



Rock lobster management changes

September 2020



To minimise the economic impact of COVID-19 on WA fishers and processors of western rock lobster, the following changes are now in effect.

Changes to the current commercial rock lobster season

1. The current season has been extended and will now **end on 30 June 2021** (rather than 14 January 2021).
2. There is a revised total allowable commercial catch (TACC) for the current season of 9,000 tonnes.
Zone A: 1,620 tonnes
Zone B: 2,880 tonnes
Zone C: 4,500 tonnes
3. Licence holders will be issued with a revised licence for the current season, showing revised licence expiry date and adjusted catch entitlement.
4. The third instalment payment for access fees, which was previously due on 15 September 2020, has been **deferred to 15 March 2021**.

Changes to the subsequent commercial fishing season dates*

1. The 2021-22 season will run from **1 July 2021 – 14 January 2022**. Fees for the 2021-22 season may be paid via three instalments (due 1 July, 15 September and 15 November 2021). The catch for this season will be determined in due course.
2. The 2022-23 season will run from **15 January 2022 – 14 January 2023**.

*Subject to further industry discussion

The new back of boat (BOB) sale mechanism will allow fishers to land up to 100 lobsters per day which may be sold directly to local restaurants, fresh fish retailers and the public.

Landing and reporting

1. Fishers may land up to 100 lobsters per trip, which may be sold to a person or business who is not a registered receiver.
2. The number of BOB lobsters needs to be indicated in the pre-landing nomination made via Fish Eye. Fishers therefore must be using Fish Eye to land back of boat lobsters.
3. Back of boat lobsters are to be landed in sealed, tagged containers, and weighed by fisher upon entering an Approved Landing Area (or in Zone A (Abrolhos Islands) must be weighed when removing lobster from a designated holding area or delivering lobster to a carrier boat).
4. Fisher to report weight of lobsters as a separate consignment; and reported weight is to be deducted from the entitlement held on the licence.
5. Back of boat lobsters are to be weighed first (i.e. prior to consignments for registered receivers).
6. Lobsters to be held in sealed containers until 10 minutes after the weight is reported, after which tags can be removed and lobsters don't need to be held or transported in a sealed container (except on a carrier boat).

Transport of BOB lobsters

1. A person transporting BOB lobsters must have a receipt, transport docket or other document regarding the lobster in the person's actual possession which shows the weight or number of lobster being transported; and that the lobster being transported was lawfully purchased or obtained.
2. Back of boat lobsters can be transported in any number.
3. At the Abrolhos Islands, fishers may either bring the BOB lobsters ashore, and/or a consignment of these lobsters may be transported to the mainland via a carrier boat in sealed containers.
4. There is no possession limit for BOB lobsters.

Sale of BOB lobsters

1. Sales can be made by fisher at wharf or any other location.
2. Fisher must issue a tax invoice to the purchaser, which includes the fisher's Managed Fishery Licence Number, and the quantity of lobsters.
3. Fishers may retain BOB lobsters for their own use, if not sold. This replaces the previous 'personal consumption' arrangements.
4. Registered receivers are not permitted to purchase BOB lobsters. If an existing registered receiver would like to surrender their certificate, and instead purchase BOB lobsters, they can do this and should contact DPIRD.

Amendments to the *West Coast Rock Lobster Managed Fishery Plan 2012*, have also been introduced to update operational arrangements for fishers.

Updated operational requirements for fishers at Abrolhos Islands

1. Pot storage areas at the Abrolhos Islands have been removed.
2. The eight small rock lobster holding areas at the Abrolhos Islands have been combined into one larger area (the Abrolhos Islands Fish Habitat Protection Area).
3. Holding tags may no longer be used at the Abrolhos Islands. Fishers must now only use landing tags (which cannot be removed).
4. New additional landing area at Big Pigeon Island.
5. Carrier Boat Consignment Form no longer required.

Flexibility for fishers to manage quota at the end of a season

1. The administrative arrangements used when quota is exceeded by a small amount have been expanded and now may be used for up to 60 kgs over-quota (increased from 30 kgs).
2. Fishers are now permitted to transport and leave baited pots in the water for up to seven days after they have finished fishing their entitlement; and may also set baited pots seven days prior to the commencement of a new season.

Additional measures to reduce likelihood of whale entanglement in rock lobster gear

1. A maximum pot usage of 200 pots per licence applies from September through to 31 October 2020, and from 1 May to 30 June 2021.
2. There is a new requirement for fishers to provide information regarding the number of pots left in the water at the end of a trip (this applies year round).
3. The period in which modified whale gear is required has been extended to include April. Modified gear is now required from **1 April to 31 October**.
4. Additional new requirements during this extended period now include:
 - the line must have a weight attached, or weighted rope must be used (when longer than 32.9 m);
 - all pots must be pulled at least once every 7 days regardless of depth of water in which they are set.
5. 100% pot usage outside of whale migration times (1 November to 30 April) has now formally been included in the Plan.

Other operational changes for fishers

1. Catch Disposal Records (i.e. paper-based logbooks) have been updated. All fishers must collect and use new logbooks ASAP.
2. Fish Eye forms are being updated.
3. Holding Over forms are being updated.
4. Three additional Approved Landing Areas (at Augusta Marina, Mangles Bay and Big Pigeon Island) and associated weighing points have been included in the Plan.
5. The broader Big Bank area is now open to 'normal' commercial fishing by Zone B licence holders, and the previous additional research requirements under the Exemption conditions no longer apply. Note there is still a small closed research area in Big Bank. See schedule 4 of the [West Coast Rock Lobster Managed Fishery Management Plan 2012](#).
6. The requirement for weighing of lobster to be done outside has been removed, subject to the weighing and the scale reading being visible from outside the venue.

Important disclaimer

Information current as of 24 September 2020.

Please note this is provided as general information only, for further details please access the Management Plan or contact DPIRD.

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