

# Tropical rocklobster fishery

## Commercial fishing rules in Queensland

From **1 September 2021**, the crayfish and rocklobster fishery will be managed under the *Queensland crayfish and rocklobster fishery harvest strategy*.

### General

- The crayfish and rocklobster fishery targets predominantly one species – tropical spiny rocklobster (*Panulirus ornatus*). Other species of tropical spiny rocklobster are also found in Queensland waters, but these are much less abundant and contribute only marginally to the total catch.
- The fishery is quota-managed with a total allowable commercial catch (TACC). The TACC is split into individual transferable quota units.
- The TACC is adjusted according to the decision rules in the harvest strategy each year. The current TACC can be found in the Fisheries Quota Declaration 2019.
- The commercial fishery area for the east coast of Queensland comprises all tidal waters east of longitude 142°31'49" east, south of latitude 10°41' south and north of latitude 14° south (see Figure 1). The fishery also extends out to the 25 nautical mile seabed line along the Gulf of Carpentaria coast, south of latitude 10°48' south.
- Refer to the harvest strategy for information on fishery targets, biomass indicators, reference points, and decision rules that will be implemented if biomass limits are reached – visit [fisheries.qld.gov.au](http://fisheries.qld.gov.au).



Figure 1: Crayfish and rocklobster fishery area

### Equipment

- Crayfish and rocklobster fishery operations are dive-based (hookah or scuba) using hand collection techniques (hand spears, spear guns or lobster loops).
- Primary boats can be up to 25 m long and tender boats can be up to 10 m long.
- A maximum of 8 tender boats can operate under this licence.
- Measurements of vessels used in commercial fisheries are determined by national marine safety requirements under the National Standard for Commercial Vessels – visit [amsa.gov.au](http://amsa.gov.au).
- Other Australian Government requirements include displaying unique identifying numbers, safety management plans, safety equipment and licensing – for more information, visit [amsa.gov.au](http://amsa.gov.au).

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## Closure

An annual seasonal closure north of 14° south is in place from 1 October to 31 January (inclusive) to reduce fishing mortality on breeding stocks.

## Fishing operation

- Minimum size limit of 90 mm carapace length and 115 mm tail length for *Panulirus ornatus*. The carapace length limit does not apply when only the tails are retained.
- Mated (tar spotted) and egg-bearing female lobsters cannot be taken.
- No more than 1 diver per tender boat can collect lobsters.
- An approved vessel tracking unit must be:
  - installed as per the department's *Vessel tracking installation and maintenance standard*
  - installed on vessel/s and confirmed working prior to commencement of a fishing trip.
- The licence holder must have a contract with an approved supplier for collection of vessel tracking positional data
- There is also no longer a distance requirement for primary and tender vessels operating in this fishery. However, Australian Maritime Safety Authority safety rules apply – visit [amsa.gov.au](https://amsa.gov.au).
- Fishers must comply with marine park and go-slow zoning – for more information, visit [gbrmpa.qld.gov.au](https://gbrmpa.qld.gov.au) and/or [des.qld.gov.au](https://des.qld.gov.au).

## Licensing

- All commercial fisheries now operate under a single primary commercial fishing licence. A unique boat mark must be registered on the licence if a boat is being used.
- The person in charge of an operation must hold a commercial fisher licence to operate under the primary commercial fishing licence.
- To operate in the fishery, fishers must have:
  - a primary commercial fishing licence
  - at least one R symbol
  - sufficient quota required to fish.
- A range of transactions can be completed online using FishNet Secure (e.g. quota temporary transfers, registering vessel tracking units to primary commercial fishing licences, accessing quota activity statements and registering change of personal contact details).
- Fees for licences and quota are invoiced in advance (i.e. before the fishing season starts or before the licence can be used).
- The licence holder is responsible for keeping contact details up to date on FishNet Secure.
- You may require accreditation with Safe Food in order to legally sell or supply your product in Queensland – for more information, visit [safefood.qld.gov.au](https://safefood.qld.gov.au).

## Reporting requirements

In summary, fishers must

- report trip/catch notices for all catch to which a TACC applies via approved means (e.g. Automated Integrated Voice Response system)
- complete catch and effort logbooks and the threatened, endangered and protected animal logbook
- complete catch disposal records for the disposal of all catch to which a TACC applies
- keep sale dockets for all wholesale sales for 5 years, including to businesses involved in the processing and storage of fisheries resources.

For more information on reporting requirements, visit [fisheries.qld.gov.au](https://fisheries.qld.gov.au).