

DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

NO. 5860

14 February 2025

**MARINE LIVING RESOURCES ACT, 1998
(ACT NO. 18 OF 1998)**

**CONSULTATION ON THE INTENTION TO ALLOCATE ABALONE FOUND IN THE EASTERN CAPE
TO THE SMALL-SCALE FISHING SECTOR**

I, Dion Travers George, Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, hereby publish, for public comment, my intention to allocate abalone found in the Eastern Cape to the small-scale fishing sector in the Eastern Cape.

If approved, the Delegated Authority will be required to set a total allowable catch and/or total allowable effort for the small-scale fishing sector for inclusion in the basket of species that may be harvested by small scale fishing right holders allocated in terms of section 18 of the Marine Living Resources Act, 1998 (MLRA). The recommended TAC is 28.5 tonnes as was proposed during the experimental project.

Proposed allocation of abalone found in the Eastern Cape to the small-scale fishing sector in the Eastern Cape, South Africa

In 2012, the Abalone Scientific Working Group (SWG) of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (Department) initiated an Abalone experimental project in the Eastern Cape Province which ran for three fishing seasons until 2015. This followed claims from fishing communities that there is an abundance of Abalone in the Eastern Cape and requests that the Department grant these communities access to fishing this resource as an extension of the existing Abalone commercial sector. The experiment was conducted in terms of section 83 of the Marine Living Resources Act, 1998 (MLRA) which permits the conducting of scientific investigations or practical experiments and followed a three-phase approach.

Phase one included a desktop study, information gathering, an economic feasibility study and an experimental fishery design and fishery management plan. Phase two required the implementation of the fishery management plan including data collection, monitoring, research, reassessment of the fishery and finally a Ministerial decision on the approval or otherwise of the commercial exploitation of the resource under investigation. In the final phase, phase three, the fishery management plan must be revised.

The purpose of the experiment was to:

- (a) Investigate the geographic distribution, including size and stock availability, of wild Abalone in the Eastern Cape; and
- (b) establish whether the geographic spread, size composition and distribution of Abalone in the Eastern Cape could be sustainably harvested for commercial purposes.

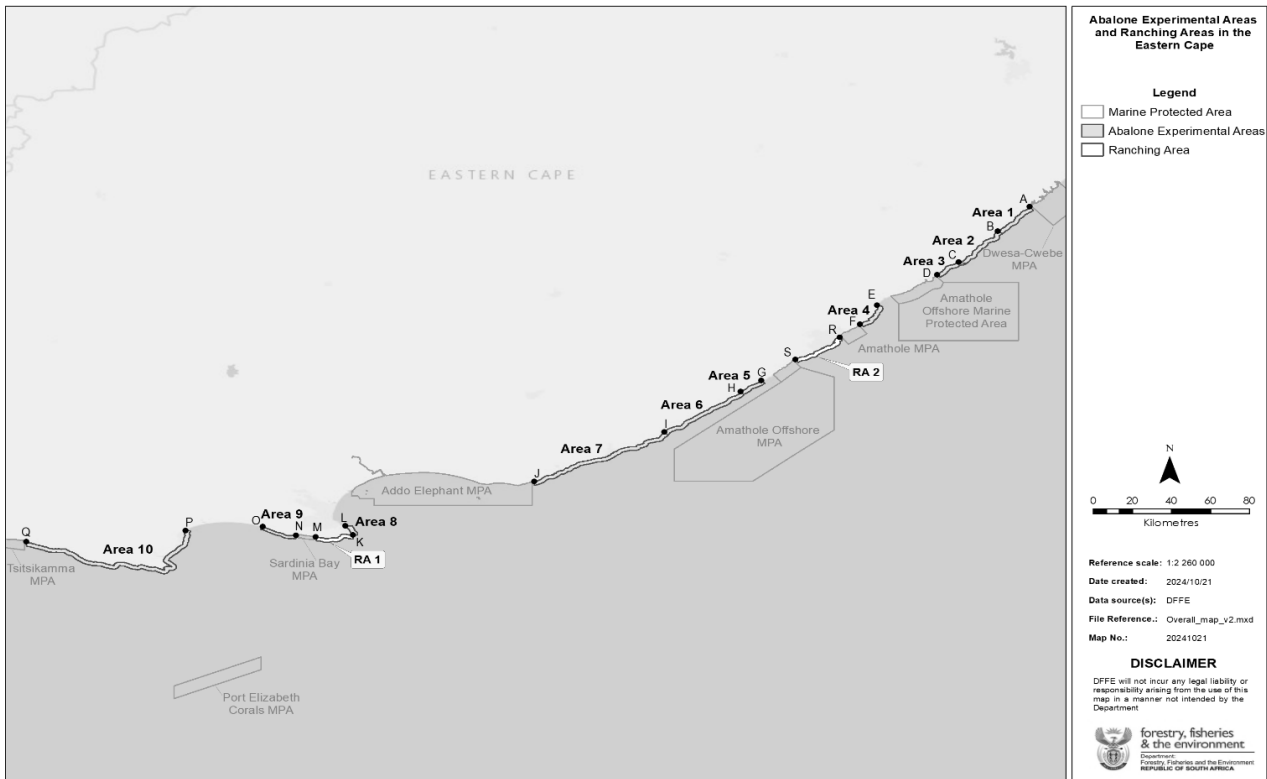
An experimental allocation of 28.5 tons for the Eastern Cape was proposed and the coastal region was divided into six areas.

