

Rock lobster fishers affected by trade disruptions in February 2020

The government has agreed to an interim solution to support the rock lobster industry and minimise losses from trade disruptions caused by the coronavirus in China.

Instructions for fishers

- Fishers with live rock lobster will need to provide information to the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) before returning any rock lobster to the sea.
- Do not return rock lobster to the sea without first contacting your local MPI office.

[Find your nearest MPI fisheries office](#)

Export trade affected by the virus

The coronavirus is taking a big toll on ordinary Chinese people with restrictions on movements and gatherings to minimise health risks. The Chinese New Year celebrations between 25 January and 8 February are particularly affected. Exporters from New Zealand and other countries traditionally sell large numbers of rock lobster into China during this period, but most orders have been cancelled.


Following these disruptions, the industry has asked the government to help manage the impact caused by cancelled orders as a result of coronavirus.

A large number of rock lobster have been held in land-based containers and in holding pots at sea, and the government has decided that fishery officers can work to assist fishers to return a limited number of rock lobster back into the sea.

Careful consideration has been given to any potential impacts on the health and sustainability of our fisheries and the welfare of the lobsters, as well as impacts on the marine environment the fish are being released into.

Anyone holding live rock lobster will need to provide information to Fisheries New Zealand (a business unit of MPI) before any of the fish can be released.

Government media release

[Support for crayfish industry after disruptions – Beehive](#) 

Other effects on trade

We're carefully monitoring how the novel coronavirus is affecting New Zealand primary industries and businesses.

[Get the latest information on how the coronavirus is affecting trade](#)