Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development

GOVERNMENT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Protect
Grow
Innovate

Abalone

Recreational fishing guide 2026/27



A licence is required to fish for abalone

Please note:

Recreational fishing for Roe's abalone in the Western Zone (from the Greenough River Mouth to Busselton Jetty) will be open on the following Saturdays between 7:00am and 8:00am on:

- 12 December 2026
- 9 January 2027
- 6 February 2027
- 20 February 2027.

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Fish for the future

Abalone fishing is a popular Western Australian recreational fishing activity, with 15,293 licences in the 2025/26 season.

The length of the open recreational fishing season for abalone in the Western Zone may be adjusted each year to ensure recreational catch is managed in a sustainable manner.

Scan the QR code for up-to-date abalone rules (available in a number of languages).


Chinese simplified
Chinese traditional


Japanese


Korean


Vietnamese


Tagalog (Filipino)



Roe's abalone
Haliotis roei



Greenlip abalone
Haliotis laevigata



Brownlip abalone
Haliotis conicopora

Recreational fishing rules

Licences

You must have a current recreational fishing for abalone licence and produce it if required. Apply for a new licence or renew an existing licence online at dpird.wa.gov.au/get-a-recreational-fishing-licence.
Alternatively, application forms are available from select DPIRD offices and the website.

> **Note:** You don't need a Recreational Fishing from Boat Licence (RFBL) if you hold an abalone fishing licence and that is the only fishing activity that is taking place on the boat.

Don't fish for other people

Recreational fishers are only permitted to collect abalone for themselves and not for other people, even if they are part of the same group.

Seasons and locations

Recreational fishers may only fish for or take abalone during the open season in the zone they are fishing in.



Western Zone (Zone 1)

The Western Zone extends from Busselton Jetty to the Greenough River mouth. This incorporates all islands within the zone including Rottnest, Carnac, Garden and Penguin Islands.

Open season: The following Saturdays from 7:00 am – 8:00 am.

- 12 December 2026
- 9 January 2027
- 6 February 2027
- 20 February 2027.

Changes that may affect fishing days in Zone 1: Abalone catches will be monitored during the season. The number of fishing days may be reduced if required to protect fish stocks.

Cancellation of fishing days may occur if poor weather conditions are forecast. DPIRD will take action on the advice of Surf Life Saving Western Australia to close a fishing day for safety reasons. Check DPIRD social media pages and text messages in case of a closure. The decision to cancel a fishing session is based on the best available information at the time of the decision. Fishers are reminded that local water conditions can vary between fishing locations and fishers must take responsibility for their own safety. At no time should fishers enter the water unless they are confident in their ability to handle the conditions.

Diving: Recreational fishers must not use SCUBA or hookah (surface-supplied compressed air) gear to take abalone in the Western Zone (Zone 1).

Scan to watch educational videos on abalone fishing in the Western Zone (Zone 1)

Northern Zone (Zone 2)

The Northern Zone which extends from Greenough River Mouth to the Northern Territory border is **closed** to abalone fishing until further notice.

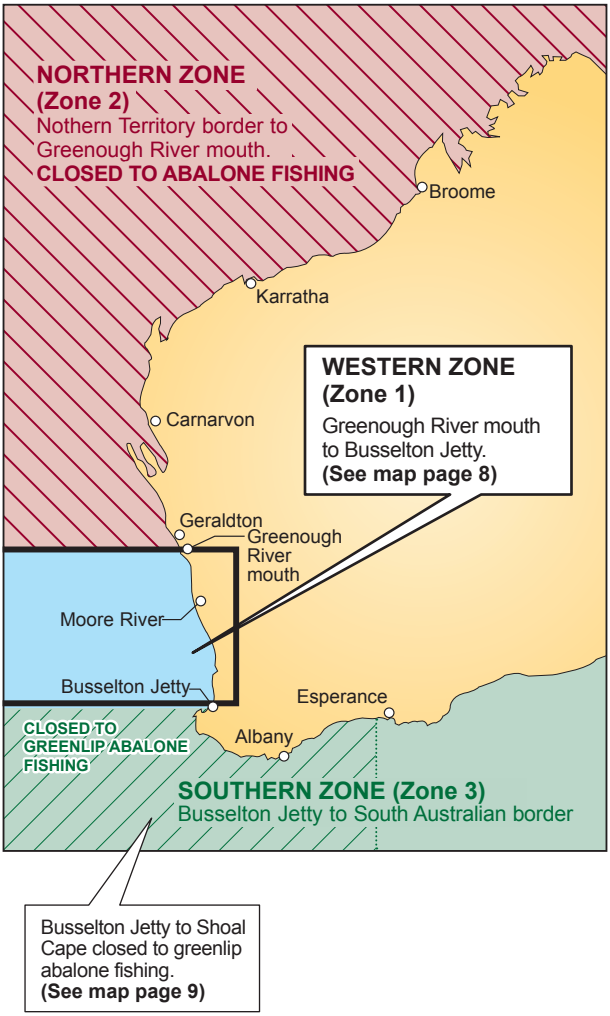
Southern Zone (Zone 3)

