



Our ref: CORP F2026/000127
Receipt No: 23769922

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6 August 2026

Removed from Disclosure Log

C/- Guardian Australia

Removed from Disclosure Log

Dear

Removed from Disclosure Log

Determination under the *Freedom of Information Act 1991*

I refer to your application made under the *Freedom of Information Act 1991* which was received by the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) on 7 July 2026, seeking access to the following:

"Emails, reports or briefings related to the population of Australian giant cuttlefish in Spencer Gulf."

Timeframe: 1/03/2026 to 6/07/2026

On 7 July 2026, PIRSA's Records Management and FOI Support Officer contacted you seeking to refine the scope of the term "emails". A response was received from you indicating that "internal operational emails" are to be excluded.

Accordingly, on 7 July 2026, it was confirmed that your application is amended as follows:

"Emails (excluding emails between PIRSA officers regarding internal operational matters), reports or briefings related to the population of Australian giant cuttlefish in Spencer Gulf."

Timeframe: 1/03/2026 to 6/07/2026

The following determination has been finalised.

I have located forty-three documents that are captured within the scope of your request.

Determination 1

I have determined that access to the following documents is **granted in full**:

Doc No.	Description of document	No. of Pages
2	SARDI Advice Note dated 20/3/2026 – SARDI Algal Bloom Response – Assessment of Non-Quota Fish Stocks in Spencer Gulf and Gulf St Vincent	15
3	SARDI document dated 20/3/2026 - Algal bloom impact on key fish stocks in South Australia's gulfs	15
4a	Attachment to Document 4 – Overview of Cuttlefish Monthly Counts report	2
6a	Attachment to Document 6 – Annual Cuttlefish Population Data	3
7a	Attachment to Document 7 – Document titled "Karenia spp. Temp & salinity tolerances"	1
8a	Attachment to Document 8 – SARDI draft talking points - Office for Algal Bloom Research	10
21a	Attachment to Document 21 – Template for response to Legislative Council Question Without Notice re Giant Australian Cuttlefish	1
24a	Attachment to Document 5 – Cuttlefish temperatures - Weekly temperature by year	1
27a	Attachment to Document 27 – Document re more reasons to visit Whyalla	2
29a	Attachment to Document 29a – Cuttlefish Population Estimates	2
30	SARDI document dated 29/5/2026 - Algal bloom impact on key fish stocks in South Australia's gulfs	15

The information removed from Documents 2, 3 and 8a is outside of the scope of your request.

Determination 2

I have determined that access to the following document is **granted in part**:

Doc No.	Description of document	No. of Pages
1	Email from Senior Policy Officer, Park Strategic Projects, Department for Environment and Water to Executive Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture, PIRSA and other recipients dated 20/3/2026 re Cuttlefish Taskforce documents	2

The information removed from the above document is pursuant to Clause 4(1)(a) and Clause 6(1) of Schedule 1 of the Freedom of Information Act.

Clause 4(1)(a) states:

4—Documents affecting law enforcement and public safety

- (1) A document is an exempt document if it contains matter the disclosure of which could reasonably be expected—
 (a) to endanger the life or physical safety of any person

The information removed pursuant to Clause 4(1)(a) consists of the floor number of the workplace of the Departmental officer concerned.

The release of this information could pose a security risk to the physical safety of the Departmental officer concerned from members of the public who may hold alternative views to those of the agency.

Clause 6(1) states:

“6 - Documents affecting personal affairs

- (1) A document is an exempt document if it contains matter the disclosure of which would involve the unreasonable disclosure of information concerning the personal affairs of any person (living or dead).”

The information removed pursuant to Clause 6(1) consists of the landline telephone number of a Departmental officer.

This information is considered exempt in order to avoid direct contact from members of the public who may hold alternative views to those of the agency.

Accordingly, it is considered that disclosure of this information would be an unreasonable intrusion into the privacy rights of the individuals concerned.

The remaining information removed and two of the attachments are outside of the scope of your request.

Determination 3

I have determined that access to the following document is **granted in part**:

Doc No.	Description of document	No. of Pages
9	Emails between Media Manager, Department for Environment and Water and Media Manager, PIRSA dated 16/6/2026 re Cuttlefish populations	3

The information removed from the above document is pursuant to Clause 4(1)(a), Clause 6(1) and Clause 9(1) of Schedule 1 of the Freedom of Information Act.

The information removed pursuant to Clause 4(1)(a) consists of the floor number of the workplace of the Departmental officer concerned.

The release of this information could pose a security risk to the physical safety of the Departmental officer concerned from members of the public who may hold alternative views to those of the agency.

The information removed pursuant to Clause 6(1) consists of the landline and mobile telephone numbers of Departmental officers.

The landline number is considered exempt in order to avoid direct contact from members of the public who may hold alternative views to those of the agency.

As a mobile telephone number allows a person, including an officer of an agency, to be contacted outside of business hours and is information that is not ordinarily available to the public, the information is taken to concern the personal affairs of an individual.

Accordingly, it is considered that disclosure of this information would be an unreasonable intrusion into the privacy rights of the individuals concerned.

Clause 9(1) states:

“9—Internal working documents

(1) A document is an exempt document if it contains matter—

(a) that relates to -

(i) any opinion, advice or recommendation that has been obtained, prepared or recorded; or

(ii) any consultation or deliberation that has taken place, in the course of, or for the purpose of, the decision-making functions of the Government, a Minister or an agency; and

(b) the disclosure of which would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest.”

The information removed pursuant to Clause 9(1) consists of a communication between PIRSA officers for internal decision-making purposes.

In favour of the public interest:

- Meeting the objects of the Freedom of Information Act favouring access to documents.
- Ensuring optimal use of public resources.
- High level of interest in the accountability of public office holders.
- The importance of transparency and openness and the interest that the public has in the decision-making processes of Government.

Contrary to the public interest:

- The recent age of the information was considered and the continuing relevance of the matters.
- Protection of the deliberative processes of Government.
- Providing an agency with the ability to undertake internal consultation without unnecessary interference.
- Being able to contribute to communications in an open and frank manner.

- Preserving the integrity of information-gathering processes leading up to the finalisation of decisions.
- Recognising that internal decision-making processes are required to be undertaken to enable an agency to provide information to the public on matters of concern and interest.
- Disclosing this information may compromise the manner in which information is gathered in the future for the decision-making processes of Government to the detriment of the betterment for South Australia.

Having considered the various factors weighing for and against disclosure, I have determined that disclosure of this information would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest.

Determination 4

I have determined that access to the following documents is **granted in part**:

Doc No.	Description of document	No. of Pages
4	Email thread between A/Chief Executive, Department for Environment and Water (DEW), other DEW officers and Executive Director, SARDI (PIRSA) dated 1/5/2026 re monitoring data for cuttlefish report	2
5	Email from Director, Biodiversity Science, Coasts and Information, Department for Environment and Water to PIRSA officers dated 2/6/2026 re SARDI Cuttlefish Population Estimate (is also an attachment to Document 6)	1
6	Email thread between Department for Environment and Water and PIRSA officers dated 2/6/2026 and 3/6/2026 re Cuttlefish Count Data	5
7	Email thread between media outlet, Department for Environment and Water and PIRSA officers dated 2/6/2026 and 4/6/2026 re Algal Bloom impact on Cuttlefish	6
8	Email from Research Director, Aquatic and Livestock Sciences, SARDI (PIRSA) to PIRSA officer dated 16/6/2026 re Office for Algal Bloom Research launch – Talking Points	1
10	Email thread between Department for Environment and Water and PIRSA officers dated 16/6/2026 re Cuttlefish survey locations	4
11	Email from Executive Director, Biodiversity and Nature Economy, Department for Environment and Water (DEW) to PIRSA/DEW officers dated 16/6/2026 re Cuttlefish Parliamentary Briefing Note update with latest data	1
12	Emails between Department for Environment and Water and Executive Director, SARDI (PIRSA) dated 17/6/2026 re draft Parliamentary Briefing Note re Giant Cuttlefish	2
13	Email thread between The Guardian Australia and PIRSA officers dated 18/6/2026 re Giant Australian Cuttlefish media response	5

17	Email thread between media outlet and PIRSA officers dated 22/6/2026 and 23/6/2026 re media response re cuttlefish	3
18	Email thread between media outlet and PIRSA officers dated 24/6/2026 and 25/6/2026 re media response re cuttlefish	3
20	Email thread between officers of Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, Department of the Premier and Cabinet and PIRSA dated 26/6/2026 re Cuttlefish update	4
21	Emails between Office of the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development and PIRSA officers dated 26/6/2026 re Question Without Notice re Giant Australian Cuttlefish	2
22	Email from Executive Director, SARDI (PIRSA) to Media Manager, PIRSA dated 26/6/2026 re 2026 Giant Australian Cuttlefish Season	3
23	Email from Sub-Program Leader – Molluscan Fisheries, SARDI (PIRSA) to PIRSA officer dated 29/6/2026 re Cuttlefish count	1
24	Email from Sub-Program Leader, SARDI (PIRSA) to SARDI officer dated 29/6/2026 re cuttlefish temperatures	1
25	Email from Whyalla City Council to officers of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and PIRSA dated 29/6/2026 re cuttlefish aggregation	2
27	Emails from Whyalla City Council dated 29/6/2026 and 30/6/2026 re cuttlefish messaging	3
28	Email thread between officers of Department for Environment and Water and PIRSA dated 29/6/2026 and 30/6/2026 re Cuttlefish Data and Information for PIRSA-SARDI	5
29	Email thread between The Guardian Australia and PIRSA officers dated 30/6/2026 re Cuttlefish Population Estimates	7

The information removed from the above documents is pursuant to Clause 6(1) of Schedule 1 of the Freedom of Information Act.

The information removed consists of the following:

- Documents 4, 6, 10, 11 and 12:
 - Landline and mobile telephone numbers of Departmental officers
- Documents 5, 8, 22, 23, 24 and 28:
 - Mobile telephone numbers of Departmental officers
- Document 7:
 - Mobile telephone number of a Departmental officer
 - Name, mobile telephone number, email and website address of a staff member from a media outlet and identifying information of the organisation
 - Name of Departmental officer from another agency
- Document 13:
 - Name of an individual

- Document 17:
 - Name and email address of a staff member from a media outlet and identifying information of the organisation
- Document 18:
 - Name and contact details of a staff member of a media outlet and identifying information of the organisation
 - Names of individuals
- Document 20:
 - Name, mobile telephone number and email address of a staff member from an agency from another jurisdiction
 - Names of officers from other agencies
- Documents 21 and 25:
 - Names of Departmental officers
- Document 27:
 - Names of Departmental officers from other agencies
 - Names of other individuals
- Document 29:
 - Personal information relating to a Departmental officer
 - Mobile telephone number of a Departmental officer

The term 'personal affairs' has been held to involve 'matters of private concern to an individual' and the 'composite collection of activities personal to the individual concerned'.

It is expected that individuals from organisations can correspond with public sector agencies without fear that their identities are revealed.

Consent has not been provided to disclose the names of the Departmental officers and other individuals and, accordingly, there would be an expectation that their personal information would not be released in this way.

Accordingly, it is considered that disclosure of this information would be an unreasonable intrusion into the privacy rights of the individuals concerned.

The remaining information removed from Documents 8, 13, 18 and 29 is outside of the scope of your request. Two of the attachments for Document 8 are also outside of the scope of your application and are therefore not attached.

Determination 5

I have determined that access to the following documents is **granted in part**:

Doc No.	Description of document	No. of Pages
14	Email thread between The Guardian Australia and PIRSA officers dated 18/6/2026 re Giant Australian Cuttlefish media response	5
26	Email thread between media outlet and PIRSA officers dated 29/6/2026 re Cuttlefish update response	4

The information removed from the above documents is pursuant to Clause 6(1) and Clause 9(1) of Schedule 1 of the Freedom of Information Act.

The information removed pursuant to Clause 6(1) consists of the following:

- Document 14:
 - Mobile telephone number of a Departmental officer
- Document 26:
 - Name, email address and other contact details of a staff member from a media outlet and identifying information of the organisation

It is expected that individuals from organisations can correspond with public sector agencies without the fear that their identities are revealed.

Accordingly, it is considered that disclosure of this information would be an unreasonable intrusion into the privacy rights of the individuals concerned.

The information removed pursuant to Clause 9(1) consists of communications between PIRSA officers for internal decision-making purposes.

In favour of the public interest:

- Meeting the objects of the Freedom of Information Act favouring access to documents.
- Ensuring optimal use of public resources.
- High level of interest in the accountability of public office holders.
- The importance of transparency and openness and the interest that the public has in the decision-making processes of Government.

Contrary to the public interest:

- The recent age of the information was considered and the continuing relevance of the matters.
- Protection of the deliberative processes of Government.
- Providing an agency with the ability to undertake internal consultation without unnecessary interference.

- Being able to contribute to communications in an open and frank manner.
- Release of this information would discourage the flow of free exchange of ideas and options during deliberative processes.
- Preserving the integrity of information-gathering processes leading up to the finalisation of decisions.
- Disclosing this information may compromise the manner in which information is gathered in the future for the decision-making processes of Government to the detriment of the betterment for South Australia.

Having considered the various factors weighing for and against disclosure, I have determined that disclosure of this information would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest.

Determination 6

I have determined that access to the following documents is **granted in part**:

Doc No.	Description of document	No. of Pages
15	Email thread between The Guardian Australia and PIRSA officers dated 18/6/2026 re Giant Australian Cuttlefish media response	4
19	Email thread between PIRSA officers dated 25/6/2026 and 26/6/2026 re cuttlefish survey results	2

The information removed from the above documents is pursuant to Clause 9(1) of Schedule 1 of the Freedom of Information Act.

The information removed consists of communications between PIRSA officers for internal decision-making purposes.

In addressing the public interest test for the Clause 9(1) exemption, I have balanced the following factors:

In favour of the public interest:

- Meeting the objects of the Freedom of Information Act favouring access to documents.
- Ensuring optimal use of public resources.
- High level of interest in the accountability of public office holders.
- The importance of transparency and openness and the interest that the public has in the decision-making processes of Government.

Contrary to the public interest:

- The recent age of the information was considered and the continuing relevance of the matters.
- Protection of the deliberative processes of Government.

- Providing an agency with the ability to undertake internal consultation without unnecessary interference.
- Release of this information would discourage the flow of free exchange of ideas and options during deliberative processes.
- Preserving the integrity of information-gathering processes leading up to the finalisation of decisions.
- Disclosing this information may compromise the manner in which information is gathered in the future for the decision-making processes of Government to the detriment of the betterment for South Australia.

Having considered the various factors weighing for and against disclosure, I have determined that disclosure of this information would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest.

Determination 7

I have determined that access to the following documents is **refused**:

Doc No.	Description of document	No. of Pages
1a	Attachment to Document 1 – Cuttlefish Coast Sanctuary Zone – Draft Conservation Management Plan dated December 2025	35
1b	Attachment to Document 1 - Cuttlefish Coast Taskforce – Draft Final report	13
11a	Attachment to Document 11 – Department for Environment and Water Draft Parliamentary Briefing Note re Giant Cuttlefish	18
12a	Attachment to Document 12 – Department for Environment and Water Draft Parliamentary Briefing Note re Giant Cuttlefish	18

Access to the above documents is refused pursuant to Clause 9(1) of Schedule 1 of the Freedom of Information Act.

Documents 1a and 1b consist of draft reports prepared by another public sector agency.

Documents 11a and 12a consist of different versions of a draft Parliamentary briefing note prepared by another public sector agency for the purpose of providing updated briefing advice to a Minister in the course of decision-making functions of Government.

In addressing the public interest test for the Clause 9(1) exemption, I have balanced the following factors:

In favour of the public interest:

- Meeting the objects of the Freedom of Information Act favouring access to documents.
- Ensuring optimal use of public resources.
- High level of interest in the accountability of public office holders.

- The importance of transparency and openness and the interest that the public has in the decision-making processes of Government.

Contrary to the public interest:

- The recent age of the information was considered and the continuing relevance of the matters.
- Allowing Ministers to be advised and kept updated on matters relating to their portfolio areas.
- Enabling documents to be prepared for consideration without the fear that they are released into the public domain prior to finalisation and approval.
- Protection of the deliberative processes of Government.
- Providing an agency with the ability to undertake internal consultation and collaborate with other public sector agencies without unnecessary interference.
- Release of this information would discourage the flow of free exchange of ideas and options during deliberative processes.
- Preserving the integrity of information-gathering processes leading up to the finalisation of decisions.
- Disclosing this information may compromise the manner in which information is gathered in the future for the decision-making processes of Government to the detriment of the betterment for South Australia.

Having considered the various factors weighing for and against disclosure, I have determined that disclosure of these documents would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest.

Determination 8

I have determined that access to the following document is **refused**:

Doc No.	Description of document	No. of Pages
16	Parliamentary Briefing Note dated 18/6/2026 re Cuttlefish in Spencer Gulf – Annual population estimate survey	5

Access to the above document is refused pursuant to Clause 9(1) and Clause 17(c) of Schedule 1 of the Freedom of Information Act.

The document consists of updated advice sought from an agency to which a Minister reports in the course of the decision-making functions of Government.

In addressing the public interest test for the Clause 9(1) exemption, I have balanced the following factors:

In favour of the public interest:

- Meeting the objects of the Freedom of Information Act favouring access to documents.
- Ensuring optimal use of public resources.

- High level of interest in the accountability of public office holders.
- The importance of transparency and openness and the interest that the public has in the decision-making processes of Government.

Contrary to the public interest:

- The recent age of the information was considered and the continuing relevance of the matters.
- Allowing Ministers to be advised and kept updated on matters relating to their portfolio areas.
- Enabling documents to be prepared for consideration without the fear that they are released into the public domain prior to finalisation and approval.
- Protection of the deliberative processes of Government.
- Providing an agency with the ability to undertake internal consultation without unnecessary interference.
- Release of this information would discourage the flow of free exchange of ideas and options during deliberative processes.
- Preserving the integrity of information-gathering processes leading up to the finalisation of decisions.
- Disclosing this information may compromise the manner in which information is gathered in the future for the decision-making processes of Government to the detriment of the betterment for South Australia.

Having considered the various factors weighing for and against disclosure, I have determined that disclosure of this document would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest.

Clause 17(c) states:

"17 – Documents subject to contempt etc

*A document is an exempt document if it contains matter the public disclosure of which would, but for any immunity of the Crown –
(c) infringe the privilege of Parliament."*

With respect to Clause 17(c), the document consists of a briefing note which was specifically prepared for the purpose of use in proceedings in Parliament. Disclosure of this information would infringe the privilege of Parliament.

Determination 9

I have determined that access to the following document is **refused**:

Doc No.	Description of document	No. of Pages
21b	Attachment to Document 21 – Legislative Council Hansard extract dated 25/6/2026 marked "Draft - Subject to Revision – Not to be Quoted or Distributed" re Giant Australian Cuttlefish	1

Access to the above document is refused pursuant to Clause 17(c) of Schedule 1 of the Freedom of Information Act.

The document consists of an extract from Legislative Council Hansard marked "Draft - Subject to Revision – Not to be Quoted or Distributed". Disclosure of this information would infringe the privilege of Parliament.

Right of Appeal

If you are dissatisfied with this determination, you are entitled to exercise your right of review and appeal as outlined in the attached documentation [Making a Freedom of Information Application | State Records of South Australia \(archives.sa.gov.au\)](#), by completing the "FOI Application Form for Internal Review of a Determination" and returning the completed form to:

Freedom of Information Principal Officer
Department of Primary Industries and Regions
GPO Box 1671
ADELAIDE SA 5001

or via email PIRSA.FOI@sa.gov.au

FOI Disclosure Log

In accordance with the requirements of Premier and Cabinet Circular PC045, details of your application, and the documents to which you are given access, will be published in PIRSA's disclosure log. A copy of PC045 can be found at http://dpc.sa.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0019/20818/PC045-Disclosure-Log-Policy.pdf

If you disagree with publication, please advise the undersigned in writing within fourteen calendar days from the date of this determination.

Should you require further information or clarification with respect to this matter, please contact Ms Lisa Farley, Senior Freedom of Information Advisor on 8429 0422 or email PIRSA.FOI@sa.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Michelle Griffiths
Accredited Freedom of Information Officer
DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND REGIONS

Farley, Lisa (PIRSA)

From: Arnold, Jacob (DEW)
Sent: Friday, 20 March 2026 2:42 PM
To: Irving, Jason (DEW); Allen, Amy (DEW); Justin Commons; Clause 6(1) Clause 6(1)
 Begg, Gavin (PIRSA); Clause 6(1) (DEM); Clause 6(1) (DIT); Clause 6(1) (SATC);
Clause 6(1) (SATC); SATC:Executive Assistant to CE
Cc: Walter, Michele (DEW)
Subject: Cuttlefish Taskforce - documents
Attachments: Cuttlefish Coast Conservation Management Plan Final.pdf; Out of scope
Out of scope Out of scope DRAFT_CuttlefishFinalReport_V2.docx

OFFICIAL

Hi Cuttlefish Taskforce members,

Please find attached:

- The Conservation Management Plan
- Out of scope
- Out of scope
- A draft final Taskforce report

Out of scope The remaining of these documents are for discussion at the next meeting.

Clause 6(1)

In my absence, Amy will be the contact point to organise that next meeting, which I anticipate will be later in April. I will leave you in her capable hands.

Kind regards,

Jacob Arnold

Senior Policy Officer, Park Strategic Projects
 Protected Area Policy Unit

Park Planning and Visitor Experience Branch | National Parks and Public Lands Division
 Department for Environment and Water

P: (08) Clause 6(1)

[Or via MS Teams \(internal staff only\)](#)

Level 6(1) 81-95 Waymouth Street, Adelaide
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Government
of South Australia

Department for
Environment and Water



Helping South Australians conserve, sustain and prosper

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ADVICE TO: PIRSA FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

FROM: SARDI AQUATIC AND LIVESTOCK SCIENCES

SUBJECT: SARDI ALGAL BLOOM RESPONSE: ASSESSMENT OF NON-QUOTA FISH STOCKS IN SPENCER GULF AND GULF ST VINCENT

DATE: 20 MARCH 2026

KEY ISSUES

- PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture have requested an updated Advice Note on the impact on non-quota fish stocks in Spencer Gulf and Gulf St Vincent from the algal bloom.
- A total of 17 species or species groups from the Marine Scalefish Fishery were assessed.
- The impact assessment on these non-quota species used spatial and temporal analyses of monthly commercial catch data before and after the onset of the bloom.
- The low monthly catches for many species limit the ability to detect potential impacts of the algal bloom; consequently, the assessment presented here is based on qualitative interpretation rather than quantitative analysis. Out of scope.
Out of scope
- Out of scope
Out of scope. In **Spencer Gulf**, ten species were similarly assessed as negatively affected, five showed no apparent impact, and data were insufficient for two species.

