as bait or berley. The biosecurity measure complements the salmonid industry’s strict biosecurity protocols and enhances disease protection between salmonid growing areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Restrict the use of skipjack tuna, albacore tuna and yellowtail kingfish for used as bait and berley to heads and frames only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Prohibit the sale or use of any part of a salmonid species as bait or berley.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^4\) Shark-Cage Diving and Use of Berley for Fishing and Ecotourism Background and Issues Paper Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, September 2012
\(^5\) Salmonids are Atlantic salmon and Ocean trout. Note Australian salmon is not a salmonid.
3. Recreational Catch Limits

3.1 Defining recreational catch limits

Recreational catch limits (bag, possession and boat limits) are an important way of sharing our fish resources in a fair and equitable manner. They also reduce wastage of the resource and minimise opportunities for the illegal marketing of fish.

There has been some confusion about how possession limits and the use of on-water possession limits work in the scalefish fishery. To simplify this, catch limits will now be based on bag limits, possession limits—with a boat limit applying to all species.

**Bag limit:** This is the maximum number or weight of a particular type of fish that an individual fisher can take (retain) in a day.

**Possession limit:** This is the maximum number or weight of a particular type of fish an individual fisher can possess anywhere in Tasmania (or within a specified area).

A person who is in State waters and is in possession of more than the bag limit may need to establish that they have been on a fishing trip for more than a day and be under the possession limit for that type of fish.

**Boat Limit:** This is the maximum number or weight of a particular type of fish that can be taken in a day by all persons on a vessel or possessed on a vessel at any one time. It is the responsibility of the person in charge of the vessel to ensure the boat limit is not exceeded. This means that individuals on that boat may not be able to retain their entire individual bag limit.

The draft management plan sets a bag limit for all key fish types. For most species the possession limit would follow a simple formula of twice the bag limit and the boat limit would be three times the bag limit. Other fish types, such as billfish (marlin and swordfish), tunas, mako and blue shark, striped trumpeter and blue-eye trevalla have been grouped in a category termed “specialised scalefish” as they need refined management due to their stock vulnerability status, large meat return or potential wastage issues. Possession limits and boat limits are therefore specified for each of the “specialised scalefish” fish types and shark.

The proposed general catch limits are listed in Table 1. The catch limits for Shark and Specialised Scalefish are listed in Table 2. The basis of recreational catch limits and key changes are discussed in the following sub sections.

3.1.1 Basis of Recreational Catch Limits

Bag limits and possession limits restrict an individual fisher’s catch while boat limits limit a fishing group’s catch. Bag limits reduce the ability to circumvent catch restrictions by making multiple trips during the day and “transferring catch” to others. Reports indicate that this does occur with shark.

Possession limits also limit overall catch, as well as constraining a person’s ability to take their bag limit day after day, and reducing the ability for a person to have marketable quantities of fish. A person legitimately possessing commercially caught fish amounting to quantities above the specified possession limits can establish proof of a commercial purchase with a receipt.

Recreational bag limits were first introduced for shark in the late 1990s, and in 2001 limits for...
other species were phased in. The initial limits were generous and based on social values at the
time, such as what was deemed enough for a feed and to share around with others.

Possession limits replaced daily bag limits for scalefish species in 2004 with the objective of
reducing illegal fishing and tightening enforcement because possession limits applied to the total
number of fish possessed by that person anywhere in Tasmania—including their boat, car and
home. Possession limits are efficient to enforce, as compliance officers do not need to establish
who had taken the fish, when they were taken, or where the fish were taken.

The possession limits were generous when implemented in 2004 reflecting the fact that fishers
wanted to store their catch from a few days fishing and the community attitude of gifting
recreational fish to family, friends and others. However, many fishers came to view possession
limits as bag limits—therefore reducing their effectiveness to constrain catch.

In recent years the community and recreational fishers attitude regarding the value of our fish
resources have generally changed to focus on the quality of fishing and the fishing experience
more than the retention of large quantities of fish. Attitudinal surveys report that recreational
fishers catch fish for a range of reasons, and the enjoyment value for the first few fish is high and
then diminishes with catching successive fish. Frijlink & Lyle (2010)\(^6\), when reporting on fisher
motivations in Tasmania indicated that fishers prefer to retain enough fish for immediate
consumption rather than keep larger numbers of fish. This suggests that limits should be set at a
level that shares the resource widely amongst participants.

Another reason for the previous catch limits is that they catered for the likely catch by particular
gear types permitted in Tasmania such as beach seine, gillnet and set lines. As the issues of fish
wastage, bycatch and excess catch have been managed through the ban on night netting, soak
times and maximum numbers of hooks there is less justification for generous limits.

Tasmania’s recreational bag and possession limits will continue to provide a reasonable quantity
of fish on a per person basis. The increasing number of large recreational boats and charter
vessels with modern equipment combined with passenger (and fisher) capacity mean that
recreational boats are increasingly likely to take significantly more fish than can be reasonably
consumed by those fishing and are approaching commercial quantities of fish. Boat limits are
proposed for all scalefish to recognise the practice of fishing as a group and sharing the catch.

Boat limits are used to confine fishing activities to within the spirit and intentions of recreational
fishing and recognise group fishing activities. They limit the total recreational fishing catch and
prevent fishers circumventing personal daily bag limits, by carrying non-fishing crew in a boat.
Boat limits also confine the total catch taken, recognising that boat fishing is often more effective
than shore fishing and that fishing is a group activity where the catch is shared. This is particularly
the case given the rapid uptake of new fishing vessel technology and accessories—such as
winches/electric reels, sounders and plotters—and the increase in size of recreational vessels in
the last decade. Boat limits for charter fishing vessels is discussed below under the sub section
“Charter Boat Limits”.

The combination of applying the ‘3 levers’ of bag, possession and boat limits takes into account
that for some fishers a bag limit offers restraint, while for others it may be the boat limit.

\(^6\) Frijlink & Lyle (2010) An evaluation of motivations, attitudes and awareness of Tasmanian recreational fishers
Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute Report, 56p
3.1.2 Determining Catch Limits

Catch limits may initially be set after arbitrarily balancing a range of factors such as:

- Biological information—including sustainability and exploitation levels;
- What is reasonable for a day’s catch or for an immediate feed, fisher satisfaction, “catch sharing” and group fishing activities—particularly for large fish (e.g. tuna);
- Fish wastage, meat recovery and survivability information;
- Seasonality (presence of species) and accessibility e.g. travel, weather;
- Resource sharing amongst other fishers/sectors—including value to recreational fisher (e.g. trophy fish and niche fishing opportunities);
- Compliance risks in terms of market value or having commercial quantities;
- Simplicity of rules—aim for consistency in catch limits where possible.

Once set, changes to catch limits are considered part of a catch assessment mechanism. Information from recreational fishing surveys assist in considering the impact and effects of adjustments, as well as understanding motivations and recreational values. The most recent Survey of recreational fishing in Tasmania was undertaken in 2012/13.

The general principle in setting a baseline for a bag limit is the amount of fish which a fisher could reasonably catch in a day’s angling for their immediate needs. Potential issues associated with excess catch of netting and set line practices will not be used to set catch limits. The issues associated with these fishing methods will be managed by improving fishing practices through education and legislation.

3.1.3 Key changes to catch limits

- Daily bag limits are set for key species.
- Most species are listed in Table 1: General Species, in which the possession limit is two times the bag limit and the boat limit is three times the bag limit.
- Table 2: Shark and Specialised Scalefish, lists bag, possession and boat limits for species that require additional management—such as billfish, tunas, mako and blue shark, striped trumpeter and blue-eye trevalla.
- Currently the default possession limit of 15 applies for “Any other scalefish species”. The proposal is to set a default bag limit of five for any scalefish species that does not specifically have a defined catch limit. This will assist in the precautionary management for future emerging species.
- Bag limits are set for the known emerging species such as billfish, mahi-mahi and tailor.
- King George whiting has been removed from the whiting group category and is now listed separately.
- King gar has been included in the garfish limit, with the combined bag limit of all garfish species being a total of 10.
- Flathead (all species combined) have a bag limit of 15 of which not more than five (5) can be bluespotted and rock flathead of which only one can be greater than 60 cm (more detail under “Species Management”).

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• Blue warehou has been grouped with silver warehou and the combined bag limit has been set at 10 to reflect the current stock status concerns of blue warehou.
• Bastard trumpeter bag limit is set at 5 to reflect the stock status concerns.
• After taking account of the amount of meat return and stock status issues there is a bag limit of one “jumbo” tuna (>150 cm).
• Atlantic salmon and ocean trout have a bag limit of 12 reflecting the Inland Fisheries Service general bag limits.
• The octopus catch limit of five (5) in Eaglehawk Bay is extended as a bag limit Statewide. Similarly, the south-east waters calamari limit is extended to a bag limit of 10 Statewide.
• The bag limit for prawns of 2 kg is replaced by 50 prawns, as a bag limit based on numbers is deemed more practical from a fisher and compliance perspective than weight.
• Baitfish have been grouped and combined with redbait as “small pelagic species (combined total)” with a bag limit of 50 fish.

Feedback is sought on whether certain fish types that are not generally classed as recreational fishing species or are known to be unsuitable for eating (such as red velvet fish and cowfish) should have a lower limit than the proposed default limit of five or possibly even a zero limit.

3.1.4 Inclusion of other species in the scalefish plan

Recreational fishers take a range of crab types; including red velvet, red bait crabs, sand crabs and soldier crabs. Inshore crabs (red velvet or red bait crabs) were included in the scalefish management plan in 2009. However, other crab species (excluding giant crab—which has its own management plan) are not included in any management plan and are not currently subject to recreational catch limits.

All crab species, excluding giant crab, are incorporated in the draft scalefish management plan. Crabs (except soldier crab) will be grouped under “Inshore crabs (combined total)” with a bag limit of 15. Soldier crabs will be included in the “invertebrate bait species” grouping along with burrowing shrimp, marine worms with a combined bag limit number of 50.

3.1.5 Charter fishing vessels

Having separate arrangements for charter vessels is somewhat problematic, given there is no charter boat licence on which to hinge rules.

A different boat limit is proposed for charter vessel operators, recognising that they may need to have an extra allowance to support their commercial business operations. A charter boat limit of five times the individual bag limit for general scalefish and a separate specified charter boat limit for shark and specialised scalefish when they have paying fishers on board and have an “authorisation” as being recognised as a charter fishing business is therefore warranted. Individual bag limits still apply.

