



FACTSHEET

# Western Rock Lobster



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**Common Name:** Western Rock Lobster

**Scientific Name:** *Panurlirus cygnus*

**Conservation Status:** The waters around Rottnest Island are a designated Marine Reserve. Some parts of Rottnest's reefs are included the Marine Sanctuary Zones shown in the Rottnest Island Marine Management Strategy (2007).

WA fishing regulations state the minimum size limit for Western Rock Lobsters is a 76 mm carapace (the shield covering the lobster's body excluding tail). The bag limit for this species is 8 per day. These limits may change, so please contact Department of Fisheries for current catch limits.

**Habitat:** Reefs

**Body length:** 7.5-9 cm (Western Rock Lobsters are sized by the length of their carapace, not by their whole length)

**Weight:** 3-5 kg

**Description:**

The Western Rock Lobster has 5 pairs of legs, a short body and a thick tail that makes up about half of its length. Its tail

contains lots of delicious meat and ends in a fan shape. This lobster has large bulging eyes and a pair of large spiny antennae.

It has a brownish to reddish colour and is armoured and spiny all over

**Diet:**

Molluscs, worms, small crustaceans, algae.

**In the wild:**

Western Rock Lobsters is one of about 8 species of rock lobster found in WA's waters. It only occurs in continental shelf waters off the Australian west coast and is common in the waters off Rottnest Island.

These animals feed mostly at night and live together in big groups in and amongst the limestone and coral reefs. They hide in caves or under ledges, often living in groups in bigger caves. Their thick armour and spiny surface helps protect them from predators but sheltering in numbers offers greater protection. When attacked, the lobster or group of lobsters will back into a cave with their spines and spiky antennae pointing aggressively forward.





These antennae are also vital for the lobster to find its way around and a communication tool. Western rock lobsters grow slowly taking five years to reach maturity and some of the large lobsters may be up to 30 years old or more. They are the target of WA's largest and most valuable fishery.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

These lobsters can regrow their legs and antennae if they lose them in attacks by predators (like octopus, sea lions, Brown-spotted Wrasse and Dhufish).

### **Threats:**

- Overfishing
- Pollution