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**Media Release****NSW's State Fish, the Eastern Blue Groper, will continue being protected**

Friday, 28 February 2025

Vision of Eastern Blue Groper available here: <https://spaces.hightail.com/space/A1JwW1ASuG>

The NSW Government today announced that the State's Fish, the Eastern Blue groper, will continue to be protected following scientific advice and community feedback.

Consequently, the no-line fishing prohibition, implemented 12 months ago, will continue for a further three years from 1 March 2025 to enable further research and monitoring on the species.

This decision combines with the long-term existing prohibition on spearfishing and commercial fishing of the Eastern Blue Groper to continue the temporary prohibition of line fishing.

This decision has been taken after the Government considered a range of important factors including recently published scientific information that raised concerns about the potential impacts of climate change and that caution should be taken in managing the species due to their unique biological traits.

The State's Fish holds a special place for many people and communities, and this has also contributed to the decision to continue the fishing prohibition of the iconic Eastern Blue Groper.

This decision aligns with the situation in Victoria where for a long period of time there has been a prohibition of line fishing, spear fishing and commercial fishing for the Blue Groper.

The Government is committed to the sound management of our fisheries resources while also enabling the important activity of recreational fishing to be undertaken along the coast and inland waters of NSW.

Steps were taken early last year by the Government to ensure the protection of the State's Fish, by placing a 12 month prohibition on line fishing for the fish, so research could be done to ascertain the best way to manage the Blue Groper and to enable community consultation.

The protection afforded by a prohibition on fishing was required following a community outcry on the behaviour of persons found illegally spearing the fish along the NSW coast and a concern for the sustainability of the species.

During the 12-month period of the ban, the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development undertook both community engagement, comprehensive research and stock assessment of the Blue Groper.

The stock assessment concluded that the Eastern Blue Groper is in a sustainable position, however there is a risk the species is being impacted by climate change and warming waters.

The decision to continue a ban of line fishing will afford protection for the State Fish while the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development continue scientific monitoring and research of this important species, including looking at how the community can get involved through citizen science programs.

NSW Minister for Agriculture Tara Moriarty said:

“NSW’s State Fish, the Eastern Blue Groper, will continue being protected after the Government considered a range of advice, community feedback and scientific research.

“There is a strong community interest in the State’s iconic Eastern Blue Groper, and there is a community expectation that we take every step possible to understand any potential impacts that climate change may be having on the species.

“Three further years of scientific monitoring will deliver a deeper level of understanding of how this wonderful fish is coping with warming conditions and what impact those conditions are having on the population, particularly in our inshore waters where people interact with the Eastern Blue Groper.

“I know some fishers will be disappointed, but I also know there are many in the NSW community, including fishers, who want this State Fish protected and that is what the Government is doing.”

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