As such it is proposed to issue a letter of authorisation from the Secretary to allow charter vessels to have an “authorised” charter boat limit. The master of the vessel would need to demonstrate they hold survey certificates from MAST and operate as a legitimate charter business. Letters of authorisation could have effect from the date of issue for a specified period or until they no longer operate as a charter vessel. A service fee may apply for these authorisations.
Due to the considerable experience and skill of charter boat operators and the technologies they use in this sector of the recreational fishery—additional monitoring and more specific management arrangements may be considered in the future.

Table 1: Proposed non-commercial catch limits (general species)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fish type</th>
<th>Bag Limit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Salmon (and other <em>Arripis</em> sp. combined)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barracouta</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boarfish (species combined)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bream</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cod (species combined)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elephantfish</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flathead (combined) of which not more than a total of 5 can be Bluespotted flathead or Rock Flathead and only one of these can be greater than 60 cm</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flounder (species combined)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garfish (including King Gar)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurnard</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leatherjacket (species combined)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackerels – Jack and Blue (species combined)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morwong – Banded Morwong</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morwong – Grey, Jackass, Blue (species combined)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mullet (species combined)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Octopus – (species combined)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pike and Snoek (species combined)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salmonoids – Ocean trout (in marine waters)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salmonoids – Atlantic salmon (in marine waters)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver Trevally</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snapper</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish type</td>
<td>Bag Limit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Pelagics (Australian Anchovy, Australian Sardine, Australian Sprat, Blue Sprat, Redbait and Hardyheads) – combined total</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squid – Gould’s (arrow)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squid – Southern calamari</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailor (aka chopper, skipjack).</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpeter – Bastard Trumpeter (including real bastard trumpeter)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warehou – Blue and Silver (species combined)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiting – King George</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiting (excluding King George Whiting) – species combined</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrasse (family Labridae) and Herring Cales (family Odacidae) – species combined</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellowtail kingfish</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scalefish other – Inshore crab</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scalefish other – Prawns (family Penaeidae)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scalefish other – Bait, invertebrates (Soldier Crabs, burrowing Shrimp, Marine Worms (combined)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Species not specified – per species (excludes protected species)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For fish types in the general species table the possession limit is two times the bag limit and the boat limit is three times the bag limit.

Table 2: Proposed non-commercial catch limits for shark and specialised scalefish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fish type</th>
<th>Bag limit</th>
<th>Possession Limit</th>
<th>Boat Limit</th>
<th>Authorised Charter boat limit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Billfish – Marlin or swordfish each species</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue-eye trevalla</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharks and Rays – except, elephantfish, gummy, mako, school (* denotes the shark boat limit of 5 for all shark species combined)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(5^{sc})</td>
<td>(5^{sc})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shark – School and Gummy (* denotes the shark boat limit of 5 for all shark species combined)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(5^{sc})</td>
<td>(5^{sc})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shark – Mako or Blue (combined) (* denotes the shark boat limit of 5 for all shark species combined)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(5^{sc})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpeter, Striped</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunas – Bluefin, Yellowfin, Bigeye (species combined) Tuna less than 150 cm.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunas – Bluefin, Yellowfin, Bigeye (species combined) Tuna over 150 cm.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuna – species combined (other than southern bluefin, yellowfin or bigeye)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 Species Specific Management

4.1 Flathead

Flathead is the most commonly caught recreational fish, with surveys consistently showing Tasmanian fishers retain approximately one million flathead (equating to 235 to 360 tonnes) each year. This exceeds the Tasmanian commercial flathead catch (of 40 to 70 tonnes) by around five times and confirms flathead as the backbone of recreational sea fishing in Tasmania. Therefore it is important to keep an eye on the stocks and the catch, and to periodically review how these species are managed.

In recent years, fishery awareness activities such as the Fishcare “Responsible Fishing” clinics/exhibits, the Recreational Sea Fishing Guide and the TAS Fish App have encouraged recreational fishers to release flathead less than 320 mm, as meat return on the fish this size is substantially greater than that of a 300 mm fish. In addition these awareness campaigns have aimed to educate the public about the different species of flathead, and the high survivability of released fish if handled carefully. This promotion has been well received.

During the 2012-13 statewide survey of recreational fishing in Tasmania\textsuperscript{8}, 80% of respondents indicated that they would support moving to a minimum size of 32 cm, even if this resulted in lower catch rates for a period of time (~12 months) to allow for growth to the new legal-size. Respondents were also asked whether they considered the current possession limit of 30 fish per person is too high—61% indicated that they considered it was.

The recreational fishing surveys indicate that 90% of flathead retained by recreational fishers are sand flathead, 5% are tiger flathead with the remainder not identified. A small amount of bluespotted flathead and rock flathead are also taken. As the life characteristic, area distribution and fishery characteristics vary between species, separate management arrangements are proposed.

4.1.1 Sand Flathead

Fishers periodically experience seasonal changes in flathead catch rates. Some recreational fishers attribute a drop off catches to commercial fishing activity, particularly Danish Seine fishing. Commercial Danish seiners, however, target tiger flathead and although their fishing areas overlap with recreational fishers, it does not seem to have had an adverse impact.

