

How scientists saved us from scallop stock collapse

January 9 2018, by Kirsten Flint

For the first time in 5 years, WA scallop fishers were able to fish in the once-profitable waters surrounding the Abrolhos Islands in 2017.

In 2010 and 2011, an extreme marine heatwave decimated stocks. Where once researchers would have found thousands, only a handful were discovered. Literally—there were only five.

It was a dire situation with a whole industry put out of work. Conventions of climate scientists, scallop experts, oceanographers and industry were called. The term 'extinction' was even thrown around.

The scallops that survived this apocalyptic oceanic event would have to repopulate the oceans. But only with the help of our Fisheries Department were they able to recover. Scallops are broadcast spawners and can release 1 million eggs per spawning, but the protection of these breeding individuals was crucial in giving the molluscs the space and [time](#) they needed to bounce back.

With [extreme climate events](#) set to become less 'freak' and more frequent, we have to anticipate that similar large-scale population fluxes will occur. Unfortunately, we can't predict what the weather will do. We also can't predict the different ways that [different species will be affected](#).

For the time being, we can only rely on one thing—regular sampling and [management strategies](#) from our seafaring scientists.

This article first appeared on [Particle](#), a science news website based at Scitech, Perth, Australia. Read the [original article](#).

Provided by Particle

Citation: How scientists saved us from scallop stock collapse (2018, January 9) retrieved 9 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2018-01-scientists-scallop-stock-collapse.html>

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