BACKGROUND

In mid-March 2025, a harmful algal bloom, dominated by *Karenia* spp, was identified in the waters around the Fleurieu Peninsula in South Australia (SA). The harmful algal bloom has subsequently spread, primarily into Gulf St Vincent (GSV), but also into the Spencer Gulf (SG), southern Yorke Peninsula (YP), Kangaroo Island (KI) and the Coorong. It is estimated the algal bloom has affected over 500 species of fish, invertebrates and associated marine and coastal diversity (source: iNaturalist). This has included mortality of iconic commercial species such as Pipi and Snapper, protected species such as Leafy Seadragons, and larger marine life, including many species of sharks and rays.

As part of SARDI's broader algal bloom response program, assessments are being undertaken to evaluate potential impacts on fisheries and fish stocks. PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture have requested an updated Advice Note on the effects of the harmful algal bloom on non-quota fish stocks within Gulf St Vincent/Kangaroo Island and Spencer Gulf. All data are non-confidential.

This Advice Note summarises the observed impacts on a range of non-quota species based on spatial and temporal analyses of commercial logbook data across all fishing sectors. Due to low monthly catches and small sample sizes for many non-quota species, the capacity to detect bloom-related impacts is limited. Accordingly, the assessments presented are based on qualitative interpretation rather than quantitative analysis.

Out of scope



Out of scope



RESULTS

The impact on non-quota fish stocks in GSV/KI and SG from the algal bloom are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Assessment of negative algal bloom impact on non-quota commercial MSF species in both Gulf St Vincent/Kangaroo Island and Spencer Gulf based on monthly logbook data with a comparison between the last assessment in January 2026 (compared to the current assessment in March 2026). Yes = Observed negative impact; No = No observed negative impact; '-' = No data. Note that no changes in 'observed impact' were detected from the previous Advice Note (dated 9 January 2026).

Species	Gulf St Vincent/Kangaroo Island		Spencer Gulf	
	Jan 26	Mar 26	Jan 26	Mar 26
Out of scope				
Cuttlefish	Yes	Yes	No	No
Out of scope				

Out of scope



Out of scope



Out of scope



Out of scope



Out of scope



Out of scope



Out of scope



Out of scope



Out of scope



Out of scope



Out of scope



Out of scope



Cuttlefish

Although data for GSV/KI are limited, greatly reduced catch or no catch from May to October 2025 indicates a negative impact (Figure 14). In SG, monthly catch from June 2025 to February 2026 was relatively negligible, consistent with the 3-year average for this period, suggesting impacts were low.

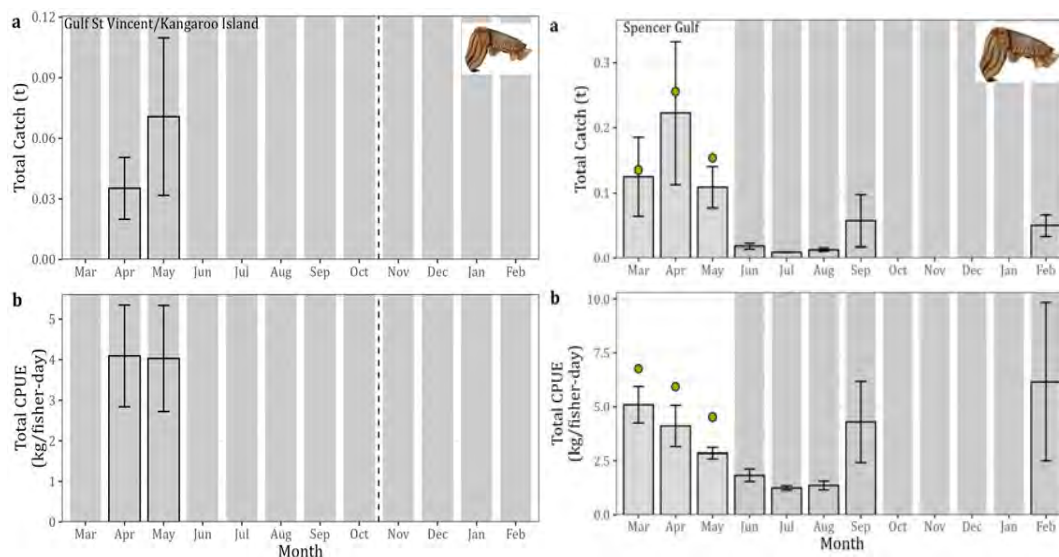


Figure 14. Commercial Fishery statistics for Cuttlefish in the Gulf St Vincent/Kangaroo Island fishing and Spencer Gulf zones. A) Total catch (t) and B) Total CPUE (kg/fisher-day) during the algal bloom period (March 2025 onwards; red dot) compared to the 3-year monthly average (February 2022 – February 2025; grey bars). Error bars indicate standard error. Green dot indicates change in catch/CPUE <50% of 3-year monthly average; orange dot indicates change in catch/CPUE of 50-80% of 3-year monthly average, red dot indicates change in catch/CPUE >80% of 3-year monthly average. Dashed line indicates closure of commercial fishery in Gulf St Vincent/Kangaroo Island fishing zone from 01 November 2025. Grey bars indicate months where data were removed due to confidentiality (< 5 licences).

Out of scope



Out of scope



Out of scope

SUMMARY

Out of scope

Out of scope

In Spencer Gulf, ten species

were similarly assessed as negatively affected, five showed no impact, and data were insufficient for two species.

Dr Gretchen Grammer

Research Director, SARDI Aquatic and Livestock Sciences

Disclaimer

PIRSA and its employees do not warrant or make any representation regarding the use, or results of the use, of the information contained herein as regards to its correctness, accuracy, reliability and currency or otherwise. PIRSA and its employees expressly disclaim all liability or responsibility to any person using the information or advice. Use of the information and data contained in this Advice Note is at the user's sole risk. If users rely on the information they are responsible for ensuring by independent verification its accuracy, currency or completeness.

Appendix

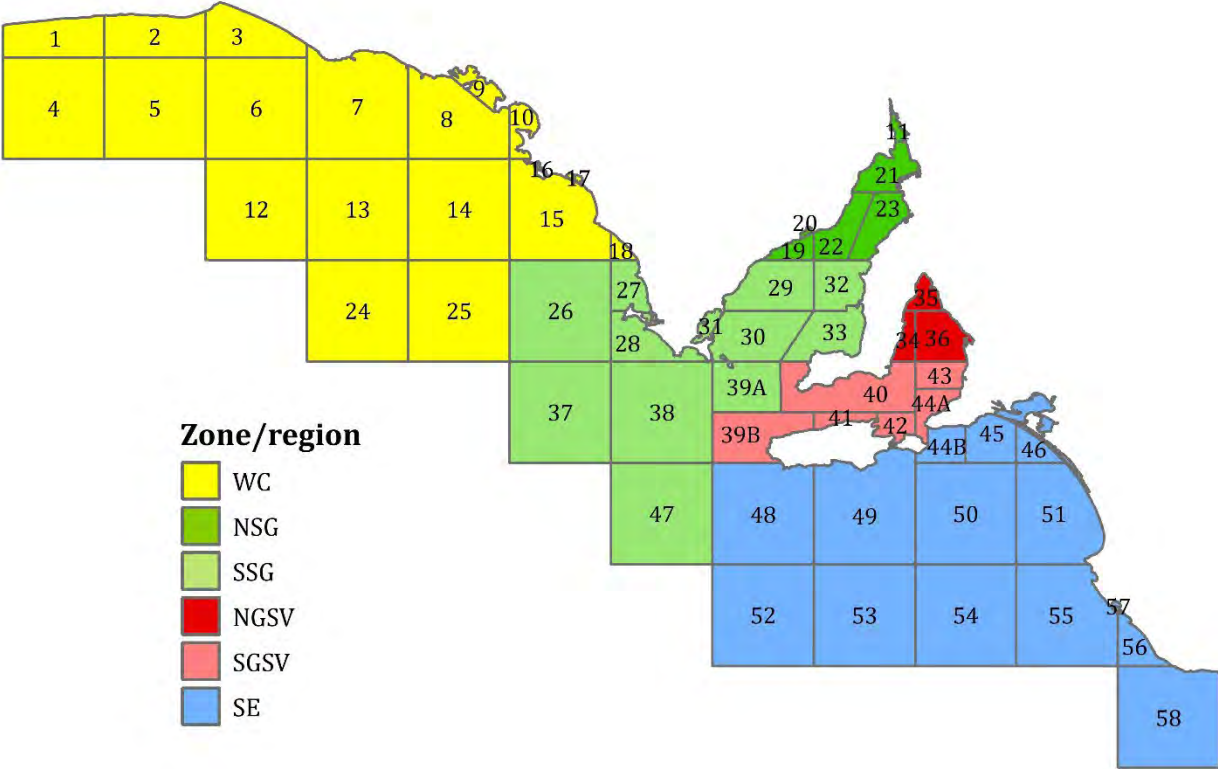


Figure A1. Management zones and marine fishing areas (blocks) in the Marine Scalefish Fishery. Abbreviations for management zones: WC, West Coast; NSG, Northern Spencer Gulf; SSG, Southern Spencer Gulf; NGSV, Northern Gulf St Vincent; SGSV, Southern Gulf St Vincent; SE, South East.

Out of scope



Out of scope



Algal bloom impact on key fish stocks in South Australia's gulfs

Updated: 20 March 2026

Source: SARDI Aquatic and Livestock Sciences

Overview

Since March 2025, a large algal bloom caused by *Karenia* species has affected the waters of Gulf St Vincent, Spencer Gulf, Kangaroo Island and nearby areas. The bloom has resulted in widespread marine life deaths, impacting fish, shellfish and other sea life.

As part of the extensive SARDI Algal Bloom Response, fisheries and fish stocks are being assessed to understand the impact of the algal bloom on commercial fish species. This Fact Sheet outlines how the algal bloom is affecting key quota-managed species

Out of scope

Out of scope

Spencer Gulf (SG), where the bloom has been most widespread (Figure 1). It also provides a summary report on 17 non-quota species in both gulfs.

Methods

This assessment uses both commercial fishing and independent survey data. Specifically, the assessment combines:

1. Analysis of commercial fishing data.
2. Scientific (fishery-independent) surveys.
3. Targeted fishing surveys with commercial operators.
4. Bycatch and species sampling.

Out of scope

For all species, the assessment relies heavily on spatial and temporal analyses of commercial logbook data across all fishing sectors. To quantify fishery impacts, monthly catch and catch rate (expressed as catch per unit effort; CPUE) during the algal bloom period (March 2025 onwards), were compared against the 3-year monthly average (baseline) from February 2022 – February 2025 for each species. This allows quantification of a “before” and “after” algal bloom impact.

Out of scope

Results

Out of scope

Out of scope

Out of scope

Out of scope

Out of scope

Out of scope

Out of scope

Out of scope

Out of scope

Out of scope

Non-quota species

Data sources: [Commercial logbook](#).

A total of 17 species or species groups from the Marine Scalefish Fishery were assessed. The low monthly catches for many species limited the ability to detect potential impacts of the algal bloom; consequently, the assessment presented was based on qualitative interpretation rather than quantitative analysis.

Out of scope

Out of scope

In Spencer Gulf, ten (Western Australian Salmon, Australian Herring, Whaler Sharks, Sand Crab, Yellow-eye Mullet, Bluethroat Wrasse, Silver Trevally, Leatherjackets, Gummy Shark, School Shark) species were similarly assessed as negatively affected, five (Yellowfin Whiting, Snook, Ocean Leatherjacket, Rays and Skates, Cuttlefish) showed no impact, and two (Mulloway, Black Bream) lacked sufficient data.

Main findings

Out of scope

Spencer Gulf

Out of scope

What this means

Out of scope

- **Spencer Gulf fisheries appear to be less affected,** Out of scope
- Results will continue to be updated as more fishing and survey data become available.

Next steps

- SARDI continues to collect and analyse data to track impacts and provide further advice to PIRSA and industry.
- Updates will be shared as new information becomes available.

Figures

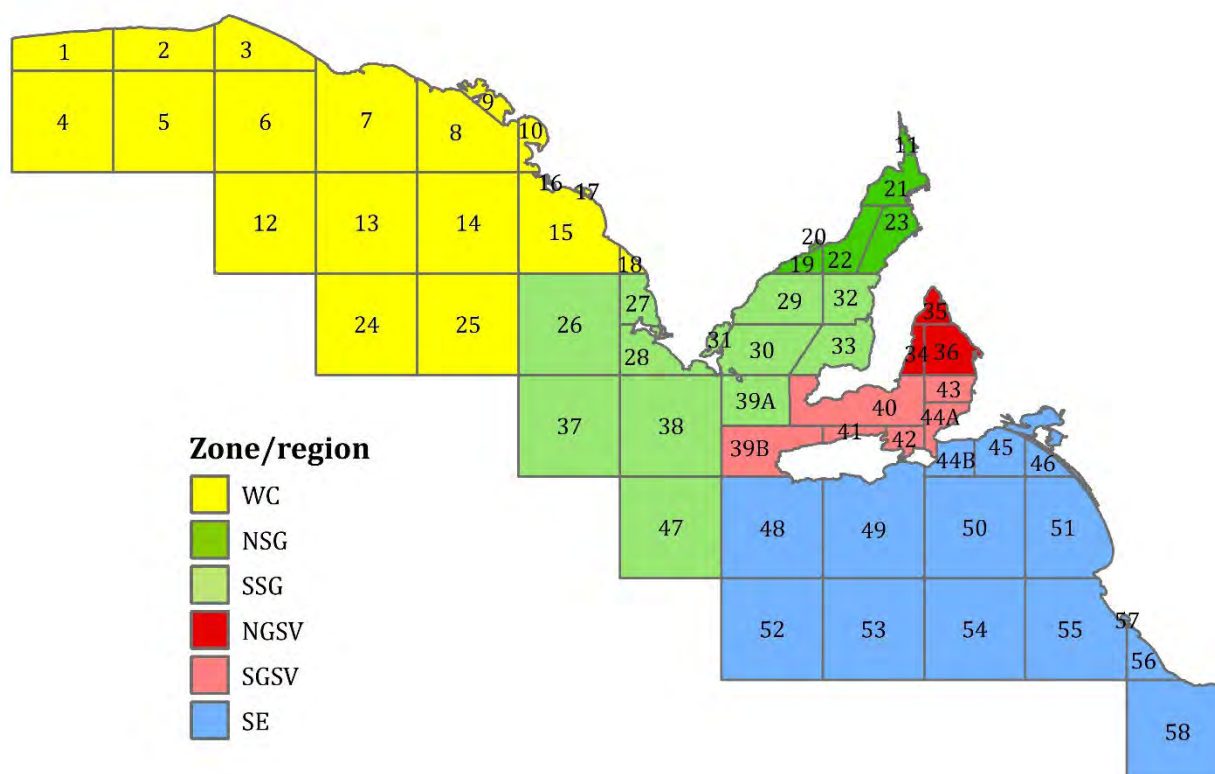


Figure 1. Management zones and marine fishing areas (blocks) in the Marine Scalefish Fishery. Abbreviations for management zones: WC, West Coast; NSG, Northern Spencer Gulf; SSG, Southern Spencer Gulf; NGSV, Northern Gulf St Vincent; SGSV, Southern Gulf St Vincent; SE, South East.

Out of scope



Out of scope



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Out of scope

Farley, Lisa (PIRSA)

From: Carruthers, Sandy (DEW)
Sent: Friday, 1 May 2026 2:58 PM
To: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI)
Subject: FW: cuttlefish
Attachments: Overview of Cuttlefish Monthly Counts_May 2026.docx

OFFICIAL

Hi mike
 Info re cuttlefish, will keep you informed
 Thanks, sandy

Sandy Carruthers

A/Chief Executive

Department for Environment and Water
 P (08) Clause 6(1) M Clause 6(1)

From: Bryars, Simon (DEW) <Simon.Bryars@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 1 May 2026 2:14 PM
To: Carruthers, Sandy (DEW) <Sandy.Carruthers@sa.gov.au>
Cc: Quin, Rebecca (DEW) <Rebecca.Quin@sa.gov.au>; Ward, Matthew (DEW) <Matthew.Ward@sa.gov.au>; Brock, Danny (DEW) <Danny.Brock@sa.gov.au>
Subject: RE: cuttlefish

OFFICIAL

Hi Sandy

See attached summary prepared by Danny and the team.

Note that counts in May are often low (see Table 1) and last year was very low (see Table 2), with the peak in numbers occurring much later than usual (Figure 1). This was likely due to the heat wave we had last year and the lag time for the water to cool down, which is the trigger for the aggregation.

Based on what we are hearing from locals, we are expecting low numbers next week, but the key surveys will be June and July.

Please let me know if you require any additional info.

Cheers
 Simon

From: Ward, Matthew (DEW) <Matthew.Ward@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 1 May 2026 10:18 AM
To: Carruthers, Sandy (DEW) <Sandy.Carruthers@sa.gov.au>
Cc: Quin, Rebecca (DEW) <Rebecca.Quin@sa.gov.au>; Bryars, Simon (DEW) <Simon.Bryars@sa.gov.au>
Subject: RE: cuttlefish

OFFICIAL

Thanks Sandy, I'm sure the team can supply this.

I'll leave this one with Bec and Simon

M

From: Carruthers, Sandy (DEW) <Sandy.Carruthers@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 1 May 2026 10:06 AM
To: Ward, Matthew (DEW) <Matthew.Ward@sa.gov.au>
Cc: Quin, Rebecca (DEW) <Rebecca.Quin@sa.gov.au>; Bryars, Simon (DEW) <Simon.Bryars@sa.gov.au>
Subject: cuttlefish

OFFICIAL

Hi Matt
Can I please have a table showing the monitoring data for as far back as we have it for cuttlefish survey numbers per month
I've given mike a heads up that surveys start next week.
Can the team plse let me know as soon as they have next weeks survey results ready.
Thanks
Sandy

Sandy Carruthers

A/Chief Executive

Department for Environment and Water
P (08) [Clause 9\(1\)](#) | M [Clause 9\(1\)](#)
81-95 Waymouth Street Adelaide 5000
GPO BOX 1047 Adelaide 5000
environment.sa.gov.au



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Government of South Australia
Department for Environment
and Water

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Overview of Cuttlefish Monthly Counts

Table 1. Mean monthly cuttlefish count/transect (SARDI data)

Year	April	May	June	July	August
1998	4	17	17	13	4
1999	1	39	33	21	3
2000	0	12	46	28	9
2001			35		
2005			23		
2008			16		
2009		27	13		
2010		6	26	28	
2011			9	4	
2012		3	2	1	
2013		2	2	2	
2014		8	7	5	
2015		14	19	11	
2016		26	27	14	
2017		13	18	7	
2018			23		
2019			17		
2020			37		
2021			15		
2022			22		
2023			14		
2024			13		
Mean	2	15	20	12	5

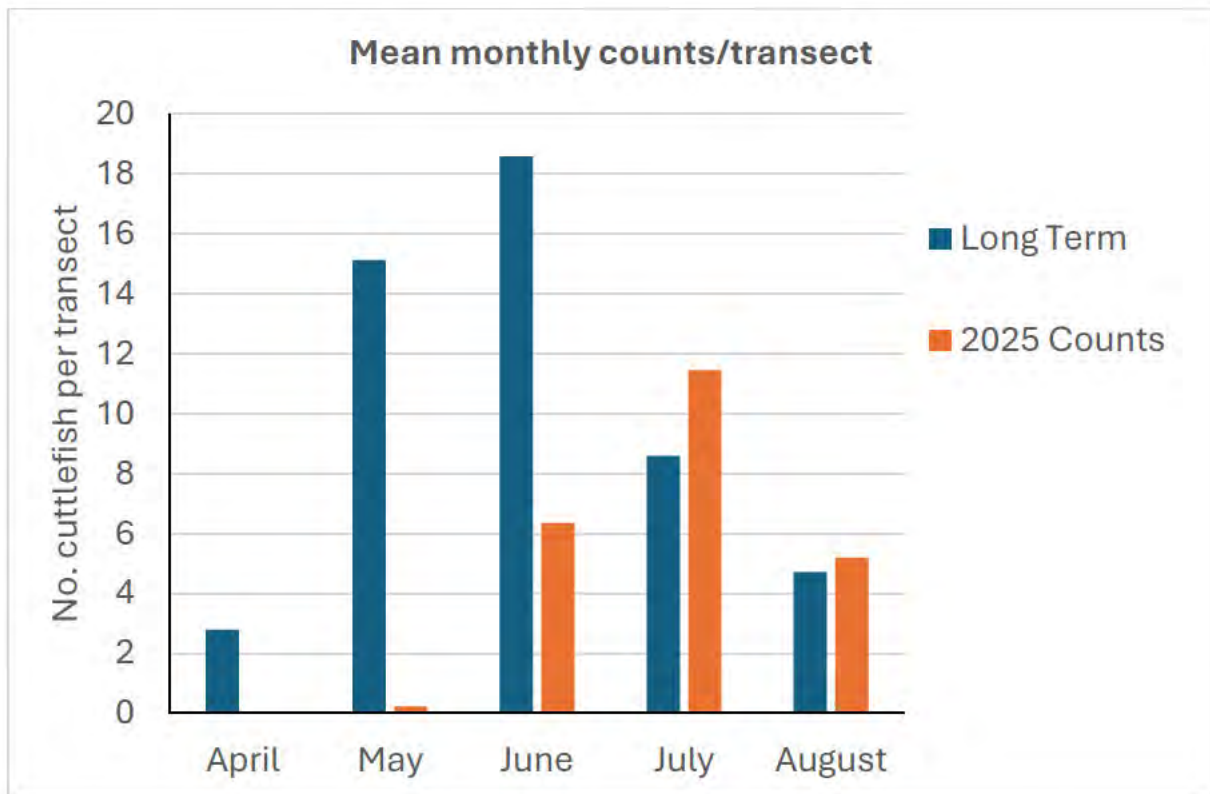


Figure 1. Comparison of 2025 monthly counts vs SARDI long term monthly counts

Table 2. Monthly number of cuttlefish recorded at each site by DEW - 2025

Location	May counts	June counts	July counts	August counts
False Bay Shallow	4	100	48	8
Black Point Shallow	2	79	23	7
Black Point Deep	0	41	46	9
Third Dip Shallow	1	8	51	51
Third Dip Deep	2	3	55	3
WOSBF Shallow	0	6	38	50
WOSBF Deep	0	5	105	41
Stony Point Shallow	0	10	15	28
Stony Point Deep	0	2	68	9
SANTOS Tanks Shallow	0	0	9	2
Grand Total	9	254	458	208

Notes: SARDI conduct their surveys across 14 sites and from 2018-2025 they have done a single survey during June (i.e. no monthly data available). In 2025 DEW conducted monthly surveys (May, June, July, August) at 10 of those 14 sites within the main aggregation area (noting that the other 4 sites consistently have very few cuttlefish). In 2025 the abundance counts during June at those 10 sites were very similar between DEW and SARDI. DEW will repeat monthly surveys at the same 10 sites again in 2026. SARDI will do their usual survey in June 2026.

Farley, Lisa (PIRSA)

From: Ward, Matthew (DEW)
Sent: Tuesday, 2 June 2026 9:32 PM
To: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI); Grammer, Gretchen (PIRSA-SARDI)
Cc: Carruthers, Sandy (DEW)
Subject: SARDI C/Fish Popn estimate

OFFICIAL

Hi Mike/ Gretchen

Sorry for the late / early one and going straight to the source, would you have this info (below) at hand with the number each year?

Updating our PBN for tomorrow morning for our Min who is very interested.

Thanks
Matt

Year	Official Cuttlefish Population Estimate
2012	
2013	
2014	
2015	
2016	
2017	
2018	
2019	
2020	247,146
2021	107,847
2022	
2023	
2024	81,420
2025	63,734

Dr Matthew Ward

Director Biodiversity Science, Coasts and Information

Department for Environment and Water

M Clause 6(1)

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**Department for Environment
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Farley, Lisa (PIRSA)

From: Stobart, Ben (PIRSA-SARDI)
Sent: Wednesday, 3 June 2026 8:20 AM
To: Carruthers, Sandy (DEW)
Cc: Grammer, Gretchen (PIRSA-SARDI); Mayfield, Stephen (PIRSA-SARDI); Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI); Ward, Matthew (DEW); Brock, Danny (DEW)
Subject: RE: Cuttlefish Count Data
Attachments: Cuttlefish data for DEW 030626.xlsx

OFFICIAL

Hi Sandy,

As requested, please find attached the cuttlefish annual population estimates and the raw counts for last year.

Regards

Ben

From: Carruthers, Sandy (DEW) <Sandy.Carruthers@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 3 June 2026 7:51 AM
To: Ward, Matthew (DEW) <Matthew.Ward@sa.gov.au>
Cc: Grammer, Gretchen (PIRSA-SARDI) <Gretchen.Grammer@sa.gov.au>; Stobart, Ben (PIRSA-SARDI) <Ben.Stobart@sa.gov.au>; Mayfield, Stephen (PIRSA-SARDI) <Stephen.Mayfield@sa.gov.au>; Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI) <Michael.Steer@sa.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Cuttlefish Count Data

Hi matt

We need both sets of data

Last years raw counts

All the years of population estimates

Thanks
Sandy

Sent from my iPhone

On 3 Jun 2026, at 7:27 am, Ward, Matthew (DEW) <Matthew.Ward@sa.gov.au> wrote:

Thank you

Sent from my iPhone

On 3 Jun 2026, at 07:19, Grammer, Gretchen (PIRSA-SARDI)
<Gretchen.Grammer@sa.gov.au> wrote:

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi Ben and Steve, see email attached. Looks like it's just per year estimates that are required.

Matt – if it's something different, please clarify with your team as they are requesting finer detailed info (emails below).

Thanks,
Gretchen

Dr Gretchen Grammer | Research Director, Aquatic and Livestock Sciences
South Australian Research and Development Institute – SARDI | **Department of
Primary Industries and Regions**
Government of South Australia | 2 Hamra Ave West Beach SA 5024 | PO Box 120
Henley Beach SA 5022
Affiliate Associate Professor – Flinders University
P: +61 8 8429 0797 | **M:** Clause 6(1) | **E:** gretchen.grammer@sa.gov.au
pir.sa.gov.au/research

<image002.png>

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We ensure the land, sea, water and sky are healthy for future generations and strive to better understand their spiritual and cultural significance for Aboriginal people across the state.

In the spirit of reconciliation, our commitment is to build progressive and trusting relationships, to share knowledge and learn from each other.

We recognise and own a difficult past, and together we will walk forward. We acknowledge the many Aboriginal people of this Country as the oldest continuous living culture in the world.

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From: Stobart, Ben (PIRSA-SARDI) <Ben.Stobart@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 2 June 2026 9:42 PM
To: Mayfield, Stephen (PIRSA-SARDI) <Stephen.Mayfield@sa.gov.au>; Grammer, Gretchen (PIRSA-SARDI) <Gretchen.Grammer@sa.gov.au>
Subject: Fw: Cuttlefish Count Data

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi Steve and Gretchen,

Am i able to provide DEW with 2025 transect cuttlefish numbers for 2025 as requested below without a data request?

Thanks
Ben

Obtener [Outlook para iOS](#)

De: Quin, Rebecca (DEW) <Rebecca.Quin@sa.gov.au>
Enviado: martes, junio 2, 2026 9:37 p. m.
Para: Stobart, Ben (PIRSA-SARDI) <Ben.Stobart@sa.gov.au>; Brock, Danny (DEW) <Danny.Brock@sa.gov.au>
Asunto: Re: Cuttlefish Count Data

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Thanks Ben of we can get first thing that would be great

Get [Outlook for Android](#)

From: Stobart, Ben (PIRSA-SARDI) <Ben.Stobart@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, June 2, 2026 8:30:26 PM
To: Brock, Danny (DEW) <Danny.Brock@sa.gov.au>
Cc: Quin, Rebecca (DEW) <Rebecca.Quin@sa.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Cuttlefish Count Data

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Ok, will check if that requires a data request tomorrow, hopefully ok. Out on boat for diving after 9 am but should be back early afternoon

Obtener [Outlook para iOS](#)

De: Brock, Danny (DEW) <Danny.Brock@sa.gov.au>
Enviado: Tuesday, June 2, 2026 8:20:32 PM
Para: Stobart, Ben (PIRSA-SARDI) <Ben.Stobart@sa.gov.au>
Cc: Quin, Rebecca (DEW) <Rebecca.Quin@sa.gov.au>
Asunto: RE: Cuttlefish Count Data

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi Ben,

Just clarifying that we are after your actual 2025 transect numbers – ie raw counts.

Cheers
Danny

From: Stobart, Ben (PIRSA-SARDI) <Ben.Stobart@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 2 June 2026 7:59 PM
To: Brock, Danny (DEW) <Danny.Brock@sa.gov.au>
Cc: Quin, Rebecca (DEW) <Rebecca.Quin@sa.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Cuttlefish Count Data

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

No problem can send tomorrow, that information is in our last advice note, do you not have that?

Obtener [Outlook para iOS](#)

De: Brock, Danny (DEW) <Danny.Brock@sa.gov.au>
Enviado: Tuesday, June 2, 2026 7:52:09 PM
Para: Stobart, Ben (PIRSA-SARDI) <Ben.Stobart@sa.gov.au>
Cc: Quin, Rebecca (DEW) <Rebecca.Quin@sa.gov.au>
Asunto: Cuttlefish Count Data

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi Ben,

Sorry for short notice, our Minister is heading up to Whyalla on weekend and keen on getting some up-to-date cuttlefish data.
Are you able to provide

1. The 2025 survey counts.
2. The actual population estimate for each year (numbers, not the graph)

If we could grab these first thing tomorrow that would be awesome.
Any concerns with data sharing pls check with Gretchen or Gavin for approvals as this is time sensitive.

Cheers
Danny

Daniel Brock
Team Leader Marine Science, Environmental Science and Research
Partnerships Unit

Biodiversity Science, Coasts and Information Biodiversity and Nature Economy Division
Department for Environment and Water
P (08) [Clause 6\(1\)](#) | M [Clause 6\(1\)](#)
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<image003.jpg>

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Year	Abundance
1998	88554
1999	182585
2000	171215
2001	177106
2002	
2003	
2004	
2005	125142
2006	
2007	
2008	75295
2009	123105
2010	106026
2011	38373
2012	18531
2013	13492
2014	57317
2015	130771
2016	177092
2017	124992
2018	150408
2019	114596
2020	247146
2021	107847
2022	137999
2023	100042
2024	81420
2025	63734

Year	Month	Site	Transect	Total
2025	June	3RD DIP-Deep	1	26
2025	June	3RD DIP-Deep	2	27
2025	June	3RD DIP-Deep	3	30
2025	June	3RD DIP-Deep	4	24
2025	June	3RD DIP-Shallow	1	17
2025	June	3RD DIP-Shallow	2	22
2025	June	3RD DIP-Shallow	3	27
2025	June	3RD DIP-Shallow	4	20
2025	June	BLACK PT-Deep	1	2
2025	June	BLACK PT-Deep	2	7
2025	June	BLACK PT-Deep	3	1
2025	June	BLACK PT-Deep	4	10
2025	June	BLACK PT-Shallow	1	32
2025	June	BLACK PT-Shallow	2	12
2025	June	BLACK PT-Shallow	3	27
2025	June	BLACK PT-Shallow	4	12
2025	June	FALSE BAY	1	2
2025	June	FALSE BAY	2	12
2025	June	FALSE BAY	3	1
2025	June	FALSE BAY	4	12
2025	June	FITZGERALD BAY	1	0
2025	June	FITZGERALD BAY	2	0
2025	June	FITZGERALD BAY	3	0
2025	June	FITZGERALD BAY	4	0
2025	June	PT LOWLY EAST	1	0
2025	June	PT LOWLY EAST	2	0
2025	June	PT LOWLY EAST	3	1
2025	June	PT LOWLY EAST	4	1
2025	June	PT LOWLY LIGHT	1	4
2025	June	PT LOWLY LIGHT	2	1
2025	June	PT LOWLY LIGHT	3	4
2025	June	PT LOWLY LIGHT	4	0
2025	June	PT LOWLY WEST	1	1
2025	June	PT LOWLY WEST	2	0
2025	June	PT LOWLY WEST	3	0
2025	June	PT LOWLY WEST	4	0
2025	June	SANTOS TANKS	1	0
2025	June	SANTOS TANKS	2	4
2025	June	SANTOS TANKS	3	0
2025	June	SANTOS TANKS	4	0
2025	June	STONY PT-Deep	1	5
2025	June	STONY PT-Deep	2	3
2025	June	STONY PT-Deep	3	7
2025	June	STONY PT-Deep	4	9
2025	June	STONY PT-Shallow	1	34
2025	June	STONY PT-Shallow	2	14
2025	June	STONY PT-Shallow	3	24

2025 June	STONY PT-Shallow	4	11
2025 June	WOSBF-Deep	1	8
2025 June	WOSBF-Deep	2	9
2025 June	WOSBF-Deep	3	27
2025 June	WOSBF-Deep	4	12
2025 June	WOSBF-Shallow	1	10
2025 June	WOSBF-Shallow	2	9
2025 June	WOSBF-Shallow	3	13
2025 June	WOSBF-Shallow	4	3

Farley, Lisa (PIRSA)

From: Bolch, Christopher (SARDI)
Sent: Thursday, 4 June 2026 11:19 AM
To: Grammer, Gretchen (PIRSA-SARDI)
Subject: RE: URGENTLY SEEKING ADVICE: Media query (via DEW) - Clause 6(1) - algal bloom impact on Cuttlefish DEADLINE: NOON - TODAY, Thursday 4 June
Attachments: Karenia spp salinity tolerance.docx

OFFICIAL

Hi Gretchen

As usual the answer to a seemingly simple question is not straight-forward. Attached is very brief summary for *Karenia* spp. (ie. the context of the query). Also further notes on the two more relevant species of concern for Spencer Gulf - *K. mikimoto* and *K. cristata*.
 I can add citations if that is necessary.

"Upper Spencer Gulf" – is geographically vague but....

A brief search indicates salinity range this time of year is typically approaching and/or exceeding 40 ppt. Based on that – then my opinion is it would be unlikely that a bloom would actively develop or grow in that area. But a mature, well-established bloom mass **may** survive if it were to be transported into that area.

Suggested response to query (edit/add as you see fit)

Most *Karenia* species exhibit a wide salinity tolerance in nature. Tolerances vary for each species but blooms have been recorded from as low as 18-20ppt, to as high as as 40-45ppt. However, most *Karenia* exhibit maximum growth at lower salinity (30-35ppt). The physiological tolerances and optimal growth conditions for South Australian *K. cristata* are not yet well-defined, but are the subject of on-going laboratory experiments by SARDI and collaborative research partners.

Cheers
 Chris

From: PIRSA:Media <PIRSA.Media@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 4 June 2026 10:07 AM
To: Bolch, Christopher (SARDI) <christopher.bolch@sa.gov.au>

Cc: PIRSA:Media <PIRSA.Media@sa.gov.au>; Grammer, Gretchen (PIRSA-SARDI) <Gretchen.Grammer@sa.gov.au>
Subject: URGENTLY SEEKING ADVICE: Media query (via DEW) - Clause 6(1) - algal bloom impact on Cuttlefish
DEADLINE: NOON - TODAY, Thursday 4 June
Importance: High

OFFICIAL

Hi Chris,

Following on from Gretchen's email I will need to progress this query and response today so if you can get back to me with some advice **by lunchtime TODAY at the latest** I will be most appreciative.

Thanks,

Fontella

Fontella Koleff | Senior Media Adviser
P: +61 8429 0488 | **E:** Fontella.Koleff2@sa.gov.au

From: Grammer, Gretchen (PIRSA-SARDI) <Gretchen.Grammer@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 4 June 2026 7:29 AM
To: PIRSA:Media <PIRSA.Media@sa.gov.au>; Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI) <Michael.Steer@sa.gov.au>; Doubell, Mark (PIRSA) <Mark.Doubell@sa.gov.au>; Bolch, Christopher (SARDI) <christopher.bolch@sa.gov.au>
Cc: Walker, Rhiannan (PIRSA) <Rhiannan.Walker2@sa.gov.au>
Subject: RE: SEEKING ADVICE AND INPUT: Media query (via DEW) - Clause 6(1) - algal bloom impact on Cuttlefish
DEADLINE: C.O.B Wednesday, 3 June

OFFICIAL

Hi Fontella,

I'm adding Chris Bolch into this email chain to help with the highlighted point: *What is known about the ability of Karenia species to survive and proliferate in hypersaline environments such as the Upper Spencer Gulf?*

Chris – could you please provide a brief 1-2 sentence response for this one.

Thanks,
Gretchen

Dr Gretchen Grammer | Research Director, Aquatic and Livestock Sciences
South Australian Research and Development Institute – SARDI | **Department of Primary Industries and Regions**
Government of South Australia | 2 Hamra Ave West Beach SA 5024 | PO Box 120 Henley Beach SA 5022
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P: +61 8 8429 0797 | **M:** Clause 6(1) | **E:** gretchen.grammer@sa.gov.au
pir.sa.gov.au/research



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From: PIRSA:Media <PIRSA.Media@sa.gov.au>

Sent: Tuesday, 2 June 2026 2:10 PM

To: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI) <Michael.Steer@sa.gov.au>; Grammer, Gretchen (PIRSA-SARDI)

<Gretchen.Grammer@sa.gov.au>; Doubell, Mark (PIRSA) <Mark.Doubell@sa.gov.au>

Cc: PIRSA:Media <PIRSA.Media@sa.gov.au>; Walker, Rhiannan (PIRSA) <Rhiannan.Walker2@sa.gov.au>

Subject: SEEKING ADVICE AND INPUT: Media query (via DEW) - Clause 6(1) - algal bloom impact on Cuttlefish

DEADLINE: C.O.B Wednesday, 3 June

OFFICIAL

Hi everyone,

We have been contacted by the Clause 6(1) (via DEW) in relation to Jochen Kaempf's modelling and the journalist is writing a story about how Kaempf's prediction of a 'second wave' of the algal bloom in Spencer Gulf could potentially impact the cuttlefish population in USG.

While DEW has indicated the highlighted questions are for us (they're handling the rest) I have included the whole query here as there are some elements we have already included in last week's ABC Eyre Peninsula response which I have pasted here as a starting point.

If you can over the next couple of days between presentations etc get back go me with insights and feedback I can then tidy this up and finish up approvals on Thursday. Of course, happy to chat with you all on this while here at West Beach. 😊

QUERY:

What monitoring is currently being undertaken across Spencer Gulf to track the presence, concentration, and movement of the Karenia algal bloom?

Can DEW confirm the most recent confirmed detections of the Karenia species, including levels recorded in the Boston Bay area?

Has DEW detected any measurable impacts of the bloom on cuttlefish aggregation behaviour, egg survival, or marine biodiversity in the Upper Spencer Gulf to date?

How does DEW incorporate independent oceanographic modelling into its monitoring and forecasting of bloom movement across Spencer Gulf?

What is known about the ability of Karenia species to survive and proliferate in hypersaline environments such as the Upper Spencer Gulf?

STARTING POINT - RESPONSE SENT TO ABC EYRE PENINSULA – WEDNESDAY, 27 May

While ongoing monitoring continues to rule out the presence of Karenia algae in the vast majority of South Australian waters, the State Government has been clear there is no guarantee it will not return.

The Government works with multiple partners, including IMOS, CSIRO and the Bureau of Meteorology to monitor and improve our understanding of harmful algal blooms using oceanographic moorings, satellite observations, field sampling, and advanced oceanographic and environmental modelling approaches.

The Government is aware of, and acknowledges, the modelling produced by Jochem Kaempf and others. However, the bloom has evolved differently to some modelled scenarios at various stages of the event, reinforcing the need to rely on multiple lines of evidence including field sampling, satellite observations, and oceanographic monitoring to develop improved early detection and predictive capability.

For these reasons, the State Government continues to conduct regular testing at both on and offshore locations around South Australian waters and has invested in an extensive monitoring system.

Water testing occurs twice weekly in areas of elevated Karenia activity, such as being experienced near Lower Eyre Peninsula.

While these results remain elevated, testing results available at www.algalbloom.sa.gov.au show a decline in cell counts at several testing sites and continue to be monitored.

In addition to regular testing, the State Government has also invested in six early detection and environmental monitoring buoys, including one in Boston Bay, which can provide early detection of Harmful Algal Blooms.

Trials of the monitoring buoys and additional technologies, including advanced Imaging FlowCytobot (IFCB) technology, which captures high-resolution images of microscopic algal organisms in seawater to support early detection of harmful algal species have shown promising results and will support enhanced near real-time monitoring capability as well as providing the essential data required to improving the understanding and prediction of algal blooms in South Australian waters.

Thanks,

Fontella

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Clause 6(1) (DEW) <Clause 6(1)>
Sent: Tuesday, June 2, 2026 1:18:42 PM
To: PIRSA:Media <PIRSA.Media@sa.gov.au>
Cc: DL:DEW Media <dldewmedia@sa.gov.au>
Subject: FW: Clause 6(1) - algal bloom impact on Cuttlefish

OFFICIAL

Hi team

We've received the HAB questions below from the Whyalla News.

We can handle the first three as we've recently answered similar queries.

We think four and five (as highlighted) are for PIRSA, noting that Mike Steer was quoted in an ABC story in April talking about the latter: [Algal bloom tracks further north up the Yorke Peninsula, sparking concern for stingrays - ABC News](#)

We've been asked for a response by Monday, so we will make a start on ours and keep in touch with you about providing a combined response.

Many thanks

Clause 6(1)

From: Clause 6(1) <Clause 6(1)>
Sent: Tuesday, 2 June 2026 12:29 PM
To: DEW:Media <DEW.Media@sa.gov.au>
Subject: Clause 6(1) - algal bloom impact on Cuttlefish

Hi,

Clause 6(1) here from the Clause 6(1).

I'm getting in touch regarding the independent modelling undertaken by Dr Jochen Kaempf which predicts a 'second wave' of the algal bloom in Spencer Gulf. I'm writing a piece about the potential impact this may have on the cuttlefish population in the USG.

I've included some questions below regarding current monitoring efforts in the Gulf and if DEW has any data on potential impacts of the bloom on the cuttlefish.

I have also sent separate questions to Minister Emily Bourke, just so you are aware.

My deadline for this story is Monday 12pm next week, if you can back to me before then that would be great, thanks.

What monitoring is currently being undertaken across Spencer Gulf to track the presence, concentration, and movement of the Karenia algal bloom?

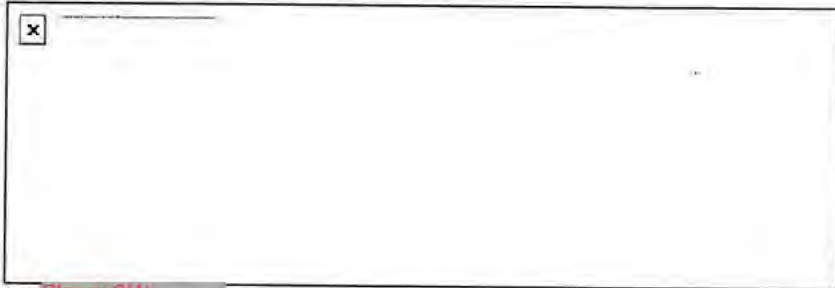
Can DEW confirm the most recent confirmed detections of the Karenia species, including levels recorded in the Boston Bay area?

Has DEW detected any measurable impacts of the bloom on cuttlefish aggregation behaviour, egg survival, or marine biodiversity in the Upper Spencer Gulf to date?

How does DEW incorporate independent oceanographic modelling into its monitoring and forecasting of bloom movement across Spencer Gulf?

What is known about the ability of Karenia species to survive and proliferate in hypersaline environments such as the Upper Spencer Gulf?

Kind regards,



M: *Clause 6(1)*

E: *Clause 6(1)*

W: *Clause 6(1)*

Learn more about us here: *Clause 6(1)*

Karenia* spp. Temp & salinity tolerances.**Karenia* spp.**

Most *Karenia* species exhibit wide temp and salinity tolerance in nature. Responses are both species and strain-dependent but minimum salinities can be as low as around 18-20ppt (or lower in some environmental contexts) to as high as 40-45ppt.

In culture, most species exhibit maximum growth in the range of 30-35ppt.

Salinity tolerance is also affected by other environmental factors and stressors such as temperature, light, nutrient availability

K. mikimotoi

Strains of *K. mikimotoi* exhibit wide temp and salinity tolerances like other *Karenia* species, however, several studies indicate a somewhat lower salinity optimum of around 24-30ppt.

K. cristata

The physiological tolerances and optimal growth conditions of Sth Australian *K. cristata* are not yet clearly defined, but are the subject of on-going laboratory experiments.

South African blooms in 1988-89 occurred at temperatures ranging from 12.5 to 20 degrees (mean SST from approx. 14-18 C). Blooms were associated with increased frequency (6-9 days/month) of calm sea conditions – defined as low winds (<3 knots for > 5hrs/day) (see Horstmann et al. 1991). Dispersion of the bloom coincided with a decrease in calm weather conditions.

While the high concentration blooms persisted only for approx. 3 weeks, *K cristata* was evident in the water column for at least 11 months after initial blooms.

Farley, Lisa (PIRSA)

From: Grammer, Gretchen (PIRSA-SARDI)
Sent: Tuesday, 16 June 2026 11:33 AM
To: Porter, Kerry (PIRSA-SARDI)
Subject: OABR launch docs
Attachments: 202606 - Talking points - OABR - Algal Bloom Science Program - Symposium
 Outcomes - Current bloom activity.docx; Out of scope
Out of scope
Out of scope

Hi Kerry – attached are docs for a good starting point for the OABR launch if you need to do that one as a question.

Thanks,
 Gretchen

Dr Gretchen Grammer | Research Director, Aquatic and Livestock Sciences
 South Australian Research and Development Institute – SARDI | **Department of Primary Industries and Regions**
 Government of South Australia | 2 Hamra Ave West Beach SA 5024 | PO Box 120 Henley Beach SA 5022
 Affiliate Associate Professor – Flinders University
P: +61 8 8429 0797 | **M:** Clause 6(1) | **E:** gretchen.grammer@sa.gov.au
pir.sa.gov.au/research



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 We ensure the land, sea, water and sky are healthy for future generations and strive to better understand their spiritual and cultural significance for Aboriginal people across the state.
 In the spirit of reconciliation, our commitment is to build progressive and trusting relationships, to share knowledge and learn from each other.
 We recognise and own a difficult past, and together we will walk forward. We acknowledge the many Aboriginal people of this Country as the oldest continuous living culture in the world.*

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Office for Algal Bloom Research

Last updated 15 June 2026

Objective ID: xxxx

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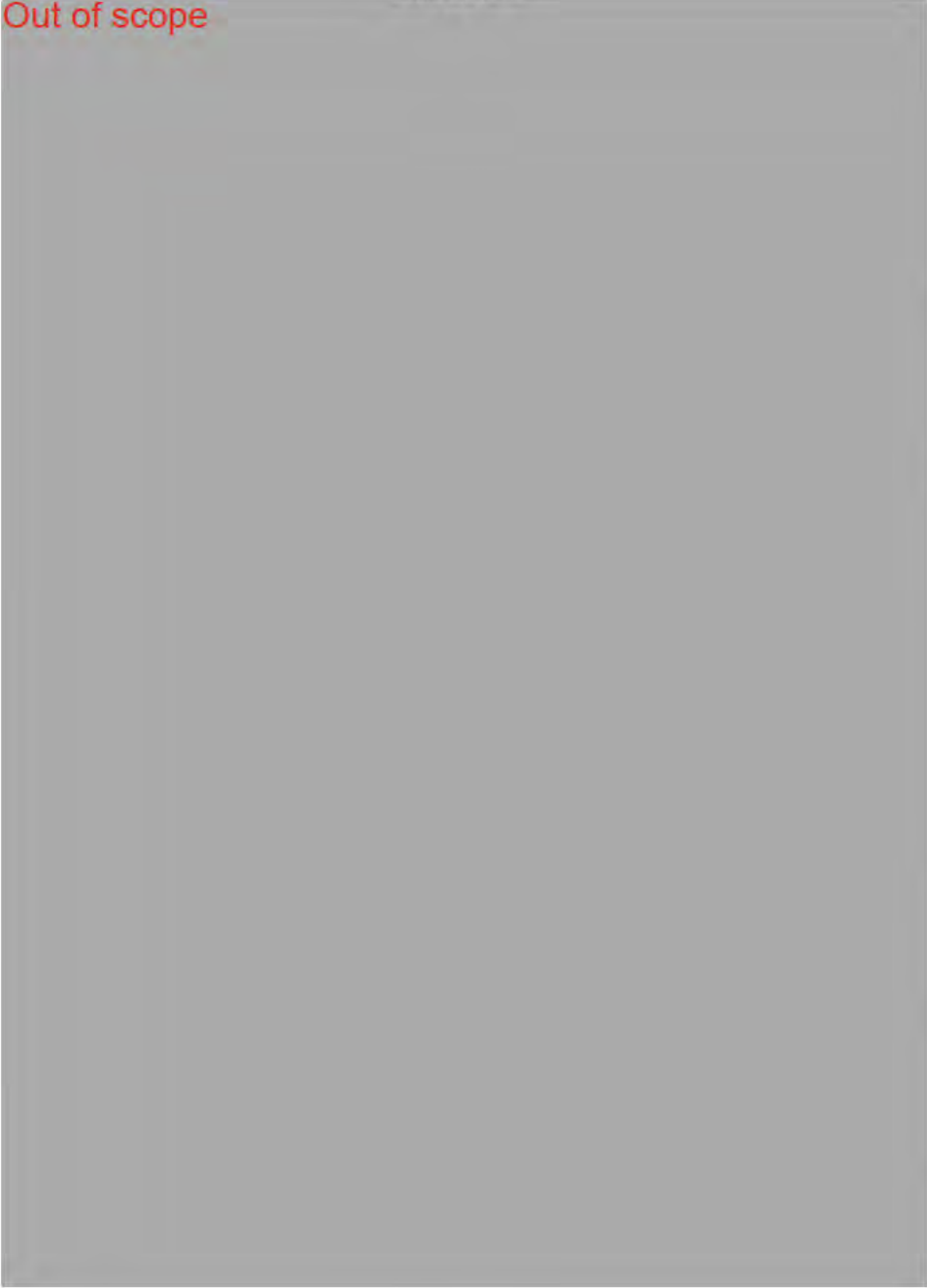
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Out of scope



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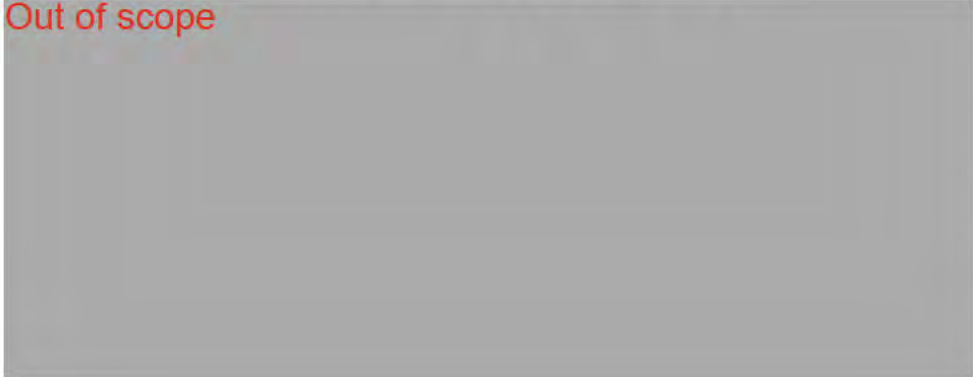
OFFICIAL

Out of scope



Other Algal Bloom Science Program initiatives

Out of scope



OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

Out of scope



- The temporary installation of a 200m x 100m air bubble curtain in Upper Spencer Gulf to safeguard Australia's iconic giant cuttlefish population from the algal bloom.

Out of scope



Algal Bloom Fish Recovery Program

What is being done to help fish stocks recover?

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

- As part of the response to the algal bloom the South Australian Government has outlined a plan for the long-term recovery of key fish stocks in waters affected by the algal bloom.
- The comprehensive recovery program includes a range of measures, both short- and long-term, to protect and support businesses, support recreational fishing, and protect and grow fishing stocks.

Out of scope



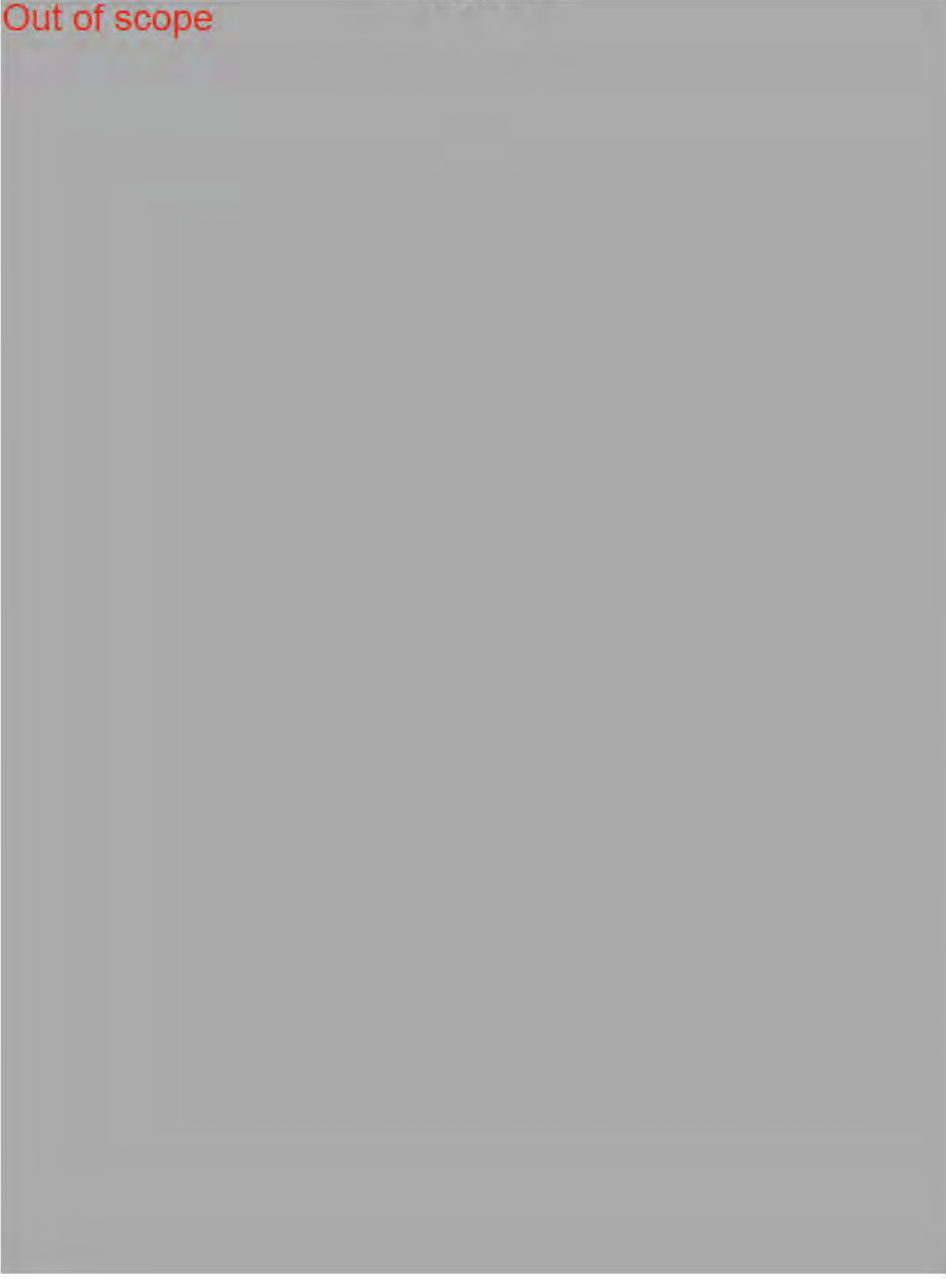
Out of scope



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Out of scope



OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

Out of scope

Scientific background behind fishing limits changes

As part of the response to the current algal bloom, fisheries and fish stocks are being assessed to understand the impact of this event on commercial fish species. It was from this information that the new fishing limits were established

The latest advice is as follows:

Out of scope

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

Out of scope

Non-quota species

- A total of 17 species or species groups from the Marine Scalefish Fishery were assessed. The low monthly catches for many species limited the ability to detect potential impacts of the algal bloom; consequently, the assessment presented was based on qualitative interpretation rather than quantitative analysis.

Out of scope

Spencer Gulf:

- Out of scope
- Five (5) species showed no impact - Yellowfin Whiting, Snook, Bluethroat Wrasse, Rays and Skates. Cuttlefish.

Out of scope

What this means?

Out of scope

- Spencer Gulf fisheries appear to be less affected, though continued monitoring is needed.
- Early results will be updated as more fishing and survey data become available.

Next steps

- SARDI continues to collect and analyse data to track impacts and provide further advice to PIRSA and industry.
- Updates will be shared as new information becomes available.

Out of scope

Out of scope

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

Out of scope



OFFICIAL

Farley, Lisa (PIRSA)

From: PIRSA:Media
Sent: Tuesday, 16 June 2026 4:27 PM
To: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI)
Cc: PIRSA:Media; Walker, Rhiannan (PIRSA)
Subject: FW: Cuttlefish populations

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi Mike, see below for background on cuttlefish from DEW.

Clause 9(1)

Steve said SARDI has more historical

data to give it a bit of context?

- The Department for Environment and Water (DEW) is currently undertaking its annual dive surveys to assess numbers in the lead up to the annual SARDI population estimate count.
- DEW began dive surveys on 4 and 5 May 2026. During these surveys no Cuttlefish were recorded at any of the 10 sites (2025 monthly count was nine). Low numbers during May 2026 were expected due to warmer temperatures, which is anecdotally expected to delay the start of the breeding season.
- DEW completed surveys on 10 and 11 June 2026 and recorded 16 Cuttlefish. The water temperature was 15-16 °C.
- DEW's monthly survey for July 2026 is planned to be undertaken between 1 – 4 July, subject to weather conditions and underwater visibility. Cuttlefish numbers are expected to peak in July (2025 monthly count was 458).

Thanks
Tom

Tom Dougherty | Media Manager

Department of Primary Industries and Regions

Government of South Australia | 11 Waymouth St

GPO Box 1671 Adelaide SA 5001

M: Clause 6(1)

E: tom.dougherty@sa.gov.au | **Media Inbox:** PIRSA.Media@sa.gov.au

pir.sa.gov.au



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We ensure the land, sea, water and sky are healthy for future generations and strive to better understand their spiritual and cultural significance for Aboriginal people across the state.
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From: Johansson, Steve (DEW) <Steve.Johansson@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 16 June 2026 3:23 PM
To: PIRSA:Media <PIRSA.Media@sa.gov.au>
Cc: DL:DEW Media <dldewmedia@sa.gov.au>
Subject: Cuttlefish populations

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi Tom,

Please see below to pass on to Mike Steer as discussed.

- The Department for Environment and Water (DEW) is currently undertaking its annual dive surveys to assess numbers in the lead up to the annual SARDI population estimate count.
- DEW began dive surveys on 4 and 5 May 2026. During these surveys no Cuttlefish were recorded at any of the 10 sites (2025 monthly count was nine). Low numbers during May 2026 were expected due to warmer temperatures, which is anecdotally expected to delay the start of the breeding season.
- DEW completed surveys on 10 and 11 June 2026 and recorded 16 Cuttlefish. The water temperature was 15-16 °C.
- DEW's monthly survey for July 2026 is planned to be undertaken between 1 – 4 June, subject to weather conditions and underwater visibility. Cuttlefish numbers are expected to peak in July (2025 monthly count was 458).

Cheers,

Steve Johansson

Media Manager

Strategic Communications and Engagement Branch Corporate, Heritage and Climate Action Division
Department for Environment and Water

T (08) [Clause 6\(1\)](#) M [Clause 6\(1\)](#) | W environment.sa.gov.au

Level 81-95 Waymouth Street, Adelaide, SA 5000

GPO Box 1047, Adelaide, SA 5001



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**Department for Environment
and Water**

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The Department for Environment and Water acknowledges Aboriginal people as the First Peoples and Nations of the lands and waters we live and work upon. We acknowledge and respect the deep spiritual connection and relationship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to their Country. The department works in partnership with the First Peoples of South Australia and supports their Nations to take a leading role in caring for their Country.

Farley, Lisa (PIRSA)

From: Carruthers, Sandy (DEW)
Sent: Tuesday, 16 June 2026 8:15 PM
To: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI); Bruce, Ben (DEW)
Cc: Ward, Matthew (DEW)
Subject: RE: Cuttlefish

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Sorry to be confusing

Map doesn't show all the SARDI sites there is one more to the west (so 14 in total)
 13 on the map)

Sandy Carruthers

Executive Director, Biodiversity and Nature Economy

Department for Environment and Water

P (08) Clause 6(1) | M Clause 6(1)

From: Carruthers, Sandy (DEW)
Sent: Tuesday, 16 June 2026 6:13 PM
To: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI) <Michael.Steer@sa.gov.au>; Bruce, Ben (DEW) <Ben.Bruce@sa.gov.au>; Carruthers, Sandy (DEW) <Sandy.Carruthers@sa.gov.au>
Subject: FW: Cuttlefish

Hi Mike
 10 of your 13 sites (not 14)
 Info in this email as requested
 Thanks
 Sandy

Sandy Carruthers

Executive Director, Biodiversity and Nature Economy

Department for Environment and Water

P (08) Clause 6(1) | M Clause 6(1)

From: Brock, Danny (DEW) <Danny.Brock@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 16 June 2026 6:02 PM
To: Carruthers, Sandy (DEW) <Sandy.Carruthers@sa.gov.au>; Ward, Matthew (DEW) <Matthew.Ward@sa.gov.au>
Cc: Quin, Rebecca (DEW) <Rebecca.Quin@sa.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Cuttlefish

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi Sandy,

Please see below for map showing sampling sites.

SARDI do all 13 shown of which DEW does 10 (same location and method)

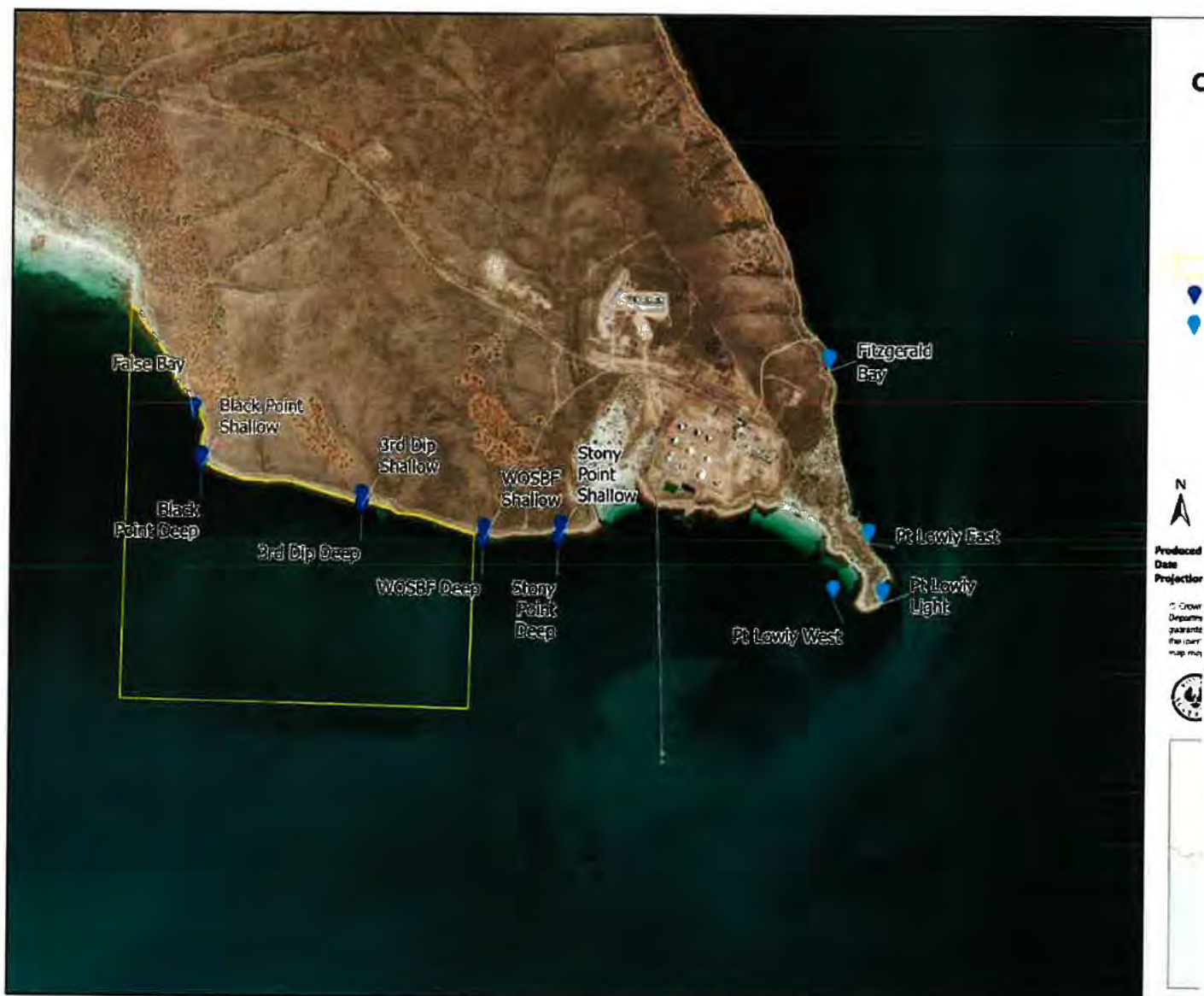
Methods used are as outlined in SARDi survey manual attached but in brief at each site:

Divers lay out 2 parallel 100 metre transects at each site and 2 divers swim along transect counting all cuttlefish in a 2m belt transect.

Shallow sites are between 1-2 deep and deep sites are between 3-5 m deep.

Cheers

Danny



From: Carruthers, Sandy (DEW) <Sandy.Carruthers@sa.gov.au>

Sent: Tuesday, 16 June 2026 5:47 PM

To: Ward, Matthew (DEW) <Matthew.Ward@sa.gov.au>; Brock, Danny (DEW) <Danny.Brock@sa.gov.au>

Subject: FW: Cuttlefish

Importance: High

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi Danny

Are you able to provide this to me plse asap

Mike is on the radio tomorrow

Thanks

Sandy

Sandy Carruthers

Executive Director, Biodiversity and Nature Economy

Department for Environment and Water

P (08) [Clause 6\(1\)](#) M [Clause 6\(1\)](#)

From: Bruce, Ben (DEW) <Ben.Bruce@sa.gov.au>

Sent: Tuesday, 16 June 2026 4:51 PM

To: Carruthers, Sandy (DEW) <Sandy.Carruthers@sa.gov.au>

Subject: Cuttlefish

Importance: High

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi Sandy

Can you please send Mike Steer a description of the methodology that we have been using for our surveys and the location that they have been undertaken this afternoon.

Thanks

Ben

Ben Bruce

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Department for Environment and Water

P (08) [Clause 6\(1\)](#) E ben.bruce@sa.gov.au

81-95 Waymouth Street, Adelaide

GPO Box 1047, Adelaide SA 5001

environment.sa.gov.au



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Government of South Australia

Department for Environment
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Farley, Lisa (PIRSA)

From: Carruthers, Sandy (DEW)
Sent: Tuesday, 16 June 2026 9:22 PM
To: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI); Bruce, Ben (DEW)
Cc: Carruthers, Sandy (DEW); Holmes, Justin (DEW)
Subject: cuttlefish PBN update with latest data
Attachments: DEW_Algal Bloom - Cuttlefish_BNE.docx

OFFICIAL

Hi Mike
 This is the updated version
 Thanks
 Sandy

Sandy Carruthers

Executive Director, Biodiversity and Nature Economy

Department for Environment and Water

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GPO BOX 1047 Adelaide 5000

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Farley, Lisa (PIRSA)

From: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI)
Sent: Wednesday, 17 June 2026 10:37 AM
To: Mach, Xina (DEW)
Cc: Carruthers, Sandy (DEW); Holmes, Justin (DEW); Bruce, Ben (DEW)
Subject: RE: PBN - Cuttlefish
Attachments: DEW_Algal Bloom - Cuttlefish_BNE_MS.docx

Thanks Xina,
 See minor comments.

Prof. Mike Steer | Executive Director
 South Australian Research and Development Institute - SARDI
Department of Primary Industries and Regions
 Government of South Australia | Kaurna Country
 Plant Research Centre, 2b Hartley Grove, Urrbrae SA 5064
P: +61 8 8429 0115 | **M:** Clause 6(1) | **E:** michael.steer@sa.gov.au
pir.sa.gov.au

Executive Assistant: **Rhiannan Walker**
P: +61 8 8429 3513 | **E:** Rhiannan.walker2@sa.gov.au



The Department of Primary Industries and Regions respects Aboriginal people as the state's first people and nations. We recognise Aboriginal people as traditional owners and occupants of South Australian land and waters. We pay our respects to Aboriginal cultures and to Elders past, present and emerging.

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From: Mach, Xina (DEW) <Xina.Mach@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 17 June 2026 9:32 AM
To: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI) <Michael.Steer@sa.gov.au>

Cc: Carruthers, Sandy (DEW) <Sandy.Carruthers@sa.gov.au>; Holmes, Justin (DEW) <Justin.Holmes@sa.gov.au>; Bruce, Ben (DEW) <Ben.Bruce@sa.gov.au>
Subject: PBN - Cuttlefish

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi Mike,

Please see attached latest Cuttlefish PBN.

I understand a copy was provided last night. It has been further updated this morning to indicate that SARDI surveys are planned for week commencing 22 June 2026.

Thanks,
Xina

Xina Mach

Principal Advisor

Office of the Executive Director, Biodiversity and Nature Economy
Department for Environment and Water

P (08) Clause 5(1)

85-91 Waymouth St
ADELAIDE SA 5000

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Farley, Lisa (PIRSA)

From: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI)
Sent: Thursday, 18 June 2026 1:01 PM
To: PIRSA:Media
Cc: Porter, Kerry (PIRSA-SARDI)
Subject: RE: FOR URGENT APPROVAL: Proposed media response - Guardian Australia - Giant Australian Cuttlefish DEADLINE: 2:30pm TODAY - Thursday, 18 June

Please check in with Ben Stobart – I have limited time atm.

From: PIRSA:Media <PIRSA.Media@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 18 June 2026 1:00 PM
To: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI) <Michael.Steer@sa.gov.au>
Cc: PIRSA:Media <PIRSA.Media@sa.gov.au>; Porter, Kerry (PIRSA-SARDI) <Kerry.Porter@sa.gov.au>
Subject: FOR URGENT APPROVAL: Proposed media response - Guardian Australia - Giant Australian Cuttlefish DEADLINE: 2:30pm TODAY - Thursday, 18 June

OFFICIAL

Hi Mike,

Sorry... Following your ABC interviews we also received today the following query from Guardian Australia on the Giant Australian Cuttlefish numbers. Based on the transcript of your interview with

Clause 11 Out of scope

, I have pulled together the following proposed response. Are you happy for this to proceed? Feel free to tweak.

There is one part of the question (in red) I haven't been able to answer. If you do know that'll be great

Out of scope

Out of scope

Once I hear back from you DEW have asked to look at it so if you can get back to me before 2:30pm it should give me enough time to run this past DEW and MO to meet the deadline.

There is one part of the question (in red) I haven't been able to answer. If you do know that'll be great

Out of scope

Out of scope

QUERY

1. Cuttlefish numbers can fluctuate year to year. What sort of range is typical? When do low numbers become a concern?
2. How does timing in the peak of numbers vary year to year? And would we expect to be seeing strong numbers now?
3. Could the algal bloom be to blame for the low numbers? What other factors could affect the cuttlefish population?

4. What is the current status of the algal bloom in Spencer gulf?
5. When will the results of next week's population survey be available (and can you share them with me)?

PROPOSED RESPONSE

While researchers from the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) are anecdotally receiving reports that population numbers of Giant Australian Cuttlefish in northern Spencer Gulf seem relatively low, the formal full scale assessment of this year's population will be conducted by both SARDI and Department of Environment and Water (DEW) teams over the coming weeks. Cephalopods, which include cuttlefish and squid, are known for seasonal population variations. These boom and bust cycles are usually driven by environmental factors including water temperatures and food availability.

As part of the this year's population assessments, investigations will also determine driving factors behind current population activity including whether conditions are in fact conducive to delays with the spawning season, as can occur, or are the result of other environmental reasons including potential impacts from the current Harmful Algal Bloom and/or changes to the ecosystem in northern Spencer Gulf.

*While **monitoring continues to rule out the presence of Karenia algae in the vast majority of South Australian waters**, however, latest testing has confirmed elevated levels remain at a small number of onshore sites on southern Eyre Peninsula and at limited offshore locations in southern Spencer Gulf. These sites continue to be closely monitored.*

Once the population survey is finished, data analysis results in a slight delay of several weeks before results are finalised. The results will be publicly released once ready.

Thanks,

Fontella

Fontella Koleff | Senior Media Adviser

P: +61 8429 0488 | E: Fontella.Koleff2@sa.gov.au

From: Removed from Disclosure Log

Sent: Thursday, 18 June 2026 9:47 AM

To: PIRSA:Media <pirsa.media@sa.gov.au>

Subject: Guardian Australia - Questions for a response

Hello PIRSA media team,

I am looking into the apparent decline in giant cuttlefish numbers (reported in the [ABC](#)). And I was wondering if you could provide comment on a few questions by 4pm today:

1. Cuttlefish numbers can fluctuate year to year. **What sort of range is typical? When do low numbers become a concern?**
2. How does timing in the peak of numbers vary year to year? And would we expect to be seeing strong numbers now?

3. Could the algal bloom be to blame for the low numbers? What other factors could affect the cuttlefish population?
4. What is the current status of the algal bloom in Spencer gulf?
5. When will the results of next week's population survey be available (and can you share them with me)?

While researchers from the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) are anecdotally receiving reports that population numbers of Giant Australian Cuttlefish in northern Spencer Gulf seem relatively low, the formal full scale assessment of this year's population will be conducted by both SARDI and Department of Environment and Water (DEW) teams over the coming weeks. Cephalopods, which include cuttlefish and squid are known for seasonal population variations. These boom and bust cycles are driven by environmental factors including water temperatures and food availability.

As part of the this year's population assessments, investigations will also look into the driving factors behind current population activity including whether conditions are in fact conducive to delays with the spawning season, as can occur, or other environmental reasons including potential impacts from the current Harmful Algal Bloom and changes to the ecosystem in northern Spencer Gulf.

*While **monitoring continues to rule out the presence of Karenia algae in the vast majority of South Australian waters**, however, latest testing has confirmed elevated levels remain at a small number of onshore sites on southern Eyre Peninsula and at limited offshore locations in southern Spencer Gulf. These sites continue to be closely monitored.*

Once the survey is undertaken data analysis is required which usually takes several weeks. The results will be publicly released when ready.

5. Anything to add?

While the full scale annual population survey of the Giant Australian Cuttlefish by

The South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) is aware of community concerns over the low numbers of Giant Australian Cuttlefish and will investigate these concerns formally in coming weeks as part of its annual population survey. Cephalopods including cuttlefish and squid can have significant population fluctuations and with the season they have incredible inter-annual variation.

Surveys over the years have seen population fluctuations, including delayed starts to the spawning season.

due to commence next week, SARDI is aware of concerns over the

Yeah, numbers that I hear at the moment are relatively low. There's two teams that have been going out. There's representatives from the Department of Environment and Water, and the Sardi team will be out next week doing the full-scale survey. So we have heard that the numbers are relatively low. However,

we'll do a formal assessment in the next couple of weeks. What we also heard that it seems to be a bit delayed. And, you know, the spawning season does extend right up to the end of July and into August. So, you know, we won't want to speculate yet to see whether there you know if there's been any impact or whether it's a delayed start but we also know too that cephalopods including cuttlefish and squid they have incredible inter-annual variation.

So they can boom and bust on an annual basis. And it's the environment that drives it, particularly water temperatures and food availability.

We know, of course, a lot of work was done and observations around the giant cuttlefish. Of course, bubble curtain you know, continued monitoring of those waters around Point Lowly, which didn't see harmful levels levels of algal bloom. But, you know, how will the answer be discerned as to if the cuttlefish have been impacted by the algal bloom? How will you determine that?

*While **monitoring continues to rule out the presence of Karenia algae in the vast majority of South Australian waters**, however, latest testing has confirmed elevated levels at a small number of onshore sites on southern Eyre Peninsula particularly around Boston Bay and at limited offshore locations in southern Spencer Gulf. These sites continue to be closely monitored.*

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Farley, Lisa (PIRSA)

From: Grammer, Gretchen (PIRSA-SARDI)
Sent: Thursday, 18 June 2026 2:24 PM
To: PIRSA:Media; Mayfield, Stephen (PIRSA-SARDI)
Subject: RE: FOR URGENT APPROVAL: Proposed media response - Guardian Australia - Giant Australian Cuttlefish DEADLINE: 2.30pm TODAY - Thursday, 18 June

Hi Fontella – edits below in red. The text highlighted in yellow is not something that SARDI is doing. Is this part of the work the DEW is undertaking or one of the Unis? This will need to be fact checked with them.

Steve and I worked through this together so below (and the above) are his inputs puts as well.

Thanks,
 Gretchen

Dr Gretchen Grammer | Research Director, Aquatic and Livestock Sciences
 South Australian Research and Development Institute – SARDI | **Department of Primary Industries and Regions**
 Government of South Australia | 2 Hamra Ave West Beach SA 5024 | PO Box 120 Henley Beach SA 5022
 Affiliate Associate Professor – Flinders University
P: +61 8 8429 0797 | **M:** Clause 6(1) | **E:** gretchen.grammer@sa.gov.au
pir.sa.gov.au/research



*The Department of Primary Industries and Regions cares for the Country and communities of South Australia.
 We ensure the land, sea, water and sky are healthy for future generations and strive to better understand their spiritual and cultural significance for Aboriginal people across the state.
 In the spirit of reconciliation, our commitment is to build progressive and trusting relationships, to share knowledge and learn from each other.
 We recognise and own a difficult past, and together we will walk forward. We acknowledge the many Aboriginal people of this Country as the oldest continuous living culture in the world.*

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From: PIRSA:Media <PIRSA.Media@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 18 June 2026 1:43 PM
To: Grammer, Gretchen (PIRSA-SARDI) <Gretchen.Grammer@sa.gov.au>; Mayfield, Stephen (PIRSA-SARDI) <Stephen.Mayfield@sa.gov.au>
Subject: FOR URGENT APPROVAL: Proposed media response - Guardian Australia - Giant Australian Cuttlefish DEADLINE: 2.30pm TODAY - Thursday, 18 June

OFFICIAL

Hi Gretchen and Stephen,

Due to time constraints, I am having to send this to both of you at once. Sorry....

Following Mike's interviews in relation to concerns on the Giant Australian Cuttlefish on ABC Radio we have been contacted by The Guardian Australia with a series of questions. I drafted a response based off the transcripts of Mike's interviews and he asked me due to his own time constraints if I could run everything past Ben Stobart which I have done.

Please see below query and proposed response (which include Ben's edits/feedback). Are you both happy for this to proceed?

As I still need to run this past Mike, along with DEW and the Minister's Office I would be most appreciative if you can get back to me before 2:30pm it should give me enough time to complete approvals and meet the deadline.

QUERY

1. Cuttlefish numbers can fluctuate year to year.
2. How does timing in the peak of numbers vary year to year? And would we expect to be seeing strong numbers now?
3. Could the algal bloom be to blame for the low numbers? What other factors could affect the cuttlefish population?
4. What is the current status of the algal bloom in Spencer gulf?
5. When will the results of next week's population survey be available (and can you share them with me)?

PROPOSED RESPONSE

While researchers from the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) are anecdotally receiving reports that population numbers of Giant Australian Cuttlefish in northern Spencer Gulf seem relatively low, the formal full scale assessment of this year's population will be conducted by both SARDI and Department of Environment and Water (DEW) teams over the coming weeks. Cephalopods, which include cuttlefish and squid, are known for considerable seasonal population variations. In the case of the Point Lowly aggregation, since surveys began in 1998, numbers have ranged from a minimum of 13,500 in 2013 to 247,000 in 2020. Notably, after concern for the low number in 2013 the population estimate rapidly increased to over 100 thousand by 2015. These boom and bust cycles are usually driven by environmental factors including water temperatures and food availability.

Clause 9(1)

Clause 6(1) *While the peak of the spawning normally occurs in June it has been known to spread into July depending on year.*

While monitoring continues to rule out the presence of *Karenia* algae in the vast majority of South Australian waters, Clause 9(1) *latest testing has confirmed elevated levels remain at a small number*

of onshore sites on southern Eyre Peninsula and at limited offshore locations in southern Spencer Gulf. These sites continue to be closely monitored.

Once the population survey is finished, data analysis results in a slight delay of several weeks before results are finalised. The results will be publicly released once ready.

Thanks,

Fontella

Fontella Koleff | Senior Media Adviser

P: +61 8429 0488 | **E:** Fontella.Koleff2@sa.gov.au

From: [Redacted]

Sent: Thursday, 18 June 2026 9:47 AM

To: PIRSA:Media <pirsa.media@sa.gov.au>

Subject: Guardian Australia - Questions for a response

Hello PIRSA media team,

I am looking into the apparent decline in giant cuttlefish numbers (reported in the [ABC](#)). And I was wondering if you could provide comment on a few questions by 4pm today:

1. Cuttlefish numbers can fluctuate year to year. What sort of range is typical? When do low numbers become a concern?
2. How does timing in the peak of numbers vary year to year? And would we expect to be seeing strong numbers now?
3. Could the algal bloom be to blame for the low numbers? What other factors could affect the cuttlefish population?
4. What is the current status of the algal bloom in Spencer gulf?
5. When will the results of next week's population survey be available (and can you share them with me)?

While researchers from the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) are anecdotally receiving reports that population numbers of Giant Australian Cuttlefish in northern Spencer Gulf seem relatively low, the formal full scale assessment of this year's population will be conducted by both SARDI and Department of Environment and Water (DEW) teams over the coming weeks. Cephalopods, which include cuttlefish and squid are known for seasonal population variations. These boom and bust cycles are driven by environmental factors including water temperatures and food availability.

As part of the this year's population assessments, investigations will also look into the driving factors behind current population activity including whether conditions are in fact conducive to delays with the spawning season, as can occur, or other environmental reasons including potential impacts from the current Harmful Algal Bloom and changes to the ecosystem in northern Spencer Gulf.

*While **monitoring continues to rule out the presence of Karenia algae in the vast majority of South Australian waters**, however, latest testing has confirmed elevated levels remain at a small number of*

onshore sites on southern Eyre Peninsula and at limited offshore locations in southern Spencer Gulf. These sites continue to be closely monitored.

Once the survey is undertaken data analysis is required which usually takes several weeks. The results will be publicly released when ready.

5. Anything to add?

While the full scale annual population survey of the Giant Australian Cuttlefish by

The South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) is aware of community concerns over the low numbers of Giant Australian Cuttlefish and will investigate these concerns formally in coming weeks as part of its annual population survey. Cephalopods including cuttlefish and squid can have significant population fluctuations and with the season they have incredible inter-annual variation.

Surveys over the years have seen population fluctuations, including delayed starts to the spawning season.

due to commence next week, SARDI is aware of concerns over the

Yeah, numbers that I hear at the moment are relatively low. There's two teams that have been going out. There's representatives from the Department of Environment and Water, and the Sardi team will be out next week doing the full-scale survey. So we have heard that the numbers are relatively low. However, we'll do a formal assessment in the next couple of weeks. What we also heard that it seems to be a bit delayed. And, you know, the spawning season does extend right up to the end of July and into August. So, you know, we won't want to speculate yet to see whether there you know if there's been any impact or whether it's a delayed start but we also know too that cephalopods including cuttlefish and squid they have incredible inter-annual variation.

So they can boom and bust on an annual basis. And it's the environment that drives it, particularly water temperatures and food availability.

We know, of course, a lot of work was done and observations around the giant cuttlefish. Of course, bubble curtain you know, continued monitoring of those waters around Point Lowly, which didn't see harmful levels levels of algal bloom. But, you know, how will the answer be discerned as to if the cuttlefish have been impacted by the algal bloom? How will you determine that?

While monitoring continues to rule out the presence of Karenia algae in the vast majority of South Australian waters, however, latest testing has confirmed elevated levels at a small number of onshore sites on southern Eyre Peninsula particularly around Boston Bay and at limited offshore locations in southern Spencer Gulf. These sites continue to be closely monitored.

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Farley, Lisa (PIRSA)

From: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI)
Sent: Thursday, 18 June 2026 2:58 PM
To: PIRSA:Media
Cc: Porter, Kerry (PIRSA-SARDI); Grammer, Gretchen (PIRSA-SARDI)
Subject: RE: FOR URGENT ED APPROVAL: Proposed media response - Guardian Australia - Giant Australian Cuttlefish DEADLINE: 3.30ppm TODAY - Thursday, 18 June

OFFICIAL

Thanks Fontella,
 See changes below. Please check with DEW – I understand they may be doing some population modelling work (through the Uni??)
 m

From: PIRSA:Media <PIRSA.Media@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 18 June 2026 2:40 PM
To: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI) <Michael.Steer@sa.gov.au>
Cc: PIRSA:Media <PIRSA.Media@sa.gov.au>; Porter, Kerry (PIRSA-SARDI) <Kerry.Porter@sa.gov.au>
Subject: FOR URGENT ED APPROVAL: Proposed media response - Guardian Australia - Giant Australian Cuttlefish DEADLINE: 3.30ppm TODAY - Thursday, 18 June
Importance: High

OFFICIAL**FOR ED APPROVAL**

TOPIC: Giant Australian Cuttlefish
DATE: Thursday, 18 June 2026
OUTLET: The Guardian Australia
FORMAT: Written response
SPOKESPERSON: PIRSA
APPROVALS: Gretchen Grammer, Steve Mayfield, Ben Stobart

Hi Mike,

I have now run this response past Gretchen, Steve and Ben. Please see below the latest version.

I am running this past DEW once I have heard back from you. Clause 9(1)

Clause 9(1)

I know you caught up in the Board meeting but if you can get back to me ASAP, I'll be most appreciative.

QUERY

1. Cuttlefish numbers can fluctuate year to year.
2. How does timing in the peak of numbers vary year to year? And would we expect to be seeing strong numbers now?
3. Could the algal bloom be to blame for the low numbers? What other factors could affect the cuttlefish population?
4. What is the current status of the algal bloom in Spencer gulf?
5. When will the results of next week's population survey be available (and can you share them with me)?

PROPOSED RESPONSE

While researchers from the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) are anecdotally receiving reports that population numbers of Giant Australian Cuttlefish in northern Spencer Gulf seem relatively low, the formal full scale assessment of this year's population will be conducted by both SARDI and Department of Environment and Water (DEW) teams over the coming weeks.

Cephalopods, which include cuttlefish and squid populations, are known vary from one year to the next

Clause 9(1) *In the case of the Point Lowly aggregation, since surveys began in 1998, numbers have ranged from a minimum of 13,500 in 2013 to 247,000 in 2020. Notably, after concern for the low number in 2013 the population estimate rapidly increased to over 100 thousand by 2015. These boom and bust cycles are* *Clause 9(1)* *typically driven by environmental factors including water temperatures and food availability.*

Clause 9(1)

Clause 9(1) *As part of this year's population assessment, researchers will also assess whether temperature conditions during the previous hatching season may have influenced recruitment and the timing of aggregation, consistent with previous research. While the peak of the spawning normally occurs in June it has been known to spread into July depending on the year.*

*While **monitoring continues to rule out the presence of Karenia algae in the vast majority of South Australian waters**, latest testing has confirmed elevated levels remain at a small number of onshore sites on southern Eyre Peninsula and at limited offshore locations in southern Spencer Gulf. These sites continue to be closely monitored.*

Once the population survey is finished, data analysis results in a slight delay of several weeks before results are finalised. The results will be publicly released once ready.

Thanks,

Fontella

Fontella Koleff | Senior Media Adviser

P: +61 8429 0488 | **E:** Fontella.Koleff2@sa.gov.au

From: Removed from Disclosure Log
Sent: Thursday, 18 June 2026 9:47 AM
To: PIRSA:Media <pirsa.media@sa.gov.au>
Subject: Guardian Australia - Questions for a response

Hello PIRSA media team,

I am looking into the apparent decline in giant cuttlefish numbers (reported in the [ABC](#)). And I was wondering if you could provide comment on a few questions by 4pm today:

1. Cuttlefish numbers can fluctuate year to year. What sort of range is typical? When do low numbers become a concern?
2. How does timing in the peak of numbers vary year to year? And would we expect to be seeing strong numbers now?
3. Could the algal bloom be to blame for the low numbers? What other factors could affect the cuttlefish population?
4. What is the current status of the algal bloom in Spencer gulf?
5. When will the results of next week's population survey be available (and can you share them with me)?
5. Anything to add?

