

# TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCH, SIZE LIMITS & MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE 2008 ABALONE QUOTA YEAR

December 2007

# TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCH (TAC)

The TAC for the 2008 fishing year is 2,593.5 tonnes.

The breakdown between zones is as follows:

|                         |                    |                              |
|-------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Eastern Zone</b>     | 231 kg/Unit        | TAC of 808.5 tonnes          |
| <b>Western Zone</b>     | 360 kg/Unit        | TAC of 1,260 tonnes          |
| <b>Northern Zone</b>    | 95 kg/Unit         | TAC of 332.5 tonnes          |
| <b>Bass Strait Zone</b> | 20 kg/Unit         | TAC of 70 tonnes             |
| <b>Greenlip Zone</b>    | 35 kg/Unit         | TAC of 122.5 tonnes          |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>741 kg/Unit</b> | <b>TAC of 2,593.5 tonnes</b> |

## SUSTAINABLE CATCH TARGETS

During 2007 the Abalone Fishery Advisory Committee (AbFAC) discussed a number of options for refining the spatial management of the fishery. The use of catch caps is one management measure that has been in place for a number of years. While it is widely accepted that fishing effort needs to be distributed across the fishery to reduce the likelihood of localised overfishing, there is no absolute agreement on how this can be most effectively achieved.

The sustainable catch target working group was formed from AbFAC. This group has met on a number of occasions and discussed the possibility of setting catch targets, and upper and lower trigger points for the fishery. One of the key areas discussed in this group has been the scale on which such measures should be implemented.

The first recommendation on regional sustainable catch targets was that the area between Whale Head and South West Cape (Blocks 12B, C, D and 13A, B) on the south coast has an upper catch limit of 245 tonnes. Secondly, that the Actaeons area in the south east (Blocks 13C, D and E) has an upper catch limit of 266 tonnes.

Options for controlling effort in the south west as well as other parts of the fishery will be considered early in 2008 and divers are encouraged to participate in discussions.

**A catch limit of 180 tonnes has been placed on the area of Northern Zone fishing outside of Block 5 to ensure a total of 152.5 tonnes catch comes from Blocks 5A, B and C as part of the experimental size limit fishery in block 5 as discussed on the following page.**

# ALTERATIONS TO SIZE LIMITS IN 2008

There will be two experimental size limit changes for the 2008 Quota Year:

In the 2007 Annual General Meeting of the Tasmanian Abalone Council, a number of motions were put forward to reduce size limits in two parts of the fishery.

The view was put forward that the area on the north west coast between Woolnorth and Arthur River had significant numbers of stunted abalone which may be more appropriately fished with a reduction in size limit to 127mm. In addition to this area, it was also suggested that the area from Arthur River to Wild Wave River (6A,B & C) may be better utilised at a size limit of 132mm.

It was agreed in AbFAC that there was not adequate information on growth and size at maturity to implement a permanent reduction in size limits. However, a controlled trial with collection of specific research data would be a cost-effective way to assess the proposal to reduce size limits.

To participate in these experimental size limit fisheries divers will be required to comply with a number of conditions including having a depth logger and GPS unit issued by TAFI for the collection of fine scale spatial catch rate data.

The Minister has approved the following exemption under Section 11 of the *Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995*

- (1) That the holder of a fishing licence (abalone dive) must not take or possess abalone with a shell length less than 127 millimetres in the waters of the north-west area or on land within one kilometre of those waters.
- (2) That the holder of a fishing licence (abalone dive) must not take or possess abalone with a shell length less than 132 millimetres from the Couta Rocks area or on land within one kilometre of those waters.
- (3) That the holder of a fishing licence (abalone dive) keeps appropriate records as determined in writing by the General Manager, Primary Industries, for the purposes of this exemption.

**The Department will advise Divers early in 2008 on the details of the “appropriate records” required in Condition (3) of this exemption. Until that time, the existing size limits of 132mm in north-west area and 136mm in the Couta Rocks area still apply.**

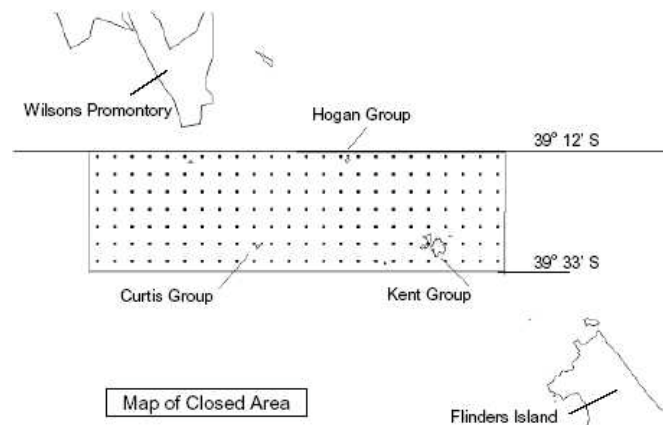
Depth loggers and GPS data logging units will be provided by TAFI and the data from these units will be used by TAFI to assess the performance of the fishery.

If divers wishing to participate in the experimental fishery have not received additional advice by the end of January 2008, they are advised to confirm the details of the trial with the Department on 6233 3512.

## BIOSECURITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR KING ISLAND AND THE NORTHERN BASS STRAIT ISLANDS

During 2007 special arrangements were developed for fishing the area around King Island requiring all fish taken around King Island (blocks 1-4) to be landed on the Island and are not to enter processing facilities on mainland Tasmania that discharge effluent into the marine environment.

For 2008, the Northern Bass Strait islands will remain closed until 31 March 2008 whilst details of Biosecurity arrangements are finalised to allow fishing in this region again. The north coast and Flinders Island parts of the Bass Strait zone will be open to fishing as of 1 January 2008.



Biosecurity will remain a high priority for the Department throughout 2008. Divers and processors are asked to continue following the cleaning and disinfecting protocols and procedures developed and distributed in March 2007. Additional information on biosecurity and Abalone Viral Ganglionneuritis (AVG) can be obtained from [www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/abalone](http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/abalone)

## **CHANGES TO THE FISHERIES (ABALONE) RULES 2000**

### **-UNLOADING FROM MOTHER BOATS:**

During 2007, industry raised concerns that in certain circumstances it was very difficult to comply with Rule 29 of the Abalone Rules that requires divers to complete part A of the Diver's Docket within 4 hours of landing. The definition of landing being that time when the abalone container or vessel makes contact with the land or an extension of the land. It has been noted that when returning from a fishing trip on a mother boat it can take significant time to sort and unload a large catch from a number of divers.

As a result of these concerns the Fisheries (Abalone ) Rules 2000 have been amended to allow divers returning from a fishing trip on a **Mother boat 6 Hours** to complete part A of the diver's docket after the abalone are landed. In all other cases the time allowed to complete Part- A of the diver's docket remains at 4-hours.

This amendment will take effect on the 26 December 2007.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

An updated 2008 Abalone Fishery Operational Information Paper will be available from the Fisheries Monitoring and Licensing Section of DPIW, on the ground floor of the Marine Board Building in early 2008 and also on the DPIW website [www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/abalone](http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/abalone) or [www.fishing.tas.gov.au](http://www.fishing.tas.gov.au). This paper contains an explanation of the rules in relation to the following points:

- The parts of the fishery,
- Size limits,
- Arrangements for fishing in the various parts of the fishery for dinghies.
- Mother boat requirements
- Research areas
- Processor requirements
- Docket books

For additional information contact:

The Principal Fisheries Management Officer (Abalone), Ph (03) 6233 3512 or 6233 2044.

For licensing and quota balance inquiries phone (03) 6233 3515.

For docket book and overcatch inquiries phone (03) 6233 6514.