



forestry, fisheries & the environment

Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

PUBLIC NOTICE

24 February 2022

For immediate release

USE OF MOTORISED EQUIPMENT FOR RECREATIONAL ANGLING: DRONES AND REMOTELY OPERATED DEVICES AND/OR VEHICLES

It has come to the attention of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment ("the Department") that a variety of motorised devices, such as, but not limited to, bait-carrying drones, bait-carrying remote-controlled boats and other remotely operated vehicles, as well as motorised electric reels are used by recreational anglers to illegally catch fish as well as sharks.

These devices are prohibited for use of angling in terms of the Regulations promulgated in terms of the Marine Living Resources Act, 1998 (Act No. 18 of 1998) ("MLRA").

In terms of the Regulations, "angling" means recreational fishing by manually operating a rod, reel and line or one or more separate lines to which no more than ten hooks are attached per line. Therefore, it is clear that angling is limited both from shore and from vessels, to fishing by manually operating a rod, reel and line.

The Department is concerned about the conservation status of several shark and fish species targeted by these illegal methods. The motorised devices give anglers a huge advantage over those that confine themselves to traditional angling methods as provided for by the law. With the aid of these devices, anglers are able to catch large breeding fish with a much higher success rate than when confined to manual methods and in so doing unduly increase the pressure on already threatened species.

Recreational angling is an activity that can be enjoyed by all South Africans, regardless of socio-economic status. The Regulations that govern recreational fishing were designed to limit the cumulative impact of this activity and to ensure that it remains sustainable, ethical and with minimal adverse impact on our aquatic environment.

The purpose of this Public Notice is to alert recreational anglers and suppliers of fishing equipment that the Department intends to rigorously enforce the Regulations that govern recreational angling and ensure offenders are prosecuted and sentences accordingly. The Department will also seize the various illegal devices used and upon any successful conviction will seek an order from the court to have these devices forfeited to the state.

SUE MIDDLETON

DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL: FISHERIES MANAGEMENT