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## Recreational Rock Lobster Season Opens

The recreational rock lobster season opens this Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> November and Tasmania's recreational fishers are geared up can't wait.

Chief Executive Officer of TARFish, Mark Nikolai, has spoken with over 1000 recreational fishers over the last two weeks and rock lobster fishing is the number one topic of discussions amongst the recreational fishing community.

Mark said that fishers are aware the fishery is facing continued declining stocks, particularly on the East/South East coasts and unless targeted, fair and equitable management measures are put in place in the not too distant future for all extractive users, we will face the future consequences of low rock lobster stocks.

Mark noted there are no changes to bag and possession limits for recreational fishers for the 2010/11 season, however asks fisher's to support responsible fishing practices.

1. *Fish Safely*

Check your boat, safety gear and weather predictions. Remember don't put your, or your crews safety at risk for the sake of a rock lobster.

2. *Fish Responsibly*

Consider the current state of the rock lobster stocks and only take enough for a feed of fish, this may not be your maximum bag or possession limits accordingly to the current rules. Consider releasing rock lobsters with a carapace length exceeding 140mm, these large lobsters have been shown to control the Long Spined Sea Urchin which is causing significant damage to the marine environment on the East/South East coast.

3. *Report suspected illegal fishing activity*

Illegal fishing activities continue to reek untold damage to fish stocks and we all must be vigilant and report any suspected illegal activity quickly to marine police on 0427 655 557. The Marine Police have just taken delivery of new iPhones that enable them to instantly check fishing and boat licences.

There is no doubt the rock lobster fishery is facing significant challenges and if we want to continue to reap the health and well being benefits of recreational fishing we must fish responsibly.

Contact Mark Nikolai, Chief Executive Officer on 0403 868 004 or 1300 665 225 for further information.

*TARFish is the independent, government recognised peak body looking after the interests of recreational marine fishers in Tasmania.*