SANBI IDentifyIt - Species

East Coast Rock Lobster - Panulirus homarus

NEMBA Status
Not listed

Other names
Crayfish, Kreef

Geographic location / distribution
Rocky reefs 1-15 m, sometimes into deeper water; Eastern Cape to East Africa.

Physical description
Size - Up to 25 cm
Adult - Colour brown to orange-red to olive-green with orange spines and blue and green markings on head; has a blue stripe down the side when uncooked, and small round spots on the legs and abdomen; two sharp horns (or prongs) project forwards between the eyes, with no spines between them; each tail segment has a transverse groove: the margin of the groove is scalloped on segments 2-5.

Other similar species
Jasus lalandii - West Coast Rock Lobster
Palinurusgilchristii - South Coast Rock Lobster
Panulirus longipes - Longlegged Spiny Rock Lobster
Panulirus ornatus - Ornate Rock Lobster
Panulirus versicolor - Painted Rock Lobster

MLRA
Panulirus sp. may not be imported, offered for sale or purchased in South Africa
Recreational only, with permit
Closed Season : 1 November - end February
Size limit : Minimum carapace size 65 mm
Bag limit : 8

References
East Coast Rock Lobster - *Panulirus homarus*

**Identification**

- Two sharp horns (or props) project forwards between the eyes, with no spines between them.
- Blue and green markings on head.
- Each tail segment has a transverse groove; the margin of the groove is scalloped on segments 2-4.
- Orange spines.
- Adult - Colour brown to orange-red to olive-green. Adult has a blue stripe down the side when uncooked, and small round spots on the legs & abdomen.
- Size — Up to 25 cm.
MARINE SPECIES: ROCK LOBSTERS

This section includes information on six species of rock lobster found in South Africa: four species from the genus Panulirus (which are all referred to as East Coast Rock Lobster in the MLRA Regulations), West Coast Rock Lobster Jasus lalandii and South Coast Rock Lobster Palinurus gilchristi.

Please refer to the MLRA Regulations, Parts 8-10 (s44-s54) for details of regulations relating to rock lobsters. It is prohibited to fish, collect, disturb or be in possession of any rock lobster that is in berry (carrying eggs).

Measuring Rock Lobsters

Rock Lobsters are measured in one of two ways. Where the carapace (the exoskeletal unit covering the head and thorax) is present, it is measured along the mid-dorsal line (see picture at left). Where only the tail is present, the 2nd-from-front tail segment is measured from the front to rear edges (see picture at right).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Carapace (mm)</th>
<th>2nd tail segment (mm)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Coast</td>
<td>25 (Commercial)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30 (Recreational)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Coast</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: MLRA Regulations

Above: Lobsters in berry.

Above: Measuring the carapace of a South Coast Rock Lobster.

Right: Measuring the 2nd tail segment of a Painted Rock Lobster.

PHOTO: Kerry Sink