

Easter snoek shortage fears rise amidst tightened fishing regulations

Those excited to indulge in snoek as they participate in Easter weekend traditions should be cautioned: there might be shortages of the delicacy on the shelves and in pantries this year.



Source: [Pexels](#)

This, as the Department of Forestry Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) tightens regulations on catch limits for small-scale fishers, and traditional fishers face delays in permit processing and reductions in permitted boats.

Of late, advocacy groups have been inundated with requests from fisheries cooperatives asking for assistance as they face unexpected cuts, limiting their ability to fish.

More recently, the DFFE enlisted the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) to inspect fishing vessels, sparking concerns among fishers along the west coast about meeting the demand for snoek over the Easter weekend.

Maria Welcome of Green Connection noted that newly formed fisheries cooperatives - 62 in total - have faced unexpected cuts recently, limiting their ability to fish. She warned of possible empty shelves this Easter.

In response to public protests, DFFE spokesperson, Peter Mbelengwa reported, that some recreational boats at Hondeklipbaai exceeded catch limits on Saturday, 13 March 2024, leading to fines and confiscation of excess fish.

To this end, the SANDF was called in to support law enforcement - a move that has raised questions around the involvement of the SANDF and police in small coastal towns.

Community involvement in fisheries

Small-scale fisherman, Walter Steenkamp expressed frustration over government policies affecting their livelihoods and called for greater community involvement in fisheries management.

“We are suffering as small-scale fisheries because the government doesn't care for us,” he said. “They must try to bring co-management in so that we can sit around one table, put the regulations on the table, and negotiate.”

No fines were issued, and no fish were confiscated during subsequent inspections at Hondeklipbaai.

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