Danish fishing operations and the area of use are outlined on the DPIPWE’s Sea fishing web pages. As the commercial fishery catch of sand flathead is relatively low (less than 15 tonnes per annum since 2008/9\textsuperscript{9}), compared to the recreational catch (at over 200 tonnes) other influences may be more likely—including environmental influences and natural annual variability, as well as the relatively high recreational catch itself.


Many recreational fishers are aware that flathead are not as active during the cooler months. A recent Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) tagging project\textsuperscript{10} using specialised tags found that seasonal drop off in flathead catches in Pittwater (near Hobart) were most likely due to the seasonal movement of fish out of the area. Associated laboratory tank studies confirmed that metabolic rates substantially increased with temperature.

The relatively small commercial catch of sand flathead has not provide sufficient data for a formal fisheries assessment or report on annual variability of sand flathead populations. Following the conclusion of a recent Fishwise project, \textit{Developing a Low-Cost Monitoring Regime to Assess Relative Abundance and Population Characteristics of Sand Flathead}\textsuperscript{11}, IMAS has indicated that the fishery will now have assessment.

The above research monitored flathead populations in D’Entrecasteaux Channel, Frederick Henry/Norfolk Bays and Great Oyster Bay between 2012 and 2014 and found that research catch rates had declined in most areas—suggesting a decline in the abundance of sand flathead. The report suggests a need to reduce fishing pressure.

Females were found to grow more quickly and to larger sizes than males and, on average, reached the current legal size (30 cm) at younger ages than males. The research also confirmed that fishing pressure on sand flathead stocks is high and because of faster growth, females are more vulnerable to being caught and removed from the fishery earlier than males.

IMAS stated that there is merit in moving to a 32 cm size limit as the additional protection given to the adult spawning would allow females to spawn for an additional year before entering the fishery.

\subsection*{4.1.2 Bluespotted Flathead and Rock Flathead (recreational niche fishery)}

There is an emerging recreational fishery on the north-west coast targeting the fast growing southern bluespotted flathead and potentially the rock flathead. Due to the large size of individual fish being caught, and the “niche” status for these species special management action is perhaps warranted—including implementing conservative catch limits and slot limits (minimum and maximum size).

Studies of samples collected from the North West coast indicate that the size at maturity for these two species is around 40 cm. As such these species would not be protected by the proposed 32 cm size limit.

To address this, a requirement for recreational fishers to land fish whole or with frames so compliance officers can distinguish between flathead species in the north-west of Tasmania.


Flathead Proposals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Increase the minimum size limit for all flathead species (excluding southern bluespotted and rock flathead) to 32 cm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Introduce a minimum size limit for southern bluespotted and rock flathead of 40 cm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Introduce a combined bag limit for all flathead species of 15 fish, of which no more than five (5) fish can be southern bluespotted or rock flathead with only one of these fish allowed to be greater than 60 cm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. All flathead must be landed whole or with frames in the area east from Cape Grim and west of Port Sorell, unless holder of a commercial licence, landing flathead other than southern bluespotted flathead.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 Striped Trumpeter

After a prolonged period of poor recruitment, striped trumpeter stocks are now showing signs of recovery. The stock status is reported as ‘transitional recovering’ and research\textsuperscript{12} has confirmed that the average size at maturity is around 60 cm. Spawning closures, commercial trip limits and reduced recreational catch limits all help limit the total catch. The latest fishery assessment suggests further management action is needed to align the size limit with the size of maturity.

The proposal is to increase minimum size limit for Striped Trumpeter from 50 cm to 55 cm which is closer to the size of maturity (SOM) of 60 cm. Although the proposed size limit ideally should align to the SOM, the compromise is a further step towards this and a minimum size of 60 cm may be considered in the future. Feedback is sought on the proposed minimum size limit to 55 cm and on potentially increasing the size limit to 60 cm to align with the SOM.

Commercial trip limits, introduced in 2000, have driven down the commercial catch of striped trumpeter. Recreational surveys indicate that in recent times the recreational catch of striped trumpeter now exceeds commercial catch. Although no real changes to recreational catch limits for striped trumpeter are included in the catch limit tables in Section 3, feedback is sought on the proposed recreational bag, possession, boat and charter boat limits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase minimum size limit for Striped Trumpeter from 50 cm to 55 cm.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment Sought</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comment is sought on an alternative size limit of 60 cm and on the proposed recreational bag, possession, boat and charter boat limits listed in Table 2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 Blue Groper
Blue Groper is reportedly (through RedMAP) increasing its range into Tasmanian waters. Blue groper are an effective predator of the long spine urchin (*Centrostephanus rodgersii*) and may reduce the formation of barrens along the east coast of Tasmania and prove to be a valuable ally in controlling this marine pest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposal</th>
<th>Introduce minimum size limits for:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• King George whiting – 35 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Tailor – 25 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Yellowtail kingfish – 45 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Silver warehou – 25 cm (same as blue warehou)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4 Size Limits for emerging species and others
Range extended species or species that traditionally have occupied warmer northern waters increasingly inhabit Tasmanian waters. Some species may present commercial and recreational fishing opportunities and need management measures applied.

Size limits are being considered for emerging species such as King George whiting, tailor and yellowtail kingfish. As these species have not traditionally been found in Tasmanian waters, the small populations mean it may not be feasible to gather the specific biological and lifecycle characteristics relevant to our waters, so information from other States will be used as a guide in setting recreational catch limits. When more information becomes available, adaptive management measures may be considered. All proposed recreational catch limits are defined in Section 3.

