



Fisheries Regulations 2019

Electronic reporting

New fisheries regulations to transition commercial fishers to electronic reporting

What is changing?

The new Fisheries Regulations 2019 will introduce electronic catch reporting to replace paper logbooks in specified fisheries. The electronic reporting system, known as Vic-eCatch, will be available to fishers as a smartphone and tablet app and will provide an end-to-end service for catch reporting, including the creation and distribution of Catch Disposal Records.

Vic-eCatch significantly simplifies reporting; it's quick and easy to use and allows much of the information to be automatically filled in based on a fisher's pre-set preferences. It will remove the need to spend time filling out and mailing forms and it enables catch data to be immediately available to both the fisher and the VFA.

To further simplify the reporting process, abalone fishers and receivers will no longer be required to work with hardcopy 'abalone dockets' as they will soon be able to report

abalone transfer information on Vic-eCatch. Rock lobster fishers will be able to use Vic-eCatch to maintain electronic coff and wet-well registers, which is a first for Victoria.

If the Vic-eCatch system is ever unavailable on a given day, the VFA will ensure that a manual reporting process is available via a phone call.

Which licence classes will be required to report electronically?

The specified licence classes include the abalone, rock lobster and giant crab fisheries, in addition to the Scallop Dive Fishery and Sea Urchin Fishery, which are already reporting electronically. The latter two fisheries will be transitioned across to Vic-eCatch in the future. For all other fisheries, the existing arrangements will remain unchanged and fishers will continue to report catch in logbooks for the time being. It should be noted that the VFA intends to transition all commercial fisheries to Vic-eCatch over time, and that this will be done in consultation with industry.

When will the change to electronic reporting take place?

Dates for the commencement of electronic reporting are detailed in the table below.

Commercial Fishery Access Licence class	Expected commencement*
Abalone	1 April 2020 (central and western zones) 1 April 2021 (eastern zone)
Giant crab	1 July 2020
Rock lobster	1 July 2020
Scallop dive (already reporting electronically)	1 February 2020
Sea urchin (already reporting electronically)	1 February 2020

* The regulations are framed on the basis that electronic reporting will be required on 1 February 2020. However, the VFA will exempt all relevant licence classes from this requirement until the expected implementation date detailed above to help with the transition.



How do I start electronic reporting?

The VFA is working hard to make sure the Vic-eCatch system is easy to use and that the transition to electronic reporting for commercial fishers is smooth. The VFA will hold a series of information sessions on the development of Vic-eCatch and will run training sessions for fishers throughout the state in the lead up to the commencement of the electronic reporting requirement.

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