Based on the findings of the Eastern Cape abalone experimental project that was conducted from Groot River to the western boundary of Dwesa-Cwebe Marine Protected Area, the abalone resource is unlikely to be able to sustain a commercial fishery. Thus, the Department is proposing to make the abalone resource in the Eastern Cape available to the small-scale sector subject to the following proposed conditions and/or considerations:

1. Abalone is already an existing fishery, and allocations in the Eastern Cape will be considered an extension of the existing fishery for this resource.
2. There will be no requirement for further experimental fishing of abalone in the Eastern Cape. Catch statistics and resource trends from an allocated fishery must be monitored annually and catch allocations adjusted in response to resource trends.
3. Allocations will be made for each of the 6 experimental fishing areas in order to avoid the risk of local depletion in any one area.
4. Allocations will be precautionary and in line with the allocations provided in the experimental Fishery as detailed in the areas indicated in the table below:

Experimental Area	Name	Boundary	Latitude	Longitude	Area (km ²)	Proposed Tonnage
1	Area 1	Dwesa MPA South Boundary (1km setback from MPA)	-32,320315	28,818938	41,17	4
		Qhorha Mouth (Kob Inn)	-32,4475	28,671667		
	Area 2	Qhorha Mouth (Kob Inn)	-32,4475	28,671667	54,15	
		Khobonqaba Mouth	-32,607778	28,491111		
	Area 3	Khobonqaba Mouth	-32,607778	28,491111	27,81	
Great Kei Mouth	-32,674742	28,392901				
2	Area 4	Cintsa Mouth	-32,833333	28,116667	32,04	6
		Gonubie Mouth	-32,933665	28,03753		
3	Area 5	Tyolomnqa Mouth	-33,225833	27,583056	22,99	1.5
		Keiskamma Mouth	-33,284444	27,488333		
	Area 6	Keiskamma Mouth	-33,284444	27,488333	84,63	
		Great Fish River Mouth	-33,494722	27,138611		
4	Area 7	Great Fish River Mouth	-33,494722	27,138611	136,03	3
		Cannon Rocks	-33,752367	26,538459		
5	Area 8	Summerstrand	-33,983056	25,671111	13,44	5
		Cape Recife	-34,030316	25,704675		
	Area 9	Sardinia Bay MPA West Boundary (1km seback from MPA)	-34,033191	25,444418	25,47	
		Maitlands River Mouth	-33,988333	25,291111		
6	Area 10	Kabeljous River Mouth	-34,008333	24,935278	198,80	9
		Tsitsikamma MPA East Boundary (1km seback from MPA)	-34,066003	24,203629		

5. The proposed allocations will cover the sites identified and illustrated in the below map.



6. The size limit will be set at 114 mm to retain consistency with the commercial fishery.
7. Abundance surveys will be conducted, and data from confiscated poached abalone in the Eastern Cape will be analysed to update catch allocation determinations for future total allowable catch.

Members of the public are invited to submit written comments or input, within 30 days from the date of the publication of this Notice in the Government Gazette or the newspaper whichever is the later date, to any of the following addresses:

By post to: Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
 The Deputy Director-General: Fisheries Management
 Attention: Mr Msimelelo Mdledle
 Private Bag X2
 VLAEBERG
 8018

By hand at: 4th Floor Foretrust Building, Martin Hammerschlag Way, Foreshore, Cape Town
 By email: For comments related to abalone: ECabalonecomments@dffe.gov.za

Any inquiries in connection with the Notice can be directed to Mr Msimelelo Mdledle by phone: 021 402 3727 / 066 471 1473 or through email: MMdledle@dffe.gov.za

Comments or input received after the closing date may be disregarded.

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment complies with the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (Act No. 4 of 2013). Comments received and responses thereto are collated into a comments and response report which will be made available to the public as part of the consultation process. If a commenting party has any objection to his or her name, or the name of the represented company/organisation, being made publicly available in the comments and responses report, such objection should be highlighted in bold as part of the comments submitted in response to this Government Notice.



DION TRAVERS GEORGE
MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT