



Our reference: A5804620

27 March 2023

FISHERIES & AQUACULTURE

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NOTICE TO WEST COAST PRAWN FISHERY LICENCE HOLDERS

Closure of West Coast Prawn Fishery

Dear Licence Holder

In accordance with the West Coast Prawn Fishery Harvest Strategy (the Harvest Strategy), following a stock status classification of depleted, the West Coast Prawn Fishery was closed on 18 November 2022 by notice pursuant to regulation 10 of the *Fisheries Management (Prawn Fisheries) Regulations 2017*.

The Harvest Strategy provides that following a closure the fishery can be reopened for March or April based on the results from a fishery independent survey (FIS) in Venus Bay, with the March decision rule stating the fishery may reopen if the catch rate is ≥ 30 kg/hr (1.10 lb/min).

As a result of the FIS conducted on 21 March 2023, an advice note was provided by the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) stating that the catch rate was 21.2 kg/hr. A copy of the advice note is attached for your reference.

Based on the SARDI advice note, I advise that consistent with the Harvest Strategy and the objects described in Section 7(1)(a) of the *Fisheries Management Act 2007*, which relates to conservation and management measures to protect the aquatic resources of the State from over-exploitation, the closure of the West Coast Prawn Fishery will be retained.

Section 1.6.7 of the Harvest Strategy provides that the fishery could be reopened based on results [being specified minimum catch rates] from FIS conducted in Venus Bay in March, June and/or November. The next opportunity for the fishery to reopen is therefore through a FIS conducted in Venus Bay in June, which would need to achieve catch rates of ≥ 30 kg/hr (1.10 lb/min).

Further, section 1.6.8 of the Harvest Strategy provides that in years of limited commercial fishing (less than three months of fishing), management arrangements for the following year may be determined based on FIS catch rates from Venus Bay, with the number of nights fishing based on the average of the FIS catch rates.

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.

Yours sincerely



Prof Gavin Begg
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE