

Media Release

The Hon Melissa Horne MP

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation

Minister for Ports and Freight

Minister for Fishing and Boating



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NEW SLOT LIMIT FOR BLACK BREAM IN GIPPSLAND LAKES PLAN

A new slot limit for black bream will come into effect from April 1 as part of a range of improvements in the now finalised Gippsland Lakes Recreational Fishery Plan.

Minister for Fishing and Boating Melissa Horne said the Plan is already on track to returning the Gippsland Lakes to a recreational fishing mecca with commercial netting removed in April 2020 well ahead of schedule, large stockings of estuary perch and Australian bass in recent months, and habitat restoration underway.

Consultation on the Plan and black bream fishing rules saw a record number of responses to the Victorian Fisheries Authority's (VFA) survey of recreational fishers with almost 4,400 submissions.

The new black bream slot limit of 28-38cm was strongly endorsed during consultation and will apply to the Gippsland Lakes and its tributaries. The minimum size limit of 28cm remains unchanged and will be enhanced by a new maximum size limit of 38cm that will provide added protection for larger bream.

Large black bream are more prolific breeders, produce more eggs and contribute more to future generations. The new slot limit will ensure the protection of larger breeding fish which will contribute to rebuilding black bream stocks.

The modified slot limit is evidence-based and underpinned by science with modelling indicating 12 per cent more breeding black bream will remain in the population with the slot limit in place.

The performance of the fishery will continue to be monitored and black bream bag limits will be reviewed in response to indicators during the first two years of the plan. A steering committee will also be established to oversee the Plan's implementation and review after five years.

Another major step in the fishery plan is stocking dusky flathead. The collection of broodfish from the lakes has commenced to ensure a breeding program can be started to improve flathead numbers in the system.

By improving habitat, installing artificial reefs, increasing stocks and changes to fisheries regulations the Plan will help accelerate the recovery of key species while helping secure a range of socio-economic benefits to regional communities in Gippsland that come from a productive, thriving recreational fishery.

To view the Plan, visit www.vfa.vic.gov.au/gippslandlakes

Quotes attributable to Minister for Fishing and Boating Melissa Horne

"Recreational fishers have demonstrated their stewardship of the Gippsland Lakes fishery through their huge response in the development of the Plan. We thank all those who invested their time in providing feedback."

"We have made the first steps in revitalising the Gippsland Lakes by removing commercial netting and are excited to see the full Plan implemented to secure the future of this iconic fishery."

Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Jane Garrett

"This Gippsland Lakes is amongst Australia's greatest waterways and I look forward to seeing this Plan take its recreational fishery to the next level."

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