



9 May 2023

FISHERIES & AQUACULTURE

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## NOTICE TO FISHERS

### Northern Zone Rock Lobster Fishery

#### Closure of escape gaps for pot monitoring program

Dear Licence Holder,

I write to inform you of new arrangements to allow for the closure of escape gaps when participating in the voluntary pot monitoring program.

Historically, under the *Fisheries Management (General) Regulations 2017*, Northern Zone Rock Lobster Fishery (NZRLF) licence holders could close the escape gaps on up to three Rock Lobster pots, and a Ministerial exemption was issued annually to NZRLF licence holders to allow the closure of escape gaps on all pots when an independent observer was onboard the vessel.

As advised by a Notice to Fishers dated 2 May 2023, provisions for the requirement of Rock Lobster pots to have escape gaps are now provided for under Regulation 14A of the *Fisheries Management (Rock Lobster Fisheries) Regulations 2017*.

Regulation 14A allows for the closure of escape gaps by written approval of the Minister, with 14A(2)(a) stating that such written approval can be subject to conditions.

As delegate of the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, I hereby provide written approval for the closure of escape gaps subject to the following conditions:

1. Where no independent observer is on board the vessel, a maximum of three Rock Lobster pots may have the escape gaps closed.
2. Where an independent observer is on board the vessel and that observer is undertaking catch sampling for research purposes, all Rock Lobster pots may have the escape gaps closed.
3. With the exception of three Rock Lobster pots, all escape gaps on Rock Lobster pots on board the vessel must be open where no independent observer is present or as soon as the independent observer leaves the vessel.

4. Data generated while escape gaps are closed must be forwarded directly to the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI). Data may not be copied or provided to additional parties.
5. The independent observers must be either Mr Mark Barwick of 48 St Andrews Terrace, Port Lincoln, South Australia, 5605, or an employee of SARDI.
6. Before the closure of four or more escape gaps, the NZRLF licence holder, or their registered master, must contact the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) FISHWATCH on 1800 065 522 and answer a series of questions about the activity:
  1. Name of the person making the call;
  2. Licence number;
  3. Name of the boat and its registration number;
  4. The name of the Registered Master on board the boat;
  5. Port of departure;
  6. Number of days at sea.
7. This notice constitutes the written approval required under Regulation 14A of the *Fisheries Management (Rock Lobster Fisheries) Regulations 2017* and must be carried with you at all times when any escape gaps are closed.

If you have any queries regarding these arrangements, you can contact Jordan Lear, Fishery Manager, on (08) 8429 0931 or email [Jordan.Lear@sa.gov.au](mailto:Jordan.Lear@sa.gov.au) .

Yours sincerely



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