

Total Allowable Commercial Catch for the Victorian Banded Morwong Fishery 2022/23

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

A weight of evidence approach has been used in setting for the 2022/23 fishing season. This included consideration of factors such as biological characteristics, stock status, fishery management arrangements (including a 3-month closed season and slot limit of 40-50cm), recent catch and effort analysis and consideration of stakeholder views. The following points are also noted:

1. A TACC of 2920 fish will maintain the annual TACC that has been in place since the most recent increase was implemented four years ago for the 2018/19 fishing season (which followed a peak in the fishery's standardised annual catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) in the 2016/17 fishing season).
2. There is not currently a reliable biomass estimate for the Victorian banded morwong fishery and there is no recent information or research that supports increasing the TACC at this time.
3. While there is a 5-year declining trend in the fishery's standardised annual CPUE since its peak in 2016/17, is it recognised that:
 - a. total fishing effort carried out in 2020/21 and 2021/22 and subsequent catch was significantly less than 2018/19 and 2019/20. It is understood that this was partly due to the impacts of Covid on the live fish market and operators involved. In effect, a total of 1214 fish and 920 fish were not harvested from the fishery resulting in an under-catch of the TACC of 41.6% and 31.5% for the 2020/21 and 2021/22 fishing seasons, respectively.
 - b. the limited number of operators and fishing days creates some uncertainty in the reliability of CPUE.
 - c. the catch-per-unit-effort low of 8.37 fish/hour which occurred in the 2021/22 fishing season may partially be related to the new licence holders which are still gaining experience in the fishery.
 - d. Limited spread of effort to date from the eastern side of the fishery presents opportunity to spread effort to some western areas to

A %Address%
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potentially increase fishing efficiency and mitigate risk of localised depletion in eastern areas.

In considering the available evidence, I have set the Banded Morwong Fishery TACC at 2920 fish for the 2022/23 season.

A handwritten signature in dark grey ink, appearing to read "Chris Padovani". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent upward stroke on the left side.

Chris Padovani

**A/ Director – Fisheries Management, Science, Policy, Licensing and Communications
Victorian Fisheries Authority**

16 / 3 /2022