

Rationale for setting the 2022/23 abalone total allowable commercial catches

The Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) uses a multiple-lines-of-evidence assessment approach to assess the state of the abalone resource and set the annual total allowable commercial catch (TACC) for each of the three commercial abalone zones.

The information considered in arriving at the TACCs includes:

- *Fishery dependent information*: catch history, catch per unit effort (CPUE) and diver observations; and
- *Fishery independent information*: independent dive survey data that includes pre-recruit and recruit abundance.

Following a comprehensive consultation process that included workshops and a request for submissions from stakeholders, I have made the following decision on the TACC for the Eastern Abalone Zone. The Western and Central Abalone Zones are currently in their TACC setting processes and will be published separately.

Eastern Zone

- a blacklip abalone TACC of 331 tonnes; and
- to set legal minimum sizes for blacklip abalone.

The Eastern Zone Abalone Industry Association and the VFA continue to work together on the draft harvest strategy framework with the objective of rebuilding the abalone biomass in the zone. The draft harvest strategy was again trialled alongside the existing processes, with a contribution now made by MRAG Asia Pacific, contracted by the VFA to conduct the stock assessment.

After consideration of information at the stock assessment and quota workshop, a 6.5t reduction were suggested to catch levels.



Chris Padovani

A/Director Fisheries Management, Science, Licencing, Policy and Communications
Victorian Fisheries Authority

25 / 03 / 2022