

Hon Leon Bignell MP

Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

Wednesday, November 2, 2016

Changes to recreational fishing rules across South Australia

After extensive consultation, new rules for recreational fishing in South Australia - including changes to fishing limits for 26 species - will come into effect from 1 December 2016.

The changes to legal limits and management arrangements have been finalised this week, following extensive State-wide community consultation earlier this year.

Key changes include:

- Reduced bag/boat limits for Garfish, Samsonfish, Western Blue Groper, large Yellowtail Kingfish, Australian Herring (Tommy Ruff), Scallops and Blue Swimmer Crab/Sand Crabs.
- Increased size limits for Bream, Mulloway (marine waters) and Samsonfish;
- Reduced bag/boat limit for Snapper in Spencer Gulf;
- Increased bag/boat limit for Spangled Perch;
- Introduction of recreational limits for Albacore, Whaler Sharks, Congolli, Bloodworms, Sea Urchin, Trevally, Wrasse and Harlequin Fish;
- Introduction of a vehicle limit on Pipi and boat limits for Mulloway in the Coorong and Yabbies;
- Simplified limits on Hyrtl's Tandan Catfish;
- Removal of limits on Yellowfin Tuna and protection for Cooper Creek Catfish.

New arrangements to improve the stock status of one of the State's most iconic and popular species, King George Whiting, are also being introduced. The changes are:

- Reduced State-wide daily bag limit to 10 and boat limit to 30 (previously 12 and 36)
- Increased legal minimum size limit to 32 cm in all waters East of Cape Catastrophe on the tip of the Eyre Peninsula at 136°E (previously 31cm). West of this point, the size limit will remain at 30cm.
- Introduction of a spatial spawning closure for King George Whiting 1 - 31 May in an area of southern Spencer Gulf, southern Gulf St Vincent and Investigator Strait to protect this key spawning area during a critical reproductive period, where the taking and possession of King George Whiting by all fishers will be prohibited.

Quotes attributable to Fisheries Minister Leon Bignell

Each year more than 277,000 men, women and children take part in recreational fishing in South Australia. It's a much-loved pastime, an important tourism drawcard and a vital economic contributor to South Australia's regions.

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For grandparents to be able to continue to take their grandchildren fishing we need to have a balanced approach to how many fish we take.

The changes announced today will see fishing limits change for 26 different marine and freshwater species and additional protection introduced to safeguard our iconic King George Whiting.

These are vital measures to support the sustainability of our fish stocks, allow for a fair days fishing, maintain quality recreational fishing for future generations of South Australians and to ensure each fishing sector is operating within its allocated catch share for each key species.

Earlier this year extensive consultation was undertaken with industry, recreational fishing groups and the public as part of a comprehensive review of management arrangements for recreational fishing. I thank all those people who took part in the consultation.

More than 800 people attended 12 public meetings held across the State between February and April and more than 900 submissions were received during the three month consultation period. In addition, RecFish SA's submission represented the views of 1550 people.

It's important all fishers familiarise themselves with the new rules and play their part in protecting the health of our fish stocks. I urge people to download the excellent fisheries app which has updated information on all the rules and regulations for fishing in SA.

Background

Fish stocks are constantly changing and regular reviews of management arrangements are necessary to support the sustainability of our fisheries.

In early 2016, the State Government released three key documents for public consultation, outlining proposed ways to manage recreational fishing into the future.

The State Government has reviewed and considered all the submissions and information received during the consultation process together with the best available biological and fishery data to guide its final decisions.

Along with changes to fishing limits for certain species, the review focused on measures to improve the 'transitional-depleting' stock status of King George Whiting stocks in Spencer Gulf and Gulf St Vincent, where research has indicated fishing pressure is too high. The changes will also address an increase in the recreational catch of King George Whiting to 58.1% - above the recreational sector's allocated catch share of 48.5%.

Information is available online and our team of Fishcare Volunteers will be visiting popular fishing spots across the State to hand out information on the changes, ahead of the 1 December start date.

For full details on the changes visit www.pir.sa.gov.au/newrecfishrules or PIRSA's Recreational Fishing Guide app.