Currently there is a size limit for blue warehou, but not silver warehou.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposal</th>
<th>Introduce minimum size limits for:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• King George whiting – 35 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Tailor – 25 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Yellowtail kingfish – 45 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Silver warehou – 25 cm (same as blue warehou)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 Specialised Scalefish Fishing
In Tasmania, recreational sea fishing licences are required for fishing high value fish resources (such as rock lobster, abalone and scallops), for specific equipment (gillnets, beach seine nets, set lines) that may have a relatively high impact on the resource or the environment and for fisheries that have relatively high monitoring and information needs. No licence is required for general rod and line fishing or by Aboriginal persons engaged in cultural fishing. Licence types and costs are outlined on the [recreational sea fishing licence web page](http://www.fishing.tas.gov.au/licence) at [www.fishing.tas.gov.au/licence](http://www.fishing.tas.gov.au/licence).

The purpose of recreational fishing licences are to provide:
- financial contribution towards management, research, compliance, communication and fisheries education;
• accurate information on participation in a fishery and a contact database to support higher definition surveys and assessments; and

• a contact database for communicating responsible and sustainable fishing information and messages;

Previous scalefish reviews in 2003/04 and 2008/09 discussed the introduction of a licence for gamefish, but did not act on this because more information was needed at the time. Information needs (including catch estimates) were the primary driver for this fishing licence. Subsequently, the Marine and Safety Tasmania (MAST) boat registration was used to gain information about gamefish/offshore fisheries.

A licence endorsement similar to that proposed previously is now proposed on the basis that recreational fisheries for offshore and gamefish are increasing in significance—both to the community and in terms of participation and catch—and information needs are also increasing. In recent years a significant amount of Fishwise funds (> $300,000) can be directly attributed for research into gamefish (tuna and mako shark) and for offshore fisheries, such as striped trumpeter and blue-eye trevalla.

The introduction of a licence endorsement that captures these activities would ensure that the beneficiaries of gamefish/offshore resources contribute to management, research and educational costs—and provide financial support for effective information on catch and participation. The new licence endorsement will also overcome the issue that revenue from the current licence activities (particularly from rock lobster fishing) subsidises the research work undertaken on these scalefish species.

The recreational sea fishing licence framework operates as an endorsement system. A minimum base licence fee applies to each person for the first type of licence, an additional endorsement fee then applies for each extra licence type. The fees are indexed to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the cost in 2014/15 for the first licence is $51.80 ($29.60 for Government issued senior/pension card holders) and $7.50 for each additional licence type.

It is proposed to introduce a specialised scalefish licence endorsement for recreational fishers to take and possess specialised scalefish. This is a new licence category and will operate the same as endorsements for rock lobster, scallops and abalone have in the past.

These species were defined in Section 3 as the following fish:

• all tuna species;
• all swordfish, marlin and broadbill species;
• striped trumpeter;
• blue-eye trevalla;
• mako or blue shark

This licence endorsement will also be required for possessing and using an electric reel.

A licence endorsement of this type should only impact on fishers who actively gear up and target these species i.e that it does not capture the average fisher with a standard type of fishing rod fishing from shore or smaller dinghies (eg flathead or salmon fisher). It should be noted that the
licence is proposed for defined specialised fishing and opinions are not being canvassed on a
general fishing licence as the Government has stated that such a licence will not be introduced.

As one of the purposes of licence endorsements is to provide information to better manage
fisheries, particularly those that may increase catch efficiency, feedback is sought whether those
using all auxiliary fishing gear including electric motorised beach fishing systems, balloons, kites,
rafts, and downriggers that assist with the deployment and retrieval of a fishing line should be
licenced under the specialised scalefish category.

Recreational set line licence holders who catch striped trumpeter and blue-eye trevalla on their
set lines will not need the specialised scalefish licence. If, however, they catch these species using
other gear they will require the licence endorsement.

Although it is difficult to estimate how many endorsements will be issued under the specialised
scalefish category, it is estimated to be around 6,000 to 10,000.

Additional revenue from the new recreational endorsement will be deposited into the Fishwise
Fund. The Fishwise Fund pays for the management of recreational sea fishing and provides for
programs that support recreational fishing activities including:

- Fisheries awareness and education – such as the sea fishing guide, rulers, gauges and
  brochures.
- Fishcare – promotes community involvement in fishing, better fishing practices and
  protecting fish resources.
- Resource Management – recreational fishery surveys, research and the Research
  Fisheries Advisory Committee (RecFAC).
- Fishwise Community Grants – funds projects that improve the management of
  recreational sea fishing and education on fishing issues.
- Peak body grant – to TARFish, the Tasmanian Association for Recreational Fishing Inc.

### Proposal

Extend recreational fishing licence requirements to include specialised scalefish
activities. Which includes fishing for tunas, marlin, swordfish, striped trumpeter,
blue-eye trevalla, mako or blue shark, and when using an electric fishing reel.

### Comment Sought

Specific comment is sought on whether the use of auxiliary fishing gear should
also require a specialised scalefish licence endorsement.

### 6 Banded Morwong Fishery (Commercial)

In late 2008 a quota management system with a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) was introduced
for part of the Banded Morwong Fishery which operates on the east coast of Tasmania from
Whale Head in the south to Low Head on the north coast (excluding the Furneaux Group). The
quota fishery provides for individual quota allocations—which are transferable among all banded
morwong licence holders.
Further detail on the management of the Banded Morwong Fishery can be found in the scalefish section of the DPIWVE sea fishing pages.

6.1 Banded Morwong Quota Management System

It is proposed that the commercial banded morwong quota fishery be changed to a weight based quota management system as opposed to the current number based system.

As a result of industry preference at the time—stemming from perceived practical difficulties in weighing off live fish—catches have been recorded as the number of fish landed as opposed to weight of fish traditionally used for quota management systems. A conversion ratio (of 1.3 kg per fish) is then used to determine tonnages when setting the TAC.

Over time there has been increased concern within industry that the conversion ratio used is not always representative due to the average size variation between assessment regions of the TAC area. Additionally, fishers are paid by weight and this potentially encourages fishers to increase their average fish weight above the conversion ratio by high grading and targeting areas with larger fish, thus potentially exceeding the TAC.

Moving to a weight based quota system will remove the real and perceived discrepancies between fishers operating in different assessment regions. Additionally fishers and processors completing quota dockets can more confidently declare fish weights (compared to numbers) avoiding the risk of prosecution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>That the commercial banded morwong quota fishery is changed to a weight based quota management system.</td>
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</table>

6.2 Commercial Banded Morwong Quota Unit Holdings

Currently, the management of the commercial Banded Morwong Quota Fishery limits the holder of a fishing licence (banded morwong) to hold or use a maximum of 200 units.

The Total Allowable Catch (TAC) has declined each year since the implementation of the quota management system in late 2008. This trend will impact on the viability of individual operations unless they can readjust their quota holdings above the current maximum 200 unit quota ceiling. This is particularly the case as the beach price has not increased in real terms for a number of years.

To assist operators to remain financially viable, the proposal is to increase the maximum quota unit holding limit from 200 units to 230 units.

This will provide fishers with increased flexibility for their individual operations to enable them maximise financial viability within the quota management system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposal</th>
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<tr>
<td>That the commercial banded morwong fishery quota holding limit is increased from 200 units to 230 units.</td>
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</table>
7 Administrative and Other Issues

A number of minor administrative changes to the management plan are required to provide for improved consistency across fisheries or to better clarify the purpose and intent of existing rules. Accommodating long term season closures in the rules is also proposed.

7.1 Spawning closures

Seasonal closures for species such as southern calamari and Gould’s squid in the south east, striped trumpeter and banded morwong have applied for all Tasmanian fishers for many years. These closures have been implemented by public notice.

The intent is for the squid, striped trumpeter and banded morwong closures to now be included in the rules. This will allow long term planning for fishers of those species and be more cost effective from a management perspective.

Flexibility will be maintained in the management plan to allow changes by public notice if new information warrants any changes to the timing and areas of closures.

The existing commercial garfish closures will remain in place and continue to be set by public notice. This closure only applies to the commercial operators and has been in place for a few years. The current garfish closures are in place for 2015 and 2016.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposal</th>
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<tr>
<td>The current closed seasons for calamari/squid, striped trumpeter and banded morwong to be incorporated in the Rules</td>
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</table>

7.2 North Coast Night Netting Endorsements

The 2004 Scalefish Review led to a ban on unattended net fishing at night for recreational fishers and a requirement for commercial fishers to attend their nets if they were set at night.

In addition it was agreed commercial fishers who operated in north coast waters—between Cape Grim in the north-west to Cape Naturaliste in the north-east—would be exempt from the attendance provision if they applied and were granted temporary endorsements on their fishing licence (personal) to allow the setting of unattended gillnets and small mesh gillnets in north coast waters.

Fishing licences (personal) that have been endorsed to allow the setting of unattended nets in north coast waters have continued to be so endorsed annually since then. Industry are of the view that these endorsements should now be made transferable and be placed on the relevant scalefish licence and are not supportive of the eventual phasing out of this endorsement.

The DPIPWE would like to make these endorsements permanent and is canvassing feedback on two options.

1. That catch history will not be further considered and that the temporary endorsements currently issued are replaced with permanent and transferable endorsements issued on the relevant scalefish licence—either a fishing licence (scalefish A or B) or fishing licence (small mesh gillnet); or
2. That catch history will not be further considered and that the temporary endorsements currently issued are replaced with permanent and non-transferable endorsements issued on a fishing licence (personal).

Any fisher who has not previously received a temporary night netting endorsement would be ineligible to apply for a permanent night netting endorsement.

### 7.3 Administrative and other Amendments

A number of minor administrative changes to the management plan (Rules) are required to provide for improved consistency across fisheries or to better clarify the intent and purpose of existing rules. These include:

- Allowances for banded morwong vessels returning to port at the end of the season to enable them to transit closed areas.
- Clarifying that the holder of a commercial rock lobster licence, who also holds a wrasse licence, is permitted to take more than 30 kilograms of wrasse on any one day.
- Clarifying the number of squid jigs that can be used on a commercial auto jig machine by a scalefish licence holder.
- Clarifying definitions, areas and names (fish species and locations) in the rules.

### 8 Other Topics not raised

Comments about other aspects of the fishery not specifically related to the proposals will be considered, but may not be incorporated as legislation due to the consultation requirements of the **Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995** (refer Sections 53 & 55). If a matter raised requires legislative constraint and is outside the scope of the proposed alterations to the management plan, it may be considered in a future review, or through educational or policy solutions.

