

WA recreational fishing ban: Opposition says alternative proposals from anglers 'ignored'



Josh Zimmerman | The West Australian
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Josh Zimmerman



The State Opposition has called for a pause on plans to dramatically scale back the recreational fishing season for a huge stretch of WA's coastline, likening it to 'using a sledgehammer to crack a walnut'. Credit: The West Australian



Shadow Fisheries Minister Colin de Grussa has called for a pause on plans to dramatically scale back the recreational fishing season for a huge stretch of the WA coastline, which he likened to "using a sledgehammer to crack a walnut".

The McGowan Government has faced intense backlash since revealing potential changes that would slash the fishing season for demersal scalefish from its current 10 months to either 94-days in staged openings from December to May, or a 123-day limit from April to October.

Premier Mark McGowan has defended the looming ban on catching species such as pink snapper and dhufish in the west coast bioregion, insisting it was necessary to rebuild stocks.

"We're putting it out for consultation but all of the science says that the decline in fish stocks needs remedial action. If you don't do something, in five or 10 years time there won't be any fish," Mr McGowan said on Sunday.



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Steve Butler

That position was rubbished by Mr de Grussa on Tuesday, who said the "same science" had been relied upon by hobby and commercial fishers when drafting alternative proposals that had been "ignored" as part of the initial consultation process.

Those proposals included a total ban on catching dhufish during the species' spawning season and adjusting the split between commercial and recreational fishers to hand a larger share to the latter.

There is currently a 750 tonne annual limit across the entire west coast bioregion - which runs from Kalbarri to Augusta - with commercial operations allocated two thirds of the total catch.



Colin de Grussa. Credit: DAVID BROADWAY

Recreational fishers are also currently banned from catching demersal species from October 15 to December 15.

“We know that both the recreational sector and the commercial sector have had a number of different options that they put on the table for government, all based on the same science that the government is using,” Mr de Grussa said.

“But Government wasn’t prepared to listen and instead they’ve taken the blunt instrument, easy to manage, administratively simple approach that suits them rather than the best approach for the industry.”

The two options that have been put on the table by the McGowan Government - that would effectively ban recreational fishing for eight or nine months each year - are out for consultation until September 16, with changes expected to be in place by summer.

“This will have a devastating impact right across Western Australia,” Mr de Grussa said.

“There are so many small businesses that make their living out of providing the equipment that people need for fishing.

“All will be devastated by this proposal, which is why Government really needs to go back to the table, extend the deadline for submissions on this and actually listen to industry and be prepared to properly resource their own departments to manage the fisheries.”

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stephen f 1 week ago

It's all well and good for the opposition to say this, but we are genuinely screwed if the governments proposed changes don't occur .

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Samantha R 1 week ago

It's always the little guy getting the blame and being punished. Big commercial companies don't get the same treatment, they're allowed to continue business as usual, making money, raking in the most significant portion of fish numbers caught, harming the surrounding environment with commercial amounts of bycatch, biocides, potential oil leaks etc. The hobbyist gets enough for a meal or two for him/her/them self and maybe their family, plus gets the enjoyment and mental health of being out in nature and practicing a skill. The hobbyist should not be the only one to be punished, onus should first be on the commercial fishery companies, any other companies involved ie seafood stores/restaurants etc, and then the hobbyists if and where necessary as a last resort.

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Ray P 1 week ago

Activities that involve the killing or catching of wildlife for recreation and fun need to be phased out. Time to evolve.

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dan s 1 week ago

Good work Collin !!!

Tell the people the truth about this "science"

And how it is basically people standing at the boat ramp asking fishers what they caught once in a blue moon

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– **undefined** 1 week ago

↩ In reply to **dan s**

Ignorant comment. Do a bit of research into how the stock assessment was done.

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– **Jaylin W** 1 week ago

There are so many small businesses that make their living out of providing the equipment that people need for fishing.

bro they're gonna have an even harder time hwhen there's no fish left

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