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Farley, Lisa (PIRSA)

From: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI)
Sent: Tuesday, 23 June 2026 7:50 AM
To: PIRSA:Media
Cc: Walker, Rhiannan (PIRSA)
Subject: RE: FOR ED APPROVAL: Media response - Clause 6(1) - cuttlefish

Thanks Fontella – those lines are accurate.

From: PIRSA:Media <PIRSA.Media@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 22 June 2026 5:25 PM
To: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI) <Michael.Steer@sa.gov.au>
Cc: PIRSA:Media <PIRSA.Media@sa.gov.au>; Walker, Rhiannan (PIRSA) <Rhiannan.Walker2@sa.gov.au>
Subject: FOR ED APPROVAL: Media response - Clause 6(1) - cuttlefish

OFFICIAL

Hi Mike,

The SARDI inbox received a query from Clause 6(1) this afternoon regarding cuttlefish. I think the response we did last week for The Guardian Australia probably handles most of this and I suspect the question on Whyalla's CuttleFest probably needs to be answered by the Council.

Is there is anything else you think we need to include let me know – otherwise if you are happy with this approach, I'll forward this to DEW to see if they want to add to it.

QUERY

1. Why have there only been 12 Giant Australian Cuttlefish sighted so far between the Cuttlefish Coast Sanctuary Zone and Stony Point dive site, at a time of year when there would normally be thousands moving in to aggregate and breed?
2. How will this affect things like Whyalla's CuttleFest?
3. What kind of research is being conducted, and what are you expecting to find?
4. How is algal bloom potentially affecting cuttlefish?
5. Is there anything else you'd like to add? Any interesting facts and figures?
6. Do you have any photos we could use with the story?

RESPONSE SENT TO THE GUARDIAN AUSTRALIA – Thursday, 18 June

While researchers from the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) are anecdotally receiving reports that population numbers of Giant Australian Cuttlefish in northern Spencer

Gulf seem relatively low, the formal full scale assessment of this year's population will be conducted by both SARDI and Department of Environment and Water (DEW) teams over the coming weeks. Cephalopods, which include cuttlefish and squid populations, are known to vary from one year to the next. In the case of the Point Lowly aggregation, since surveys began in 1998, numbers have ranged from a minimum of 13,500 in 2013 to 247,000 in 2020. Notably, after concern for the low number in 2013 the population estimate rapidly increased to over 100 thousand by 2015. These boom and bust cycles are typically driven by environmental factors including water temperatures and food availability.

As part of this year's population assessment, researchers will also assess whether temperature conditions during the previous hatching season may have influenced recruitment and the timing of aggregation, consistent with previous research. While the peak of the spawning normally occurs in June it has been known to spread into July depending on the year.

While **monitoring continues to rule out the presence of *Karenia* algae in the vast majority of South Australian waters**, latest testing has confirmed elevated levels remain at a small number of onshore sites on southern Eyre Peninsula and at limited offshore locations in southern Spencer Gulf. These sites continue to be closely monitored.

Once the population survey is finished, data analysis results in a slight delay of several weeks before results are finalised. The results will be publicly released once ready.

Thanks,

Fontella

Fontella Koleff | Senior Media Adviser

P: +61 8429 0488 | E: Fontella.Koleff2@sa.gov.au

From: [Clause 6\(1\)](#) <[Clause 6\(1\)](#)>
Sent: Monday, 22 June 2026 2:24 PM
To: PIRSA:Sardi <pirsa.sardi@sa.gov.au>
Subject: [Clause 6\(1\)](#) cuttlefish article

You don't often get email from [Clause 6\(1\)](#) [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello,

I am a journalist with [Clause 6\(1\)](#), and we are interested in writing an article about the lack of cuttlefish sightings in Whyalla. I would love to ask you some questions about this, but please also feel free to forward this email to others that you feel may want to contribute to the story. We are looking to source all information by 5pm on Friday 26 June, so if you are able to respond by then, it would be greatly appreciated.

Questions:

7. Why have there only been 12 Giant Australian Cuttlefish sighted so far between the Cuttlefish Coast Sanctuary Zone and Stony Point dive site, at a time of year when there would normally be thousands moving in to aggregate and breed?
8. How will this affect things like Whyalla's CuttleFest?

9. What kind of research is being conducted, and what are you expecting to find?
10. How is algal bloom potentially affecting cuttlefish?
11. Is there anything else you'd like to add? Any interesting facts and figures?
12. Do you have any photos we could use with the story?

Thank you very much for your time and consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Warm regards,

A small rectangular area with a grey background and red text, likely a redacted signature or name.

Farley, Lisa (PIRSA)

From: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI)
Sent: Thursday, 25 June 2026 1:36 PM
To: PIRSA:Media
Cc: PIRSA:Media; Walker, Rhiannan (PIRSA)
Subject: Re: FOR NOTING: DPC Response to Clause 9(1) - Cuttlefish

Approved

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From: PIRSA:Media <PIRSA.Media@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 25 June 2026 13:04:55
To: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI) <Michael.Steer@sa.gov.au>
Cc: PIRSA:Media <PIRSA.Media@sa.gov.au>; Walker, Rhiannan (PIRSA) <Rhiannan.Walker2@sa.gov.au>
Subject: FOR NOTING: DPC Response to Clause 9(1) - Cuttlefish

OFFICIAL

Hi Mike,

Bec Opie has just contacted us to advise us that she is about to send the following response to Clause 8(1) following a query she received from them.

Do you have any issues with what she has done? As she indicated she has used all things that have been said publicly.

If you are happy with this statement we will send it to Clause 6(1) for now too while we work out the post count process.

Thanks,

Fontella

Fontella Koleff | Senior Media Adviser
P: +61 8429 0488 | **E:** Fontella.Koleff2@sa.gov.au

From: Opie, Rebecca (DPC) <rebecca.opie@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 25 June 2026 12:50 PM
To: DL:DEW Media <dldewmedia@sa.gov.au>; PIRSA:Media <PIRSA.Media@sa.gov.au>; Moore, Joseph (DPC) <joseph.moore@sa.gov.au>
Subject: FW: Clause 5(1) media enquiry

OFFICIAL

Hi all,

FYI I'm sending this in response to **Clause 11.1** enquiry below.

Out of Scope

... It's all things that have previously been said.

Cheers,
Bec

Attributable to a state government spokesperson

The formal full-scale assessment of this year's Giant Australian Cuttlefish population in northern Spencer Gulf is being conducted by both SARDI and DEW teams over the coming weeks.

Cephalopods, which include cuttlefish and squid populations, are known to vary from one year to the next. In the case of the Point Lowly aggregation, since surveys began in 1998, numbers have ranged from a minimum of 13,500 in 2013 to 247,000 in 2020.

Notably, after concern for the low number in 2013 the population estimate rapidly increased to over 100 thousand by 2015. These boom and bust cycles are typically driven by environmental factors including water temperatures and food availability.

As part of this year's population assessment, researchers will also assess whether temperature conditions during the previous hatching season may have influenced recruitment and the timing of aggregation, consistent with previous research. While the peak of the spawning normally occurs in June it has been known to spread into July depending on the year.

Monitoring continues to rule out the presence of Karenia algae in the vast majority of South Australian waters, including in the upper Spencer Gulf.

The State and Federal Government have invested more than \$160 million to the algal bloom response, including increased research, monitoring, and tourism programs that injected \$46.9 million into coastal communities.

Ongoing algal bloom response measures continue with a focus on protecting and restoring our environment.

Programs include:

- Investing more than \$12 million to restore shellfish reefs off Yorke Peninsula, Eyre Peninsula, Kangaroo Island and Adelaide.*
- Conducting underwater surveys to provide quantitative data on the ecological impact of the algal bloom on marine biodiversity and habitat, providing a baseline to monitor recovery.*
- Expanding our investment in South Australia's capacity for real time oceanographic water quality forecasting and monitoring through collaboration with the CSIRO, including acquisition of state-of-the art monitoring buoys.*
- Restocking native fish in reservoirs, creeks and inland waterways to provide alternative fishing options.*
- A targeted breeding and conservation program for vulnerable and threatened species impacted by the algal bloom.*

- Working with citizen scientists to collect and analyse data - improving our understanding and tracking of algal blooms.

From: Clause 6(1) <Clause 6(1)>
Sent: Wednesday, 24 June 2026 3:23 PM
To: Opie, Rebecca (DPC) <rebecca.opie@sa.gov.au>
Subject: Clause 6(1) media enquiry

Hi Rebecca,

I hope you've had a good week.

I've just done an interview with Clause 6(1), who says he has been unable to operate Giant Cuttlefish tours in Whyalla due to the species' diminished numbers this year. He believes they have been impacted by the algal bloom.

I'm wondering if it would be possible to get a statement about some of the work the government is doing to support tourism operators affected by the algal bloom, as well as how the government is working towards restoring marine habitats.

I'm currently working towards a deadline of midday tomorrow.

Thank you in advance.

Kind regards,

Clause 6(1)

Farley, Lisa (PIRSA)

From: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI)
Sent: Friday, 26 June 2026 8:45 AM
To: Koleff, Fontella (PIRSA)
Cc: Dougherty, Tom (PIRSA)
Subject: RE: FOR APPROVAL AND EDITING - PROPOSED LINES: Cuttlefish survey results

Thanks Fontella,
 See edits.

From: Koleff, Fontella (PIRSA) <Fontella.Koleff2@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 25 June 2026 6:15 PM
To: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI) <Michael.Steer@sa.gov.au>
Cc: Dougherty, Tom (PIRSA) <Tom.Dougherty@sa.gov.au>
Subject: FOR APPROVAL AND EDITING - PROPOSED LINES: Cuttlefish survey results
Importance: High

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi Mike,

As discussed here are the proposed lines/talking points regarding the Cuttlefish count as per our phone discussion. This is a thought bubble based on what we had to date and our phone conversation so feel free to edit.

Clause 9(1)

Clause 9(1)

Last question with Gavin as Chair of the working group are you alerting him?

PROPOSED LINES – CUTTLEFISH COUNT

- *Initial assessments of this year's Giant Australian Cuttlefish population in northern Spencer Gulf by both SARDI and DEW teams confirm anecdotal reports of low numbers of the species in the aggregation area.*
- *While the peak of the spawning season normally occurs in June it is known to spread into July depending on the conditions at the time, but with the numbers currently being experienced the view from researchers in light of these initial survey results is that a significant population decline is being experienced this season.*
- *More **Clause 9(1)** surveys are scheduled to occur in coming weeks as part of this year's population assessment **Clause 9(1)** with researchers not only determining species numbers but also whether temperature conditions during the previous hatching season may have influenced the recruitment and timing of the aggregation. The survey is also being expanded beyond the traditional aggregation*

zone in Northern Spencer Gulf to determine if Giant Australian Cuttlefish activity is occurring elsewhere. The continuation of this data gathering is important to help determine what may be influencing this year's population levels.

- While indications of a severe decline in this year's population figures are concerning, it is also known that cephalopods, which include cuttlefish and squid, are known to vary significantly in population numbers from one year to the next. In the case of the Point Lowly aggregation, since surveys began in 1998, numbers have ranged from a minimum of 13,500 in 2013 to 247,000 in 2020. Notably, after concern for the low number in 2013 the population estimate rapidly increased to over 100 thousand by 2015. These boom and bust cycles are typically driven by environmental factors including water temperatures and food availability.

Clause 9(1)

- While monitoring continues to rule out the presence of *Karenia* algae in the vast majority of South Australian waters, **including northern Spencer Gulf**, latest testing confirms elevated levels remain at a small number of onshore sites on southern Eyre Peninsula and at limited offshore locations in southern Spencer Gulf. These sites continue to be closely monitored. It is not known yet **whether** the Harmful Algal Bloom has been an influence on this year's population.
- While this year's population survey is still to be completed with final results due in several weeks, in the interest of transparency and in recognition of the level of public concern these initial results have been released.

Thanks,

Fontella

Fontella Koleff | Senior Media Adviser

P: +61 8429 0488 | **E:** Fontella.Koleff2@sa.gov.au

Farley, Lisa (PIRSA)

From: [redacted] (DPC)
Sent: Friday, 26 June 2026 9:43 AM
To: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI); Grammer, Gretchen (PIRSA-SARDI); Carruthers, Sandy (DEW)
Cc: Barclay, Ann (PIRSA); PIRSA:Media; [redacted] (DPC); [redacted] (DPC)
Subject: Re: Cuttlefish update [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Thank you - and sorry, I forgot that Mike is now coming to Monday's meeting.

Regards

[redacted]

From: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI) <Michael.Steer@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2026 9:38 am
To: [redacted] (DPC) <[redacted]>; Grammer, Gretchen (PIRSA-SARDI) <Gretchen.Grammer@sa.gov.au>; Carruthers, Sandy (DEW) <Sandy.Carruthers@sa.gov.au>
Cc: Barclay, Ann (PIRSA) <Ann.Barcly@sa.gov.au>; PIRSA:Media <PIRSA.Media@sa.gov.au>; [redacted] (DPC) <[redacted]>; Pelton, Grant (DPC) <[redacted]>
Subject: RE: Cuttlefish update [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Fontella- can you please share updated talking points.

FYI – I just briefed Prem prior to a presser that is occurring now.

From: [redacted] (DPC) <[redacted]>
Sent: Friday, 26 June 2026 9:37 AM
To: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI) <Michael.Steer@sa.gov.au>; Grammer, Gretchen (PIRSA-SARDI) <Gretchen.Grammer@sa.gov.au>; Carruthers, Sandy (DEW) <Sandy.Carruthers@sa.gov.au>
Cc: Barclay, Ann (PIRSA) <Ann.Barcly@sa.gov.au>; PIRSA:Media <PIRSA.Media@sa.gov.au>; [redacted] (DPC) <[redacted]>; [redacted] (DPC) <[redacted]>
Subject: Fw: Cuttlefish update [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi Mike/Gretchen/Sandy

Do you have any updated information on Giant Cuttlefish status we can share with DCCEEW?

Gretchen, you could potentially be asked about this at Monday's taskforce meeting.

Thanks

Removed from Disclosure Log

From: Clause 6(1) <Clause 9(1)>
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2026 9:31 am
To: Clause 6(1) (DPC) <Clause 6(1)>
Subject: Cuttlefish update [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi Clause 6(1) - I've been keeping an eye on updates from Whyalla Dive Shop socials on the Cuttlefish and note the below was posted this morning. 😞

Do you have any additional information or advice you can share with us on the status of Giant Australian Cuttlefish, and any research or actions underway in response to low numbers?

Thanks

Clause 6(1)

Important Update – 2026 Giant Australian Cuttlefish Season

After a late start to winter, with warmer-than-usual water temperatures persisting into early June, our team has been monitoring the Cuttlefish Coast near Point Lowly on a daily basis, looking for signs of the annual migration.

Unfortunately, those signs have not eventuated.

With water temperatures now approaching 13°C, and following extensive surveys conducted by our dive guides both underwater and from Cutty's glass-bottom boat, we can confirm that there are currently next to no Giant Australian Cuttlefish present on the reef.

After carefully considering the situation, the Whyalla Dive Shop and Cutty's Tours have made the extremely difficult decision to cancel our 2026 Giant Australian Cuttlefish seasons. As a result, we will not be operating guided dive or snorkel tours, glass-bottom boat tours, or equipment hire for the remainder of the season.

This decision has not been made lightly. We understand that many visitors have planned holidays months in advance, with the cuttlefish aggregation as the highlight of their trip. However, based on the conditions we are seeing every day, we cannot in good faith encourage people to travel to Whyalla expecting to experience the aggregation.

We also ask that visitors respect the few remaining animals on the reef. With such low numbers present, allowing them to remain undisturbed gives them the best possible opportunity to complete their breeding cycle without unnecessary human interference.

All existing bookings will be cancelled, and all deposits and payments will be refunded by the end of next week. Our team will be in contact with all affected guests directly.

While the exact cause of this year's non-arrival is not yet known, there are several likely contributing factors. These include the Harmful Algal Bloom, changes in cuttlefish predator populations associated with fisheries management, and ongoing changes in ocean conditions with the rapid advancement of climate change. At this stage, no single cause has been identified, and further research is needed to better understand what has occurred.

The Whyalla Dive Shop will continue working alongside researchers and organisations including Eyre Lab, Flinders University, and The University of Adelaide to monitor the population and support ongoing research into the Giant Australian Cuttlefish aggregation. We will continue to share updates as more information becomes available.

To everyone who has supported us over the years by diving, snorkelling, or joining our tours, thank you. Your enthusiasm for this incredible natural phenomenon has helped us share one of South Australia's most unique marine experiences with visitors from around the world.

To those who were planning to visit this season, we are truly sorry for the disappointment. We remain hopeful that the aggregation will recover, and we look forward to welcoming you back to Whyalla in future seasons.

Sincerely,

The Whyalla Dive Shop and Cutty's Glass Bottom Boat Tour's Teams

Clause 6(1) (she/her) Clause 6(1)

Director

International Environment, Reef & Ocean Division | Ocean & Wildlife Branch | Domestic Ocean Policy

Ngunnawal Country

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

P Clause 6(1) | E m Clause 6(1)



DCCEEW.gov.au ABN 63 573 932 849



We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

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Farley, Lisa (PIRSA)

From: Vounasis, Angela (PIRSA)
Sent: Friday, 26 June 2026 10:37 AM
To: Porter, Kerry (PIRSA-SARDI)
Subject: FW: QWN - Giant Australian Cuttlefish - Thursday 25 June 2026
Attachments: 2026-06-25 - QWN - Giant Australian Cuttlefish - D Hood.obr; 20260625 - LC - Giant Australian Cuttlefish.obr

Hi Kerry

The Minister took the attached question on notice in Question Time yesterday – can SARDI please prepare a response?

Due **COB 9 July.**

Thank you
Angela

From: Clause 6(1) (PIRSA) <Clause 6(1)@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 26 June 2026 9:54 AM
To: Blades, Anna (PIRSA) <anna.blades2@sa.gov.au>
Cc: Vounasis, Angela (PIRSA) <angela.vounasis@sa.gov.au>
Subject: QWN - Giant Australian Cuttlefish - Thursday 25 June 2026

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Good morning Anna

Please find attached Questions Without Notice received by Minister Scriven on Thursday 25 June 2026.

Please prepare a response by Friday 10 July 2026.

Kind regards

Clause 6(1) | Parliament and Cabinet Officer
Office of the Hon Clare Scriven MLC
Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development
Minister for Forest Industries
Government of South Australia | 1 King William Street, Adelaide
GPO Box 1671 Adelaide SA 5001
W: www.pir.sa.gov.au **P:** 08 7085 1767



Government of South Australia
Department of Primary Industries
and Regions

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**QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

Giant Australian Cuttlefish

In reply to Hon D.G.E. Hood MLC (25 June 2026)

Supplementary:

When will the population assessment be finalised, and will those results be made public?

Hon C.M. Scriven MLC: "I have been advised that:

Answer."

Hon Clare Scriven MLC

Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development
Minister for Forest Industries

/ / 2026

Farley, Lisa (PIRSA)

From: Dougherty, Tom (PIRSA)
Sent: Friday, 26 June 2026 11:58 AM
To: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI)
Cc: Koleff, Fontella (PIRSA); PIRSA:Media
Subject: FYI - Whyalla dive shop post

OFFICIAL

<https://www.facebook.com/whyalladiveshop/posts/pfbid036yDmgpkThwyjxsMkPNg3Teo5eqyxhygQ4s8Q3RVrVHuKTPx3F6Wn21HxLDRp2KgXI>

Whyalla Dive Shop**Important Update – 2026 Giant Australian Cuttlefish Season**

After a late start to winter, with warmer-than-usual water temperatures persisting into early June, our team has been monitoring the Cuttlefish Coast near Point Lowly on a daily basis, looking for signs of the annual migration.

Unfortunately, those signs have not eventuated.

With water temperatures now approaching 13°C, and following extensive surveys conducted by our dive guides both underwater and from Cutty's glass-bottom boat, we can confirm that there are currently next to no Giant Australian Cuttlefish present on the reef.

After carefully considering the situation, the Whyalla Dive Shop and Cutty's Tours have made the extremely difficult decision to cancel our 2026 Giant Australian Cuttlefish seasons. As a result, we will not be operating guided dive or snorkel tours, glass-bottom boat tours, or equipment hire for the remainder of the season.

This decision has not been made lightly. We understand that many visitors have planned holidays months in advance, with the cuttlefish aggregation as the highlight of their trip. However, based on the conditions we are seeing every day, we cannot in good faith encourage people to travel to Whyalla expecting to experience the aggregation.

We also ask that visitors respect the few remaining animals on the reef. With such low numbers present, allowing them to remain undisturbed gives them the best possible opportunity to complete their breeding cycle without unnecessary human interference.

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While the exact cause of this year's non-arrival is not yet known, there are several likely contributing factors. These include the Harmful Algal Bloom, changes in cuttlefish predator populations associated with fisheries management, and ongoing changes in ocean conditions with the rapid advancement of climate change. At this stage, no single cause has been identified, and further research is needed to better understand what has occurred.

The Whyalla Dive Shop will continue working alongside researchers and organisations including [Eyre Lab](#), [Flinders University](#), and [The University of Adelaide](#) to monitor the population and support ongoing research into the Giant Australian Cuttlefish aggregation. We will continue to share updates as more information becomes available.

To everyone who has supported us over the years by diving, snorkelling, or joining our tours, thank you. Your enthusiasm for this incredible natural phenomenon has helped us share one of South Australia's most unique marine experiences with visitors from around the world.

To those who were planning to visit this season, we are truly sorry for the disappointment. We remain hopeful that the aggregation will recover, and we look forward to welcoming you back to Whyalla in future seasons.

Sincerely,

The Whyalla Dive Shop and Cutty's Glass Bottom Boat Tour's Teams



Tom Dougherty | Media Manager

Department of Primary Industries and Regions

Government of South Australia | 11 Waymouth St

GPO Box 1671 Adelaide SA 5001

M: [Clause 6\(1\)](#)

E: tom.dougherty@sa.gov.au | **Media Inbox:** PIRSA.Media@sa.gov.au

pir.sa.gov.au





Government of South Australia
Department of Primary Industries
and Regions

Artwork by Ngarrindjeri artist Jordan Lovegrove

The Department of Primary Industries and Regions cares for the Country and communities of South Australia. We ensure the land, sea, water and sky are healthy for future generations and strive to better understand their spiritual and cultural significance for Aboriginal people across the state. In the spirit of reconciliation, our commitment is to build progressive and trusting relationships, to share knowledge and learn from each other. We recognise and own a difficult past, and together we will walk forward. We acknowledge the many Aboriginal people of this Country as the oldest continuous living culture in the world.

