

Corner Inlet Fishery Management Advisory Committee

November 2025

Overview

The Corner Inlet Fishery Management Advisory Committee (CIFMAC) met on the 21 November 2025. The fishery continues to maintain its status as a key supplier of Victorian seafood. Science assessments have indicated the fishery operates sustainably and maintains strong ethical practices. Key discussion points included:

- Catch and effort trends
- Key species biology
- Priority focus areas
- New Corner Inlet Fishery Code of Conduct
- Compliance updates
- Esso decommissioning plans

Catch and Effort

Key fish species, such as rock flathead, calamari and gummy shark are performing well, both commercially and recreationally. Seine netting effort has increased slightly, and mesh netting effort was down. Catch of King George Whiting (KGW) was down, likely a result of lowered recruitment in recent years. However, surveys indicate recruitment has increased in 2025, which will be reflected in the fishery in 2027.

Key Species Biology

KGW reach legal minimum length (LML) at ~3 years of age and can live up to 20 years. Genetics and otolith microchemistry indicate the adult spawning population is located off western Victoria/eastern South Australia, which suggests recruitment success in Victoria is driven largely by weather and ocean currents.

Rock flathead reach LML at ~2 years of age and can live for up to 22 years. Recent research indicates the adult spawning stock is likely confined to Corner Inlet, suggesting that recruitment of rock flathead is locally driven.

Priority Focus Areas

The CIFMAC will continue to monitor the sustainability of species in Corner Inlet. The CIFMAC is interested in research exploring how various habitats support populations of commercially and recreationally important species and the susceptibility of those habitats to disturbance from land-based pollutants. This information will help inform habitat restoration projects being led by commercial fishers following events such as unexplained seagrass die offs.



SIV Code of Conduct

Seafood Industry Victoria (SIV) has recently completed the new Corner Inlet Fishery Code of Conduct following a workshop with local commercial fishers. The code is a set of voluntary commitments that go above and beyond mandatory fishery regulations to help ensure sustainability of the fishery and future benefits to the community.

Compliance Update

Compliance in the fishery continues to be high in both the commercial and recreational sectors. While commercial and recreational fishers often work in harmony, there have been reported instances of recreational boat interactions with nets. A need for greater education around day shapes and commercial fishing operations was identified.

Esso Decommissioning Plans

Esso presented on ExxonMobil's decommissioning plans for the oil and gas platforms in Bass Strait, which ceased operations in 2024. The platforms will first be cleaned and prepared for transport before the *Pioneering spirit*, the world's largest construction vessel, will begin to remove the topsides (above sea platforms) and portions of the subsurface support structures (e.g. steel jackets). The sections will be placed onto heavy transport vessels, which will transit through Corner Inlet to Barry Beach terminal, where they will be dismantled and recycled. Environmental studies are currently underway to ensure the impact to the environment is minimal.