The Southern Zone extends from the Busselton Jetty to the South Australian Border.

Open season: The zone is open to abalone fishing between 1 October and 15 May the following year.

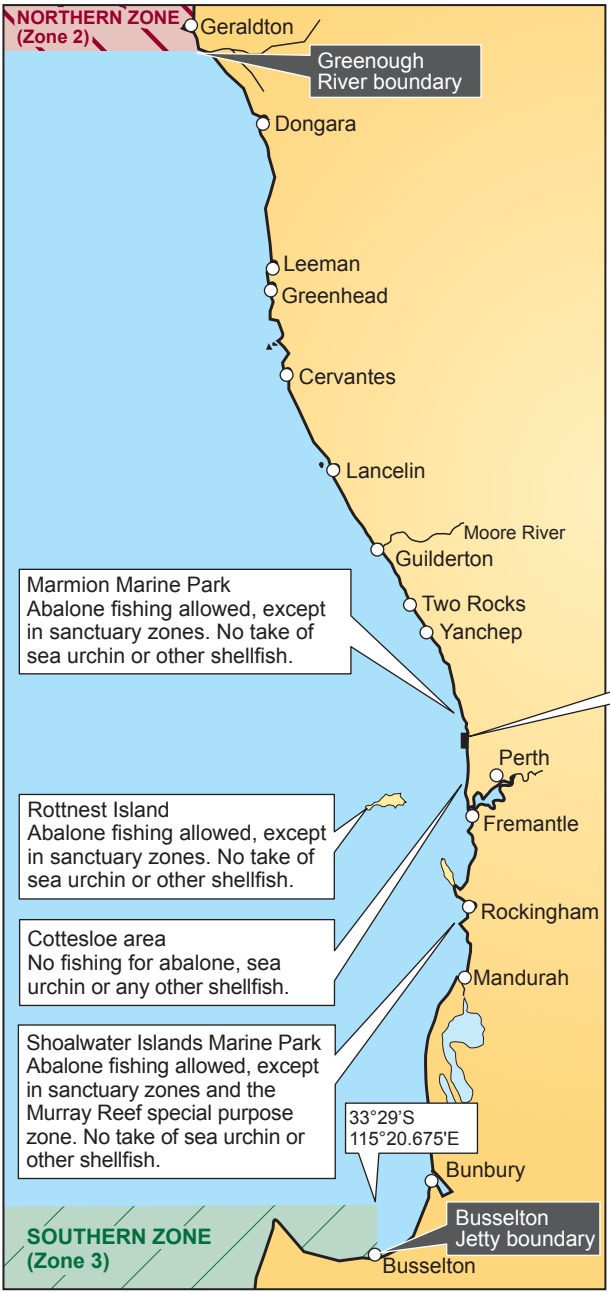
Closed area: The area from Busselton Jetty to Shoal Cape is closed to greenlip abalone fishing.

