



MEDIA STATEMENT

MINISTER BARBARA CREECY GRANTS 15-YEAR RIGHTS TO SMALL SCALE FISHING CO-OPERATIVES IN THE EASTERN CAPE

16 NOVEMBER 2019

Today, Saturday, 16 November 2019, in Port Elizabeth, as part of the transition to the new small-scale fishing sector, 20 small-scale fishing co-operatives, with 1 591 members, in the Eastern Cape have been awarded 15-year small-scale fishing rights.

The Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, Ms Barbara Creecy handed certificates to fishing cooperatives as recognition of their fishing rights and this also marked the commencement of presenting fishing rights to the remainder of 53 co-operatives in the Eastern Cape.

The basket of species granted is made up of, amongst others, squid, hake hand line, traditional line fish, seaweed, East Coast Rock Lobster and abalone ranching. All species allocated for own use will be accessed by all members for food security whereas species requested for commercial purposes will be owned and controlled by the co-operative for the co-operatives' business operations.

After the department amended its legislation in 2016 to recognise the importance of small-scale fishers, the department launched an Expression of Interest process. A total of 316 communities from the four coastal provinces registered their interest and this prompted the department to physically visit all these co-operatives for the purpose of registration and declaration of small-scale fishers in South Africa.

“The Finalisation of the small-scale fisheries policy provides an opportunity for the amendment of the Marine Living Resources Act of 1998, which did not legally recognise small-scale fishers in South Africa,” said Minister Creecy.

In Eastern Cape, 132 communities expressed interest and were all visited to verify fishers. Subsequently, 78 communities were declared small-scale fishing communities in line with the

requirements of the Regulations relating to Small-Scale Fisheries. 5335 individual fishers were declared small-scale fishers from the 78 small-scale fishing communities.

Co-operatives were required to classify as to whether species are requested for food security/own use or for commercial purpose. All species allocated for own use will be accessed by all members for food security whereas species requested for commercial purposes will be owned and controlled by the co-operative for the co-operatives' business operations.

During the assessment of fishing rights applications, it was noticed that the majority of species requested were line fish species. It was also noticed that some of the species require use of a vessel. Therefore, Total Allowable Effort (TAE) will need to be availed through the apportionment of TAE between small-scale and commercial sector when the department allocates commercial rights in 2021. In the meantime, co-operatives will be able to fish from shore using hook and line and will further share an Effort of 38 vessels while fishing rights allocation process (FRAP 2021) is being concluded.

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ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES