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FISHERIES & AQUACULTURE

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**NOTICE TO MARINE SCALEFISH FISHERY AND ROCK LOBSTER
FISHERIES LICENCE HOLDERS****2023-24 Quota unit values for Snapper, King George Whiting, Southern
Garfish and Southern Calamari**

Dear licence holder,

I write in relation to the setting of the kilogram unit values of quota units for the Tier 1 stocks in the Marine Scalefish Fishery (MSF) for Snapper, King George Whiting, Southern Garfish and Southern Calamari – for the 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 quota period.

As delegate of the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, for the purposes of regulations 14(4), 17(4), 17A(4) and 17B(4) of the *Fisheries Management (Marine Scalefish Fishery) Regulations 2017* and regulations 17A(4), 17B(4), 17C(4) and 17D(4) of the *Fisheries Management (Rock Lobster Fisheries) Regulations 2017*, I have determined the kilogram value of quota units for each species in each fishing zone for the 2023-24 quota period as provided in Table 1, effectively setting total allowable commercial catches (TACCs) provided in Table 2.

Table 1: Kilogram value of a unit for MSF Tier 1 stocks for the 2023-2024 quota period.

Fishing Zone	King George Whiting	Snapper	Southern Calamari	Southern Garfish
West Coast				
Spencer Gulf	55.50		51.00	50.00
GSV/KI	23.00		40.50	35.50
South East		26.37		

Table 2: TACCs in kilograms for MSF Tier 1 stocks for the 2023-24 quota period.

Fishing Zone	King George Whiting	Snapper	Southern Calamari	Southern Garfish
West Coast	183,000*	0		
Spencer Gulf	116,963	0	207,520	103,451
GSV/KI	46,334	0	164,837	75,289
South East		52,509**		

*Not ITQ – only catch cap

**TAC of 70,012 kg consisting of: TACC of 52,509 kg, TARC of 17,503 kg

In determining the kilogram unit values I have considered the following:

- Objects of the *Fisheries Management Act 2007*
- Recommendations from the Marine Scalefish Fishery Management Advisory Committee (MSFMAC) and related stock summaries

- The status of stocks as published in the 'Assessment of the South Australian Marine Scalefish Fishery in 2020' report provided by the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) and the draft 2021/22 report
- The SARDI Snapper Stock Assessment Report 2022
- The *South Australian Management Plan for the Commercial Marine Scalefish Fishery* (the MSF Management Plan)
- The outcomes of reviews of quota allocation decisions relating to exceptional circumstances as communicated in the notice to fishers of 21 December 2022, noting there remain some ongoing reviews.

In considering the unit values I have noted there have been no changes to stock status and no updated harvest strategies for the stocks in question and that a new harvest strategy framework is in development. Since catch limits were last considered, new assessments for Snapper and King George Whiting have been undertaken by SARDI.

South East Snapper

In 2021-22, SARDI undertook assessments of Snapper stocks in South Australia, including the stock in the South East (SE) region. The stock was sustainable with an increasing biomass. The update of the stock assessment has triggered a model re-evaluation of an appropriate harvest fraction for SE Snapper to guide consideration of a total allowable catch (TAC). This involved identification of a harvest fraction that coincided with a stable or increasing stock, consistent with the previous methods applied to set the 2021-22 TAC.

Considering the re-evaluated harvest fraction, the sustainable stock status, increasing biomass, and record high recruitment of Snapper recorded in Port Phillip Bay in 2018 and 2022, the MSFMAC recommended a TAC increase from 48 tonnes to 70 tonnes based on a 20% harvest fraction, and subsequent increase in TACC from 35.842 tonnes to 52.5 tonnes, as per existing regional catch shares for SE Snapper. The MSFMAC considered the increase in TAC to be conservative and I have supported this recommendation in determining the kilogram unit value of SE Snapper for the 2023-24 quota period.

King George Whiting

An updated stock assessment was undertaken for King George Whiting (KGW) in 2022-23 and the outcomes were considered by the MSFMAC. All stocks are classified as sustainable, however in the case of KGW in the Spencer Gulf Fishing Zone (SGFZ), there had been a decline in recruitment and subsequent small decline in estimated biomass in recent years. Both raw and standardised Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) were high and did not indicate any issues with stock status. The MSFMAC recommended the 2022-23 TACC be maintained for 2023-24 and that recruitment and biomass be closely monitored.

For the West Coast Fishing Zone (WCFZ), the new KGW assessment incorporated the new fishing zone boundaries. There was no evidence of unsustainable fishing occurring, and there was a high but uncertain biomass and low harvest fraction. The MSFMAC noted the biomass estimates were less certain on the West Coast than in the Spencer Gulf or Gulf St Vincent/Kangaroo Island regions, as the adult spawning stock was outside the footprint of the fishing effort. Considering these factors and the current development of a new harvest strategy framework, the MSFMAC recommended the 2022-23 commercial catch cap be maintained for 2023-24.

I have carefully considered the above recommendations for KGW and the other Tier 1 stocks and determined the unit values in Table 1 – which effectively remain unchanged except for SE Snapper.

As the KGW in the WCFZ is not managed under individual transferable quota (ITQ), the commercial catch cap will remain unchanged and fishing for the species will be closed in that zone when the commercial take reaches 183,000 kg during the 2023-24 period.

Carry-over and over-catch arrangements

Regulations 14(5), 17(5), 17A(5) and 17B(5) of the *Fisheries Management (Marine Scalefish Fishery) Regulations 2017* and 17A(5), 17B(5), 17C(5) and 17D(5) of the *Fisheries Management (Rock Lobster Fisheries) Regulations 2017* provide for carry-over of uncaught quota held on an individual licence at a default level of up to 10% of the quota entitlement, unless a lesser amount is determined by the Minister. The regulations also provide for over-catch of quota, whereby an amount up to 10%, or lesser amount determined by the Minister, may be over-caught and each kilogram in excess of the quota allocation may be deducted from the quota entitlement on that licence by the Minister in the subsequent quota period at a rate of 1:1.

Consistent with the policy paper *Managing Under-catch and Over-catch in South Australian Fisheries* and considering recommendations from the MSFMAC, I can advise that the default carry-over and over-catch values of up to 10% will be applied in the 2023-24 quota period.

Please note that where an over-catch amount exceeds 10% of the quota entitlements held on a licence, each kilogram in excess of the quota allocation may be deducted from the quota entitlements on that licence in the subsequent quota period at a rate of 2:1.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) Fisheries and Aquaculture licencing unit will assess uncaught or over-caught quota entitlements at the end of each quota period. Adjustments to quota entitlements will be applied to licences as soon as practicable following the beginning of the next quota period. Licence holders will be advised of the changes at the time the adjustments are made in quota statements.

Should you have any queries regarding the MSF, you can contact Yolande Markey, Fisheries Manager on (08) 8683 5315 or email yolande.markey@sa.gov.au.

Yours sincerely,



Prof Gavin Begg
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE
Delegate of the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development