

Have your say

East coast Spanish mackerel harvest strategy and management changes

The Queensland Government is seeking community feedback on proposed amendments to the harvest strategy and management of the east coast Spanish mackerel (*Scomberomorus commerson*) fishery in Queensland. Feedback from this consultation will inform management arrangements and harvest strategy amendments to set the future harvest of the fishery.

The fastest and easiest way to provide your feedback is to **complete the online survey** on our [engagement hub](#).

The survey questions are also available at the end of this document if you would prefer to **print and post your submission** to:

Spanish mackerel fishery discussion paper
Department of Primary Industries
GPO Box 46
Brisbane Qld 4001

Submissions close 5 pm, Wednesday 8 October 2025.

NOTE: The survey questions are designed to seek your input – they are not a voting tool. Your feedback will be used to help develop options for fisheries management action and provide an insight into the preferences of all stakeholders.

Background

There have been long-held concerns regarding the sustainability of the east coast Spanish mackerel fishery. Following significant collaboration with a project team consisting of commercial and recreational fishers, an independent scientific expert and Fisheries Queensland, a stock assessment was completed in 2025.

This 2025 assessment estimated stocks at between 17% and 62% of unfished biomass, most likely at 34%. There is now an opportunity to provide greater access to Spanish mackerel through review of the harvest strategy and the management proposals detailed in the discussion paper.

Proposed management arrangements

The following management arrangements are proposed:

- Amend the harvest strategy target reference point from 60% unfished biomass to 48% unfished biomass, amend the harvest strategy objectives, and remove the 40% interim target reference point previously established when stocks were believed to be below the 20% threshold.
- Increase the total allowable commercial catch from 165 t to 250 t to improve industry viability and better align the commercial sector catch share to the established 60% commercial 40% recreational allocation in the harvest strategy.
- Increase the recreational boat limit from 2 per boat with 2 or more people on board to 4 per boat with 4 or more people on board, without significantly negatively impacting the sector catch share ratio.
- Maintain the current seasonal closures in northern and southern Spanish mackerel waters.
- Amend the harvest strategy decision rules as drafted in the *Amended east coast Spanish mackerel harvest strategy: 2023–2028 – Proposed amendments* document available on our [engagement hub page](#).

All other current management arrangements, including the 75 cm minimum size limit, individual recreational possession limit of one fish per person would remain the same.

Table 1. Management proposal summary

Control	Past (2019–2022)	Present (2022–2025)	Proposal (2025 onwards)
Commercial TACC	578 t	165 t	250 t
Recreational possession limit (per person)	3 fish	1 fish	1 fish
Recreational boat limit	6 fish	2 fish	4 fish
Sectoral catch shares (commercial:recreational)	60:40	36:64	60:40
Seasonal closures	-	2 x 3-week closures north of 22°S (around the new moon in Oct–Dec) and 2 x 3-week closures south of 22°S (commencing 1 Feb and 1 Mar)	2 x 3-week closures north of 22°S (around the new moon in Oct–Dec) and 2 x 3-week closures south of 22°S (commencing 1 Feb and 1 March)

Next steps

Feedback from this consultation will be used to finalise amendments to the *East coast Spanish mackerel harvest strategy: 2023–2028*. The implementation of any new management arrangements is expected to commence from the end of 2025.