



forestry, fisheries & the environment

Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

14 February 2025

For immediate release

WARNING AGAINST FRAUDULENT FISHING PERMITS PURPORTEDLY ISSUED UNDER THE RULES OF THE ABORIGINAL EMPIRE

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) has become aware of individuals unlawfully issuing fraudulent fishing permits to fishing communities. These illegal documents falsely claim to grant authorization to fish in all waters within South Africa under the so-called "Rules of the Aboriginal Empire." The Department strongly condemns these actions and warns the public that such permits hold no legal standing under South African law.

The Marine Living Resources Act, 1998 (Act No. 18 of 1998) is the only legal framework governing the sustainable management and utilization of South Africa's marine living resources. Fishing rights, licenses, and permits issued outside the provisions of this Act are invalid and illegal. Anyone found harvesting marine resources while in possession of such similar and fraudulent documents will be in direct contravention of the Act and subject to prosecution.

The Department urges all fishing communities and individuals to verify the legitimacy of their fishing permits and to apply for the necessary authorizations through the proper channels:

- **Commercial and Small-Scale Fishing Permits** must be applied for through the Department by Right Holding entities or individuals by submitting the relevant application forms, which can be requested via:
 - **Telephone:** 086 000 3474 (share-call)
 - **Email:** CSCEnquiries@dffe.gov.za
- **Recreational Fishing Permits** can be obtained at the nearest South African Post Office or applied for online at: <https://www.fishing.dffe.gov.za>

The Department further cautions the public against individuals or groups spreading misinformation and casting aspersions on the role of government institutions in the sustainable management of South Africa's marine resources. Such actions not only undermine lawful fisheries management but also threaten the long-term sustainability of the country's marine biodiversity.

The Department remains committed to ensuring the sustainable use of marine living resources while protecting the rights of legitimate fishers. Members of the public are encouraged to report any suspected illegal fishing activities or fraudulent permit issuers to the Department or law enforcement authorities.

SUE MIDDLETON
DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL: FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

