What are the current rules?
The existing Western Australian (WA) applied fishing rules are already in place on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands (CKI) but were not designed specifically for the unique CKI region, and do not take into account Cocos Malay customs.

Why are we proposing to change the current rules?
It is important that the proposed new rules take into account the unique CKI environment, community values, and cultural needs, while ensuring enough protection so fish resources remain sustainable for current and future generations of CKI residents. After hearing from more than 150 residents during on-island consultations on the initial proposed rules in 2019, the revised new rules are now available here.

What studies and research have taken place?
Studies by the Fisheries team at WA Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (WA Fisheries) began in 2006 and include underwater visual surveys, diver operated video, baited remote underwater video surveys, environmental surveys, biological sampling and catch composition, acoustic tagging and eDNA (environmental DNA obtained from samples). Studies have explored species composition, distribution and abundance, and whether stocks rely on local recruitment or periodical recruitment from elsewhere. This information is used to make informed management decisions. The rules will be reviewed in 2023, taking into account the latest science, and community input. If the science demonstrates that there is a change in fish stocks, the proposed new rules will be amended.

How will the proposed new rules compare to the existing rules?
The rules take into account the specific circumstances of the CKI community. The new bag limits allow each person to take a total of 60 finfish (pelagic, demersal and lagoon) and 56 invertebrates (crustaceans and molluscs). This includes a daily bag limit of 40 gong gong. WA Fisheries is also proposing the CKI community report their catch to contribute to important research and the sustainability of the fishery. Further details on how to log your catches will be available in the near future.

Below is an example of the proposed new rules compared to the existing rules:
### How do the proposed new rules recognise Cocos Malay customs?

In recognition of long-standing Cocos Malay fishing practices on CKI, the Department proposes to issue Exemptions to permit the Cocos Malay community to take additional fish in preparation for cultural or religious events. This includes Muhammad’s birthday, Islamic New Year, weddings, funerals and other cultural events.

The Australian Government will also issue Exemptions allowing designated Cocos Malay artisan fishers to sell locally caught fish to the island community. This is in recognition of the long-standing historical reliance on fish on the CKI, including the sale of small quantities of locally caught fish for consumption within the community.

### Will I be able to take passionfruit coral trout?

Yes, the new arrangements include a daily bag limit of two passionfruit coral trout per person.

### Will these new rules be permanent?

The rules will be reviewed in 2023, taking into account the latest science and community input. The primary focus remains that CKI fish and aquatic resources are managed in a sustainable way for current and future generations of CKI residents. The Australian Government and WA Fisheries strongly support community engagement in evidence collection to support review of the rules and their effectiveness into the future.

### Why are there limits proposed to what I can take off CKI?

Due to CKI’s isolated and limited habitat, the fish resources are, in general, at higher risk of over-fishing. This is particularly the case for demersal species that inhabit the fringing coral reef around CKI. These fish rely on the resident population for juvenile recruitment. The focus of the fisheries management approach on CKI is to ensure the sustainability of the fish resources into the future for those that live on CKI. To help achieve this goal, the proposed maximum quantity of wahoo and tuna that a person may possess in the area of CKI Airport is five kilograms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rule</th>
<th>WA (current)</th>
<th>CKI (proposed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demersal species mixed bag limit</td>
<td>5 (North Coast)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pelagic species mixed bag limit</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gong gong</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational fishing licences</td>
<td>5 categories</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size limits applied</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What community consultation occurred to develop and promote these rules?

WA Fisheries began consulting with the CKI community in 2002. Initial consultation was focused meetings with various community groups which led to the development of a draft management strategy in 2005. Awareness of the strategy and management approach on CKI has been supported by further community meetings, letter drops, shire and council meetings, public information sessions and the distribution of proposed recreational fishing guides. The CKI community called for the maintenance of a sustainable fishing resource to achieve its strategic vision by 2030. After hearing from more than 150 residents during on-island consultations on the initial proposed rules last year, the revised new rules are now available here and written comments can be made in the two-week comment period.

What if I have further questions?

Please contact WA Fisheries by emailing IndianOceanTerritories@dpird.wa.gov.au or the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications by emailing IndianOceanTerritories@infrastructure.gov.au