



Document ID: A5718456

19 December 2022

FISHERIES & AQUACULTURE

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**NOTICE TO MARINE SCALEFISH FISHERY, ROCK LOBSTER FISHERIES,
CHARTER BOAT FISHERY, AND LAKES AND COORONG FISHERY LICENCE
HOLDERS**

Dear licence holder

Further to correspondence provided on 9 November 2022 regarding the release of the Snapper Stock Assessment Report 2022 (“the Report”), I write to advise of the Snapper management measures that are to apply from 1 February 2023.

Following release of the Report, the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) undertook a series of public Snapper Science Information Sessions at key regional centres and hosted an online webinar on 19 November 2022. The full Report and the key findings are available on the PIRSA website at:

pir.sa.gov.au/snapper-report

As outlined in the letter of 9 November 2022, stakeholder bodies were invited to provide comments on the Report and its implications to the Marine Scalefish Fishery Management Advisory Committee (MSFMAC).

The MSFMAC met on 21 November 2022 to consider the outcomes of the Report and stakeholder comments, and to develop recommendations to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development for the management of Snapper stocks in South Australia from 1 February 2023. The MSFMAC Chair’s Report outlines these recommendations and is available on the PIRSA website at:

pir.sa.gov.au/msfmac

Snapper management from 1 February 2023

After considering the recommendations from the MSFMAC, the objects of the *Fisheries Management Act 2007* and findings of the Snapper Stock Assessment Report 2022 – in particular that the Spencer Gulf/West Coast and Gulf St Vincent stocks remain depleted with low biomass and that recovery may take several years or longer, the South Australian Government has extended the existing Snapper closure from 1 February 2023 to 30 June 2026. The extension of the closure will provide the best possible chance for the depleted stocks to rebuild.

As Snapper in the South East is part of the separate Western Victorian Stock and remains at sustainable levels, Snapper fishing will remain open in the South East Fishing Zone.

Support initiatives

It is fully acknowledged that Snapper is a very important and iconic species to all sectors and the decision to extend the closure has not been taken lightly. To assist those people most impacted and to build our understanding of the factors that underpin Snapper recovery, the Government has approved the following support initiatives:

Commercial fee relief: Commercial Marine Scalefish Fishery (MSF) licence holders with Snapper quota entitlements, and all Charter Boat Fishery licence holders will have 50% relief applied to their annual licence fees (the base fee for MSF licence holders) for the duration of the closure, at a total cost of \$2.4 million. As the licence fee structure for the MSF is currently being reviewed, fee relief may be applied to a Snapper quota unit fee component (if implemented) of the annual fee once the new structure is in place.

Science funding: A \$5 million Snapper science program (\$2.5 million State Government funding with matching funds from the Commonwealth Fisheries Research and Development Corporation) to improve our understanding of the factors that underpin stock recovery, including:

- Refinement of the Daily Egg Production Method (DEPM) and trialling/integrating acoustic surveys for improved estimates of fishable biomass;
- Stock discrimination and population study on the West Coast to better understand the connectivity of the Spencer Gulf/West Coast stock;
- Continuation of recruitment surveys to develop a cost-effective method of monitoring the number of juvenile Snapper that enter the South Australian population each year, and understand the drivers for recruitment variability;
- continuation of adult sampling (including collection of genetic material for future close-kin mark-recapture study);
- Further development of recreational fishing reporting abilities to provide timely monitoring of recreational catches;
- Aquatic habitat restoration projects which improve Snapper habitat; and
- Enhancement of the snapper stock assessment model to include forecasting and Management Strategy Evaluation capability to assist in designing recovery strategies.

Snapper restocking: \$1.2 million over two years to fund Snapper fish stocking in Spencer Gulf and the Gulf St Vincent to help replenish depleted fish stocks.

Recreational fishing: \$200,000 over three years for reef restoration projects, working closely with RecFish SA.

Ongoing Snapper management: PIRSA and SARDI will continue to implement planned work including:

- Development of a Snapper Rebuilding Plan as part of the development of new harvest strategies for the MSF;
- Development of Snapper bycatch / discards reporting; and

- An external review of the Snapper stock assessment model.

Mental Health Support: The Government will also work with Seafood Industry Australia to support the expansion of the national 'Stay Afloat' program to support the mental health and well-being of affected commercial fishers, charter operators and seafood processors and continue to provide support through the established Family and Business (FaB) Mentors program.

The FaB mentors can provide free informal financial or health and well-being advice and I encourage individuals who have concerns relating to the impact of the Snapper management measures to contact either:

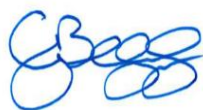
- Colleen White: 0409 388 649; or
- Steve Whillas: 0458 852 268

Further information about the Snapper management measures and status of the various support initiatives is available on the PIRSA website at:

www.pir.sa.gov.au/snapper-management

Should you wish to discuss the information above, please contact Sam Stone, MSF Fisheries Manager on sam.stone@sa.gov.au or 8429 2101.

Yours sincerely



Prof Gavin Begg
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE