

Total allowable Commercial Catch for Victorian Rock Lobster Fishery 2018/19

Consultation on the 2018/19 on the Total Allowable Commercial Catches (TACC) was undertaken in March-April 2018 in accordance with section 3A of the Fisheries Act 1995.

Setting the 2018/19 TACC has occurred in accordance with the the objective of transitioning to the new *Victorian Rock Lobster Fishery Management Plan* and involves the first use of the new harvest strategy. The strategy is based on standardised catch per unit effort (CPUE), pre-recruit indices (PRIs), predetermined TACC levels that correspond with CPUE bands, and decision rules that are used to set the annual TACCs for the Rock Lobster Fishery.

The Western Zone Rock Lobster Fishery has showed positive signs of improvement over the past two seasons. Improved catch per unit effort (CPUE), increased model outputs for recruitment and available biomass, and 20.8 tonnes of quota left uncaught in 2016/17 as a result of seismic survey compensation arrangements with Lattice Energy (formerly Origin Energy).

Catch rates in the Eastern Zone Rock Lobster Fishery have fallen for a fifth consecutive year, the pre-recruit index (PRI) decreased to a record low and model outputs for egg production and biomass show declining trends.

I have therefore set the Rock Lobster Fishery TACCs for the 2018/19 season at the following levels:

- 245 tonne per year in the Western Zone Rock Lobster Fishery (an increase of 15t); and
- 47 tonne per year in the Eastern Zone Rock Lobster Fishery (decrease of 12t)

The TACCs at these levels are determined to be appropriately conservative under the new harvest strategy to continue to rebuild the rock lobster population.



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