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Farley, Lisa (PIRSA)

From: Stobart, Ben (PIRSA-SARDI)
Sent: Monday, 29 June 2026 9:58 AM
To: Daly, Emma-Louise (PIRSA)
Subject: Cuttlefish

Hi Emma,

The cuttlefish count for every transect was a zero!!

We are going to wait to finalise the advice note, have to resurvey mid July and incorporate DEW data as well.

Can discuss this week.

Cheers

Ben

Dr Ben Stobart | Sub-Program Leader – Molluscan Fisheries



South Australian Research and Development Institute - SARDI | **Department of Primary Industries and Regions**

Government of South Australia | Port Lincoln Marine Science Centre. 1 Hindmarsh Street, Port Lincoln, South Australia 5606

PO Box 5, Port Lincoln, SA 5606, DX 51053

P: +61 8 86883419 | **M:** Clause 6(1) | **E:** ben.stobart@sa.gov.au

pir.sa.gov.au



The Department of Primary Industries and Regions respects Aboriginal people as the state's first people and nations. We recognise Aboriginal people as traditional owners and occupants of South Australian land and waters. We pay our respects to Aboriginal cultures and to Elders past, present and emerging.

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Farley, Lisa (PIRSA)

From: Stobart, Ben (PIRSA-SARDI)
Sent: Monday, 29 June 2026 12:12 PM
To: Grammer, Gretchen (PIRSA-SARDI)
Cc: Mayfield, Stephen (PIRSA-SARDI)
Subject: Cuttlefish temperatures
Attachments: weekly_temperature_by_year_highlighted2.png

Hi Gretchen,

Attached weekly temperature comparison plot for your reference, it looks like it has been a bit warmer this year and particularly over the past four weeks. The only real outlier is week 25 (second to last point on 2026 plotted data) that was warmer than usual.

I will explore this further, I find it hard to believe it would make a real difference.

Cheers

Ben



Dr Ben Stobart | Sub-Program Leader – Molluscan Fisheries

South Australian Research and Development Institute - SARDI | **Department of Primary Industries and Regions**

Government of South Australia | Port Lincoln Marine Science Centre, 1 Hindmarsh Street, Port Lincoln, South Australia 5606

PO Box 5, Port Lincoln, SA 5606, DX 51053

P: +61 8 86883419 | **M:** +61 Clause 6(1) | **E:** ben.stobart@sa.gov.au

pir.sa.gov.au

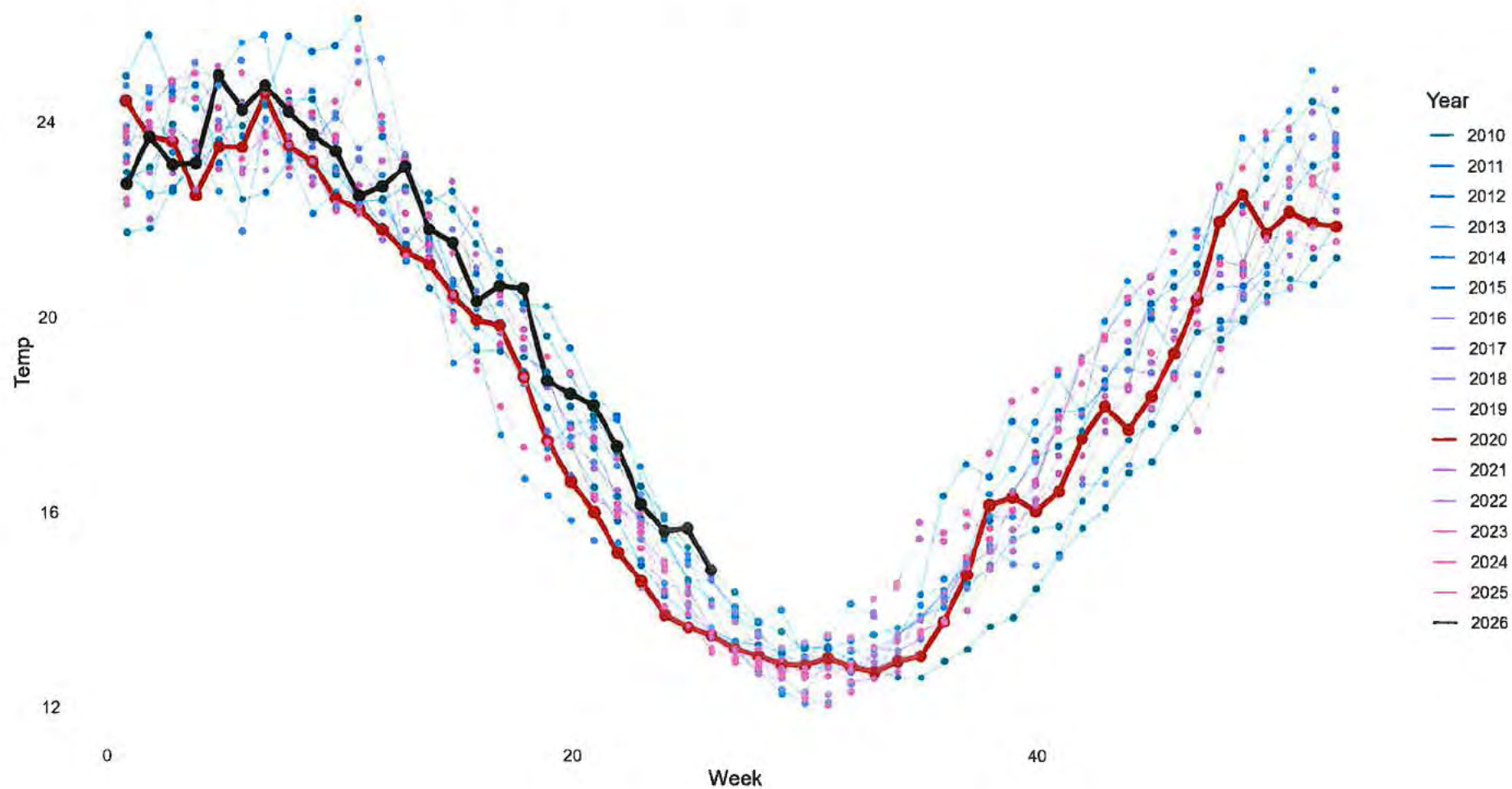


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Weekly temperature by year

2020 and 2026 are emphasised with stronger colours and thicker lines



Farley, Lisa (PIRSA)

From: Justin Commons <justin.commonsa@whyalla.sa.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 29 June 2026 1:02 PM
To: Clause 6(1) (DPC); Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI)
Subject: Cuttlefish !!!

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

You don't often get email from justin.commonsa@whyalla.sa.gov.au. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hi Mike / Sean

I have a meeting today at 3:30 pm with the Commercial Operators who operate cuttlefish experience.

Can you confirm:- "That there is no evidence that supports that the cuttlefish aggregation has been impacted by the HAB"?

Also, any plans from the State Government to introduce a ban on the site this year ?

One operator is stating the HAB has impacted, however I think this is unsubstantiated.

Also, any current intel you have would be appreciated.

Council is taking the position that the season is late (largely due to water temps being too high) and remaining "hopeful" that the aggregation will still occur.

I am happy to take a phone call if that easier.

Thanks

Justin Commons

Chief Executive Officer



Whyalla City Council

PO Box 126

Whyalla SA 5600

t. 08 8640 3444

m. 0414 896 104

e. justin.commonsa@whyalla.sa.gov.au

w. whyalla.sa.gov.au



Farley, Lisa (PIRSA)

From: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI)
Sent: Monday, 29 June 2026 4:09 PM
To: PIRSA:Media
Subject: RE: FOR URGENT APPROVAL: Proposed response - Cuttlefish Update - **Clause 6(1)**
 DEADLINE: 4:30pm - Today - Monday, 29 June

Thanks Fontella – see edits below.
 m

From: PIRSA:Media <PIRSA.Media@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 29 June 2026 4:01 PM
To: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI) <Michael.Steer@sa.gov.au>
Cc: PIRSA:Media <PIRSA.Media@sa.gov.au>
Subject: FOR URGENT APPROVAL: Proposed response - Cuttlefish Update - **Clause 6(1)** DEADLINE: 4:30pm - Today - Monday, 29 June
Importance: High

OFFICIAL

FOR URGENT APPROVAL

TOPIC: Cuttlefish update
DATE: Monday, 29 June
OUTLET: **Clause 6(1)**
FORMAT: Written response
SPOKESPERSON: PIRSA
APPROVALS: xxx

Hi Mike,

In the absence of confirmation of any potential presser or other media activity post meeting I have pulled together a potential response based off this morning's interview and Friday's presser and the conversation with Joseph on Friday on questions about support. Given you have been at taskforce I'll leave it to you to edit/adjust as necessary.

Are you happy for this to proceed?

QUERY:

- Have there been more cuttlefish sighted in the Spencer Gulf?
- What is the advice for tourism operators who run cuttlefish related activities?
- Is there support for operators?

- Has SARDI/PIRSA discovered any more information as to why the cuttlefish have not migrated to the SA coast this year?

PROPOSED RESPONSE:

Clause 6(1)

Clause 9(1)

Initial observations from last week's annual SARDI cuttlefish population survey suggest cuttlefish numbers at Point Lowly were significantly lower than would normally be expected at this stage of the season.

Clause 9(1)

Over the weekend, SARDI received anecdotal reports of additional Giant Australian Cuttlefish being observed in northern Spencer Gulf. While encouraging, numbers remain well below those typically seen at this stage of the spawning season.

With the spawning season continuing into August, SARDI and DEW will continue surveys over the coming weeks, including beyond the traditional aggregation area, to determine whether spawning activity is occurring elsewhere and to better understand the factors influencing this year's population.

Researchers are investigating whether warmer-than-usual water temperatures may have influenced this year's spawning activity.

Clause 9(1)

Clause 9(1)

While monitoring continues to rule out the presence of *Karenia* algae in the vast majority of South Australian waters, **including northern Spencer Gulf**, latest testing confirms elevated levels remain at a small number of onshore sites on southern Eyre Peninsula and at limited offshore locations in southern Spencer Gulf. These sites continue to be closely monitored. It is not known yet whether the Harmful Algal Bloom has been an influence on this year's population.

Clause 9(1)

The State Government is aware of the concerns by tourism operators on this year's cuttlefish season and is monitoring the situation.

Thanks,

Fontella

Fontella Koleff | Senior Media Adviser

Industry, Strategy and Partnerships | **Department of Primary Industries and Regions**

Government of South Australia | 11 Waymouth Street

GPO Box 1671 Adelaide SA 5001

T: +61 8 429 0488 | M: [\[redacted\]](#) | E: Fontella.koleff2@sa.gov.au

pir.sa.gov.au



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From: PIRSA:Media <PIRSA.Media@sa.gov.au>

Sent: Monday, 29 June 2026 1:21 PM

To: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI) <Michael.Steer@sa.gov.au>

Cc: PIRSA:Media <PIRSA.Media@sa.gov.au>; Walker, Rhiannan (PIRSA) <Rhiannan.Walker2@sa.gov.au>

Subject: FOR URGENT NOTING AND ADVICE: Cuttlefish Update - [\[redacted\]](#)

Importance: High

OFFICIAL

Howdy,

This is the query that I was talking about that we have just received from [\[redacted\]](#).

The journalist has now apparently spoken to Bec who has advised there won't be an update until after Taskforce so don't be surprised if there does end up being a presser.

Thanks,

Fontella

Fontella Koleff | Senior Media Adviser

P: +61 8429 0488 | E: Fontella.Koleff2@sa.gov.au

From: Clause 6(1) <Clause 6(1)>
Sent: Monday, 29 June 2026 12:59 PM
To: PIRSA:Media <pirsa.media@sa.gov.au>
Subject: Cuttlefish Update

Hi Fontella,

I am just hoping to get an update regarding the cuttlefish situation in South Australia. I understand cuttlefish will be on the agenda at the meeting with tourism stakeholders this afternoon.

Have there been more cuttlefish sighted in the Spencer Gulf?

What is the advice for tourism operators who run cuttlefish related activities?

Is there support for operators?

Has SARDI/PIRSA discovered any more information as to why the cuttlefish have not migrated to the SA coast this year?

Any information you can provide will be most helpful.

Many thanks,

Clause 6(1)

Clause 6(1)

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work.

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Farley, Lisa (PIRSA)

From: Sean Kelly <sean.kelly@whyalla.sa.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 30 June 2026 9:31 AM
To: Mayor Phill Stone; Justin Commons; Clause 6(1) Clause 6(1) Clause 6(1) Clause 6(1) Clause 6(1)
Clause 6(1) Clause 6(1) Clause 6(1) Clause 6(1) Clause 6(1)
admin@whydive.com.au; Cresshull, Michael (PIRSA); Clause 6(1) Clause 6(1)
(DEW); Hughes, Eddie; Clause 6(1) (SATC); Begg, Gavin (PIRSA)
Subject: RE: Cuttlefish Messaging
Attachments: More Reasons to Visit Whyalla 300626.docx
Importance: High

Some people who received this message don't often get email from sean.kelly@whyalla.sa.gov.au. [Learn why this is important](#)
Hi everyone,

Given the government announcement this morning, this release is more about the other reasons people should still visit Whyalla, rather than focusing on the measures in place. These are still mentioned and a link is provided to the government's full release for further context.

As such, we'll be publishing / distributing the attached this morning to directly follow up / complement the Minister's release. Let me know if you have any concerns with any of the content and I can make changes throughout the day if required.

Thanks again for your contribution towards the messaging, which hopefully helps minimise any further impact on the cuttlefish, while still encouraging tourists to check out everything else Whyalla has to offer.

Kind regards,

Sean Kelly
Manager Media and Communications



Whyalla City Council
PO Box 126
Whyalla SA 5600

t. 08 8640 3444
m. 0411 054 643

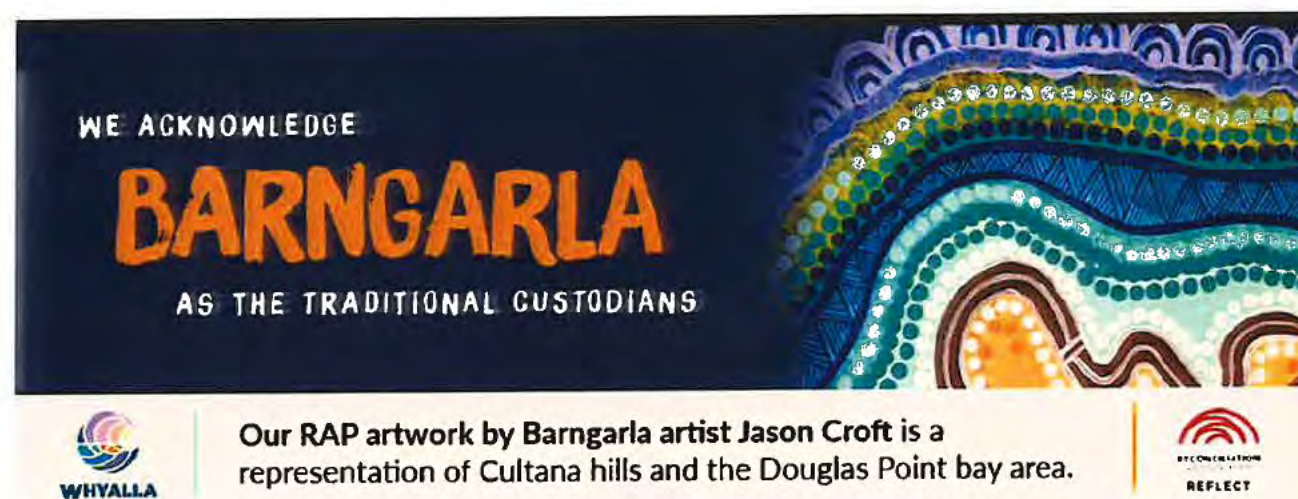
e. sean.kelly@whyalla.sa.gov.au
w. whyalla.sa.gov.au



Whyalla City Council
PO Box 126
Whyalla SA 5600

t. 08 8640 3444
m. 0411 054 643

e. sean.kelly@whyalla.sa.gov.au
w. whyalla.sa.gov.au



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With the State Government introducing an exclusion zone to protect the low numbers of cuttlefish at Stony Point this season, Whyalla's leaders are calling on tourists to check out everything else the city has to offer.

It's been well publicised that the cuttlefish currently haven't returned to Stony Point in anywhere near recent numbers. While the cause of the low numbers remains a point of debate, the tourism industry, community, government and environmental bodies all agree the current low numbers need to be left undisturbed.

To maximise their chances of survival and breeding for future seasons, the State Government will introduce a 90-day exclusion zone from Black Point to Stony Point – the main cuttlefish breeding area – which restricts in-water recreational activities such as snorkelling, diving and vessel anchoring.

[Click here](#) for the full government release, outlining the protections.

Whyalla Mayor Phill Stone agreed this was the best approach, while emphasising the on-land Cuttlefest events would continue, with so much more to see and do in Whyalla than solely diving with cephalopods.

"We fully support the State Government's intervention to avoid any potential impact on this unique, internationally renowned spectacle," Mayor Stone said.

"It's incredibly disappointing their numbers have remained low this season. We feel for those in the industry being impacted by the current downturn and hope the numbers bounce back in future seasons – both for the future of the cuttlefish and the tour operators.

"However, to the people across the world seeing these reports – don't let that stop you from visiting our great city and checking out the other incredible natural and man-made wonders we have on offer.

"We've got dolphins and seals; the only circular jetty in the southern hemisphere; sunsets to die for; stranded shingle ridges; the sea on one side with the outback on the other; plus the only manufacturer of structural steel and rails in Australia – one of the few operational steelworks you can view up-close with our award-winning tours.

"And despite the low cuttlefish numbers, we're still celebrating these incredible creatures and educating tourists and locals on their uniqueness through a host of land-based Cuttlefest activities."

Julie Rodgers can attest to Whyalla's awesomeness, having recently visited from Sydney.

"Once we opened our eyes and saw the beauty of the area – the dolphins, the pelicans, the jetty at sunset – not to mention the history it represents for our country through mining and steelmaking; we realised it was a special place. And where else can you play golf with kangaroos?? That was a real highlight!"

Mayor Stone encouraged everyone to check out Whyalla.com, which is filled with experiences, events and activities for all ages.

"As well as art exhibitions and scavenger hunts, you can even strap on some VR goggles and 'swim with the cuttlefish' – all without freezing in 11-degree water!" he said.

"Give our friendly, award-winning Visitor Centre staff a call and they'll help you plan a holiday you'll never forget."

So what are you waiting for? Head to Whyalla.com; check out the Visit Whyalla Facebook or Instagram pages; or give the Visitor Centre a call on 8645 7900 today.

Farley, Lisa (PIRSA)

From: Stobart, Ben (PIRSA-SARDI)
Sent: Tuesday, 30 June 2026 11:08 AM
To: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI)
Cc: Mayfield, Stephen (PIRSA-SARDI); Grammer, Gretchen (PIRSA-SARDI)
Subject: RE: DEW Cuttlefish Data and Information for PIRSA-SARDI

Thanks Mike

From: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI) <Michael.Steer@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 30 June 2026 11:06 AM
To: Stobart, Ben (PIRSA-SARDI) <Ben.Stobart@sa.gov.au>
Cc: Mayfield, Stephen (PIRSA-SARDI) <Stephen.Mayfield@sa.gov.au>; Grammer, Gretchen (PIRSA-SARDI) <Gretchen.Grammer@sa.gov.au>
Subject: RE: DEW Cuttlefish Data and Information for PIRSA-SARDI

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

We will need to delay the advice note until all the surveys are complete.

From: Stobart, Ben (PIRSA-SARDI) <Ben.Stobart@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 30 June 2026 10:08 AM
To: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI) <Michael.Steer@sa.gov.au>
Cc: Mayfield, Stephen (PIRSA-SARDI) <Stephen.Mayfield@sa.gov.au>; Grammer, Gretchen (PIRSA-SARDI) <Gretchen.Grammer@sa.gov.au>
Subject: RE: DEW Cuttlefish Data and Information for PIRSA-SARDI

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Thanks Mike,

Our annual advice note is normally due by end June/early July.

Given the additional information required are you able to provide a revised date for the advice note given we have surveys planned mid-July and DEW still have two lots of surveys to go.

Do you want us to wait until DEW finishes in August?

Thanks

Ben

From: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI) <Michael.Steer@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 30 June 2026 9:56 AM
To: Stobart, Ben (PIRSA-SARDI) <Ben.Stobart@sa.gov.au>
Cc: Grammer, Gretchen (PIRSA-SARDI) <Gretchen.Grammer@sa.gov.au>; Brock, Danny (DEW)

<Danny.Brock@sa.gov.au>; Bryars, Simon (DEW) <Simon.Bryars@sa.gov.au>; Ward, Matthew (DEW) <Matthew.Ward@sa.gov.au>; Homes, Murphy (DEW) <Murphy.Homes@sa.gov.au>; Quin, Rebecca (DEW) <Rebecca.Quin@sa.gov.au>; Carruthers, Sandy (DEW) <Sandy.Carruthers@sa.gov.au>

Subject: FW: DEW Cuttlefish Data and Information for PIRSA-SARDI

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Thanks Matt,

@Stobart, Ben (PIRSA-SARDI) can you please incorporate these survey data, along with results for the planned surveys into SARDI's annual advice note. Noting that it will need to encapsulate the entire breeding season.

Thanks

Prof. Mike Steer | Executive Director
South Australian Research and Development Institute - SARDI
Department of Primary Industries and Regions
Government of South Australia | Kaurna Country
Plant Research Centre, 2b Hartley Grove, Urrbrae SA 5064
P: +61 8 8429 0115 | **M:** Clause 6(1) | **E:** michael.steer@sa.gov.au
pir.sa.gov.au

Executive Assistant: **Rhiannan Walker**
P: +61 8 8429 3513 | **E:** Rhiannan.walker2@sa.gov.au



The Department of Primary Industries and Regions respects Aboriginal people as the state's first people and nations. We recognise Aboriginal people as traditional owners and occupants of South Australian land and waters. We pay our respects to Aboriginal cultures and to Elders past, present and emerging.

Disclaimer: The information in this email may be confidential and/or legally privileged. Use or disclosure of the information by anyone other than the intended recipient is prohibited and may be unlawful.

