

# BECOMING A FISHERIES AND MARINE OFFICER

Fisheries and Marine Officers play a major role in the protection and conservation of Western Australian marine and aquatic resources by ensuring compliance with management rules through law enforcement, community education and liaison with our clients.

Successful applicants will be required to work **irregular hours and at a range of locations throughout the State**. Considerable time away from home may also be required. In some instances, this will involve living on Departmental or other vessels for short periods. Given the conditions outlined, applicants need to ensure they understand and accept these requirements and have discussed them with their families.

Fisheries and Marine Officers are required to wear a uniform whilst on duty. The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD, the employer), supplies uniforms as well as providing on and off the job training in the skills, techniques and responsibilities of a Fisheries and Marine Officer.

## Role of the Fisheries and Marine Officer

Fisheries and Marine Officers maintain regular contact with the local community and fishing industry, and their local knowledge is of vital importance in developing workable management strategies and management laws. Officers commit much of their effort to detecting illegal fishing activities and, where necessary, prosecuting offenders.

Promoting community awareness of the need to observe fisheries management laws is an important part of a Fisheries and Marine Officer's role. Officers are frequently called on to give talks to schools and community groups and may also be asked to assist with operations such as search and rescue, transport to remote islands and collecting biological data for research programs.

Fisheries and Marine Officers in some regions also undertake fisheries compliance activities in Marine Parks and Reserves in collaboration with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. Officers also undertake duties on-behalf of the Commonwealth Department of the Environment in Commonwealth marine parks and reserves.

Fisheries and Marine Officers based in the Metropolitan region are also jointly responsible for marine safety, in collaboration with the Department of Transport. This involves duties from routine checking of vessels for safety equipment such as flares and life jackets, to commercial survey inspections of registered fishing vessels.

Fisheries and Marine Officers also play a role in the management of State-wide biosecurity risks. Specifically, in relation to matters such as invasive marine pests, translocation of aquatic organisms, hull biofouling on vessels and disease outbreaks in the aquatic environment.

**No guarantee can be given as to which location newly trained Fisheries and Marine Officers will be posted to. It is also important to note that Fisheries and Marine Officers are required to transfer to various locations across Western Australia throughout their careers.**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017 the former Department of Fisheries was amalgamated with the Departments of Agriculture and Food and Regional Development to form the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. The new department administers a number of Acts of parliament. As such, from time to time, Fisheries and Marine Officers may be required to assist with Animal Welfare and Marine and Terrestrial Biosecurity incidents and activities.

Fisheries and Marine Officer duties include:

- Assistance with law enforcement programs requiring the apprehension, video interviewing and prosecution of offenders in field situations;
- Assistance with customer awareness/education programs requiring the presentation of information to members of the public and community groups;
- Liaison with members of the fishing industry, community groups, members of the public and other government agencies and advise on fisheries matters;
- Adherence to Departmental policies, procedures and principles;
- Marine and land based fisheries and marine safety patrols;
- Operation of four-wheel drive vehicles and small vessels
- Presenting evidence in a court of law and serving of summonses (Prosecution Notices);
- Preparation and submission of written reports and prosecution briefs;
- Maintenance of Departmental vessels, vehicles and equipment;
- Issuing licenses and attend to administrative duties;
- Carrying out surveillance patrols and travel aboard aircraft and commercial fishing vessels;
- Liaison and patrols with staff of other State and Commonwealth Government Departments; and,
- Animal Welfare and Biosecurity compliance roles.

## Our locations

The Operations and Compliance Directorate includes four regions : South –Metro – Midwest/Gascoyne and North. The Directorate has over 230 staff, including approximately 100 Fisheries and Marine Officers. There is a network of 17 District Offices in areas where major fisheries are operating.

