



Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development

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New demersal recreational fishing rules

From 1 June 2026



From 1 June 2026, new rules apply to help protect the long-term sustainability of demersal fish stocks for future generations.








In the North, Gascoyne and South Coast bioregions (outside the West Coast bioregion) the demersal bag limit is reduced from 5 to 4 fish per day. There are also individual species bag limit reductions for key at-risk species.











Size limits have also changed for some demersal species, as well as the removal of size limits for others. These size limit changes apply to all fishing sectors across the State.

Sharks and rays have been separated from the large pelagic finfish category. Recreational fishers will now be able to retain a combined bag limit of 3 sharks and rays per day, in addition to the existing large pelagic finfish bag limit.

Note: Boat-based demersal fishing in the West Coast bioregion remains closed until Spring 2027. The current bag limit of 2 demersal fish still applies for land-based fishing in the West Coast bioregion.

New bag and size limits

Demersal scalefish daily bag limits outside West Coast bioregion		Previous	1 June 2026
TOTAL mixed species daily bag limit per fisher. This is the combined number of demersal scalefish you can take outside the West Coast bioregion.		5	4
Demersal scalefish individual species daily bag limits outside West Coast bioregion		Previous	1 June 2026
	Coral trout, coronation trout, western blue groper	1	1
	WA dhufish	2	1
	Red emperor, pink snapper (outside of Shark Bay inner gulfs) and tuskfish (including baldchin groper)	3	2
	Grass emperor	5	4
	Bight redfish, swallowtail, yelloweye redfish (separate from mixed demersal scalefish daily bag limit in South Coast bioregion)	8	4
	All other demersal species	3	4
Statewide sharks and rays daily bag limit			1 June 2026
	Sharks and rays (separate from mixed large pelagic finfish daily bag limit)		3

Statewide demersal scalefish species size limit changes		Previous	1 June 2026
	Red emperor	410 mm	450 mm
	Pink snapper (outside West Coast bioregion)*	Shark Bay Inner Gulfs: 500 mm All other areas: 410 mm	450 mm - outside West Coast bioregion
	Spangled emperor & blue morwong	410 mm	400 mm
	Bight redfish	300 mm	350 mm
	Redthroat & bluespotted emperor	280 mm	300 mm
	Grass emperor	320 mm	300 mm
	Blackspotted & goldspotted rockcod	Max: 1,000 mm or 30 kg	No max size limit
	Blue tuskfish	400 mm	No size limit
	Swallowtail & yelloweye redfish	300 mm	No size limit
	Emperor species (excluding spangled, bluespotted, grass & redthroat emperor)	280 mm	No size limit

*The size limits for pink snapper remain unchanged in the West Coast bioregion at:

- 500 mm between Lancelin and Black Point (east of Augusta)
- 410 mm between Lancelin and Zuytdorp Cliffs (north of Kalbarri)

FAQs

Why have bag and size limits changed outside the West Coast bioregion?

New bag and size limits were introduced from 1 June 2026 to support the recovery of at-risk demersal species and address concerns around any shift in recreational fishing effort from the West Coast bioregion.

Do the demersal scalefish size and bag limit changes apply to shore-based fishers?

Yes.

Why have some species had their size limit changed or removed?

To simplify the rules and to reduce the need to release demersal scalefish that are susceptible to post-release mortality.

Is there a boat limit?

There is no boat limit for demersal scalefish outside the West Coast bioregion.

How do these changes affect charter operators?

The new bag and size limits apply to all recreational and charter fishers from 1 June 2026.

Will licence fees be revised?

No. Your Recreational Fishing from Boat Licence (RFBL) allows you to undertake many different boat-based fishing experiences across WA.

All RFBL holders in WA are eligible for the WA Government's Tackle Shop Rebate Program to help them target alternative fish species and support independent tackle stores.

When will the West Coast bioregion reopen to recreational fishing?

The West Coast bioregion will reopen to boat-based recreational fishing for demersal scalefish in Spring 2027. Changes to the recreational fishing arrangements to support this fishery reopening is being considered by the West Coast Demersal Ministerial Advisory Committee.

Will mandatory catch reporting be introduced?

Real-time reporting for recreational fishers catching demersal scalefish will be introduced statewide in 2027.

What species are included in the demersal scalefish suite?

A list of demersal species can be found on the DPIRD website and in the recreational fishing guide.

Contact us

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For more demersal information, visit dpird.wa.gov.au/demersal-scalefish-resources



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