



Illegal foreign fishing

Main targets of
illegal foreign fishing:
Patagonian toothfish
Shark fins

Illegal fishing is a direct challenge to Australian sovereignty over fisheries and protected heritage areas.

AFMA is responsible for coordinating efforts to protect the Australian Fishing Zone (AFZ) from illegal fishing. We do this in close cooperation with State fisheries authorities, the Australian Customs Service, Coastwatch and Australian Defence Force.

In the main, illegal foreign fishing activity has centered on the AFZ off northern Australia and adjacent to Heard Island and McDonald Islands (HIMI) in our Southern waters.

As international waters to our north come under increasing pressure from overfishing, Australia faces rising levels of illegal fishing within our fishing zone. The main target of illegal operators in this region is shark fin for the lucrative Asian market.

Increasingly sophisticated criminal syndicates targeting valuable stocks such as Patagonian toothfish also threaten the sustainability of resources in our remote Southern waters such as around Heard Island and McDonald Islands.

The monitoring, detection and apprehension of illegal operators in our waters is a high priority for AFMA and the Australian Government.



→ AFMA Fisheries officer looks out on illegal vessel South Tomi, apprehended in the Southern Ocean.