



18 November 2022

Dear Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery licence holder

Management Arrangements for the 2022-23 Fishing Season

The 2022-23 fishing season for the Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery (TRL Fishery) will commence on 1 December 2022. This letter details some key management arrangements that will apply this season.

Total Allowable Catch

On 4 October 2022, Senator the Hon. Murray Watt, Commonwealth Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry determined a total allowable catch (TAC) of 200,000 kilograms of tropical rock lobster (TRL) in the Australian waters of the TRL Fishery for the 2022-23 fishing season to apply for the fishing season commencing on 1 December 2022. It is expected that the TAC will be increased once the outcomes of the scientific assessment processes and the catch sharing arrangements under the Torres Strait Treaty between Australia and Papua New Guinea (PNG) have been considered. Any increase in the TAC is expected to be determined by the end of February 2023.

Under this TAC, the value of each quota unit and available catch for each TRL Fishery sector is outlined in the table below. All weights are provided in unprocessed weight in kilograms.

TRL Fishery Sector	TAC (kilograms)	Number of quota units	Value of each quota unit (kilograms)	Available catch per sector (kilograms)
Traditional Inhabitant Boat (TIB) licence holders	200,000	662,016*	0.200000	132,403.597
Transferrable Vessel Holder (TVH) licence holders		337,981		67,596.403

* Held by the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA)

A further explanation of how TACs are determined for the TRL Fishery, how catch is shared between Australia and PNG, and how each sector’s catches will be managed for the 2022-23 fishing season, is provided in the enclosed TRL Management Arrangements Booklet 2022-23 (**Enclosure A**).

Moontide Hookah Closures

For the purpose of subsection 13(2) of the *Torres Strait Fisheries (Tropical Rock Lobster) Management Instrument 2018*, I provide notice that the use, possession or control, on a boat, of hookah gear to take, process or carry TRL will not be permitted during the 2022-23 fishing season during the moontide hookah closure periods shown in the calendar provided in **Enclosure B** to this letter. The first scheduled moontide hookah closure period starts on 17 February 2023.

These moontide hookah closures are in addition to the hookah closure period from 1 December until 31 January each fishing season. Free-diving, lamp fishing and traditional fishing are permitted during all hookah closure periods.

Changes to fishing and carrier licence conditions in the TRL Fishery

On 16 November 2022, and effective from 1 December 2022, my Deputy CEO, as a delegate of the PZJA, agreed to vary the conditions imposed on fishing boat and carrier boat licences in the TRL Fishery. These changes are:

- a. To strengthen existing requirements and reporting obligations on licenced fishers when landing commercial catch under the Fish Receiver System
- b. Provide operational flexibility for licenced carrier boats to reasonably transport crew between the carrier boat and land
- c. To clarify that licence holders can only take, process and carry fish that they are authorised to do so as indicated by the symbols noted on the licence (e.g. CR)
- d. To make other minor amendments to ensure condition language is clear, contact details are correct and relevant conditions apply to relevant licences.

Further details on the condition changes are provided in **Enclosure C**.

Should you have any questions concerning the matters covered in this letter, please contact the AFMA Thursday Island office on 07 4069 1990 or FisheriesTI@afma.gov.au. If you would also like to receive future management updates by email or SMS please contact the AFMA Thursday Island office to update your contact details.

Yours sincerely



Wez Norris
Chief Executive Officer

Enclosures

- A TRL Fishery Management Arrangements Booklet 2022-23
- B TRL Fishery moontide hookah closure calendar for the 2022-23 fishing season
- C Further detail on licence condition variations

Further detail on TRL fishing boat and carrier licence condition variation

Condition	Description of change	Applicable to	Rationale for change
Landing catch to a licenced fish receiver	Strengthening the language to ensure that when a licenced fisher is signing a CDR, they are verifying their fishing licence details <u>and</u> the catch they have landed. Existing conditions require the fisher to only verify their licence details. This condition is also strengthened by applying to the licence holder	All fishing boat licences (TIB and TVH)	The conditions relating to 'landing catch to a licenced fish receiver' have been varied to place a greater responsibility on fishers to verify the details of the fishing licence <u>and</u> the catch they land to a licenced fish receiver as an accurate record upon signing each Catch Disposal Record (CDR). This variation does not change the widely understood obligations of either the fisher or receiver at an operational level, but seeks to reinforce the need for licenced fishers to be sure of the record that is being produced by the fish receiver when landing their commercial catch and signing the CDR.
Carrier Licence conditions	Provide operational flexibility for licenced carrier boats to reasonably transport crew between the carrier boat and land. The variation seeks to limit the scope and operation of such a boat that could be towed. For example, being of a certain length, and for specific activities.	All Carrier class B and C licences	Currently, Carrier C licences are prohibited from towing any boat. This variation is intended to provide some flexibility for carrier boat licence class C and B holders to authorise them to be able to tow a boat that would allow the reasonable transport of crew between the carrier boat and land.
Fishery symbols	Adding in: "The licence holder must not [take], [carry], or [process or carry] fish other than those authorised under this licence as indicated by the symbol(s) noted on this licence." Note: the terms applicable in square brackets will vary and depend on the type of applicable licence and what it authorises.	All fishing boat and carrier licences (TIB and TVH)	Each Torres Strait licence will have one or more fishery entries (sometimes referred to as 'endorsements' (e.g. CR for the TRL fishery) which authorise the taking processing or carrying of certain fish in specific areas of fishery waters. These conditions have been strengthened to clarify that the licence holder cannot take, process or carry fish other than those authorised by the fishery entry. This variation seeks to remove any unintended loop holes, strengthen enforceability of the conditions and should not change the existing understanding of licence holders or their operations.
VMS	Updating the relevant contact details for the VMS team	All primary fishing & carrier boat licences greater than 6m in length	Email contact updated to: ausvms@afma.gov.au