

Total allowable Commercial Catch for Victorian Rock Lobster Fishery 2025/26

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

I am pleased to advise that I have set the Rock Lobster Fishery total allowable commercial catches (TACCs) for the upcoming season, commencing on 1 July 2025, at:

- **245 tonne in the Western Zone Rock Lobster Fishery**
- **21 tonne in the Eastern Zone Rock Lobster Fishery**

These catch levels follow the direction set under the new Harvest Strategy, declared as part of the Victorian Rock Lobster Fishery Management Plan 2024. This decision has also received unanimous support from the Rock Lobster Resource Assessment Group (RLRAG).

Western Zone

The stock indicators in the Western Zone continue to show improvement. The standardised CPUE remained at 0.78 in 2023/24, following consecutive years of increases. Further, the PRI has remained relatively consistent over the last three years. While the PRI reduced to 1.82 undersize per pot-lift in 2023/24, it remains above the harvest strategy's threshold reference point of 1.67 undersize per pot-lift. Furthermore, egg production continues to remain well above the 20% limit reference point. Based on this information, the RLRAG unanimously endorsed the application of the harvest strategy, continuing with the current rebuilding plan.

Eastern Zone

The Eastern Zone continues to present concerning results. While the CPUE increased substantially in the most recent stock assessment, this needs to be considered with caution due to the low levels of data available to assess this fishery. The PRI was recorded at 0.02 undersize per pot-lift in 2023/24. This is the lowest on record and well below the threshold of 0.25 undersize per pot-lift for the second consecutive year. Under the harvest strategy, if the zone experiences two consecutive years under the PRI threshold, a review is triggered. Based on the conservative rebuilding plan in the Eastern Zone, the RLRAG endorsed the harvest strategy outcome for the TACC to remain at 21 tonnes; and further recommended that a review of the harvest control rules be prioritised at its next meeting to determine an appropriate course of action should the trend in the PRI continue.



Travis Dowling
Chief Executive Officer
Victorian Fisheries Authority

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