

## ***Total Allowable Commercial Catch for eastern octopus zone of the Victorian Octopus Fishery 2022/23***

### **EXPLANATORY STATEMENT**

The Octopus Fishery Access Licence class was established in 2020 to enable targeted commercial octopus harvest in Victoria under dedicated, sustainable management controls. Octopus Fishery Access Licences have been issued authorising octopus harvest from the eastern octopus zone using unbaited shelter pots, under a TACC and quota management system. The TACC has been at 68.7 tonnes for the first two fishing seasons.

I have decided to maintain the TACC at 68.7 tonnes for the 2022/23 fishing season. This has been informed by a weight of evidence evaluation, taking into account stock status, species biology, management settings and available catch and effort data.

Managing sustainable biomass levels of pale octopus across the zone, and minimising risk of localised depletion, is a high priority for maximising ongoing sustainable harvest in this fishery. The TACC has to date been caught from a relatively small region around Lakes Entrance. Recent shifts in fishing location within this region have impacted the ability to detect changes in biomass trends at a wider scale. However, there are signs of possible biomass depletion in localised areas that were initially intensively fished.

Alongside the TACC, the VFA will work with the multiple licence classes that access octopus from the eastern octopus zone area to ensure that total catch is managed sustainably. Establishment of an electronic reporting system for the Octopus Fishery will be prioritised, to support spatial management of catch.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Padovani".

**Chris Padovani**

Acting Director Fisheries Management, Policy, Science, Licencing and Communications  
Victorian Fisheries Authority

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