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Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Coral Sea Fishery

**Management Arrangement
Booklet 2025**



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AFMA Coral Sea Fishery

Management Arrangement Booklet

Edited and revised in 2025 by the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA).

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What is new for 2025-26 fishing season?

There have been several changes to management arrangements in the Sea Cucumber and Aquarium sectors of the Coral Sea Fishery (CSF), primarily to meet Wildlife Trade Operation (WTO) condition obligations. The changes include the implementation of the revised [Coral Sea Fishery Sea Cucumber Sector Harvest Strategy 2025](#) and spatial management arrangements for coral harvest in the Aquarium Sector. No changes have been made to arrangements for the Line Sector or Lobster and Trochus Sectors.

Sea Cucumber Sector

- Revised annual reef zones allocation in the rotational zone strategy (Willis Islets and Diane Bank moved to into the 'Year 1' rotational group).
- Reduced fishing days permitted for Kenn Reefs (10 days to 8 days).
- Inclusion of revised catch limits for Prickly Redfish (12t) and Surf Redfish (4t) and catch triggers for amberfish (1t), elephant's trunkfish (1t), Selenka's sea cucumber (1t), sandfish (1t), stonefish (1t), and all other unspecified sea cucumber species (1t).
- Introduction of minimum size limits for sandfish (18cm), white teatfish (40cm), black teatfish (30cm), prickly redfish (40cm), deepwater redfish (20cm), surf redfish (25cm), lollyfish (20cm), greenfish (20cm), elephant's trunkfish (40cm), leopardfish (35cm), and amberfish (50cm).
- Introduction of conversion ratios for different processed forms of sea cucumbers.

Aquarium Sector

- Introduction of a 5-tonne move-on provision (with a 3-tonne review trigger) for coral harvest in the Aquarium sector, including newly defined Aquarium Sector reef zones.
- Per the WTO conditions, AFMA has formalised in-season monitoring of the 10 tonne annual catch trigger for Acroporidae coral and 15 tonne catch limit for *Acropora* spp. These will be included in the *Coral Sea Fishery Aquarium Sector Harvest Strategy*, which must be reviewed and updated (as required) by 30 January 2026.

All CSF permit holders are strongly encouraged to adopt electronic logbooks (e-logs) as soon as possible.

PLEASE REMEMBER to call AFMA if you are unsure about your CSF permit obligations or have questions about the changes above.

1 Introduction

This Coral Sea Fishery (CSF) Management Arrangements Booklet is a guide to the management arrangements that will apply to CSF permit holders in the fishing year from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

The CSF is a relatively small but diverse fishery, targeting a wide range of species with methods including line and hand collection. Entry to the CSF is limited to the existing 12 fishing permits. The CSF extends from Cape York to Sandy Cape, Queensland. It is bounded on the east by the Australian Fishing Zone and on the west by a boundary line (red line in **Figure 1** below) 0 to 100 nm east of the eastern boundary of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (**Figure 1**).

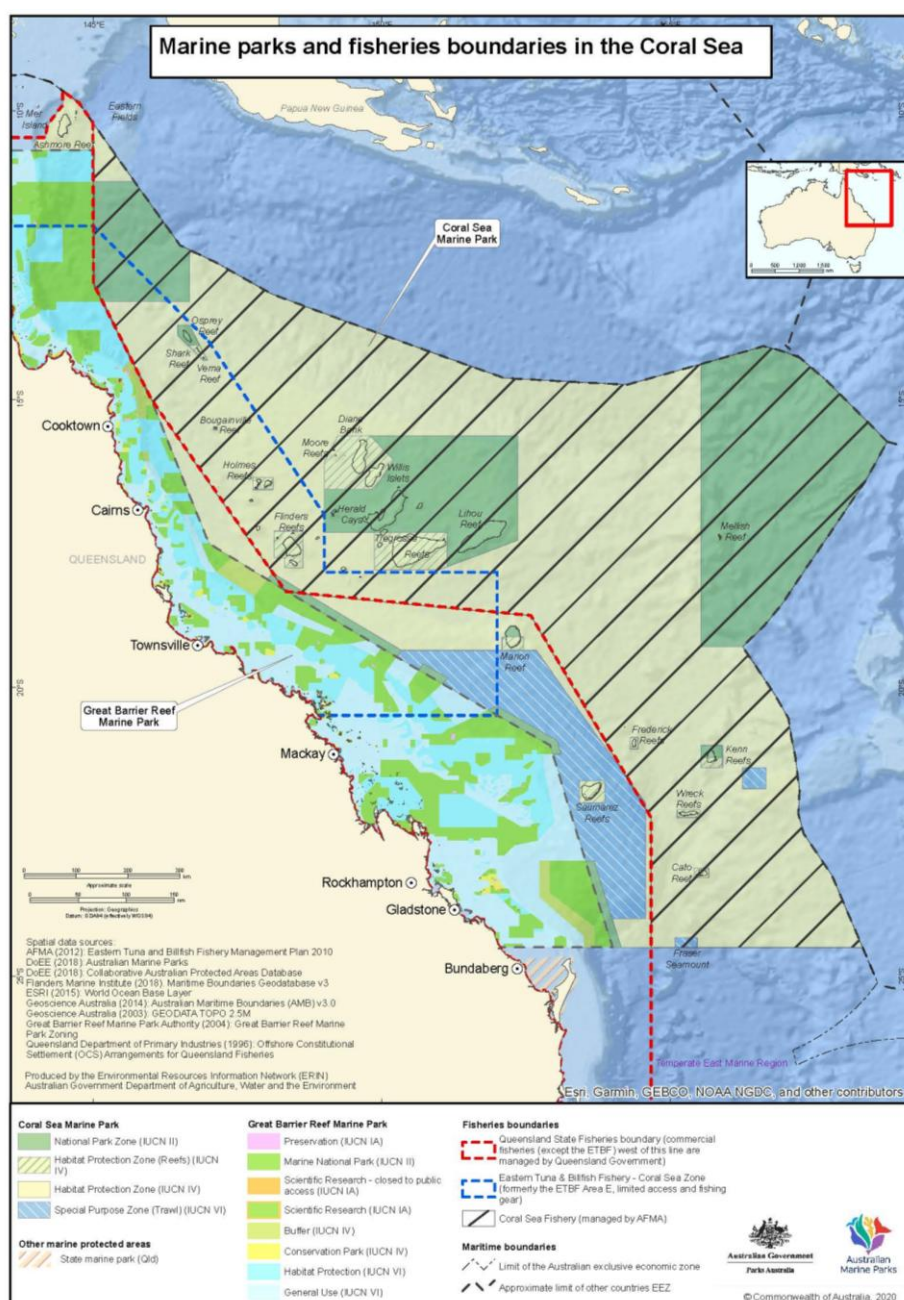


Figure 1: Marine parks and fisheries boundaries in the Coral Sea

2 Sectors of the Fishery

The CSF is a multi-sector, multi- species fishery. The species caught vary depending on the methods used as well as the areas and times fished. The fishery comprises the following sectors:

1. Line
2. Aquarium
3. Lobster and Trochus
4. Sea Cucumber

Note that trawl and trap methods have been removed from the fishery.

2.1 Line Sector

The information below details requirements for the Line Sector, including target species, methods and permit conditions. This information on the requirements for the Line Sector is intended to be a guide only and operators should refer to their permit conditions for further information.

2.1.1 Number of permits

6 permits

2.1.2 Target Species

- Cartilaginous fishes (*Chondrichthys*), including blacktip sharks, whitetip sharks and gummy sharks.
- Bony fishes (*Osteichthyes*), including flame snapper, ruby snapper, rosy snapper and bar rock cod.

2.1.3 Methods permitted

Demersal longlines, trotlines, droplines, handlines and setlines.

Where authorised automatic baiting is available for use with the longline method (subject to additional conditions).

2.1.4 Permit conditions

- Permit holders must use an AFMA approved baiting system. Approval must also be obtained from AFMA for the use of automatic baiting equipment on transfer of a permit or change of the nominated vessel.
- A maximum of 15 000 hooks may be used, stowed or secured on the boat.
- Every shot using the automatic baiting gear must be set in waters deeper than 200 metres. However, where a fisheries observer is on board the boat, only 50 per cent of all hooks using the automatic baiting gear must be set in waters deeper than 200 metres.
- Permit holders must use a bird scaring device as specified in permit conditions.
- Permit holders must comply with the Threat Abatement Plan 2018 for the incidental catch (or bycatch) of seabirds during oceanic longline fishing operations.

- Boats must carry an AFMA approved observer for the first trip of the season (or after installing automatic baiting equipment) and every fourth trip thereafter if using a “Mustad” system or every third trip if using a “Best Fishing Gear” system thereafter).

2.1.5 Line species Identification Guide

Pygmy ruby snapper (*Etelis carbunculus*) and Giant ruby snapper (*Etelis* sp.) are two species caught in the Line Sector of the CSF. The species are very similar in appearance but need to be recorded separately in logbooks. **Figure 2** and **Figure 3** provide further information on how to distinguish between the species for the purposes of logbook recording. AFMA has also produced the [Shark Identification Guide for Commercial Fishers in Northern Australia](#) to assist identification of shark species.

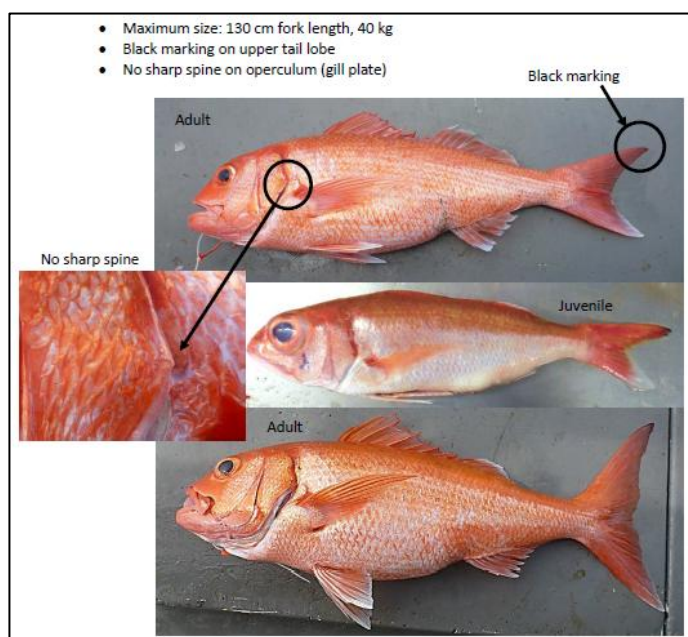


Figure 2 Identification Guide for giant ruby snapper (*Etelis* sp.)

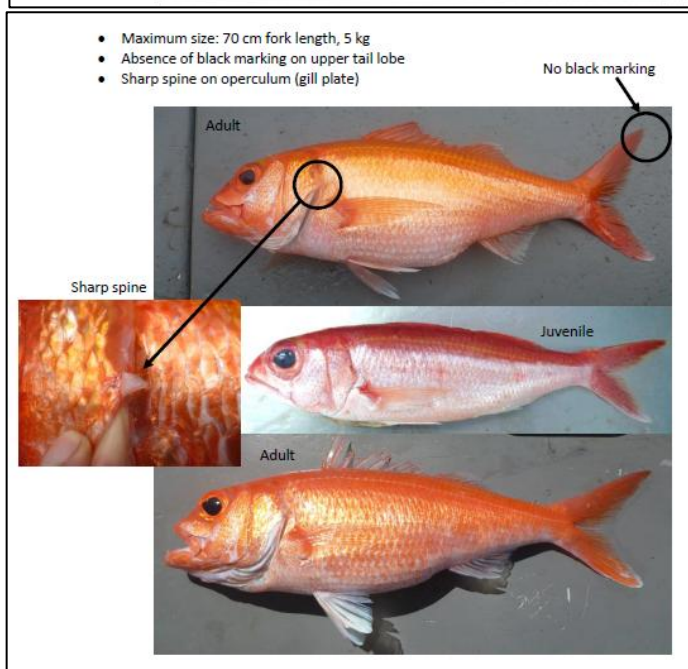


Figure 3: Identification Guide for pygmy ruby snapper (*Etelis carbunculus*)

2.2 Aquarium Sector

The information below details requirements for the Aquarium Sector, including target species, methods and permit conditions. This is intended to be a guide only and operators should refer to their permit conditions for further information.

2.2.1 Number of permits

2 permits

2.2.2 Target species

Cartilaginous fishes (*Chondrichthys*), bony fishes (*Osteichthyes*), corals (*Acroporidae*) and live rock.

The catch of live fish for the Aquarium sector is comprised of six key commercial Families, totalling around 95% of catch. These key Families are Serranidae, Labridae, Pomacentridae, Acanthuridae, Gobiidae and Pomacanthidae.

2.2.3 Methods permitted

Hand collection.

Cast, scoop and seine nets and handlines with barbless hooks may be used with or without the aid of an underwater breathing apparatus.

2.2.4 General conditions

- Fish collected must be for use in aquaria or broodstock and must not be sold for human consumption.
- Operators may collect live fish including, bony fish, sharks, rays, crustaceans, molluscs and other marine organisms including live rock but excluding mammals, reptiles, birds and specifically prohibited shark species.
- A maximum of two tender boats may be used with the nominated vessel.
- The use of chemicals (including anaesthetics) and explosives are prohibited.
- Operators must abide by net size restrictions, as specified in the permit conditions.
- Operators may undertake dual jurisdiction trips but must notify AFMA and QDAF 72 hours prior to departing and abide by specific permit conditions. AFMA can be contacted on (02) 6225 5555 and QDAF can be contacted on 13 25 23 (within Queensland) or 07 3404 6999.

2.2.5 Species limitations

- Each permit holder must not take more than 20 tonnes of live rock and report the total weight collected to AFMA 2 hours prior to mooring or anchoring at port. Live rock may only be taken by hand or by using hand held non mechanical implements.
- Each permit holder must not take more than 20 tonnes of coral belonging to the family Acroporidae (stony corals). The take of all other coral species is prohibited.
- Each permit holder must not take more than 25 live specimens of Humphead Māori Wrasse (*Cheilinus undulatus*).

- Permit conditions relating to Humphead Māori Wrasse have been updated to put a cap on the number of individuals that can be taken from any one reef at 10 live specimens. This limit is the total allocation to any one reef and live specimens are to be fished on a competitive basis; it is the permit holder's responsibility to ensure that they do not exceed the total permitted number of specimens.
- Take of the species above must be recorded in the 'comments' section of the logbook, including the number of specimens taken per trip, their size and location (lat/long).
- Permit conditions require that a **maximum** of 5 tonnes of coral be taken from an Aquarium Sector Reef Zone within a fishing season (see **Table 1** for reef zone definitions).

Table 1: Each of the zones within the Coral Sea Fishery Aquarium Sector has a corresponding series of co-ordinates as specified below.

Reef Zone	Northwest corner		Southeast corner	
Name	Latitude	Longitude	Latitude	Longitude
Abington Reef	-18.03333	149.57500	-18.12500	149.65000
Bougainville Reef	-15.47500	147.08333	-15.52500	147.14167
Cato Island Reef	-23.24167	155.52500	-23.25833	155.57500
Dart Reef	-17.38333	148.16667	-17.42500	148.21667
Diamond Islets	-17.40000	150.78333	-17.68333	151.11667
Diane Bank	-15.70000	149.46667	-16.30000	149.75000
Northern Flinders Reef	-17.38500	148.26778	-17.74262	148.61288
Southern Flinders Reef	-17.76923	148.39113	-17.89611	148.54555
Flora Reef	-16.72500	147.69167	-16.77500	147.77500
Frederick Reefs	-20.91667	154.34167	-21.03333	154.40833
Heralds Surprise	-17.30833	148.43333	-17.33333	148.49167
Western Holmes Reef	-16.37161	147.81501	-16.51667	147.90997
Eastern Holmes Reef	-16.39695	147.95878	-16.53355	148.54555
Southern Holmes Reef	-16.51922	147.79313	-16.55400	147.85102
Kenn Reefs	-21.09167	155.70000	-21.28333	155.80000
Malay Reefs	-17.90000	149.28333	-18.00000	149.39167
McDermott Bank	-17.17500	147.78333	-17.30000	147.92500
Moore Reefs	-16.00000	149.12500	-16.05833	149.18333
Shark Reef	-14.06667	146.75833	-14.20000	146.87500
Tregrosse Reefs	-17.68333	150.49167	-17.80000	150.78333
Willis Islets	-16.10000	149.93333	-16.31667	150.05000
Wreck Reefs	-22.15833	155.15000	-22.22500	155.49167

Note: Under the [Coral Sea Fishery Aquarium Sector Harvest Strategy Framework 2019](#), a total of 40 t of coral from the Family Acroporidae can be harvested across all permits, monitored by AFMA through catch triggers set at 20 t for Level 1 and 40 t for Level 2. As of 1 July 2024, AFMA has revised the Level 1 trigger for Acroporidae to limit catches of *Acropora* spp. to a maximum of 15 t (with the remaining 5 t of the trigger still able to be caught from the remaining Acroporidae genera).

2.2.6 Dual jurisdiction trips in the Aquarium Sector

Operators in the Aquarium Sector may undertake dual jurisdiction trips between Queensland State waters and Commonwealth waters. The following conditions apply to operators when undertaking a dual jurisdiction trip:

- Operators must notify AFMA and the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, that they are undertaking a dual jurisdiction trip at least 72 hours prior to departing. AFMA must be contacted either by email at monitoring@afma.gov.au or fax at (02) 6225 5440 (if email is not possible). Queensland State must be contacted at fisheriesmanagers@daf.qld.gov.au.
- When undertaking a dual jurisdiction trip, operators must not take any live rock, coral, oyster, pearl oyster, trochus or humphead Māori wrasse.
- Operators must ensure that all species taken on dual jurisdiction trips are stored separately, and are clearly labelled to include the species name, time, date and specific location that the fish was taken (this may include the latitude and longitude if possible).