Only issues relating to the Tasmanian Scalefish Fishery can be considered in this review. There are a number of other fisheries that interact with the Tasmanian Scalefish Fishery, which are not covered under this review. Rock lobster, abalone, scallop, mackerel fishery and small pelagic fishery issues will not be considered. These species are subject to other management plans/fisheries Rules or managed by other jurisdictions—such as the Commonwealth. There will be separate opportunities to have input to the development of management arrangements for these fisheries.
Appendix 1: Proposals for additional no gillnetting areas

The bold black lines depict proposed boundaries. The boundaries are indicative only and not to scale. The shaded areas indicate the current no gillnet areas.

Greater Derwent River and Frederick Henry Bay

Proposal:

(i) Extend the Derwent no gillnetting area to align with the current no mullet net area boundaries for the River Derwent i.e. from Piersons Point to Dennes Point to Cape Direction.

(ii) Remove the ability to gillnet within 200 metres of Spectacle Island and Sloping Island for a minimum 200 metre no netting area around the islands.

Adjust the current no gillnet area boundary line to exclude Sloping Island, and readjust the base line so it is from the most western point at the northern end of Lagoon Beach to a point 200 metres due north of the norther extremity of Black Jack Point.

Adjust the current no gillnet area boundary line to exclude Spectacle Island, and readjust the base line so it is 200 metres from the southern end of Tiger Head to a line that is 200 m south east of Spectacle Island.

Primary purpose:

- Protection of penguin colonies on Sloping Island, Spectacle Island.
- Protection of penguin colonies in Derwent as far down as Tinderbox.
Neck Beach (Adventure Bay)  
**Proposal:**  
Prohibit the use of gillnets in waters enclosed by an imaginary line from the southern end of Neck Beach to the northern end of Neck Beach.  
**Primary purpose:**  
- For the protection of penguins in iconic colonies located on the Bruny Island Neck.

 Waubs Bay (Bicheno)  
**Proposal:**  
Prohibit the use of gillnets in waters enclosed by an imaginary straight line from Peggys Point to the southernmost point of Diamond Island, and from a second imaginary straight line from the western most point of Diamond Island due west to mainland Tasmania.  
**Primary purpose:**  
- For the protection of penguins in iconic colonies located on the Bicheno foreshore and Diamond Island.  
**Secondary Benefits:**  
- Maintain diving values in Waubs Bay.  
- Protection of reef fish habitat.  
- Resource sharing—increase angling opportunities.

 Musselroe Bay (Ryans Arm)  
**Proposal:**  
Extend current no gillnet netting closure to include all waters in Musselroe Bay.  
**Primary purpose:**  
- Extension of current no netting area in small embayment.  
- Protection of bream fishery and increasing angling opportunities on other species. This closure was raised during the 2009 scalefish review and again verbally in 2013.
Low Head

Proposal: Prohibit the use of gillnets within waters enclosed by an imaginary straight line extending one kilometre due north of Low Head, extending one kilometre from the shoreline to a line extending one kilometre due west from Barrel Spit.

Primary purpose:

- For the protection of penguins in iconic colonies located at Low Head.

Lillico Beach

Proposal: Prohibit the use of gillnets within a one (1) kilometre radius from the Lillico Beach penguin viewing Platform. Note: The Don River and Forth River are no netting areas.

Primary purpose:

- For the protection of penguins in iconic colonies located at Lillico Beach.

Parsonage Point (Burnie)

Proposal: Prohibit the setting of gillnets within an imaginary line extending 200 metres around Parsonage Point (extending to 200 metres either side).

Primary purpose:

- For the protection of penguins in iconic colonies at Parsonage Point (Near West Park).

Secondary Benefits:

- Protection of reef habitat and resource sharing – increase angling opportunities.
Godfreys Beach (Stanley)

Proposal:
Prohibit the use of gillnets inside an imaginary straight line extending from the existing no netting boundary to the eastern most point of the first small headland north of Godfreys Beach.

Primary purpose:
- For the protection of penguins in iconic colonies located at Stanley

Bonnet Island (Macquarie Harbour Entrance)

Proposal:
Prohibit the use of gillnets within the area bounded by an imaginary straight line from the eastern most point of Wellington Head due north to Braddon Point, and from a second imaginary straight line defining the entrance to Macquarie Harbour (Nigger Head due east to Braddon Point).

Primary purpose:
- For the protection of penguins—iconic colonies located at Bonnet Island.
Proposal to extend the no gillnetting boundary in SE Macquarie Harbour

Proposal: Prohibit the use of gillnets southward and eastward of a line between Coal Point and Steadman Point in Macquarie Harbour.

Primary purpose:

- Resource sharing within the recreational sector. To enhance the iconic sea run trout fishery.

Secondary Benefits:

- Reduced area of interaction of the gillnet fishery with maugean skate.
- In line with World Heritage Area values.

