

# WA fishing ban: McGowan Government extends discussion time on slashing catch limits and restrictions



Steve Butler | The West Australian  
Tue, 30 August 2022 11:18AM | [Comments](#) | [+](#)

Steve Butler



Fisheries Minister Don Punch has extended the discussion period on mooted demersal fishing bans. Credit: The West Australian

The angry backlash over tough new demersal fishing bans proposed for WA has forced the McGowan Government to give the industry more time to argue against changes they say will have devastating consequences.

Fisheries Minister Don Punch agreed on Tuesday morning to a two-week extension to further discuss the plan, which would ban fishing on WA's most prized species such as dhufish and snapper for up to nine months a year for the next seven years.

Mr Punch, who has been inundated with opposing views since releasing the strategy, said he had listened to the feedback from industry stakeholders and allowed them more time to argue for what it believes are better and fairer options.



The comment period will now end on September 30.

“Phase one of the consultation process began in April this year, with many of the ideas and suggestions put forward by the fishing sectors included in the proposed management options,” Mr Punch said.

“Everybody has a part to play in ensuring the long-term sustainability of fishing stock and I encourage everyone to participate in the ‘Your Say’ survey.”

Mr Punch said he would use the extension time to further engage with stakeholders on the science and the need for additional management to recover stocks.

He said the total catch limit had been slashed in half to 375 tonnes to be shared among the entire fishing industry to enable stocks to recover by 2030.



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CHARTER SHUTDOWN

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As part of the proposals, recreational fishers who operate in the west coast bioregion between Kalbarri and Augusta have been given two options – a 94-day season in staged openings from December to May or a 123-day limit from April to October.

The extension on the proposals comes as Marine Tourism WA, which represents charter fishers, said the industry was already being hit by the proposed bans with clients cancelling trips and asking for refunds.

Mr Punch's extension came just hours after The West Australian published MTWA president Matt Howard's call for more discussion time.

Recreational fishing industry leaders have claimed the bans would ruin businesses and threaten the viability of many WA towns such as Jurien Bay, Lancelin and Green Head.



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They have also threatened a class action against the Government if the proposals are put in place.

Recfishwest chief executive Andrew Rowland said he welcomed the comment period extension during a time of great uncertainty for his sector.

"We really look forward to getting the minister to the table so we can hammer out a solution on this issue which puts the fish first without destroying so many businesses, charter operators and fishing clubs," Dr Rowland said.

"It gives us time to make sure the department can properly assess the package we've put together, which we firmly believe delivers the same outcome to support the fish and does it in a better way without destroying so much and allows people to continue to enjoy fishing while looking after the fish.



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Steve Butler

"All recreational fishers support sustainability and we've done a lot of heavy lifting in this fishery to get it into a recovery phase.

"People are genuinely committed to doing more and there is a better way to do this, that's why people are feeling pretty deflated and dejected and somewhat disenfranchised because they've done the good work, followed the rules and looked after the fish."


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Why only ban between Augusta and Kalbarri  
Surely the fish are threatened outside of the banned area

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- **Craig P** 2 days ago  
Didnt the same people all predict these towns to disappear when crayfish limits were imposed? None of that has happened, in fact the Indian Ocean road has opened up tourism. Plenty to do on the water without plundering fish stocks day after day


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Up the fees for a fishing permit. Those fish are government property.


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- **Greg L** 2 days ago  
↩ In reply to **Phillip L**  
Congratulations Phil, you have won the 'worst comment of the day' award.

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- **Phillip L** 2 days ago  
↩ In reply to **Greg L**  
Its great to be a winner. Where is my trophy.


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- **Jaylin W** 2 days ago  
↩ In reply to **Phillip L**  
I'm sure the honorable gentleman wouldn't suggest, for one moment, that a fish is somehow the property, or chattel, of its government.


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- **Phillip L** 2 days ago  
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Why not they tried to do it with crayfish

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- **brie M** 2 days ago  
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already the most expensive in the country

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- **David H** 2 days ago  
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Are people government property as well?

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- **Phillip L** 2 days ago  
↩ In reply to **David H**  
There is certainly evidence to demonstrate this may be the case particularly when COVID is involved.

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TOP!

