

Total allowable Commercial Catch for Victorian Pipi Fishery 2022/23

Consultation on the 2022/23 Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) was undertaken in January 2022 in accordance with section 3A of the Fisheries Act 1995.

The TACCs have been determined based on our current knowledge of the resource and also a range of factors external to the fishery that have impacted catches. Please find attached the final Further Quota Order implementing the 2022/23 TACCs

As of 4 January 2022 (with just under three months of the 2021/22 fishing season remaining), less than 10% of the TACC in Discovery Bay (Western) zone had been caught, which is a result of the primary access point through the coastal park not being open to motorised vehicles. In Discovery Bay (Eastern) zone, 58% of the TACC had been caught, which is less than the expected catch at this point in the year, again related to access. In Venus Bay commercial zone, none of the TACC had been caught, also related to the inability to access the fishery.

As noted in previous correspondence, when individual records of catch per unit effort (CPUE) were examined, there was some evidence of decline in Discovery Bay (Eastern) zone in 2020 compared to the previous three years, which was more noticeable since the commencement of the quota fishery in April 2020. The records of 2021, however, show an increase in CPUE so a management response based on fishery-dependent data is not warranted at this stage.

In terms of fishery-independent data provided by the Melbourne University research project, only one survey has been completed to date, which provides a preliminary biomass estimate. Additional fishery-independent surveys are required to provide the information needed to inform any management action. More data is expected in 2022.

Given the limited data available, as well the large proportion of uncaught TACCs due to factors external to the fishery, the current pipi TACC's will be maintained.

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