Shaded area indicates current no gillnetting area. The thick black line depicts the proposed boundary. The insert map depicts Macquarie Harbour and the separate proposal to prohibit gillnets at the enterance of Macquarie Heads.
Appendix 2: Summary of Key Management Proposals

**Gillnets**

- **Night time gillnet setting restrictions for recreational gillnets will prohibit gillnets to be used from one hour before sunset to sunrise.**
  
  *Improves enforcement of night time netting prohibitions and reduces risks associated with Penguin interactions.*

- **Extend the Derwent River no gill netting area boundary to Dennes Point/Cape Direction. Introduce additional closed areas for gillnets at Sloping Island and Spectacle Island (in Frederick Henry Bay), Neck Beach (Adventure Bay), Waubs Bay (Bicheno), Musselroe Bay, Low Head, Lillico Beach, Parsonage Point (Burnie), Godfreys Beach (Stanley), and Bonnet Island (Macquarie Harbour entrance).**
  
  *To increase protection of iconic penguin colonies.*

- **Macquarie Harbour Netting:**
  - Restrict overnight recreational netting in Macquarie Harbour to the period from 1 November to 30 April only, and further redefine the set times allowed for night nets to be from one hour before sunset to one hour after sunrise.
    
    *Address bycatch risks associated with potential long overnight soak times, particularly in relation to maugean skate.*
  
  - Extend the no netting area from the current boundary in the SE part of the Harbour to a line between Coal Point and Steadman Point, which is the existing TWWHA boundary.
    
    *Enhance angling opportunities around the Gordon River and additional protection of maugean skate.*

- **Require all gillnets to have marker buoys with identifying codes at each end of the net.**
  
  *To assist the Marine Police with identification of legal fishing apparatus.*

**Recreational set lines**

- **Reduce the number of hooks that can be used on recreational set lines from 30 to 15.**
  
  *Minimise bycatch and fish wastage.*

- **Limit the soak times of recreational set lines by prohibiting their use from one hour before sunset to sunrise.**
  
  *Minimise bycatch and fish wastage. For effective compliance.*

- **Clarify the prohibition of set lines in the Leven, Forth, Mersey and Musselroe Rivers, Ansons Bay, Macquarie Harbour and the Southport no netting area in the western side of the bay.**
  
  *Reflect policy of not allowing set line use in rivers and embayments.*
Use of certain recreational fishing gear

- Define what Auxiliary fishing gear can be used – including electric reels, balloons, kites, and downriggers that assist with the deployment and retrieval of a fishing line, and restrict their area of use. Consider clarifying that motorised fishing raft systems or remote drone systems deploying lines should be allowed.

  *Reduce risks which include: entanglement, lost lines and user interaction.*

- Require unattended bait traps to be marked with the user details.

- Prohibit the spearing of banded morwong and striped trumpeter.

  *These species have declining stock trends and are susceptible to spearing.*

- Allow the recreational spearing of flounder in the Inglis, Leven and Mersey Rivers.

Recreational Catch Limits

- Daily bag limits are set for all key fish types.

- Possession limits and boat limits generally will follow a simple formula, with the possession limit being twice the bag limit and the boat limit three times the bag limit.

- Billfish (marlin and swordfish), tunas, mako and blue shark, striped trumpeter and blue-eye are managed under a new category “specialised scalefish”.

- Possession and boat limits will be specified for shark and each type of “specialised scalefish”.

  *Takes into account stock status, reasonable meat returns and potential fish wastage associated with these species.*

Species Management

- Flathead (excluding southern bluespotted and rock flathead) minimum size limit is 32 cm. For Southern bluespotted and rock flathead it is 40 cm.

  *Takes into account new biological and fishing information and still allow reasonable meat returns.*

- Flathead has a combined bag limit of 15 fish of which no more than five (5) fish can be southern bluespotted or rock flathead. Only one (1) bluespotted flathead may be greater than 60 cm.

  *Takes into account reasonable meat returns and recognises niche fishing opportunities.*

- Flathead must be landed whole or with frames from Cape Grim east to Port Sorell.

  *Assists enforcement of catch and size limits and protects niche fishing opportunities.*

- Striped trumpeter – increase minimum size limit for striped trumpeter from 50 cm to 55 cm. Seek feedback on increasing minimum size limit to 60 cm.

  *Address stock status and closer to the size of maturity of 60 cm.*

- King George whiting – Introduce a bag limit of five and minimum size limit of 35 cm.

- Yellowtail kingfish – introduce a minimum size of 45 cm

- Atlantic salmon and ocean trout – Prohibit the use of as bait or berley.

  *Reduce biosecurity risks.*
Recreational fishing licence for specialised Scalefish activities

Extend recreational fishing licence requirements to include specialised scalefish activities. Which includes fishing for tunas, marlin, swordfish, striped trumpeter, blue-eye trevalla, mako or blue shark, and when using an electric fishing reel.

Contribute to the Fishwise fund and assist the management of recreational fisheries. Provide a cost effective framework for surveys on these species.

Spawning closures

Reflect the existing squid, striped trumpeter and banded morwong closures in the rules, rather than undertaking periodic public notices.

Commercial Fishery

- Banded Morwong Fishery – move from the current numbers based quota management to a weight based quota management system and increase the maximum unit holdings allowed by an individual.
- North Coast Night Netting Endorsements – consider moving from an annual endorsement to more permanent arrangements.

Administrative and Other Issues

A number of minor administrative changes to the management plan are required to provide for improved consistency across fisheries or to better clarify the intent and purpose of existing rules.

NOTE: “Recreational Fishers” refers to both Recreational and Aboriginal persons engaged in Aboriginal activities.