



8 August 2020

Guy Barnett, Minister for Primary Industries and Water

## Rock Lobster Fishery Season opening dates for 2020

The Tasmanian Government has announced the dates for the opening of this year's Rock Lobster Fishery Season.

The 2020 season dates for the recreational and commercial fisheries maintain the status quo set during the past two years, with the exception of a slightly earlier opening date for the recreational fishery outside of the East Coast Stock Rebuilding Zone (ECSRZ), which extends from Eddystone Point to the southern end of Bruny Island.

The recreational fishery (outside of ECSRZ) will open on Sunday, November 1, this year ahead of the long weekend in Northern Tasmania. The commercial fishery season (outside of ECSRZ) will open on its traditional date of November 15.

The decision on opening dates was made after consultation with peak fishing industry bodies and relevant fisheries advisory committees.

The slightly earlier opening date for the recreational fishery (outside of ECSRZ) provides an additional weekend fishing day and gives the bonus of a long weekend for northern recreational fishers before the commercial fishery can set pots.

We encourage Tasmanians to make the most of this earlier opening date and enjoy fishing for our iconic and highly prized crays, and explore what our state has to offer by holidaying at home and supporting local businesses.

The seasons for the East Coast Stock Rebuilding Zone (ECSRZ) for the recreational fishery will open on Saturday, December 5, and the commercial fishery will open on Tuesday, December 8.

The Tasmanian Government continues to support and monitor stock in the East Coast through the 10-year stock rebuilding strategy that was implemented in 2013, due to declining stocks earlier in the decade.

The Rock Lobster Rebuilding Strategy aims to improve these stocks to greater than 20 per cent of an unfished fishery by 2023, and we are on track to achieve this rebuild and ensure we have a sustainable fishery with improved catch rates for the long term.

It was important that all views were considered when setting this year's season dates. While recreational fishers highly value the opportunity to fish before the commercial season opens, we also need to ensure that commercial fishers are able supply pre-Christmas domestic and export markets.

We also acknowledge that this year has been particularly challenging for the commercial fishing industry given the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and access to the main export market in China.

In future, when East East stocks have rebuilt, we may be able to re-evaluate future season dates.

For more information on the recreational fishing seasons visit the DPIPWE website: [www.fishing.tas.gov.au/rec/seasons](http://www.fishing.tas.gov.au/rec/seasons) and for more information on the commercial fishing seasons visit: [www.fishing.tas.gov.au/com/seasons](http://www.fishing.tas.gov.au/com/seasons)