

Media Release

Monday, 5 June, 2017 | Media contact: Nick Foster 03 8392 6254

All looking good for Victoria's Rock Lobster fishers for the future

Rock lobster are highly valued by the Victorian community and are one of the most sought after marine species for the dinner table.

In an Australian first, Victoria recreational fishers will use tags to help estimate the catch quantity of rock lobster.

Fisheries Victoria has worked closely with recreational lobster fishers across the State to ensure we have good catch data to support fantastic lobster fishing now and into the future. From 1 July 2017 all recreational fishers targeting southern rock lobster must tag every rock lobster they catch and keep.

Executive Director Travis Dowling said the tagging requirement is part of a three year trial to collect data on the recreational catch of rock lobster to ensure the species remains sustainable. There will not be any changes to bag or possession limits or existing tail fin clipping requirements as part of this trial.

“Southern rock lobsters are a priority species for both recreational and commercial fishers.” Mr Dowling said.

While the commercial fishery is highly regulated and under strict quota management controls, the recreational catch of rock lobster is currently unknown. From July 1 2017, fishers will need to tag the rock lobster they keep and report that they've used the tag through a simple online process.

“Reporting use of tags is the critical element of this trial because it provides the data on catch so we can ensure a plentiful fishery for future generations to enjoy.”

Mr Dowling said the tags will be available online and through selected Victorian Government Offices. Fisheries Victoria has created a website and apps for recreational fishers to use.

“The tags are free and there will be no limit on the number issued each year. Fishers will simply need to create an account to order tags and report their use,” Mr Dowling said.”

From 5 June 2017, recreational fishers will be able to go to www.vic.gov.au/lobstertag to order tags and download the VicRLTag app via the Apple Store and Google Play. Tags will also be available over the counter at Offices in Warrnambool, Queenscliff and Lakes Entrance.

“All recreational fishers will be able to have up to 20 tags at any one time. To get more tags, fishers simply need to report the use of tags allocated to them and order more to top-up to 20 tags.”

Tags will expire at the end of each season and must be reported as used or unused by then.

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For more information about the rock lobster tagging programme visit www.vic.gov.au/lobstertag