



Fish Facts Issue 17, December 2008



Government of South Australia
Primary Industries and Resources SA



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Articles

Year long closure to protect Murray cod	Fishers reminded of state-wide recreational netting ban
Two men banned from rock lobster fishing	Carp "legal" bait for marine waters
New fisheries vessel for west coast	Illegal abalone haul results in hefty fines



Year long closure to protect Murray cod

Agriculture, Food and Fisheries Minister Rory McEwen has announced moves to further protect the iconic freshwater fish species, the Murray cod.

A new closed season will now come into effect from January 1, 2009 and continue until July 31 when the existing seasonal closure comes into effect.

"This is on top of the current annual closed season for Murray cod from August 1 to December 31 to protect the species during their breeding season.

"The new arrangements will effectively close the Murray cod fishery for all of 2009," Mr McEwen said.

"Research has shown that Murray cod are dependant on flows for reproduction. Low water levels also reduce habitat.

"Given the continued drought and lack of flows in the River Murray, it's important that we take strong and decisive action now to protect this iconic freshwater species for future generations.

"This latest closure, which comes into effect from New Year's Day until July 31, 2009 will effectively close the Murray cod fishery until the end of next year.

"It's important that the current size of the Murray cod population is maintained to ensure that spawning success and recruitment to the fishery can occur when there are improved river flows and enhanced habitat conditions.

"Any fisher accidentally catching a Murray cod during the closure must return the fish to the water immediately," Mr McEwen said

For more information about Murray cod visit the [PIRSA Fisheries web site](#).

[top](#)



Two men banned from rock lobster fishing

Two local men have had their rock lobster pot registrations suspended following an appearance in the Mount Gambier Magistrates Court recently.

Primary Industries Fisheries Officers observed the men retrieving each of their two registered recreational rock lobster pots plus two other unregistered rock lobster pots on two different occasions at Cape Douglas in the State's southeast in December 2007.

The two unregistered rock lobster pots each had floats marked with commercial southern zone rock lobster fishery numbers. It is an offence for recreational fishers to use floats with commercial licence numbers.

As a result, Mr Raymond James Dunbar (42) of Cape Douglas and Mr Craig James Whitehead (36) of Mount Gambier were found guilty and convicted of a number of charges relating to illegal rock lobster fishing.

Mr Dunbar was fined \$2000. He also had his recreational rock lobster registration suspended and is disqualified from holding a recreational rock lobster pot registration for a period of two years.

Mr Whitehead was fined \$5000. He also had his recreational rock lobster registration suspended, is disqualified from holding a recreational rock lobster pot registration for a period of four years and is prohibited from being on any boat that is carrying any device designed for the purpose of taking rock lobster for a period of four years.

A total of 6 rock lobster pots seized by Fisheries Officers were also forfeited.

PIRSA Fisheries Services, Regional Manager East, Ms Mel Snart reminded fishers that a maximum of two registered pots can be used in the recreational rock lobster fishery.

"All recreational pots used must display a current recreational rock lobster tag and be operated by the person who holds that registration," Ms Snart said.

"We urge anyone who has information on fishers suspected of using excess recreational rock lobster pots to pass that information on to PIRSA Fisheries through the Fishwatch telephone service (1800 065 522) or their local Fisheries office."

Click [here to register your rock lobster pots](#).

[top](#)



New fisheries vessel for west coast

Fisheries enforcement capabilities have received a further boost with the arrival of a new \$200,000 fisheries patrol vessel at Ceduna on the far west coast.

The purpose-built, seven metre twin-hulled sailfish catamaran, FPV Bluefin, was handed over to local Fisheries Officers at Ceduna recently.

The new vessel 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.

It provides a formidable compliance tool and is a valuable addition to the PIRSA Fisheries fleet and will be used to check on compliance by commercial and recreational fishers and to investigate any suspected breaches of fisheries legislation.

FPV Bluefin can also work with the states large off-shore fisheries patrol vessel, Southern Ranger, during

deeper off shore operations.

The new vessel will be used by four Fisheries Officers based at Ceduna and Streaky Bay covering an area from Streaky Bay through to the WA border.

The arrival of FPV Bluefin follows the recent delivery of an identical vessel, FPV Cygnet, to Fisheries Officers on Kangaroo Island.

[top](#)



Fishers reminded of state-wide recreational netting ban

Fisheries Officers have reminded recreational fishers of the state-wide netting ban that applies in South Australia.

The reminder follows an incident where Fisheries Officers in plain clothes stopped two men at about 8:30 pm on December 13, 2008 at the southern end of Franklin Harbour near Cowell on Eyre Peninsula. The men were found to be in possession of a mesh net concealed in a fish bin covered with a hessian sack.

The men were issued on-the-spot fines totaling \$440.

PIRSA Fisheries Regional Manager West, Mr Andrew Carr said it has been an offence to operate a recreational mesh net in marine waters since the early 1990's.

"This type of fishing adversely impacted on fish numbers," Mr Carr said.

"Reports of illegal netting activity in the Cowell and Lucky Bay area's increase over the Christmas holiday period.

"So Fisheries Officers from both Port Lincoln and Whyalla will conduct uniformed and plain clothes patrols in the area over the coming weeks, paying particular attention to size and bag limits and illegal netting."

[top](#)



Carp "legal" bait for marine waters

Fishers have been reassured that the use of European carp as bait in South Australian marine waters is legal.

PIRSA Fisheries Executive Director Mr Will Zacharin issued the statement following a number of calls to local Fisheries Officers questioning the practice.

"While it is illegal to return carp to the River Murray or any other freshwater lakes, rivers or streams, it is acceptable to use carp as bait in marine (salt) waters," Mr Zacharin said.

"In fact using carp as bait in marine waters is a win/win situation.

"It has proven to be an effective bait in crab nets, rock lobster pots and other fishing activities and also provides a use for what otherwise might be a wasted resource."

The use of carp as bait is a widespread practice amongst South Australia's commercial rock lobster fishers.



Illegal abalone haul results in hefty fines

Two men have been found guilty in the Port Lincoln Magistrates court recently, of a number of abalone related fisheries offences.

The charges related to an incident back in January 2008 when Fisheries Officers stopped the two men as part of a routine patrol at Point Drummond, west of Cummins on Eyre Peninsula.

When officers checked their catch they found the men to have around 200 abalone. When the abalone were measured, 59 were found to be undersize.

Daniel Jakob Lauriston (27) of Port Lincoln and Mark Dale Kingdon (25) of North Shields were found guilty of taking over the bag limit of abalone, taking undersize abalone and failing to carry an accurate measuring device to measure the abalone.

As a result Mr Kingdon was fined \$4390.72 including additional penalty and Court costs. Mr Lauriston was fined a total of \$3075.72 including additional penalty and Court costs.

The daily catch limit for abalone is five per person and it is mandatory to carry a suitable measuring device when fishing for abalone in South Australia.