From: Ward, Matthew (DEW) <Matthew.Ward@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 30 June 2026 9:04 AM

To: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI) <Michael.Steer@sa.gov.au>; Carruthers, Sandy (DEW) <Sandy.Carruthers@sa.gov.au>
Cc: Quin, Rebecca (DEW) <Rebecca.Quin@sa.gov.au>; Brock, Danny (DEW) <Danny.Brock@sa.gov.au>; Bryars, Simon (DEW) <Simon.Bryars@sa.gov.au>; Homes, Murphy (DEW) <Murphy.Homes@sa.gov.au>
Subject: FW: DEW Cuttlefish Data and Information for PIRSA-SARDI

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi Mike & Sandy

Summary of Cuttlefish data.

1. An excel spreadsheet with the **DEW Cuttlefish Count data** and site information (i.e. site locations, site codes and coordinates)
2. A zip folder with the **DEW Geodatabase** with the site locations and the DEW Cuttlefish Count data
3. A word document of **instructions** for the Geodatabase, if SARDI want to connect the site location and counts together (through a temporary relate) to view the data spatially.
4. **Algal Bloom Risk Assessment for Giant Australian Cuttlefish**. The risk assessment was undertaken based on the scenario that the bloom would reach the Point Lowly site, and was completed by a group of cephalopod experts including Government scientists and experts from the University of SA, University of Tasmania and the Great Southern Reef Foundation along with the Commonwealth Government's Threatened Species Commissioner.
5. **Algal Bloom Monitoring Plan for Giant Australian Cuttlefish**. The monitoring plan was developed to track the movement of the algal bloom towards the Cuttlefish Coast SZ, track the rate of cuttlefish egg development, inform when the bubble curtain needs to be turned on (in the event required), assess the effectiveness of the bubble curtain and inform when the bubble curtain needs to be turned off. The monitoring plan was developed with oversight from the Cuttlefish Steering Committee who included cephalopod experts, members of the HAB Scientific Advisory Panel, algal bloom experts, SARDI oceanography experts and relevant DEW staff.
6. **DEW DRAFT Technical Report: Biodiversity Values and Giant Australian Cuttlefish spatio-temporal distributions in the Cuttlefish Coast SZ**. Draft report currently being prepared from the Australian Government's Heritage Grant funded project. This is a **working draft** being developed by DEW Marine Science Team with expected completion early next financial year.

If you or your team have specific questions let us know or contact the team.

Thanks to the team for pulling together summary.

Thanks
Matt

From: Quin, Rebecca (DEW) <Rebecca.Quin@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 29 June 2026 5:27 PM
To: Ward, Matthew (DEW) <Matthew.Ward@sa.gov.au>
Cc: Brock, Danny (DEW) <Danny.Brock@sa.gov.au>; Homes, Murphy (DEW) <Murphy.Homes@sa.gov.au>; Bryars, Simon (DEW) <Simon.Bryars@sa.gov.au>
Subject: DEW Cuttlefish Data and Information for PIRSA-SARDI

Hi Matt,

As per request, please find attached for sending onto Mike Steer:

1. An excel spreadsheet with the **DEW Cuttlefish Count data** and site information (i.e. site locations, site codes and coordinates)
2. A zip folder with the **DEW Geodatabase** with the site locations and the DEW Cuttlefish Count data
3. A word document of **instructions** for the Geodatabase, if SARDI want to connect the site location and counts together (through a temporary relate) to view the data spatially.
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If anything further is required please let us know.

Thanks

Bec

Rebecca Quin

Manager, Environmental Science and Research Partnerships
Biodiversity Science, Coasts and Information Branch
Biodiversity and Nature Economy
Department for Environment and Water
M 

environment.sa.gov.au naturalresources.sa.gov.au envirodata.sa.gov.au parks.sa.gov.au

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Government of South Australia
**Department for Environment
and Water**

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Farley, Lisa (PIRSA)

From: PIRSA:Media
Sent: Tuesday, 30 June 2026 6:02 PM
To: Steer, Michael (PIRSA-SARDI)
Cc: PIRSA:Media; Walker, Rhiannan (PIRSA)
Subject: FOR URGENT APPROVAL: Cuttlefish population estimates (from protection zone submission) - Request from Minister Bourke's office - The Guardian Australia DEADLINE: ASAP Overnight - Tuesday, 30 June
Attachments: Cuttlefish population estimates.docx
Importance: High

OFFICIAL

Hi Mike,

Out of scope

so only just been able to get this one to you now.

Following this morning's presser and distribution of the media release, Bec was contacted by The Guardian Australia with the following query – "can you provide any numbers from the latest surveys described in the release?" See below in the email trail the holding response she has sent back but then subsequently asked both DEW and us to provide the figures.

DEW have the following numbers which were in the cuttlefish protection zone submission, and to me they do appear to be what we have reported on over the years, however we have been asked that these be verified and approved for release by you. Are you happy for these figures to be released?

Bec was looking for something **today** (sorry) so if you can get back to us ASAP overnight/first thing in the morning we will be most appreciative.

Clause 6(1)

Tom is on deck.

Thanks,

Fontella

Fontella Koleff | Senior Media Adviser
P: +61 8429 0488 | **E:** Fontella.Koleff2@sa.gov.au

From: Opie, Rebecca (DPC) <rebecca.opie@sa.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 30 June 2026 12:33 PM
To: PIRSA:Media <PIRSA.Media@sa.gov.au>; DL:DEW Media <dl Dewmedia@sa.gov.au>
Cc: Moore, Joseph (DPC) <joseph.moore@sa.gov.au>
Subject: RE: BOURKE - More protection for Giant Australian Cuttlefish

OFFICIAL

I've sent this response to the Guardian for now but is it possible to get the numbers ready in a way that can be presented to the media?

From: Opie, Rebecca (DPC)
Sent: Tuesday, 30 June 2026 11:44 AM
To: 'Petra Stock' <petra.stock@theguardian.com>
Subject: RE: BOURKE - More protection for Giant Australian Cuttlefish

Hi Petra,

Here is the audio from the press conference we held today with Minister Bourke and SARDI Executive Director Professor Mike Steer.

The surveys are currently underway. The results will be published after they are completed.

Kind regards,

Rebecca Opie

Media Adviser to the Hon Emily Bourke MLC
Minister for Climate, Environment and Water
Minister for Tourism

M Clause 6(1) | **E** rebecca.opie@sa.gov.au | **W** dpc.sa.gov.au

Level 15, State Administration Centre, 200 Victoria Square (Tarntanyangga), ADELAIDE SA 5000
GPO Box 2343, ADELAIDE SA 5001



Government of South Australia
Department of the Premier
and Cabinet



From: Removed from Disclosure Log
Sent: Tuesday, 30 June 2026 11:09 AM
To: Opie, Rebecca (DPC) <rebecca.opie@sa.gov.au>
Subject: Fwd: BOURKE - More protection for Giant Australian Cuttlefish

You don't often get email from Removed from Disclosure Log [Learn why this is important](#)

Hi Rebecca,

Can you add me to this list please.

Also, can you provide any numbers from the latest surveys described in the release:

"Latest surveys undertaken by the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) and Department for Environment and Water (DEW) show a significant reduction in cuttlefish numbers this breeding season."

Or, please let me know when they are available.

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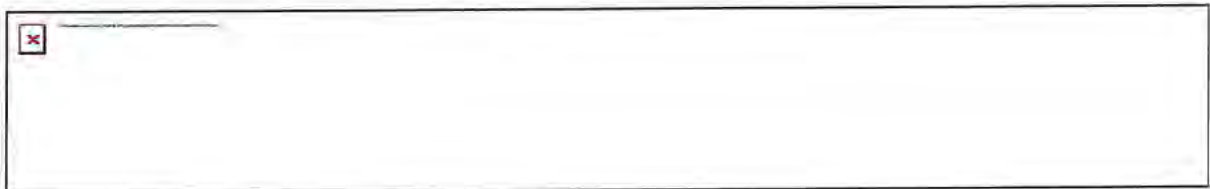
----- Forwarded message -----

From: **SA Govt Media** <media@sa.gov.au>

Date: Tue, 30 Jun 2026 at 10:27

Subject: BOURKE - More protection for Giant Australian Cuttlefish

To: <lisa.cox@theguardian.com>



Emily Bourke MLC
Minister for Climate, Environment and Water
Minister for Tourism

More protection for Giant Australian Cuttlefish

Giant Australian Cuttlefish will be better protected with a temporary restriction on recreational activities at their Upper Spencer Gulf breeding site from tomorrow.

The 90-day exclusion zone applies from July 1 to an area of the Upper Spencer Gulf Marine Park, including the sanctuary zone, between Black Point and Stony Point.

The measure – which restricts in-water recreational activities, including swimming, snorkelling and diving, as well as vessel anchoring – aims to minimise any disturbance on breeding cuttlefish, and help protect their eggs and hatchlings.

All marine park sanctuary zones are areas of high conservation value and no fishing has been allowed in them for more than a decade.

Latest surveys undertaken by the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) and Department for Environment and Water (DEW) show a significant reduction in cuttlefish numbers this breeding season.

The temporary restriction, which can be revoked at any time by the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water should cuttlefish numbers significantly increase, is supported by tourism operators and Whyalla City Council.

Impacted cuttlefish tour operators will be able to apply for the Algal Bloom Small Business Support Grants. Those businesses are encouraged to contact the Department of State Development to apply.

Annual cuttlefish numbers naturally rise and fall from year to year. Since SARDI surveys began in 1998, numbers have ranged from a minimum of 13,500 in 2013 to 247,000 in 2020.

Notably, after concern for the low number in 2013, the population estimate rapidly increased to more than 100,000 by 2015.

South Australian waters are the only place in the world where the giant cuttlefish congregate annually to breed between May and August before their eggs hatch in September through to late October. Last year, about 64,000 cuttlefish were recorded in the region during last year's breeding season.

Surveys will continue during the remainder of the breeding season.

Last November, the State Government passed laws that prohibit taking Giant Australian Cuttlefish in the northern Spencer Gulf. Anyone caught taking the cuttlefish faces a fine of up to \$20,000.

Quotes attributable to Emily Bourke

The State Government is doing everything possible to help protect our unique and iconic giant Australian cuttlefish population.

This temporary closure is in the best interests of safeguarding these amazing creatures and giving them the best opportunity to breed and thrive at a time when numbers are considerably lower than previous years.

South Australia's coastline is among the best in the world and our network of marine parks helps protect and conserve marine ecosystems and habitats, attract visitors and support local economies.

There are still lots of wonderful attractions in Whyalla including the Ada Ryan Gardens, Whyalla Conservation Park, HMAS Whyalla Ship Tour, Maritime Museum, and the only circular jetty in the southern hemisphere.

Quotes attributable to Steve Storic, owner of Spencer Gulf Adventures

The Giant Australian Cuttlefish is one of South Australia's most unique natural wonders, and protecting their breeding grounds is vital.

While this season has been slower and later than expected, history has shown the population can recover strongly.

We support measures that give these remarkable animals the best opportunity to breed successfully and ensure this world-class wildlife experience continues for generations to come.

Quotes attributable to Manny Katz, owner of Whyalla Dive Shop

The Whyalla Dive Shop is in full support of this temporary restriction as it may deliver better outcomes for future cuttlefish populations.

With so many changes to our marine environments over recent years, it's imperative that we take actions to protect this unique wildlife aggregation however possible.

We hope to share the world-renowned cuttlefish with the public in future years, but for now we'd like to give the small amount of cuttlefish that are present the chance to go through their breeding cycle undisturbed.

To the South Australian diving community and our guests, we thank you for your understanding and continued support.

Quotes attributable to Matt Waller, owner and operator of Cuttys Boat Tours

We fully support the temporary restriction.

Unfortunately there are next to no Giant Cuttlefish present on the Cuttlefish Reef.

We believe the few remaining animals should be left undisturbed to do what they need to do to survive, without human interference.

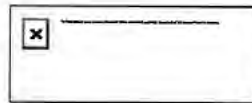
Whyalla is more than just cuttlefish - the rest is still open and is waiting to welcome visitors.

[**Click here for a PDF version of this media release**](#)

[Click here for map](#)

Media Contact

Rebecca Opie Clause 6(1)
rebecca.opie@sa.gov.au



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Year	SARDI Population Estimate
2009	123,105
2010	106,026
2011	38,373
2012	18,531
2013	13,492
2014	57,317
2015	130,771
2016	177,092
2017	124,992
2018	150,408
2019	114,596
2020	247,146
2021	107,847
2022	137,999
2023	100,042
2024	81,420
2025	63,734
2026	

Table 2. DEW surveys – Total number of cuttlefish observed per site (this is not comparable with the average count per transect as presented in table 3).

Location	2025	2026
----------	------	------

	May	June	May	June
False Bay Shallow	4	100	0	6
Black Point Shallow	2	79	0	5
Black Point Deep	0	41	0	0
Third Dip Shallow	1	8	0	3
Third Dip Deep	2	3	0	0
WOSBF Shallow	0	6	0	0
WOSBF Deep	0	5	0	0
Stony Point Shallow	0	10	0	1
Stony Point Deep	0	2	0	0
SANTOS Tanks Shallow	0	0	0	1
Total Count	9	254	0	16

Algal bloom impact on key fish stocks in South Australia's gulfs

Updated: 29 May 2026

Source: SARDI Aquatic and Livestock Sciences

Overview

Since March 2025, a large algal bloom caused by *Karenia* species has affected the waters of Gulf St Vincent, Spencer Gulf, Kangaroo Island and nearby areas. The bloom has resulted in widespread marine life deaths, impacting fish, shellfish and other sea life.

As part of the extensive SARDI Algal Bloom Response, fisheries and fish stocks are being assessed to understand the impact of the harmful algal bloom on commercial fish species. This Fact Sheet outlines how the algal bloom is affecting key quota-managed species

Out of scope

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Spencer Gulf (SG), where the bloom has been most widespread (Figure 1). It also provides a summary report on 17 non-quota species in both gulfs.

Methods

This assessment uses both commercial fishing and independent survey data. Specifically, the assessment combines:

1. Analysis of commercial fishing data.
2. Scientific (fishery-independent) surveys.
3. Targeted fishing surveys with commercial operators.
4. Bycatch and species sampling.

Out of scope

For all species, the assessment relies heavily on spatial and temporal analyses of commercial logbook data across all fishing sectors. To quantify fishery impacts, monthly catch and catch rate (expressed as catch per unit effort; CPUE) during the algal bloom period (March 2025 onwards), were compared against the 3-year monthly average (baseline) from February 2022 – February 2025 for each species. This allows quantification of a “before” and “after” algal bloom impact.

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Results



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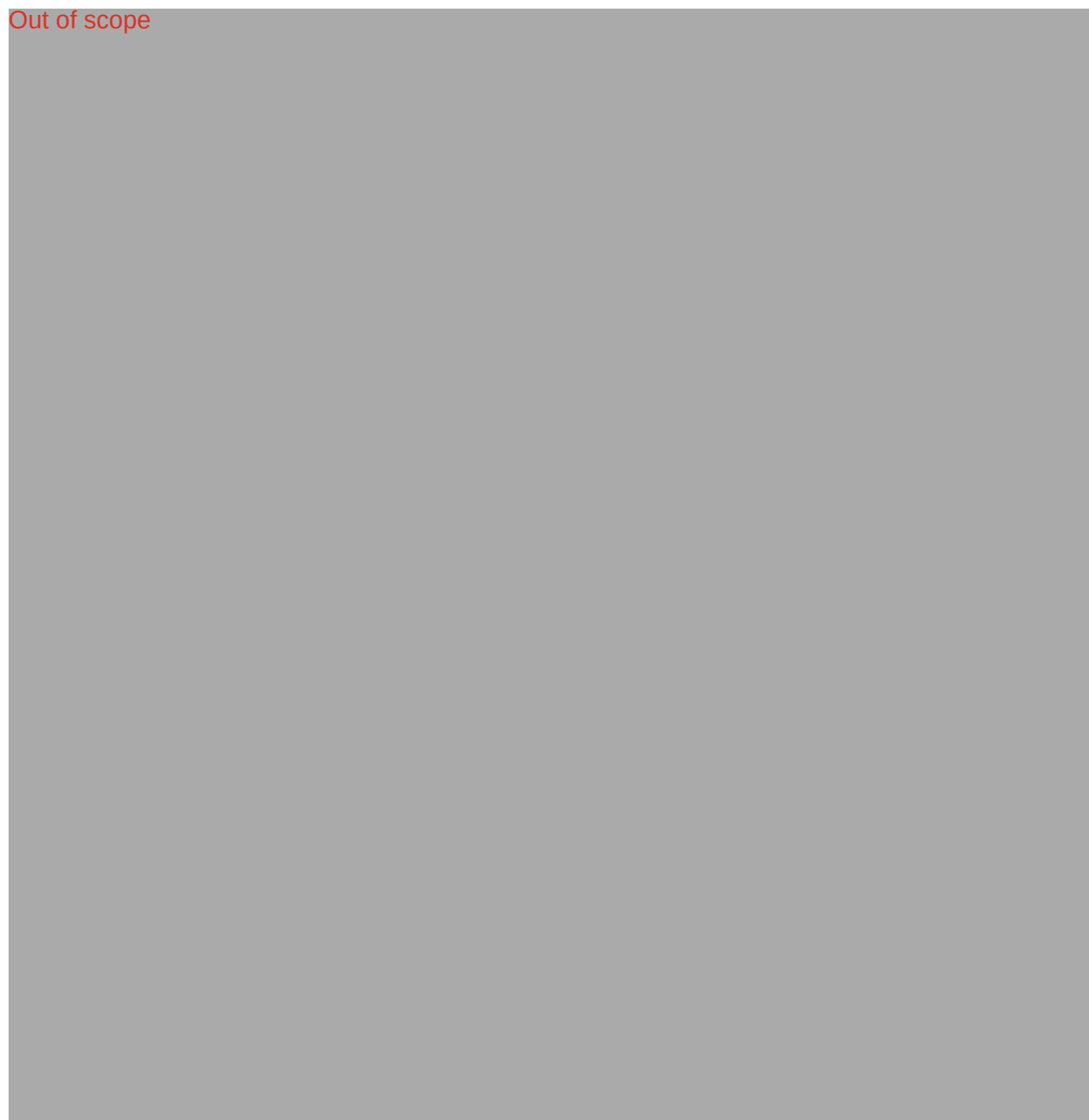
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Non-quota species

Data sources: [Commercial logbook](#).

A total of 17 species or species groups from the Marine Scalefish Fishery were assessed. The low monthly catches for many species limited the ability to detect potential impacts of the algal bloom; consequently, the assessment presented was based on qualitative interpretation rather than quantitative analysis.

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In Spencer Gulf, eight (Cuttlefish, Western Australian Salmon, Whaler Sharks, Sand Crab, Bluethroat Wrasse, Silver Trevally, Gummy Shark, School Shark) species were similarly assessed as negatively affected, seven (Australian Herring, Yellow-eye Mullet, Leatherjackets, Yellowfin Whiting, Snook, Ocean Leatherjacket, Rays and Skates) showed no impact, and two (Mulloway, Black Bream) lacked sufficient data.

Main findings

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Spencer Gulf

Out of scope

What this means

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- **Spencer Gulf fisheries appear to be less affected,**

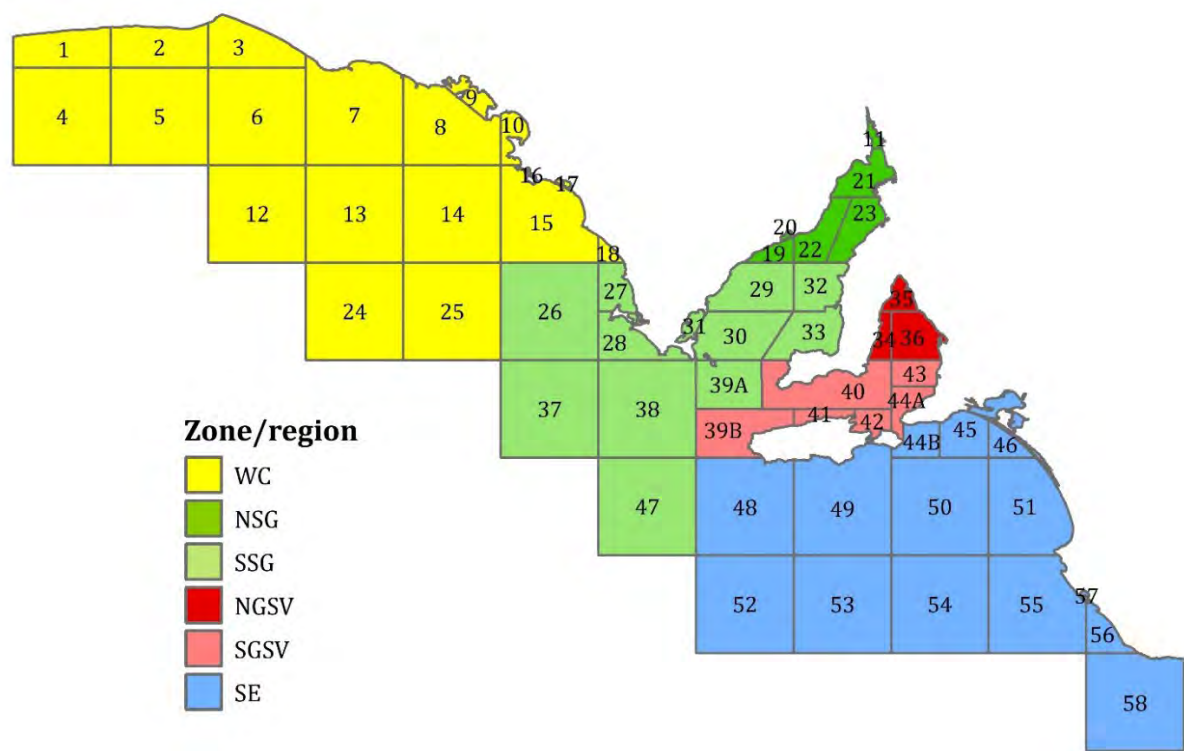
Out of scope
- Results will continue to be updated as more fishing and survey data become available.

Next steps

- SARDI continues to collect and analyse data to track impacts and provide further advice to PIRSA and industry.
- Updates will be shared as new information becomes available.

Figures

Figure 1. Management zones and marine fishing areas (blocks) in the Marine Scalefish Fishery. Abbreviations for management zones: WC, West Coast; NSG, Northern Spencer Gulf; SSG, Southern Spencer Gulf; NGSV, Northern Gulf St Vincent; SGSV, Southern Gulf St Vincent; SE, South East.



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