



**MORNINGTON
PENINSULA**
Shire

18 March 2021

Mr Travis Dowling
Chief Executive Officer
Victorian Fisheries Authority
PO Box 4509, Melbourne VIC 3001

Dear Mr Dowling

Spider Crabs – Southern Port Phillip Bay 2021

The Mornington Peninsula Shire Council (MPSC) continues to share significant concerns raised by our community regarding the increased level of human interference in the annual spider crab moulting event in southern Port Phillip Bay.

We are seeking a response from your office regarding preparations for the upcoming season and the Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) longer term management plan to this wonderful natural phenomenon.

On the 10th July 2020, the MPSC wrote a letter to the Minister for Fishing and Boating, Melissa Horne MP, detailing the concerns at Rye Pier. This letter sought several actions from the Minister and the VFA to ensure the sustainability of the moulting event (a copy is attached).

The MPSC welcomes the *Fisheries (Spider Crab) Notice 2021* (Notice) that sought to temporarily reduce catch limits to 15 spider crabs per person. Although the Notice is a necessary action, it is only enforceable for a year and only partially addresses the concerns raised in our letter to Minister Horne.

The MPSC is seeking a roadmap in advance of this season and for future years which addresses the need for education campaigns, information for coastal user groups and appeals to the VFA to ensure greater protection of the spider crabs. This could be through the measures of implementing a closed season (May to July) or fishing exclusion zone when the spider crabs migrate into shallow waters around piers and jetties, similar to the one enforced for the protection of rays since 2017.

The MPSC is a major stakeholder regarding the unique annual migration phenomenon of the spider crabs and it is our role to advocate for all coastal users to witness this event into the future.

Following a formal response, we suggest a meeting to discuss the matter further. Please contact me on 5950 1400 or alternatively, your office may wish to contact Nathan Kearsley, Manager Property and Strategy on 5950 1465.

Yours sincerely

John Baker
CEO - Mornington Peninsula Shire

Contact the Mornington Peninsula Shire

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