Offices are located in the following centres:

Albany	Carnarvon	Exmouth	Jurien Bay	Mandurah
Broome	Denham	Fremantle	Karratha	
Bunbury	Geraldton	Kununurra	Rockingham	
Busselton	Esperance	Hillarys	Lancelin	

Each office is equipped with vehicles and small craft for coastal, estuarine and river patrols and three large ocean-going patrol vessels operate from the Fremantle and Geraldton Districts providing an off-shore capacity statewide.

Upon successful completion of the initial training course, Fisheries and Marine Officers will be appointed permanently and placed in one of the District offices on a probation period. It is highly unlikely that a Fisheries and Marine Officer recruited from a regional area will be posted to their home town until they have at least three or four years' experience in the job.

# What makes a good Fisheries and Marine Officer?

Core competencies have been identified for effective on-the-job performance as a Fisheries and Marine Officer and we utilise psychological profiling techniques to assist in identifying whether candidates possess these competencies. The competencies outline a combination of skills, knowledge and personal attributes that result in successful job behaviours and include (but are not limited to):

**Stakeholder orientation** - Proactively developing stakeholder relationships by making an effort to listen to and understand the stakeholder (both internal and external). Anticipating and providing solutions to stakeholder needs and giving high priority to stakeholder satisfaction. Representing Fisheries in an effective manner. Promoting responsible fishing practices and encouraging voluntary compliance.

**Personal Drive and Integrity** - Displaying integrity, influence and self-motivation, both on a personal and professional level. Behaving in an honest, ethical and professional manner at all times.

**Teamwork Skills** - Working as part of a team or with minimal supervision. Working with others in a professional and positive manner. Contributing to the goals and outcomes of a team environment. Developing and maintaining positive relationships with team members. Following directions and instructions. Working on own initiative, when required.

**Conflict resolution and negotiation ability** - Negotiating and resolving conflict, whilst engaging in potentially difficult and volatile situations. Recognising and coping with stress in self and others.

**Proven focus on customer service** - Providing educational advice to the members of the public, including presentations to fishing, diving and school groups.

**Analytical reasoning and problem solving skills** - Understanding, interpreting and applying relevant legislation, policy and procedures. Objectively gathering facts, determining options and drawing logical conclusions in accordance with agency guidelines.

**Communication (verbal and written) and interpersonal skills** - Liaising with internal and external stakeholders, including ability to work and liaise sensitively and effectively with people, while understanding cultural differences and diversity issues. Preparing documents to a high standard, including briefs of evidence, reports and general correspondence.

**Ability to adapt to situational change** - Having a flexible approach to your work program with regards to shifts, rosters and leave. Ability to transfer around the state. Work at sea and in land based environments, sometimes under difficult, stressful and extreme conditions.

## Physical requirements

Working as a Fisheries and Marine Officer involves a great deal of physical activity. All successful applicants will be required to pass a physical and medical assessment prior to appointment to ensure that they have the physical capabilities for the job. (Please see the 'Applicant Information' attachment for details of what will be assessed)

Some of the physical activities a Fisheries and Marine Officer may be expected to perform include:

**Stamina** – working up to 12 hours per day over four to eight day periods, often in exposed environments and in all weathers both day and night. Examples include exposure to cold and rain whilst on night river patrols, exposure to summer heat whilst conducting surveillance for long periods in sand hills, lifting crates of lobster over a three-hour period, walking 2 to 5 kilometres in exposed weather conditions.

**Motion sickness** –working effectively on vessels at sea and travelling significant distances by vehicle and aircraft, without being unduly affected by motion sickness.

**Lifting** – lifting and carrying the following objects (with assistance and training in appropriate techniques): - a one metre diameter lobster pot - small outboard motors - three metre dinghies and punts onto the roof racks of vehicles - other assorted gear - drag dinghies over beaches, sandbanks and shallows.

**Jarring** – ability to cope with driving 4WD vehicles over rough roads or operating a small vessel in open sea conditions.

**Sitting/lying** –able to remain in static observation positions for up to eight hours during surveillance operations.

**Defensive Capacities** – able to cope with and handle potentially volatile situations. (Training is provided in Defensive Capacities, focussing on enhancing an individual's situational awareness and ability to disengage from a high-risk encounter before physical threat or assault occurs).

