



Document ID: A7188850

31 October 2025

FISHERIES &amp; AQUACULTURE

2 Hamra Avenue  
West Beach SAGPO Box 1625  
Adelaide SA 5001

Tel (08) 8207 5333

www.pir.sa.gov.au

**NOTICE TO MARINE SCALEFISH FISHERY, BLUE CRAB AND NORTHERN  
ZONE ROCK LOBSTER FISHERIES LICENCE HOLDERS****Temporary closure of Gulf St Vincent – marine scalefish species and blue  
crab**

Dear licence holder,

I write to inform you that a temporary commercial fishing closure for a range of fish species has been implemented for the Gulf St Vincent and Kangaroo Island Fishing Zone (including the Port Adelaide River estuary) to come into effect on 1 November 2025 as a precautionary measure to promote stock recovery of fish stocks impacted by the algal bloom.

The algal bloom that has been observed in the State, since March 2025, has had a devastating impact on more than 500 species of marine life with dead sharks, rays and other fish washing up along the coastline. Commercially and recreationally important species are among those that have been significantly affected, resulting in significant impacts on fishing activities, particularly in Gulf St Vincent and the adjacent waters of Kangaroo Island.

The South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) has been and continues to conduct assessments to evaluate the effects of the algal bloom on important fish stocks. The initial assessment shows the algal bloom has most severely affected fish stocks in Gulf St Vincent, with Spencer Gulf experiencing comparatively less of an impact. The main findings of the initial SARDI assessment for the quota species are:

- Gulf St Vincent / Kangaroo Island: Broad-scale catches of King George Whiting remain stable, but finer-scale data and industry reports show sharp localised declines. Commercial fishers advise Calamari and Garfish have been severely affected, with near absence reported in many areas. Surveys undertaken by SARDI in conjunction with the Gulf St Vincent Prawn Fishery indicated elasmobranchs and Calamari were noticeably absent and well below expected levels. Blue Crab catches were negligible, confirmed by targeted surveys with catches and catch rates well below historical levels. High levels of Abalone mortality have also been observed in the Gulf.
- Spencer Gulf: Overall, while catches of King George Whiting, Calamari, and Garfish have shown some decline in localised southern regions, catches remain relatively stable, including those for Prawn and Blue Crab.

For the lesser targeted, non-quota species, the capacity to detect bloom-related impacts is far more limited however of the 17 species assessed, 11 appeared to have experienced negative impacts in Gulf St Vincent/Kangaroo Island.

Based on these initial findings a number of management arrangements to promote stock recovery have now been implemented as a precautionary measure consistent with the object of the *Fisheries Management Act 2007*(the Act). This difficult decision is in line with the priority principle of the Act to ensure proper conservation and management measures are implemented to protect aquatic resources of the state from over exploitation and ensure those resources are not endangered. The arrangements also take into account the principle that if there are threats of a serious or irreversible damage to the aquatic resources of the state, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent such damage.

In consideration of the current available evidence and information, temporary management arrangements have been implemented in the Gulf St Vincent and Kangaroo Island Fishing Zone that will provide protection for the more heavily impacted finfish and crab species and provide the ecosystem and remaining fish stocks a greater opportunity to recover from the significant impacts of the algal bloom.

The Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, has made a declaration under section 79 of the *Fisheries Management Act 2007* to temporarily prohibit the take of Marine Scalefish Fishery species including Blue Crab by licensed persons in the commercial Marine Scalefish Fishery, Northern Zone Rock Lobster Fishery (in respect to marine scalefish), and Blue Crab Fishery within the waters of the Gulf St Vincent and Kangaroo Island Fishing Zone (including Port Adelaide River estuary), to 30 June 2026 unless varied or revoked earlier.

Licence holders will be able to transit through the Gulf St Vincent and Kangaroo Island Fishing Zone with fish lawfully taken in other fishing zones, in circumstances provided in the notice, including a requirement to make a report prior to entering the Gulf St Vincent and Kangaroo Island Fishing Zone. The section 79 notice is provided at **Attachment A**.

For holders of a Northern Zone Rock Lobster Fishery licence, the closure does not prohibit fishing for Rock Lobster and Giant Crab. However, please be advised the closures do prohibit the take of all species prescribed for the Marine Scalefish Fishery, including Octopus. These arrangements have been implemented based on evidence of the impact of the algal bloom over a wide range of species including Octopus and are required to support recovery of these impacted stocks.

A range of temporary reductions of recreational fishing bag and boat limits, and Charter Boat Fishery passenger bag and trip limits are also being implemented over the same period.

In acknowledgement of the impacts of the temporary management arrangements on industry the Government has extended the fishing fee relief and industry assistance grants to 31 July 2026, as well as committing \$500,000 to examine, in partnership with industry, the long-term sustainability of the Marine Scalefish Fishery, including analysis of further voluntary licence surrenders.

Support is also available for licence holders facing financial hardship through the [Rural Financial Counselling Service \(RFCS\)](#) and the [Family and Business \(FaB\)](#)

[Mentor program](#). These services provide financial counselling and wellbeing support for primary producers experiencing hardship. Further information is available at [Summer Plan Algal Bloom Update](#). Industry members may also seek support from [Stay Afloat Australia](#) mental and wellbeing health program for the Australian seafood industry.

Should you have any queries on this matter, please contact your local Senior Fisheries Officer in your region, or relevant fisheries manager:

Marine Scalefish Fishery – Yolande Markey, Ph: (08) 8683 5315 or email [yolande.markey@sa.gov.au](mailto:yolande.markey@sa.gov.au).

Blue Crab Fishery – Sam Stone, Ph (08) 8429 2101 or email: [sam.stone@sa.gov.au](mailto:sam.stone@sa.gov.au)

Northern Zone Rock Lobster Fishery – Steve Shanks Phone: (08) 8429 0197 or email: [steve.shanks@sa.gov.au](mailto:steve.shanks@sa.gov.au)

Yours sincerely,



Prof Gavin Begg  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
**FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE**

Attachments:

- A. Section 79 notice