

RECREATIONAL FISHING POSSESSION LIMITS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

On 30 September 2012 recreational fishing possession limits came into effect in South Australia.

Possession limits have been introduced in a move to stop fishers visiting popular fishing locations specifically to take and stockpile large quantities of fish. Possession limits restrict the number of fish that recreational fishers can catch and keep in their possession and help to ensure stock sustainability.

While possession limits set the maximum number of fish you may store, fishers are encouraged to only take enough fish for their immediate needs so that recreational catches can be equitably shared between users – fish to feed your family, not your freezer.

RECREATIONAL FISHING POSSESSION LIMITS

		Size limit (cm)	Bag limit	Boat limit	Possession limit
King George Whiting	East of Long 136°	31	12	36	Six times the bag limit (72 fish) or 7kg of fillets OR
	West of Long 136°	30	12	36	Where a person has possession of both fish and fillets - up to three times the bag limit (36 fish) and up to 3.5kg of fillets
Pipi (Goolwa Cockle)		3.5	300	-	Four times the bag limit ie. 1200 Pipi
Razorfish		-	25	75	Four times the bag limit ie. 100 fish

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are possession limits?

Possession limits refer to the maximum quantity of fish that a person can stockpile by freezing or preserving.

Is the possession limit an individual (per person) limit?

Yes.

Why are there two sets of limits for King George Whiting?

When finalising the regulations it became apparent through feedback from fishers that possessing King George Whiting as both whole and filleted fish was commonly practised. As such it was decided that it was appropriate to provide fishers with options that will allow them to continue to store a combination of whole and filleted fish. The limits allow fishers to choose to freeze or preserve up to 72 whole fish or 7kg of fillets. If fishers wish to store both whole fish and fillets they can possess a combination of up to 36 whole fish and up to 3.5kg of fillets.

In what circumstances will the new possession limits apply?

Recreational possession limits are to apply in circumstances where long term storage of the three species identified is occurring, These include freezing or preparing to freeze and preserving through methods such as pickling and smoking. These storage methods aid individuals to stockpile large quantities of fish for long periods of time. It's important to note that current regulations already have statutory defences to protect people who have lawfully obtained or purchased quantities of these fish species that are in excess of the proposed limits.

Why is South Australia introducing possession limits?

There is community concern that fish stocks are being depleted by recreational fishers from within South Australia and from interstate, who visit areas of the State specifically to take and stockpile large quantities of fish. This has prompted the Minister for Fisheries and PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture to introduce possession limits and act to ensure the sustainability of South Australian fish stocks.

What will possession limits achieve?

Possession limits are a useful regulatory tool that prevent recreational fishers taking and stockpiling large quantities of fish. They can also assist in controlling high levels of localised recreational fishing, thereby securing stock sustainability, promoting equitable access to fish stocks and reducing the risk of localised depletion.

How will the possession limits be monitored?

Fisheries Officers will continue to conduct regular patrols of known fishing areas and monitor any alleged stockpiling of the prescribed species. Together with our Fishcare Volunteers, Fisheries Officers will initially focus on educating fishers to ensure everyone understands the new regulations. As always Fisheries Officers will treat each case on its merits and where they find any breaches of the rules they will consider each matter and deal with it by way of education, formal caution, expiation or in the most serious cases prosecution before a Court.

Contact Us

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Will Fisheries Officers come into my house to search for fish?

The current circumstances in which residential premises can be searched by Fisheries Officers will continue to apply. Any application for a warrant requires an independent authority (Magistrate or Justice of the Peace) to be satisfied that there is a reasonable suspicion that an offence has been or is being committed and that there is a need for the search warrant to be granted. In general terms warrants to enter residential premises are only issued by the court where the evidence suggests serious offending, such as illegal sales or trafficking of aquatic resources.

How can I report suspected breaches of possession limits?

Members of the public can report any suspicious or illegal fishing activity to the 24-hour FISHWATCH number on 1800 065 522.

What is the penalty for breaching the regulation?

The penalty for breaching the regulation carries an on the spot fine of \$315 and in certain circumstances can carry a fine of up to \$20 000 if prosecuted before a court.

Why were possession limits placed on these three species only?

King George Whiting, Pipi and Razorfish are the recreationally important species that are most vulnerable to localised stockpiling based on PIRSA Compliance intelligence and recommendations through the possession limit consultation process. If the issue of stockpiling of other species is identified, PIRSA has the capacity to protect those species through the introduction of possession limit regulations in the future.

How do I find out the possession limit of a particular fish species?

There are several options to find out the possession limit that applies to a particular fish species. Fishers can SMS the fish name to SMSFish on 0427 767 995, contact FISHWATCH on 1800 065 522 or visit the catch limits section of the PIRSA Fisheries and Aquaculture website at www.pir.sa.gov.au/fisheries

