



Department of
Agriculture and Fisheries

Our ref: CTS15929/22

21 September 2022

Dear Spanish Mackerel Fishery Stakeholder

I am writing to advise you that new fishery management arrangements for Spanish mackerel have been announced by the Queensland Government and will be introduced from October 2022 to achieve a stronger fishery for the future.

The new arrangements strike a balance between providing the vital protections necessary to rebuild the depleted fish stock and providing better controlled access for fishers.

The changes include a northern seasonal closure in east coast waters north of 22°S (slightly north of Stanage Bay) for two three-week periods (six weeks total) around the new moons in October and November each year.

The 2022 closures will provide vitally important protection for spawning aggregations and will run from 22 October 2022 to 12 November 2022 and 21 November to 12 December 2022.

A southern seasonal closure in east coast waters south of 22°S will run for two three-week periods (six weeks in total) in February and March each year.

The 2023 closures will protect fish that aggregate in southern waters to feed and will run from 1 February 2023 to 21 February 2023 and 1 March 2023 to 21 March 2023. Northern closure dates will be adjusted in subsequent years to align with new moon periods.

In consideration of pre-existing charter bookings made up to a year in advance, seasonal closures will not apply to recreational fishers on licensed charter fishing trips until the following season, starting on 1 July 2023.

Other key management changes include:

- adjusting the total allowable commercial catch to 165 tonnes for the 2023 fishing season starting on 1 July 2023

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- changing the recreational in-possession limit to one fish per person, or two fish per boat with two or more recreational fishers on board from 1 July 2023. (The boat limit does not apply to licensed charter fishing trips)
- removing the extended charter trip limit from 1 July 2023, which currently allows recreational fishers to take twice the in-possession limit for charter trips longer than 48 hours
- developing a new smartphone app for recreational fishers to voluntarily report their Spanish mackerel catches on the east coast and shark depredation; and
- introducing a new education and awareness program promoting best practice catch, release and handling techniques for recreational fishers.

The changes do not extinguish the right of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders to take, use or keep fisheries resources in accordance with Aboriginal tradition or under Torres Strait Islander custom.

Detailed information on the management changes including the consultation process and commencement dates can be found at daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/fisheries/sustainable/legislation/management-changes-for-east-coast-spanish-mackerel.

In line with our Queensland Sustainable Fisheries Strategy: 2017–2027, a new harvest strategy for the east coast Spanish mackerel fishery is currently in development and will underpin future decision-making for this important fishery.

In addition, the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation is supporting a new three-year Spanish mackerel research project, which will be led by researchers from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

The project will focus on the impact of shark depredation and environmental influences on the fishery, exploring the application of emerging genetic approaches for estimating stock abundance using the close-kin-mark-recapture method, estimating post-release survival and enhancing catch rate standardisation.

If you would like further information, please contact the fisheries managers in the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries by email at fisheriesmanagers@daf.qld.gov.au or by calling the DAF Call Centre on 13 25 23 and asking to talk to a fishery manager.

Yours sincerely



Dallas D'Silva
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Fisheries Queensland