



GERALDTON  
FISHERMEN'S  
CO-OPERATIVE

Rock Lobster Exporters

# the BROLOS Catcher

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## CHINA TOUR 2018

After three incredible trips over the past 18 months GFC is taking to the skies this November for our 2018 China Tour. Once again we will follow your lobster on its journey from WA all the way to your Chinese customers giving you a first-hand understanding of what your Co-op is doing in China to maximise returns for your product.

Given the ever changing environment in China we are yet to finalise exact itinerary however you can be assured it will be an experience not to be missed filled with all the best parts of the previous three trips, along with new faces, new activities, and brand new locations! As well as being a fantastic opportunity to forge new friendships with your fellow GFC members from up and down the WA coast.

At this early stage the trip is planned to fall within the first 2 weeks of November. Numbers are strictly limited so if you wish to get in early and express an interest in reserving a spot on the trip please contact Leith Teakle on 0437 824 925 or email [leitht@brolos.com.au](mailto:leitht@brolos.com.au)

## Market Update

At our last update we were bearing down on Chinese New Year and were starting to see the market burst into life with high demand and reasonable prices. We're now nearly a week on the other side of the Chinese New Year holiday and the good news story has only continued. We've seen record catch rates and record export volumes for the Chinese New Year period which puts our Members in a great position for the rest of the season.

The typical pattern of demand in recent years has been a sharp increase in exports in the weeks prior to Chinese New Year and a sharp drop soon after Chinese New Year. This year we didn't see the typical sharp drop in demand after Chinese New Year. As a result, GFC has exported record volumes over the last three weeks and still managed to achieve reasonable prices.

As reported in the last edition, the whole GFC supply chain has been tested over the last month, with GFC's Members, employees and supply chain all working exceptionally hard to capitalize on this market opportunity. On the whole we've done exceptionally well however we've also identified areas of our supply chain that can be improved, from Members' boats through to our customers in China. We will be using these learnings to continue to improve our supply chain so GFC remains ready for whatever our fishermen, and the market, throw at us.

## Don't believe the hype... *Drain*

Correct (and consistent) lobster draining technique is important from three perspectives: Compliance, Lobster Quality and Water Loss.

Too much drain time results in poor quality – this is shown both in your quality statistics and the longer term effects – which flow through the entire supply chain – significantly effecting both future beach prices and new market access. This last aspect is often not often appreciated, particularly if focus is given purely to current beach prices.

Not enough drain time and fishermen suffer from excessive water loss. Also, from a compliance perspective, sufficient drain time is important. While parts of industry may not appreciate it, compliance is a critical feature of any fishery management system. In a TACC fishery, weights and measure compliance is absolutely essential. The benefits the WRL industry gain by having a sustainable fishery (with stocks the envy of every of other lobster industry) are large. The flexibility in choosing when to fish and lower associated operating costs are a direct result of this.

As mentioned in previous quality catcher articles the best way to drain (if vessels can accommodate it) is below deck, with aeration left on until the live tanks are fully drained. However, with deck draining still common, GFC are assisting fishermen by offering free hessian to protect baskets from sun and wind.

To minimise drain time, additional holes can be drilled in the bottom of baskets (or around the bottom edges). These holes are also helpful for live tanks – they increase water flow, reduce 'in tank' drain time and reduce the effort needed to pull baskets out of live tank water. An array of 12mm holes is adequate, as shown in the picture below:



*A basket bottom drilled with extra 12mm holes to facilitate draining*

Some fishermen have developed methods to further increase efficiency of deck draining. Baskets placed flat on the deck will drain slowly – particularly 'Coffins' and 'Vege crates' which have a solid border near the base. Elevating baskets off the deck at an angle (with the first row supported by a rolled up deck mat etc. and subsequent rows leaning on the back edges of baskets in the previous row) dramatically reduces drain time. To illustrate, see the photos below:



### *Angled deck draining reduces drain time significantly*

With higher CPUE rates and some boats fishing larger (and double) gear, many existing cakka boxes are just too small for the number of lobsters coming over in each pot. If you ever have lobsters fall out of the cakka box and onto the deck it is a sure sign you need to upsize your cakka box. Lobsters that have fallen on the deck are damaged and not in premium condition - deckies should be told not to put them in the catch.

Finally, every lobster boat in GFC's fleet should have tank aeration as a minimum, and we are keen to support fishermen to achieve this. Every home aquarium has a bubbler for a few ten dollar fish: shouldn't you look after your valuable catch in the same way?

If you would like any assistance with a new system design, or even tips for your existing setup, contact GFC Continuous Improvement Manager, Brad Armstrong (0437 513 837) or GFC Research and Development Officer, Joel Durell (0407 135 712).





With the 2018 AFL Premiership Season is just around the corner the Geraldton Fishermen's Co-operative invites you to join in our 2018 AFL Footy Tipping Competition.

Last year's prize pool was \$5000 with Kalbarri's Billy Trent taking home the grand prize of \$3,000. In 2018 we are hoping to once again increase the participants therefore increasing the prize pool

Our competition is open for anyone to join with an entry fee of \$50 which can be paid by cash, cheque, Electronic Funds Transfer, or can be deducted from your fishing account. Once you have joined the competition we will contact you with payment instructions. If you have any other queries, please contact Carolyn Najar on [carolynn@brolos.com.au](mailto:carolynn@brolos.com.au) or (08) 9965 9078.

To join the competition click [here](#), enter the password crayfish, then sign in or create a new account. For those of you who competed in 2017, you can simply use your login details from last year. If you are new to the competition, creating an account is quick and easy.



*2017 Winner Andrew "Billy" Trent receiving his \$3000 cheque.*

## HOW TO JOIN

1. Go to ESPN Footy site  
<http://www.footytips.com.au>
2. Then login or create a new account
3. Search for competition GFC2018
4. Enter Password – crayfish



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