



# forestry, fisheries & the environment

Department:  
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## PUBLIC NOTICE

01 November 2023

### THE DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT (DEPARTMENT) ANNOUNCES THE WEST COAST ROCK LOBSTER TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCH (TAC) AND TOTAL APPLIED EFFORT (TAE) FOR THE 2023/2024 FISHING SEASON

The Deputy Director-General: Fisheries Management (DDG: FM), acting under authority delegated by the Minister, has, in terms of section 14 of the Marine Living Resources Act, 1998 (Act No. 18 of 1998) (MLRA) determined the West Coast Rock lobster (WCRL) Total Allowable Catch (TAC) and Total Applied Effort (TAE) for the 2023/2024 fishing season. The exercise of the powers and duties stipulated in section 14 of the MLRA by the DDG: FM are guided by fundamental principles of environmental and fisheries management. Some of the most important principles are the following:

- 1) The need to achieve optimum utilisation and ecologically sustainable development of marine living resources.
- 2) Determining the TAC and TAE based on the best available science and information.
- 3) A precautionary approach must be applied in respect of the management and development of marine living resources.
- 4) The development, use and exploitation of renewable resources and the ecosystems of which they are part do not exceed the level beyond which their integrity is jeopardised.
- 5) Intergenerational equity: marine living resources must be conserved for the benefit of present and future generations.
- 6) The need to recognise approaches to fisheries management which contribute to food security, socio-economic development and the alleviation of poverty.

In determining the TAC and TAE for the 2023/2024 WCRL fishing season, further consideration was given to the judgment of *WWF South Africa v Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and Others* (Case No: 11478/18, in the High Court of South Africa, Western Cape Division Cape Town). The DDG: FM has used the best available science and information in resource assessment and the precautionary principle has been observed. The harvesting of WCRL at levels which do not facilitate growth of the resource is contrary to the judgment and constitutes a threat of serious and irreversible environmental damage. In projecting how resource abundance would be influenced by reductions in TAC and the limitation of the TAE, a TAC of 460 tons for the 2023/2024 fishing season has been determined. The TAC for the 2023/2024 fishing season has been reduced by 16.43% from the previous fishing season (2022/2023). The updated assessment has established that the status of the resource is now 14% - 25% worse depending on the illegal local sales, and the reduction in TAC is therefore unavoidable. The 2021 and 2022 assessments and projections had indicated that the resource in Super-area 7 has depleted more rapidly than other Super-areas and the prediction is that the area will not recover if the

recommended TAC were not to be split amongst the Super-areas. A reduction of 3% to 6% has been recommended for Super-area 7 for the 2023/2024 season, to enable a slight improvement of the status of the resource in Super-area 7 by 2026.

The apportionments per sector are as follows:

	2022/2023 TAC (t)	2023/2024 TAC (t)
<b>Commercial Fishing (Offshore)</b>	276.3	231.09
<b>Commercial Fishing (Nearshore)</b>	93.9	78.54
<b>Recreational Fishing</b>	16.9	14.14
<b>Subsistence (Interim Relief Measure) Fishing</b>	93.9	78.54
<b>Small-Scale Fishing sector (Nearshore)</b>		
<b>Small-Scale Fishing sector (Offshore)</b>	69.1	57.79
<b>Foreign Fishing</b>	0.00	0.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>550.0</b>	<b>460.0</b>

Similarly, to previous fishing seasons, the Department will apply effort limits to restrict the daily bag/ catch limits and the number of fishing days. The commercial and small-scale fishing sectors are authorised to undertake fishing for five months in each super-area/ zone. The start and end dates for the fishing season per sector and super-area/ zone are as follows:

Area	Catch period	
	Commercial Nearshore, Small-Scale: nearshore	Commercial Offshore, Small-Scale: offshore
<b>Super-area 1+2</b>	15 Oct - 15 March	
<b>Super-area 3+4</b>	15 Nov - 15 April	15 Nov - 15 April
<b>Super-area 5+6</b>	15 Nov - 15 April	
<b>Super-area 7</b>		01 Dec - 15 April
<b>Areas 8 and 11</b>	15 Nov - 15 April	
<b>Area 8 (Deep water)</b>		01 May - 30 June
<b>Areas 12, 13 and 14</b>	15 Nov - 15 March	

The 2023/2024 WCRL recreational fishing effort is limited to 12 days between 16 December 2023 and 1 April 2024. Fishing will be allowed as follows:

Number	Month	Date	Day	Approx. Low Tide time
1	Dec 2023	16 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday (public holiday)	11h52
2	Dec 2023	17 <sup>th</sup>	Sunday	12h42
3	Dec 2023	23 <sup>rd</sup>	Saturday	13h17
4	Dec 2023	24 <sup>th</sup>	Sunday	14h05
5	Dec 2023	26 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday (public holiday)	15h25
6	Dec 2023	27 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday	16h00
7	Dec 2023	28 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	16h34
8	Dec 2023	29 <sup>th</sup>	Friday	11h03
9	Dec 2023	30 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday	11h37
10	Dec 2023	31 <sup>st</sup>	Sunday	12h12
11	Jan 2024	01 <sup>st</sup>	Monday (public holiday)	05h06
12	Apr 2024	01 <sup>st</sup>	Monday (public holiday)	13h36

It should be noted that only persons over the age of twelve (12) may obtain a recreational fishing permit allowing the fishing, collecting, keeping, controlling, landing, transporting of, or possession of not more than four (4) WCRL per day. A seasonal WCRL recreational fishing permit costs R94 and can be purchased at the Post Office or online via the website link <https://www.fishing.dffe.gov.za>. A recreational fishing permit is valid for the entire season.

WCRL may be caught between 08h00 and 16h00 on the specified days. The bag limit is four (4) per person per day and the size restriction is eighty (80) millimetres carapace length. No person catching WCRL with a recreational fishing permit shall sell their catch. Any WCRL caught, collected, or transported must be kept in a whole state.

Further details regarding recreational fishing is contained in the "Marine Recreational Fishing Information and Permit Conditions Brochure", which will be made available on the above mentioned website link. Fishers are reminded to comply with the Regulations in terms of the Marine Living Resources Act, 1998 published in GNR. 1111 of 2 September 1998.



**MS. SUE MIDDLETON**

**DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL: FISHERIES MANAGEMENT**

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Issued by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment

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