It is the responsibility of the operator to ensure they are familiar with the conditions required in both jurisdictions, when undertaking a dual jurisdiction trip.

2.3 Lobsters and Trochus Sector

The information below details requirements for the Lobster and Trochus Sector, including target species, methods and permit conditions. This is intended to be a guide only and operators should refer to their permit conditions for further information.

2.3.1 Number of permits

2 permits

2.3.2 Target species

Trochus (*Tectus niloticus* and *Tectus pyramis*) and tropical spiny rock lobster (*Panulirus ornatus*).

2.3.3 Methods permitted

Hand collection with or without underwater breathing apparatus.

2.3.4 General conditions

A holder may only register a maximum of two tender boats, with the nominated boat to hand collect trochus and/or lobster.

2.3.5 Species limitations

- A permit holder may take up to 15 tonnes of unprocessed trochus and 15 tonnes of lobster tails during a fishing season.
- A holder must not take lobster with a tail length of less than 125 millimetres.
- A holder must not take trochus that are less than 80 millimetres or more than 125 millimetres, when measured at the widest part of the base of the shell.
- Once one and a half tonnes of lobster tail or two and a half tonnes of trochus have been taken from any reef within the fishery, no further fishing may be undertaken within a 15 nautical mile anchorage during that fishing year.

2.4 Sea Cucumber Sector

The information below details requirements for the Sea Cucumber Sector, including target species, methods and permit conditions. This is intended to be a guide only and operators should refer to their permit conditions for further information.

2.4.1 Number of permits

2 permits

2.4.2 Target species

Sea cucumber, including but not limited to, amberfish, blackfish, black teatfish, white teatfish, prickly redfish, sandfish and surf redfish.

2.4.3 Methods permitted

Hand collection with or without underwater breathing apparatus.

2.4.4 General conditions

- A maximum of two tender boats registered with the nominated boat may be used.
- Operators must comply with the sea cucumber rotational zone plan (additional information available in permit conditions). Reefs have been divided into 19 zones with a total of 129 fishing days. These zones are to be fished in accordance with the fishing plan outlined in

- **Table 4** and **Table 5**.

2.4.5 Species limitations (operator)

- A permit holder must abide by the following catch limits (wet, gutted and salted weight) in a fishing season:
 - Black teatfish – 500 kilograms
 - White teatfish – 2 tonnes
 - Prickly redfish – 6 tonnes
 - Sandfish – 500 kilograms
 - Surf redfish – 2 tonnes

Note: For surf redfish, no more than 2 tonnes may be taken from any one reef in one fishing season (1 July - 30 June) across all permits. This limit is the total allocation to any one reef and is to be fished on a competitive basis. It is the permit holder's responsibility to notify AFMA via email (northernfisheries2@afma.gov.au) once they have reached 1 tonne so that the limit may be monitored.

- Once five tonnes wet, gutted and salted weight of any mixture of sea cucumber species has been taken from any reef within the fishery, no further fishing may be undertaken within a 15 nautical mile anchorage during the fishing year.
- If sea cucumbers are landed in a processing form that is not wet, gutted and salted, conversion factors will apply (**Table 2**).
- Minimum size limits apply for specific sea cucumber species (**Table 3**).

Table 2: Conversion factors that apply in the CSF Sea Cucumber Sector.

Common name (Species)	Live to gutted	Live to salted	Live to dried	Gutted to salted	Gutted to dried	Salted to dried	Salted to gutted	Dried to gutted
Amberfish (<i>Thelenota anax</i>)	0.894	0.652	0.175	0.964	0.242	0.309	1.706	11.364
Black teatfish (<i>Holothuria whitmaei</i>)	0.677	0.529	0.108	0.824	0.177	0.220	1.213	5.649
Brown sandfish (<i>Bohadschia vitiensis</i>)	0.735	0.612	0.116	0.834	0.157	0.189	1.199	6.337
Burrowing blackfish (<i>Actinopyga spinea</i>)	0.544	0.375	0.073	0.689	0.135	0.195	1.449	7.424
Curryfish (common) (<i>Stichopus herrmanni</i>)	0.651	0.652	0.036	0.964	0.114	0.309	1.706	8.772
Curryfish (vastus) (<i>Stichopus vastus</i>)	0.894	0.652	0.175	0.964	0.242	0.309	1.706	11.364
Deepwater blackfish (<i>Actinopyga palauensis</i>)	0.818	0.593	0.175	0.728	0.190	0.262	1.374	5.263
Deepwater redfish (<i>Actinopyga echinites</i>)	0.692	0.652	0.088	0.964	0.152	0.309	1.706	6.579
Elephant trunkfish (<i>Holothuria fuscopunctata</i>)	0.519	0.652	0.133	0.911	0.242	0.263	1.097	4.132
Golden sandfish (<i>Holothuria lessoni</i>)	0.645	0.526	0.098	0.815	0.152	0.186	1.226	6.588
Greenfish (<i>Stichopus chloronotus</i>)	0.894	0.652	0.175	0.964	0.242	0.309	1.382	11.364
Hairy blackfish (<i>Actinopyga miliaris</i>)	0.480	0.652	0.067	0.964	0.209	0.217	1.037	4.785
Leopardfish (<i>Bohadschia argus</i>)	0.665	0.572	0.115	0.777	0.171	0.233	1.286	5.841
Lollyfish (<i>Holothuria atra</i>)	0.436	0.236	0.063	0.586	0.150	0.256	1.706	6.289
Prickly redfish (<i>Thelenota ananas</i>)	0.667	0.481	0.055	0.736	0.088	0.118	1.358	11.364
Sandfish (<i>Holothuria scabra</i>)	0.496	0.355	0.049	0.758	0.094	0.125	1.319	10.638
Stonefish (<i>Actinopyga lecanora</i>)	0.894	0.652	0.154	0.729	0.158	0.253	1.372	6.329
Surf redfish (<i>Actinopyga mauritiana</i>)	0.684	0.652	0.084	0.873	0.187	0.286	1.145	5.347
White teatfish (<i>Holothuria fuscogilva</i>)	0.627	0.593	0.137	0.775	0.237	0.309	1.290	4.219
Unidentified beche-de-mer	0.894	0.652	0.175	0.964	0.242	0.309	1.706	11.364

Table 3: Minimum size limits for sea cucumber species caught in the CSF Sea Cucumber Sector (compulsory from 1 July 2025).

