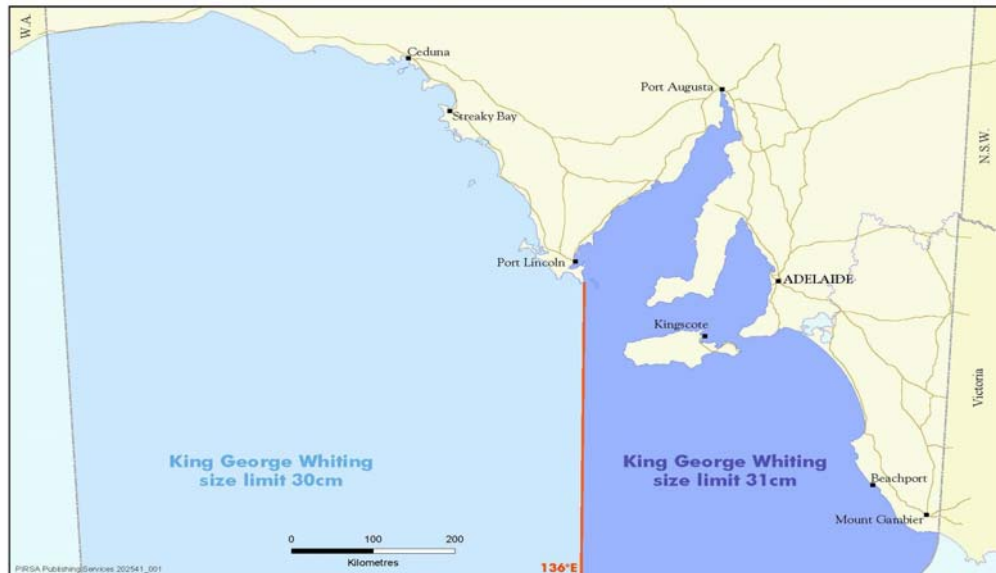


# KING GEORGE WHITING RULE CHANGES



## What are the new rules that apply to King George whiting?

- A new minimum size limit of 31 centimetres will apply for all King George whiting caught east of the line longitude 136° (near Cape Catastrophe, south of Port Lincoln, including all the waters of Spencer Gulf and Gulf St Vincent). The current minimum size limit of 30 centimetres will still apply to King George whiting caught west of the line.



- The increase in the size limit from 30cms to 31cms applies to both recreational and commercial fishers.
- There will be a reduction in the daily recreational bag limit for King George whiting from 20 to 12 and the boat limit from 60 to 36, effective from 1 October 2004.
- The new rules will apply from 1 October this year to allow sufficient time for signage across the State's wharfs and boat ramps to be changed and the Recreational Fishing Guide to be published with the new arrangements.

## Why are the rules being changed?

- The State Government has introduced new rules in a move to protect one of South Australia's icons, the King George Whiting.
- Scientific evidence indicates that stocks are considered overfished and there are concerns about the long-term sustainability of King George whiting, particularly in Gulf waters.
- Fishing effort needs to be reduced to allow the numbers of fish to increase and improve the spawning potential of the stocks.

## Why are there changes to recreational catch limits?

- Results from the recent National Recreational and Indigenous Fishing Survey showed that recreational anglers are taking about 58% of the total King George whiting catch.
- With over 50,000 registered recreational boats and over 320,000 recreational anglers in South Australia, recreational fishing is having a significant impact on fish stocks.

### How will the changes impact on commercial fishers?

- The package of changes will also include enhancement of the Marine Scalefish Fishery Licence Amalgamation Scheme which will assist in further reducing fishing effort by the commercial marine scalefish sector.
- Commercial catches of King George whiting have been in steady decline since 1992, due to a combination of a reduction in licences, implementation of no netting closures, fluctuations in stock size and increased recreational catch.
- From 750 tonnes in 1991/92, the commercial sector accounted for 453 tonnes in 2000/01, which was the same year the recent national recreational survey was conducted. The recreational catch for the same period was 585 tonnes. The commercial catch in 2003/04 was only 390 tonnes.
- Enhancement of the existing amalgamation scheme in the commercial fishery will continue to drive rationalisation of licences, which has seen commercial licences reduce from 671 15 years ago, to 396 today.
- There are 39 separate areas that are closed to the use of fish nets, including many of our larger bays, which have been implemented since 1995 when a major review of the commercial net sector was undertaken. Net fishing is restricted to waters less than 5 metres in depth and not permitted over long weekends, the Easter holiday period and from 23 December to 2 January each year.
- The mesh sizes for haul nets will be reviewed to ensure bycatch of juvenile fish is minimised.

### How were the changes decided?

- The changes followed a comprehensive review of the King George whiting fishery over 18 months by the Marine Scalefish Fishery Management Committee, in association with Primary Industries and Resources SA (Fisheries). The South Australian Recreational Fishing Advisory Council is a member of the Fisheries Management Committee.

### The new King George whiting limits at a glance

Area	Minimum size limit	Daily Bag limit	Daily Boat limit (for a minimum of 3 persons)
East of long 136 <sup>0</sup> including all waters of Spencer Gulf and Gulf St Vincent	31cm	12	36
West of long 136 <sup>0</sup> but not including Gulf waters	30 cm	12	36

### Offence with respect to possession of King George whiting

- Pursuant to section 44(4) of the *Fisheries Act 1982*, if a person has sold, purchased or has possession or control of more than 75 King George whiting then that person may be guilty of an offence. The person must prove that the fish were not taken in contravention of the Act. In other words, the person has complied with size, bag and boat limits in obtaining the fish or has proof of purchase from a registered fish processor.