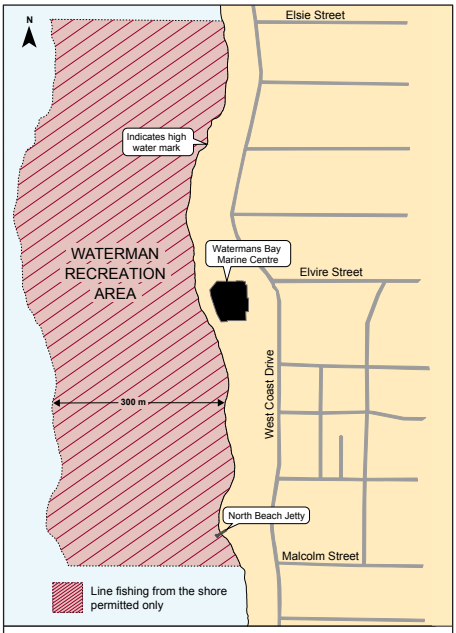
Recreational abalone zones in Western Australia



Western Zone (Zone 1)

Greenough River mouth to Busselton Jetty

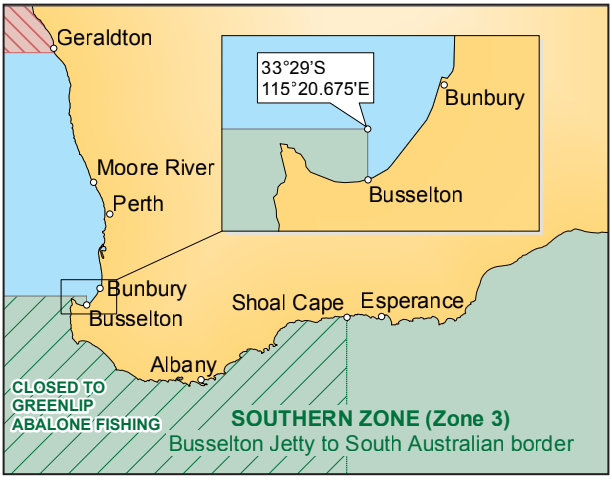




Watermans Reef Observation Area No fishing for abalone, sea urchin or any other shellfish.

Southern Zone (Zone 3)

Busselton Jetty to South Australian border



Bag limit (maximum)

This is the maximum number of abalone that a licenced fisher may take per day.



Roe's abalone

- 15 per fisher per session in the Western Zone (Zone 1)
- 20 per fisher per day in the Southern Zone (Zone 3)



Greenlip/brownlip abalone (combined)

- 5 per fisher per day (Zone 1 or Zone 3)
- Where take of greenlip abalone is prohibited (in Zone 3), a bag limit of 5 brownlip applies

Fishing for greenlip abalone from Busselton Jetty to Shoal Cape is prohibited.

Possession of abalone

A person cannot be in possession of abalone on the seaward side of the high-water mark (the beach) if they are not a licence holder.

If a boat goes out to fish for or take abalone during the season, abalone must be landed within 12 hours.

For Zone 1, all abalone taken must be landed by 8pm on the day of the allocated fishing session and Fisheries Officers may require you to prove when and where the abalone was taken.

Possession limit

This is the maximum number of abalone you may have in your possession, even if you did not take them all from the ocean on the same day. A possession limit of 20 Roe's applies in Zone 1 and a possession limit of 20 Roe's and 10 greenlip/brownlip abalone applies everywhere else except in your permanent place of residence.

The maximum number of abalone a person may have at their permanent place of residence is 80 Roe's abalone and 20 greenlip/brownlip abalone (combined).

Boat limit

A boat limit is the maximum number of abalone permitted on board a boat (except in prohibited areas).

- No boat limit applies to Roe's abalone (refer to bag limits on page 10).
- For greenlip/brownlip abalone a boat limit of 10 (combined) applies when there are 2 or more licensed fishers on board (a maximum of 5 combined if only 1 licensed fisher on board), except in prohibited areas.

Fishing gear

You must not be in the water if you are wearing or carrying abalone fishing gear, except during the abalone fishing season. In Zone 1 it is illegal to be in the water before 7:00 am on a fishing day with abalone fishing gear.

Minimum size

Roe's abalone

- Legal minimum size limit – 60 mm

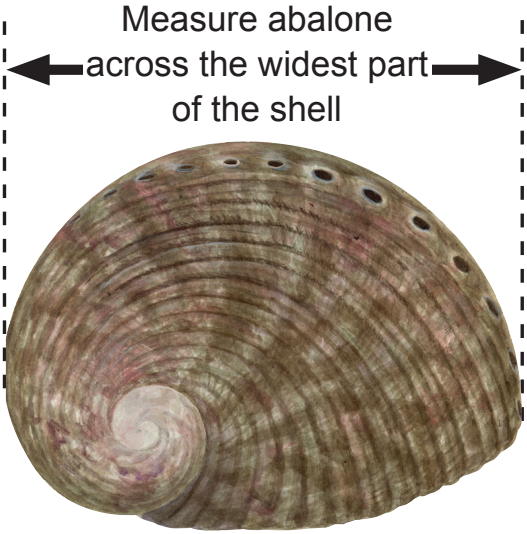
Greenlip/brownlip abalone

- Legal minimum size limit – 140 mm

It is illegal to take an abalone smaller than the minimum size limit.

Measuring

Before removing abalone from the reef, measure each abalone across the widest part of the shell using an abalone gauge, available from tackle shops. Measuring with anything else, such as a mark on a screwdriver, can lead to mistakes and penalties may apply.





You are legally required to measure each abalone as you collect it. Do not wait to measure and count your catch until after you get to shore.

Once the abalone is in your catch bag, it is considered taken and is part of your catch (bag limit).

You can contribute to the science and help ensure there will be abalone for the future by assisting the fisheries research program and having your catch weighed at selected fishing locations.



Taking abalone from the reef

To remove legal size abalone from the reef, insert a flat blade under the abalone and lift with a quick, strong flick. Carefully count your catch; the bag limit (see page 10) is strictly enforced to protect breeding stocks, so stop fishing once you reach your limit. Continuing to fish once you have reached your bag limit may result in a penalty. Discarded abalone often die putting pressure on future stocks, this is why it is important to measure your catch before removing it from the reef.



Shucking

Removing abalone from their shells (shucking) whilst at sea or within 200 m of the high-water mark (the beach) is not permitted. Abalone must be left in their shells so their size can be checked by DPIRD staff.

Take your catch home to shuck and clean it. Dispose of any waste responsibly.

Bait ban

The use of abalone meat or any abalone material as fishing bait is prohibited and significant fines apply.

Penalties for illegal fishing

Fishing rules are essential to ensure fishing remains at a sustainable level as per *Fish Resources Management Regulations 1995*. All fishing may be subject to surveillance by Fisheries and Marine Officers. Fishing out of season, taking undersize or prohibited abalone, fishing in closed waters or having more than your session limit can attract penalties as high as $10,000 plus up to 10 times the dollar value of the species.

It is illegal for recreational fishers to sell their catch. Fines as high as $400,000 plus up to 10 times the dollar value of the species – or imprisonment – may apply and you may lose your licence.

Reporting illegal fishing

To report sightings or evidence of illegal fishing activity including the sale of recreationally caught fish, call FishWatch on 1800 815 507 or submit a report online to **crimestopperswa.com.au/organisation-report/fishwatch/**

Reports made to Crimestoppers are not monitored outside normal working hours or on weekends.

Marine conservation areas

Marmion and Shoalwater Islands Marine Parks

Refer to maps on pages 7-9.
Licensed fishers may take abalone during the open season, except in sanctuary zones and the Murray Reef special purpose (scientific reference) zone in Warnbro Sound. You may not take sea urchin or other shellfish. Zone 1 dates (page 5), bag and size limits apply.



Sea urchin



Turban snail

Watermans Reef Observation Area – No fishing

This area surrounds the old WA Marine Research Laboratories at Watermans. It runs from the northern side of Elsie Steet to the southern side of Malcolm Street and extends 300 metres seawards of the high-water mark (the beach). All reef life is protected in this area at all times. You may not take any species including abalone, any other shellfish, sea urchin, crab, rock lobster and octopus.

Rottnest Island

You may take abalone during the open season, except in sanctuary zones.

You may not take sea urchin or other shellfish.

Zone 1 dates (page 5), bag and size limits apply.

Cottesloe area

You may not fish for or take abalone, sea urchins or any other shellfish from the Cottesloe area, which has been closed since 2003 due to low abalone numbers. This closure runs south of the main Cottesloe groyne to Rous Head.

Ngari Capes Marine Park

This marine park, between Busselton and Augusta, came into effect on 10 April 2019. You may not take abalone in the sanctuary zones. Zone 3 rules apply outside of sanctuary zones.