**Shark Hazard Mitigation** - may be required to assist with shark hazard mitigation which may involve transporting a Departmental firearm. Fisheries and Marine Officers undertaking this work are required to be trained and licenced in the use of the firearm and to be added to the Corporate Firearms Licence.

**Walking** –ability to walk two to five kilometres in all weather conditions day or night carrying up to 20kg of equipment. Examples include night patrols of dams for marron fishing inspection, walking into areas to establish observation posts and walking along beaches to inspect abalone and other fish catches.

**Paddling** – able to, on occasion, row or paddle dinghies or canoes 10-15 km in all weather conditions. Examples include canoe patrols of southwest rivers and closed water patrols.

**Climbing** – ability to climb hills or man-made structures. Examples include climbing trees for observation and placing radio aerials, climbing fences while apprehending offenders, climbing steep riverbanks, and climbing on boats that are mounted on trailers, to inspect catches.

**Diving** –may be required to undertake diving operations to carry out inspections of fishing activities and to gather or recover evidence. Officers are required to maintain a standard of swimming fitness and, depending on the Officer's location, dive training will be provided.

# Career prospects

## **Starting out**

Candidates selected from the pool will initially be placed on a 4 month fixed term contract as a Trainee Fisheries and Marine Officer. During the term of the contract, individuals will undertake a training course based in Fremantle WA.

Upon successful completion of the course, Trainees will be appointed permanently and commence a probation period on the job. Placement locations will be determined at this point in time. Trainee Fisheries and Marine Officers commence at Level 2, with a salary range of \$77,546 - \$ 83,887 pa.

## **After a year on the job**

After spending 12 months on the job following completion of the 4 month training course, Trainee Fisheries and Marine Officers become eligible to apply to progress from Level 2 to Level 3.1. At a Level 3.1, individuals are no longer considered to be Trainees. Progression is dependent on meeting a number of criteria, including completion of the "Training Log Book", obtaining a satisfactory performance review and having made significant progress towards achieving a Coxswains certificate. The salary range for a Level 3 Fisheries and Marine Officer is \$88,427 - \$ 95,688 pa.

## **Promotion and transfer opportunities**

Promotion is based on a competitive merit selection process and Officers can be promoted through to a Level 5 Supervising Fisheries and Marine Officer with a salary of up to \$120,979 pa.

Opportunities to transfer to other locations in the Department often arise and are made available for Fisheries and Marine Officers to express their interest.

Fisheries and Marine Officers at all levels also attract additional allowances for duties at sea or working in remote areas.

## **Is this the job for me?**

Working as a Fisheries and Marine Officer is a lifestyle choice which can provide a great sense of satisfaction. However, there are a wide variety of challenges involved in the nature of the duties and work routine that may mean this job doesn't suit you.

As a Fisheries and Marine Officer you must be prepared to accept postings to areas in any region, including the Perth metropolitan area. This may mean that you and your family have to leave your own home and undergo the inconvenience of renting. Government housing is available in some country districts.

You will be required to work long hours at odd times and may be recalled to duty at any time of the night and on weekends to respond to complaints of illegal fishing activities. Leave is not generally granted during the peak fishing months. Most leave entitlements are therefore granted during the cooler winter months in the south and the 'wet season' in the north of the State.

We **strongly advise** you to discuss the decision to apply with your family

## Further Information

Please visit our website at [www.dpird.wa.gov.au](http://www.dpird.wa.gov.au) to learn more about the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. For information about the selection process and preparing and lodging your application, please refer to the Applicant Information attached to the advertisement.

After reading all of the information and documents supplied in the advertisement, should you have any questions about the position or are in need of further job related information, please call the FMO Pool Recruitment Coordinator on **0429 317 779**. You may be asked to leave a message and your contact information, after which someone will call you back as soon as possible to answer your questions.