



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

Cocos (Keeling) Islands Recreational Fishing Rules 2022

Fact sheet

August 2022

New recreational fishing rules have been introduced for Cocos (Keeling) Islands (CKI)

On 6 April 2022, the Cocos (Keeling) Islands Applied Laws Amendment (Fish Resources Management) Ordinance 2022 came into effect – establishing the first fishing rules designed to meet the needs and interests of the CKI community and its unique marine environment.

The Australian Government has been working closely with the local community and Cocos Marine Care to create local recreational fishing rules that are founded on more than 10 years' research and the views of the CKI community.

CKI Fisheries Advisory Committee

As part of a collaborative fisheries management approach, an important element of the new rules is the establishment of a CKI Fisheries Advisory Committee. This advisory committee is a key source of advice to the Minister regarding local fisheries matters.

Members of the advisory committee are appointed by the Minister for their ability to contribute to sustainable fisheries management at CKI.

Acknowledging their local expertise and work in shaping the new recreational fishing arrangements, members of Cocos Marine Care forms the foundational membership of the new advisory committee. The members of Cocos Marine Care were identified through a traditional “setuju” process, in which a volunteer is agreed to be a representative by the community.

The new rules

Given CKI's isolation, fish stocks around the island depend mostly on local breeding populations to maintain and replenish the stocks. If not well-managed, they are vulnerable to changing environmental conditions and fishing pressure.

As such, a community and science-based approach to managing the CKI fisheries has been adopted.

To protect fish stocks, the new rules contain the following key elements:

- Daily bag limits for pelagic, demersal and lagoon finfish, mud crabs, kima (clams), gong gong and rock lobster
- Minimum size limits for demersal and lagoon finfish, and rock lobster
- Requirements for fish to be landed whole, as fish trunks or skin-on fillets
- Requirements for gong gong to have fully formed and closed spines
- Totally protected species, which must not be taken
- Airport possession limits for the export of fish off island of:
 - 5 kilograms (kg) of fish,
 - 2 kg of gong gong and
 - 2 kg of kima (clam) per person.
- Fishing gear controls, including restrictions on net and mesh sizes
- Sanctuary areas to protect the humphead Maori wrasse and gong gong
- Net fishing closure at the West Island Northern lagoon
- Cultural fishing arrangements to allow for the continued take of fish for important cultural events.

For more information, please go to:

- [Cocos \(Keeling\) Islands Applied Laws Amendment \(Fish Resources Management\) Ordinance 2022](#)
- The Department of Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts via email IOTfisheries@infrastructure.gov.au

Reviewing and updating the new rules

For the benefit of the CKI community, the sustainable management of local fish populations remains a key focus of the Australian Government.

As community values, environmental conditions and fish stocks may change over time, it will be important to update the rules as new information becomes available.

Ongoing monitoring and research will help inform changes to the rules in the future. This includes community input through citizen science, monitoring catch and effort by recreational fishers, stock assessments and other scientific research.

The CKI Fisheries Advisory Committee plays an important role in guiding the science and research activities that takes place at CKI and informing any changes to the fishing rules to ensure the ongoing sustainability of local fish stocks.

