



Fish Facts Issue 16, November 2008



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Minister announces changes to pipi (Goolwa cockle) fishery

Fisheries Minister Rory McEwen has announced changes to pipi fishing in South Australia that will impact on both recreational and commercial fishers.

The Minister said that the same commercial access arrangements as last year will apply for the Lakes and Coorong Pipi fishery – but with a significantly reduced quota.

“From 1 November 2008 commercial access to the fishery will be controlled with a total catch limit through licence conditions. Endorsements will recognise the reduction in total allowable commercial catch from 1150 tonnes to 600 tonnes,” Mr. McEwen said.

“Recreational fishers are also being asked to observe a voluntary bag reduction from 600 to 300 pipis per day.”

Mr. McEwen has told State Parliament he has an obligation under the Fisheries Management Act 2007 to protect the sustainability of the pipi resource.

“We are talking about a resource which is under serious threat and I urge everyone to exercise some restraint,” Mr McEwen said.

Mr. McEwen said, in addition, commercial fishers are being directed to only fish south of the Murray Mouth (the Coorong Beaches) with recreational fishers only fishing north of the mouth (the Goolwa Beaches).

To assist pipi fishers with these recent changes, a frequently asked questions page has been established on the [PIRSA Fisheries web site](#).

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Northern zone rock lobster fishery underway

PIRSA Fisheries has reminded recreational fishers that the northern zone rock lobster season opened at 12 noon Saturday 1 November. The southern zone opened 1 October. Both zones close at 6pm, 31 May 2009.

A number of rules apply to recreational rock lobster fishing in South Australia and all fishers should make themselves aware of these rules before they go fishing.

PIRSA Fisheries Executive Director, Mr Will Zacharin said these rules provide fishers with an opportunity to play their part in the management and long-term sustainability of the fishery.

"These rules are put in place to allow reasonable access to the resource but at the same time ensure we will have fish for the future," Mr Zacharin said.

Fishers can access up to date information about the rules that apply to recreational fishing via the free Recreational Fishing Guide (available from bait and tackle stores and Visitor Information Centres), by logging on to the PIRSA Fisheries web site (www.pir.sa.gov.au/fishing) or by ringing the 24 hour Fishwatch hotline on 1800 065 522 and requesting a copy.

Rock lobster pots must be registered with PIRSA Fisheries and have a current registration tag attached before they can be legally used in South Australia. A maximum of two pots per fisher can be registered at selected PIRSA Offices or on-line at www.pir.sa.gov.au/fishing.

During the season, Fisheries Officers will conduct regular patrols of all rock lobster fishing areas, paying particular attention to unregistered pots, over potting and interference with other fisher's pots.

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Closed season for snapper starting to show results

The annual state-wide closed season for snapper commenced from midday on Saturday, 1 November, 2008 and will continue through to midday on Sunday, 30 November, 2008. The one-month closure applies to both recreational and commercial fishers.

PIRSA Fisheries Executive Director, Mr Will Zacharin said snapper is a very important fish for commercial and recreational fishers and the short seasonal closure is an appropriate measure to ensure the fishery is managed in a sustainable way for the future.

"The closure reduces the overall fishing effort and therefore the catch from the fishery. Reducing fishing effort has allowed fish to reach a larger average weight and age and therefore produce more eggs during its lifetime," Mr Zacharin said.

"The timing of the closure allows a proportion of larger mature fish the freedom to migrate and aggregate in readiness to spawn from mid October through until March, in some years."

A recent report on the snapper fishery, conducted by the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI), showed the fish stocks benefiting from the annual closure with evidence of better than average recruitment events in recent years.

Despite the majority of fishers abiding by the seasonal closure, two men from Semaphore Park and Findon have each received an on-the-spot fine for allegedly taking snapper during the closed season following recent patrols by Fisheries Officers at Port Minlicowie, near Minlaton on the western side of Yorke Peninsula.

A search of the vessel uncovered three snapper (measuring 100cm, 95cm and 40cm).

As a result, the men were issued on-the-spot fines of \$335 each with officers also seizing a quantity of fishing equipment, an esky as well as the snapper.

Fisheries officers will continue to pay particular attention to snapper fishing hot spots throughout the seasonal closure to ensure all fishers comply with the fishing restriction.

“Water land and even aerial patrols will be used to target suspected illegal fishing,” Mr Zacharin said.

Fishers are reminded that any snapper accidentally caught during the closure must be returned to the water immediately.

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New Fisheries Patrol vessel for KI

Fisheries enforcement capabilities have received a further boost with the arrival of a new \$200,000 fisheries patrol vessel at Kingscote, Kangaroo Island.

The purpose-built, 7.2 metre twin-hulled sailfish catamaran FPV Cygnet arrived at Kingscote in mid-October.

FPV Cygnet is fitted with state-of-the-art electronics for navigation, plotting and radar and will provide an on-water-presence capable of taking up to four officers out to 30 nautical miles offshore.

The vessel makes a formidable compliance tool and a great addition to the PIRSA Fisheries fleet.

FPV Cygnet will be used to check commercial and recreational fishers and to investigate any suspected breaches of fisheries legislation.

During operations, the FPV Cygnet can interface with the State's large off-shore fisheries patrol vessel Southern Ranger, maximising its effectiveness.

The FPV Cygnet provides Fisheries Officers with the capability to circumnavigate Kangaroo Island.

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Hefty fines for exceeding snapper limits

Three recreational fishers have been fined in the Christie Beach Magistrates Court recently for taking over the bag limit of snapper.

Fisheries Officers inspected the three fishers' catch at the Wallaroo boat ramp back on 1 December 2007.

The men admitted to Fisheries Officers to catching their daily boat limit of large snapper (6 snapper over 60cms) and showed officers the fish. They stated they had no other fish onboard, however a search of the vessel uncovered another 4 large snapper over 60cms wrapped in towels and hidden underneath bunk beds in the front of the vessel.

Fisheries Officers seized all of the fish as well as three rod/reel combos and a large esky.

The three men Michael Ronald Davey (28) of Hackham West, Jason Scott Geisberger (34) of Christie Beach and Christopher David Burford (30) of Tranmere each had a conviction recorded against them and were fined more than \$2,200 each. The forfeiture of the fish and other items seized, worth several thousand dollars, was confirmed by the Court.

PIRSA Fisheries Manager Compliance Services, Mr Paul Tatarelli said the penalty handed down by the Court should act as a general deterrent for any other fishers looking to blatantly avoid the rules.

Any attempts to conceal fish in vessels invariably get detected as Fisheries Officers have powers under the Fisheries Management Act 2007 to search vessels and regularly do so.

"The penalties imposed under the new Act are indicative of how seriously this type of offending is viewed by the Courts," Mr Tatarelli said.

"This will likely be the most expensive fish these men have ever caught and never got to eat."

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Catch and release tips

If you are planning to release a caught fish, there are a few things you can do to ensure the fish has the best chance of surviving.

Wherever possible, unhook the fish while it is still in the water. If you do need to remove the fish from the water, wet your hands before you handle the fish. This reduces any damage to the fish's protective slime.

Move quickly so you can return the fish to the water as soon as possible. Large fish must be supported under the head and belly to minimise any damage to the backbone.

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PIRSA Fisheries produces Fishfacts as an information service to commercial and recreational fishers. Information about regulations and other laws is provided as a summary only and does not replace the legislation. It is the responsibility of fishers to ensure that they are aware of the law and comply with it.

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