Common Name	Species Name	Minimum size limit
Sandfish	<i>Holothuria scabra</i>	18 cm
White Teatfish	<i>Holothuria fuscogilva</i>	40 cm
Black Teatfish	<i>Holothuria whitmaei</i>	30 cm
Prickly Redfish	<i>Thelenota ananas</i>	40 cm
Deepwater Redfish	<i>Actinopyga echinites</i>	20 cm
Surf Redfish	<i>Actinopyga mauritiana</i>	25 cm
Lollyfish	<i>Holothuria atra</i>	20 cm
Greenfish	<i>Stichopus chloronotus</i>	20 cm
Elephant's Trunkfish	<i>Holothuria fuscopunctata</i>	40 cm
Leopardfish	<i>Bohadschia argus</i>	35 cm
Amberfish	<i>Thelenota anax</i>	50 cm

2.4.6 Sea Cucumber rotational zone plan

Prior to 2018, reefs within the Sea Cucumber Sector were divided into 21 zones with a total of 164 fishing days. In 2018, Osprey and Mellish Reefs were declared into national park zone under the Coral Sea Marine Park. Additionally, parts of Kenn and Bougainville Reefs are also in the national park zone. The National Park zone prohibited commercial fishing activities including hand collection. More information on these reefs is available at:

<https://parksaustralia.gov.au/marine/parks/coral-sea/>.

Table 4 shows 19 zones where commercial fishing activities including hand collection are allowed in accordance with the rotational zone fishing plan.

The total 127 days allotted to all permit holders in the Sea Cucumber Sector of the CSF are to be fished on a competitive basis. It is the permit holder's responsibility to ensure that they do not exceed the number of days allotted. Each of the 19 zones within the CSF has a corresponding series of co-ordinates (**Table 5**).

For the purpose of deducting fishing days for each zone the following rules apply:

- A fishing day is defined as being in a zone between the hours of 0900 and 1500. If three or less hours are spent in the zone between the hours of 0900 and 1500 then a half fishing day must be recorded.
- If a strong wind warning (SWW) is issued the holder should write SWW in their logbook only if no fishing took place. No day will be deducted in this case.

Table 4: Sea Cucumber Sector rotational zone plan

2025-26		2026-27		2027-28	
Days permitted	Zone	Days permitted	Zone	Days permitted	Zone
15	Flinders Reefs	15	Holmes Reefs	15	Wreck Reefs
2	Malay Reef	15	Diamond Islets	5	Tregrosse Reefs
2	Abington Reef	8	*Kenn Reefs	5	Moore Reefs
		5	Frederick Reefs	5	Cato Island Reef
		2	*Bougainville Reef	5	McDermott Bank
		2	Flora Reef	2	Dart Reef
				2	Heralds Surprise
				2	Shark Reef
				15	Willis Islets
				5	Diane Bank

* Parts of these reefs are in the National Park Zone (where commercial fishing is prohibited) in the Coral Sea Marine Park.

Table 5: Sea Cucumber Sector rotation zone co-ordinates

Reef name	Days	A (north)			B (south)			C (west)			D (east)			Chart
		Lat min			Lat max			Long min			Long max			
		dd	mm	ss	dd	mm	ss	dd	mm	ss	dd	mm	ss	
Abington Reef	2	18	2	0	18	7	30	149	34	30	149	39	0	4602
Bougainville Reef	2	15	28	20	15	29	42	147	4	38	147	6	32	616
Cato Island Reef	5	23	14	30	23	15	30	155	31	30	155	34	30	611
Dart Reef	2	17	23	0	17	25	30	148	10	0	148	13	0	615
Diamond Islets	15	17	24	0	17	41	0	150	47	0	151	7	0	614
Diane Bank	5	15	42	0	16	18	0	149	28	0	149	45	0	617
Flinders Reefs	15	17	22	30	17	53	30	148	16	0	148	36	0	615
Flora Reef	2	16	43	30	16	46	30	147	41	30	147	46	30	615
Frederick Reefs	5	20	55	0	21	2	0	154	20	30	154	24	30	612
Heralds Surprise	2	17	18	30	17	20	0	148	26	0	148	29	30	615
Holmes Reef	15	16	22	30	16	33	0	147	47	30	148	6	0	615
Kenn Reefs	8	21	12	55	21	23	0	155	32	0	155	54	30	611
Malay Reefs	2	17	54	0	18	0	0	149	17	0	149	23	30	4602
McDermott Bank	5	17	10	30	17	18	0	147	47	0	147	55	30	4602
Moore Reefs	5	16	0	0	16	3	30	149	7	30	149	11	0	4602
Shark Reef	2	14	4	0	14	12	0	146	45	30	146	52	30	616
Tregrosse Reefs	5	17	41	0	17	48	0	150	29	30	150	47	0	4602
Willis Islets	15	16	6	0	16	19	0	149	56	0	150	3	0	617
Wreck Reefs	15	22	9	30	22	13	30	155	9	0	155	29	30	611
Note: Column A is the northern boundary, Column B the southern, Column C the western and Column D the eastern.														

3 Reporting Requirements

3.1 Mandatory e-logs

In line with the *Fisheries Management (Logbooks for Fisheries) Determination 2022*, **the use of electronic logbooks (e-logs) is mandatory to submit your daily fishing log to AFMA**, unless exempt – see below.

The AFMA website has information on the mandatory use of e-logs and software providers ('[Logbooks and e-logs](#)'), including how to set up and use e-logs for the first time ('[E-logs Information](#)'). If you are already using e-logs you do not need to take any further action.

