Australian Government
Australian Fisheries Management Authority

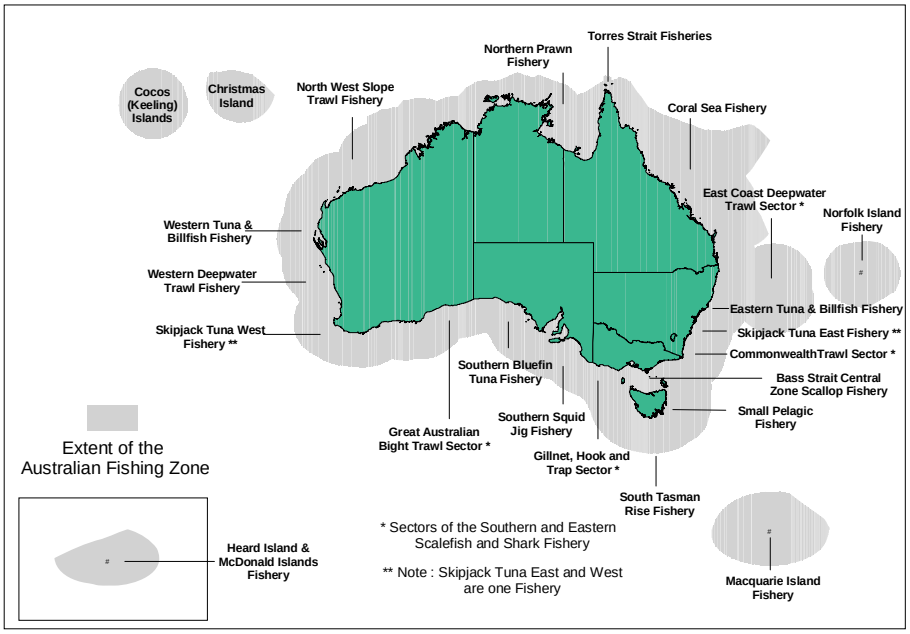
The Australian Fishing Zone

Australia has the 3rd largest fishing zone in the world, but only the 50th most productive due to the low nutrient levels in our oceans.

The Australian Fishing Zone (AFZ) is the third largest in the world, covering nearly nine million square kilometres. It extends to 200 nautical miles from the Australian coastline and also includes the waters surrounding our external territories, such as Heard and Macdonald Islands in the Antarctic.

AFMA manages more than 20 Commonwealth commercial fisheries within this area from 3 nautical miles out to the extent of the AFZ (with some fisheries extending to the high seas). The states and Northern Territory (NT) are responsible for the majority of recreational and commercial coastal and inland fishing, and inland and coastal aquaculture operations.

Because fish don't recognise borders, AFMA shares some management responsibility with the States and NT via Offshore Constitutional Settlement agreements. A general rule of thumb is that States and the NT manage inshore species, such as rock lobster or abalone, whereas AFMA manages finfish and tuna species.



→ *AFMA managed fisheries*