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**FISHERIES & AQUACULTURE**

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## **NOTICE TO WEST COAST PRAWN FISHERY LICENCE HOLDERS**

### **Closure of West Coast Prawn Fishery**

Dear Licence Holder

Following a meeting with Ms Kelly Pyke-Tape on 14 November 2022, in which we discussed the latest advice note for the fishery, I wish to advise that, as delegate of the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, pursuant to regulation 10 of the *Fisheries Management (Prawn Fisheries) Regulations 2017*, I have formally closed the West Coast Prawn Fishery.

This decision has been made following consideration of the advice on the depleted status of the fishery and the most recent advice received from the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) following industry concerns about a shift in fishing effort to inshore areas of Venus Bay impacting commercial catch rate (CPUE). The advice from SARDI concluded that 90% of fishing effort in 2022 had occurred in inshore fishing areas of Venus Bay which contrasts with the previous 11 years when fishing effort was higher offshore. However, the advice indicated that the 10-year mean for CPUE was higher in inshore areas than offshore areas, and therefore the shift in effort to inshore fishing in 2022 was not considered to negatively impact the CPUE performance in the current fishing season.

Although the harvest strategy is silent on the period of a closure, it is considered explicit that the fishery would be closed when the fishery was classified as depleted. Further, the harvest strategy provides for within-season shifts in fishing arrangements, as exemplified by the depleting status arrangements which allow for the mid-season shift from a maximum of 75 nights to 50 nights in a season if fishery independent surveys results provide for a shift. Therefore, the change in management arrangements to close the fishery in November, being within the 2022 fishing season, following the classification of the fishery as depleted in 2022 is not without precedent and consistent with the harvest strategy.

Based on the available scientific advice on the performance of the West Coast Prawn Fishery, the decision rules in the harvest strategy for the fishery and the investigation of the views of licence holders on external impacts on the commercial CPUE in 2022, I have decided to close the fishery under regulation 10 of the *Fisheries Management (Prawn Fisheries) Regulations 2017*. This recommendation

is considered to be consistent with the objects described in Section 7(1)(a) of the *Fisheries Management Act 2007* to have proper conservation and management measures implemented to protect the aquatic resources of the State from over-exploitation and ensure that those resources are not endangered. The recommendation is also consistent with the decision rules in the harvest strategy for the fishery.

It is noted the harvest strategy includes provisions for fishery independent surveys in November, March and June to inform limited commercial fishing in the following month/s if the fishery is closed to fishing. These arrangements would allow for survey CPUE and potentially commercial CPUE information to be collated allowing for the recovery of prawn stocks to be monitored and inform management arrangements for the following fishing season. I look forward to working with the Association and the West Coast Prawn Fishery licence holders in working through these arrangements in 2023.

I have attached a copy of the closure notice for your reference.

Should you have any queries regarding this matter, please contact Jordan Lear, Fisheries Manager on 0401 121 955 or at [Jordan.lear@sa.gov.au](mailto:Jordan.lear@sa.gov.au)

Yours sincerely



Prof Gavin Begg  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
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