Safety tips when fishing for abalone

- Carry your catch in a loose-weave net bag; this will allow water to pass through and not become a dragging weight.
- Attach your measuring gauge to your wrist; don't hang it around your neck.
- Study the waves before you get into the water and keep an eye on the swell while fishing – it is easy to be injured on reefs.
- Wear protective footwear and a wetsuit or light clothing that will not become too heavy when wet.
- Fish at a Surf Life Saving Western Australia patrolled location.
- If you are unsure whether conditions are too rough and you are not confident to handle the ocean conditions, don't go in.
- If you do get into trouble in the water, try to stay calm and raise and wave one arm above your head (an international distress signal) to attract help.
- If you choose to fish in an unpatrolled area, please take note of the nearest BEN sign in case of an emergency.

Catch care

Keep your catch in good condition by:

- making sure abalone is legal size, measure each abalone before you take it off the reef
- carefully counting your catch as you go, because the bag and size limit is strictly enforced to protect breeding stocks
- placing abalone in a loose-weave net bag, which allows water to flow through it
- storing abalone in a cool, shady place if you are staying longer at the beach.

Biosecurity

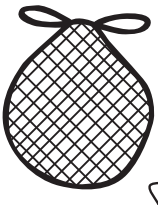
To help keep WA's waters pest and disease free, thoroughly clean and dry all gear before moving to another area to fish.

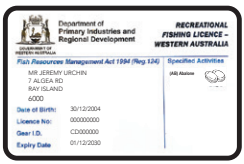
You can also help to protect our valuable aquatic environment by reporting any aquatic pests or diseases (including fish kills) to FishWatch on 1800 815 507 or via the MyPestGuide® app.










Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

RECREATIONAL FISHING LICENCE – WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Fish Resources Management Act 1994 (Reg 124)

Specified Activities

(A6) Abalone

MR JEREMY URCHIN
7 ALGEA RD
RAY ISLAND
6000

Date of Birth: 30/12/2004
Licence No: 000000000
Gear I.D. CD000000
Expiry Date 01/12/2030



SURF LIFE SAVING WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The catch that's been waiting all year...

The abalone season is short, gear up and plan ahead to make it count.

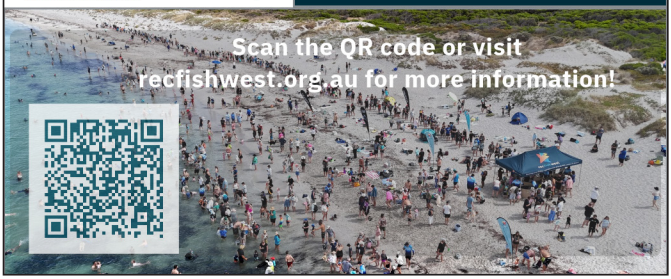
For location, fishing and safety tips visit mybeach.com.au/abalone

Join Recfishwest's Cast of Thousands!

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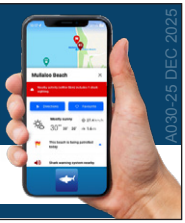
www.recfishwest.org.au

Recfishwest represents WA's 750,000+ recfishers' rights and interests and champions sustainability, safety, research and the environment. Best of all, we help keep the fun in fishing!



Report shark sightings to Water Police on **08 9442 8600**
Download the SharkSmart WA app

SHARKSMART.COM.AU



A030-25 DEC 2025

Hook up to the rec fishing rules

It's easy to keep up to date with Western Australia's recreational fishing rules. Whether it's for bag and size limits, seasonal closures or licences, all the rules are at your fingertips.



Go to **dpird.wa.gov.au/rec-fishing-guides** for rules covering more than 180 fish species. Use the interactive maps to discover information about marine protected areas and common species by region.



The free Recfishwest app provides access to the rules even if you're out of phone range and has an easy fish identification feature.

Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play



Grab a copy or download from **dpird.wa.gov.au/rec-fishing-guides**

Important disclaimer

The Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the State of Western Australia accept no liability whatsoever by reason of negligence or otherwise arising from the use or release of this information or any part of it.

This publication is to provide assistance or information. It is only a guide and does not replace the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994* or the *Fish Resources Management Regulations 1995*. It cannot be used as a defence in a court of law. The information provided is current at the date of printing but may be subject to change. For the most up-to-date information on fishing and full details of legislation contact your local DPIRD office or visit **dpird.wa.gov.au**

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For an up-to-date list of office locations visit **dpird.wa.gov.au/fishing-licence-offices**

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