



PRESS RELEASE

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2017 Bluefin Tuna Open Season

The open season for recreational fishing of Bluefin tuna in British Gibraltar Territorial Waters commences on Friday 16th June 2017 and ends on the 14th October 2017. Anglers are reminded that a Class K licence is required to fish for Bluefin tuna in British Gibraltar Territorial Waters. Licence application forms are available online from the DECC's website (<https://www.gibraltar.gov.gi/new/marine-protection---permits>). There will be a total allowable catch of 13 tonnes after which the season will close.

A dedicated office and landing point has once again been created by the DEHCC within the North Mole (No. 1 Jetty). Anglers are advised that all tuna catches must be reported and weighed at the landing point where vessels will be able to dock. The landing point will be manned from 09:00 to 14:30 (Monday-Saturday). Any catches landed from 14:30 to sunset must also be reported and weighed at the landing point by contacting the on-call landing point staff on mobile number 54020033. This service will also be operational on Sundays and public holidays. Landing point staff will assist anglers in completing the required catch form and should be contacted as soon as a fish is landed on board a vessel. Anglers are reminded that according to law the minimum size of Bluefin tuna that can be caught is 30kgs and 115cm fork length. These limits will be strictly enforced.

The Department would also like to inform anglers who practice sports fishing, as well as recreational boat users, of the need to adhere to the Cetacean Protocol when there are dolphins or whales nearby. The Department's Environmental Protection & Research Unit will be closely monitoring vessel activity, particularly sports fishermen employing 'popping' techniques, to ensure that the requirements of the Protocol are met. Anglers targeting Bluefin tuna are advised that casting any lines close to dolphins may result in their fishing licenses being revoked.

The Cetacean Protocol was introduced in 2014 as part of the Marine Protection Regulations and its objective is to protect dolphins and whales in British Gibraltar Territorial Waters (BGTW). Vessels are required to maintain a minimum distance of 60 metres from any dolphin or whale whilst navigating in BGTW. The Protocol also establishes a 500 metre radius from the animals within which vessels must travel at a constant speed of no more than 4 knots or no greater than the slowest animal in the group.

For further information on the Bluefin tuna open season please contact the DEHCC: 200 48450.

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