Permit holders may apply for an exemption where they would have significant difficulty complying with the requirement to use an e-log. If an exemption is granted, AFMA will allow permit holders to continue using paper logbooks. Such an application would be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Please contact AFMA at licensing@afma.gov.au or call Karen Cullen on 02 6225 5452 for more details or to apply for an individual exemption based on these grounds.

3.2 Line Sector

Logbook (Line): E-LINE (mandatory use of e-logs)

Catch Disposal Record: Commonwealth Catch Disposal Record (SESS2B)

3.3 Aquarium Sector

Logbook (Hand Collection): Hand Collection (mandatory use of e-logs)

Logbook (Aquarium): Aquarium Fish Trip Logbook (Aq04)

3.4 Lobster and Trochus (Hand Collection) Sector

Logbook (Hand Collection): Hand Collection (mandatory use of e-logs)

Logbook reporting (Lobster and Trochus): Hand collection Daily Fishing Log (HC01)

Catch Disposal Record: Hand collection Catch Disposal Record (HC02)

3.5 Sea Cucumber Sector

Logbook (Hand Collection): Hand Collection (mandatory use of e-logs)

Logbook (Sea Cucumber): Hand Collection Daily Fishing (HC01).

Catch Disposal Record: Hand Collection Catch Disposal Record (HC02).

4 Management Arrangements

The Coral Sea Fishery is managed by AFMA in consultation with a range of stakeholders under the *Fisheries Management Act 1991* (the Act). Policies such as harvest strategies, bycatch and discard workplans and voluntary industry codes also contribute to the management of the fishery.

The CSF is managed through a combination of input and output controls as prescribed in the:

- [Fisheries Management Act 1991](#)
- [Fisheries Management Regulations 2019](#)
- [Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy 2018](#)
- Conditions on fishing permits

Participation in the CSF is limited to 12 fishing permits; this means that new entrants to the fishery must transfer an existing CSF fishing permit into their name before entering the fishery. A decision to re-grant permits is made each year under the Act; these permits are subject to conditions set out in section 32(5) of the Act as well as conditions specified on the permits. Conditions depend on the sector and the particular permit may include limits on the number of persons able to fish under the permit at any time, gear restrictions, species size limits, catch trigger limits and total allowable catch limits (TAC) as well as spatial controls.

Through an approach known as ecosystem based fisheries management (EBFM), AFMA aims to minimise the impacts of Commonwealth managed fisheries on the marine ecosystem. AFMA's adoption of EBFM is a significant departure from traditional fisheries management, with the focus shifting from the direct management of target species to also considering the impacts on bycatch species, protected species, habitats, and communities. This approach is supported through a range of policies such as harvest strategies, bycatch and discard workplans and voluntary industry codes of practice. Management of the fishery is designed to be precautionary, recognising the low effort and diverse nature of the fishery, but balanced to allow for controlled development.

5 Harvest Strategies

There are four separate harvest strategies underpinning the management of the CSF:

- Line, Trawl and Trap Sector Harvest Strategy (**note:** that from 2019 trawl and trap methods are no longer permitted methods in the fishery).
- Aquarium Sector Harvest Strategy
- Lobster and Trochus Sector Harvest Strategy
- Sea Cucumber Harvest Strategy

These harvest strategies prescribe a range of reference points, or triggers, that allow for the controlled development of the fishery by requiring increased assessment and management actions with increasing fishing effort or catch. Triggers detect changes in the fishery based on catch composition, spatial distribution of catch and assessments of fishing catch and effort. The extent, and therefore cost, of the management response to a trigger being reached is linked to the potential risk to the fishery and level of uncertainty it presents.

The current CSF harvest strategies can be found on the AFMA website at:
<http://www.afma.gov.au/sustainability-environment/harvest-strategies/>.

6 Consultative arrangements

AFMA consults with a range of stakeholders about any development, implementation and review of fisheries management arrangements in the CSF. The main avenue of consultation is the CSF Stakeholder Group that was established to seek advice on management and research in the fishery. The group consists of all permit holders and researchers directly involved in the fishery.

AFMA also consults with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) on any amendments to management arrangements as a condition of Wildlife Trade Operation (WTO) accreditation. Where there is an overlap in species and management issues with adjoining Queensland state fisheries AFMA will consult with Queensland state fisheries managers and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority managers in developing and implementing management arrangements for the CSF.

7 Licensing

7.1 Fishing permits

All CSF fishing permits are granted for the duration of the financial year (1 July – 30 June). Operators have three months to reapply for a permit following the expiration of their fishing permit. Operators must have a current fishing permit authorising their activity on board their boat.

To discuss licensing arrangements for the CSF please contact AFMA Licensing and Data Services during business hours on 02 6225 5555 or AFMA Direct 1300 723 621.

7.2 General Conditions

7.2.1 Fishing activity limitations

Permit holders must not fish outside the CSF if fishing activity has been undertaken in the CSF, unless prior approval has been granted by AFMA (also known as dual jurisdiction trips).

Permit holders must not transfer fish from one vessel to another while at sea, unless explicitly authorised (also known as transshipping).

7.2.2 Species limitations

Permit holders must not take:

- Tuna or tuna like species, including fish of the family *Scombridae* (pomfrets or rays bream) but excluding mackerels of the genera *Scomberomorus*, *Scomber*, *Acanthorcybium*, *Grammatorcybus* and *Rastrelliger*.
- Billfish of the families *Istiophoridae* and *Xiphiidae*.
- Any species listed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.
- Humphead Māori wrasse (*Cheilinus undulatus*), except for Aquarium Sector permit holders who are authorised to take a total of 50 specimens during a fishing season (25 per permit holder).
- Deepwater dogfishes of the following species – Harrisons dogfish (*Centrophorus harrissoni*), endeavour dogfish (*C. moluccensis*), southern dogfish (*C. zeehan*) and

greeneye spurdog (*Squalus chloroculus*), unless explicitly authorised. In the event that deepwater dogfishes of the species specified are taken above, these species must be returned to the water carefully and quickly.

- When operators are authorised to take sharks, finning the sharks at sea is not permitted. Shark livers may not be carried, retained or landed without the carcass.

7.3 Fish Receiver Permits

Operators in the CSF are required to unload their catch to a licensed Commonwealth fish receiver permit holder. Where this does not apply it is stipulated in CSF fishing permit conditions. Operators should refer to the relevant regulations for full details.

Fish receiver permits are granted for 12 months and cannot be transferred. An application fee must be paid to AFMA along with a completed application form. Fish receivers are required to complete the catch disposal record (CDR) as per the instructions printed on the CDR immediately upon receipt of the consignment.

7.4 Scientific Permits

Scientific permits are granted for the purpose of conducting scientific research in a specified area of the AFZ or in a specified fishery.

AFMA will only grant a scientific permit if:

- the application is made using the approved form
- it provides sufficient information for the application to be assessed
- the proposed activity is for a scientific research purpose
- is supported by a specific scientific research project plan.

Scientific permits are granted for a maximum duration of six months and are not transferable.

For further information on obtaining a scientific permit you can refer to the Fisheries Management Paper 11 which is located here: <https://www.afma.gov.au/reporting-and-accountability/fisheries-management-policies/scientific-permits-fmp-11> or alternatively contact AFMA Licensing and Data Services on 1300 723 621.

7.5 Transfer of fishing permit

You may transfer fishing permits by filling out the appropriate application form and submitting it to AFMA or online by registering for GOFish. You can access GOFish located on AFMA's website at <https://ebusiness.afma.gov.au/>.

AFMA must register the transfer of a permit unless:

- the owner of the permit (transferor) is being investigated for, or has been convicted of, a fisheries offence
- the permit has been suspended (including instances where the owner has requested a review of that suspension); or
- levies are due and not yet paid in full when transfer application is received.

8 Annual Management and Research Levies

Operators who own fishing permits that attract a levy will receive three separate invoices. Each invoice will be one third of the total annual levy amount payable on the fishing permits you own on the day of invoicing. Levy invoices are issued in January, March and May every year.

Note: Levies are issued by financial year, not fishing season.

8.1 Payment of levies

You can make your payments by BPAY, direct deposit to the National Australia Bank, or by credit card (by sending in your card details or calling AFMA direct) or by cheque. All account details, biller code and contact details are included on the payment options page of your levy invoice. Please include the associated reference (invoice) number with your payment so AFMA can ensure your payment is attributed correctly.

It is important to note that while cheques are still accepted, the Australian Government is making changes to payment systems which will include winding back the use of cheques. If you currently use cheques to pay your levies and licensing fees, it would be advisable to get familiar with the electronic payment alternatives AFMA offers.

8.1.1 Need more time to pay your levy?

A permit holder can request to enter into an arrangement to pay an overdue levy. To request an arrangement to pay, a permit holder must contact AFMA as soon as possible on 1300 723 621 to discuss payment options. There are fees and conditions attached to entering into an arrangement and unpaid amounts attract the penalty charge of 20 per cent annually. AFMA will suspend and may cancel fishing permits if a levy remains unpaid and an arrangement has not been entered into.

For further information on levies, including invoice issue and due dates, please refer to the AFMA Levy Arrangements Guide for the year, available on the [AFMA website](#).

9 Fishery Observers

A fishing operator must carry an AFMA observer upon request by AFMA. The cost of observers is met by industry through levies unless otherwise advised. CSF fishing operators must also comply with the minimum observer coverage requirements as stated on their fishing permit.

The role of an observer is to collect independent, accurate and reliable data on Commonwealth fishing operations, catches and interactions with the environment by the boat and its fishing gear. This is achieved through:

- collection of boat activity and catch data (that is not obtainable through official logbooks)
- collection of data and samples for research programs, supporting marine management and other issues relevant to environmental awareness and fisheries management.

The role of the observer is not one of a fisheries officer. Observers have no authority to direct fishing operations of the boat or act in an enforcement role. However, observers are required to report their observations, including illegal fishing activity.

Table 6: Details of observer requirements by gear type and sector in the CSF.

Sector	Observer requirements by gear type
Line Sector	<u>Autoline</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boats must carry an AFMA approved observer for the first trip of the season (or after installing automatic baiting equipment) and every fourth trip thereafter if using a “Mustad” system or every third trip if using a “Best Fishing Gear” system thereafter). <u>Other line</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boats must carry an AFMA observer on the first trip of the season and every fourth trip, thereafter.
Sea Cucumber Sector	There is no prescribed minimum observer coverage, with coverage being as directed by AFMA.
Aquarium Sector	There is no prescribed minimum observer coverage, with coverage being as directed by AFMA.
Lobster and Trochus Sector	There is no prescribed minimum observer coverage, with coverage being as directed by AFMA.

9.1 Requirements for Observer carriage

It is the responsibility of the permit holder to monitor their observer coverage and notify AFMA at least 72 hours prior to departure to arrange for an observer as necessary.

The master of the boat must provide the observer with safe passage, including adequate food and accommodation while the observer is on board the boat during the trip. The master must allow the observer to have access to the parts of the boat which the observer reasonably requires access to, use facilities, take samples, operate equipment and provide assistance to the observer to the extent that is reasonably necessary for them to perform their functions.

The master is also required to give the observer the information that is reasonably asked for in relation to:

- the boat; or
- its equipment; or
- fish taken using the boat.

Further information can be obtained by calling the Observer Manager on 0427 496 446.

10 Environmental management

10.1 Ecological Risk Management

AFMA’s implementation of ecologically sustainable development includes the implementation of a Fisheries Management Strategy (FMS, formally Ecological Risk Management Strategy) which outline AFMA’s approach to assess, analyse and respond to the ecological risks posed by Commonwealth managed fisheries. The Coral Sea Fishery FMS is yet to be developed and is subject to the completion of Ecological Risk Assessments (ERAs). ERAs are the initial assessment stage that assesses the impact of fishing activities on the marine ecosystem.

ERA reports for the CSF were last completed in 2006. Due to low effort, low catch data and a lack of in-depth information about species abundance and distribution within the CSF, it was not practical to conduct a level 2 ERA for the effects of fishing. Instead, it was agreed that a qualitative risk analysis would be undertaken. Further risk assessment work was completed by CSIRO on all

protected and chondrichthyan species. ABARES also assessed the risks that the CSF poses to target, bycatch and discarded species in the Aquarium Sector in the 'reducing uncertainty in stock status project'. It is intended that the ERAs for the fishery will be updated in the next two years.

Further information on the results of the ERA can be found on AFMA's website at:

<https://www.afma.gov.au/fisheries-management/management-tools/ecological-risk-management-strategies>.

10.2 Bycatch and discarding workplans

CSF Bycatch and Discarding Workplans can be accessed via AFMA's website at:

<https://www.afma.gov.au/protected-species/reducing-bycatch/bycatch-and-discarding-workplans#referenced-section-3>.

The CSF Bycatch and Discarding Workplan was developed in 2010 when the first round of Ecological Risk Assessments (ERAs) was completed. Considering the fishing methods used in the fishery and the low effort, the risks to bycatch and protected species are considered to be low and are dealt with on a case by case basis if they do arise.

AFMA expects the ERAs will be updated in the next two years, at which point the bycatch and discarding workplans will be reviewed. It is planned that the bycatch and discarding workplans will be replaced by a Bycatch Strategy as a component of the FMS for the fishery when it is developed.

10.3 Bycatch handling

The 'Handling practices guide for commonly caught bycatch species' outlines the different species which fishers may encounter, and how best to return them to the water safely. A copy of the guide can be found at <https://www.afma.gov.au/reports-publications-and-guides>.

AFMA is committed to improving handling practices for all bycatch species caught during fishing operations. To further ensure that fishers use best practice when handling bycatch, AFMA has introduced a condition to reinforce the need for fishers to correctly handle bycatch. The condition will allow for enforcement action to be taken against any operator not acting in accordance with bycatch handling requirements.

AFMA has developed the following six bycatch handling principles to assist fishers to comply with the bycatch handling condition. These are:

- Principle 1: Safety of the boat and its crew are paramount

Mishandling does not include actions taken (or not taken), which are reasonably necessary (see Principles 3 and 4) to ensure the safety of the boat and or its crew.

- Principle 2: All reasonable steps should be taken

Operators are expected to take all reasonable steps to ensure that bycatch is returned to the water as quickly as practicable and in a manner which does not reduce its chance of survival.

- Principle 3: Minor gear recovery is not ‘reasonably necessary’

Actions taken for the sole purpose of recovering minor¹ fishing gear, are not considered ‘reasonably necessary’.

- Principle 4: Expediting removal from gear is not ‘reasonably necessary’

It is not ‘reasonably necessary’ to injure bycatch when removing it from fishing gear to save time.

- Principle 5: Harm, injury or death caused during capture is not mishandling

Mishandling does not include where bycatch is already dead, injured or stressed when it is brought on-board².

- Principle 6: Compliance with approved bycatch management plans

Handling of bycatch in accordance with AFMA approved bycatch management plan(s) is not mishandling.

10.3.1 Shark and ray handling

Improving handling practices can have a significant impact on the survival of sharks and rays that are released. Other benefits of improved handling practices include the reduced risk of injury to crew as sharks can bite and rays can sting in self-defence when threatened.

In 2016, AFMA produced the “Shark and Ray Handling Practices” to guide commercial fishers on best practice for handling these species. The shark and ray species encountered in the CSF are different to those in the guide, however, they are subject to the same inherent biological risks. Improving handling practices can have a significant impact on the survival of sharks and rays that are released. Other benefits of improved handling practices include the reduced risk of injury to crew as sharks can bite and rays can sting in self-defence when threatened. This can be found on the AFMA website at <https://www.afma.gov.au/protected-species/sharks/shark-and-ray-handling-practices>.

10.4 Protected species interactions

10.4.1 How and when do I fill out a TEP form?

Paper and Electronic logbooks can be used to report interactions with a TEP species:

- As a general rule, a Listed Marine and Threatened Species (TEP) Form (located at the back of your logbook) must be completed for all protected species interactions.
- Information about completing an e-log report can be found at www.afma.gov.au/fisheries-services/logbooks/e-logs-information.

¹ Minor gear includes items such as hooks, which are unlikely to cause further harm to the bycatch, or marine pollution, if discharged/discarded attached to the bycatch.

² Unless further deliberate action or inaction results in the death or further injury to the bycatch.

10.4.2 Reporting an interaction

- All interactions must be reported according to the instructions in your Daily Fishing Logbook or e-log.
- This means you need to circle yes in the box at the bottom of the logsheet and complete the TEP Form (located at the back of your logbook). Return the form to AFMA with the corresponding logsheets.
- If there is an observer present, immediately inform them of the interaction. You are still required to report the interaction in your logbook.
- Silky shark is now a protected species and all interactions must be reported.
- All interactions with seabirds must be reported in the same way.

10.4.3 Porbeagle, shortfin mako and longfin mako sharks

DCCEEW has advised that, provided an operator is fishing in accordance with the accredited management arrangements, the operator may retain and trade any of these migratory sharks that are brought up dead; however, live sharks **must** be returned to the sea unharmed.

All catches of these migratory sharks, whether retained or discarded, **must be reported in the daily fishing log or e-log** as you would normally record catch.

10.4.4 What is an interaction with a protected species?

Interaction is defined in the *Fisheries Management Regulations 2019* (FMR 2019) as physical contact that occurs between an organism and any object on board, or attached to, a nominated boat, other than that being used by an observer, that could cause the organism to be distressed.

10.4.5 Which species do I need to report?

The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) establishes four categories of protected species in Commonwealth managed areas:

- listed threatened species or ecological community – species or communities whose survival is threatened, e.g., those with low population numbers or those which have had a reduction in habitat or distribution.
- listed migratory species – to provide protection for species listed under the International Convention on Migratory Species.
- listed marine species – listed to provide general protection to Australia's native marine wildlife to reduce the likelihood of population decline.
- all cetaceans i.e., whales, dolphins and porpoises.

All whales, dolphins, seasnakes, turtles, seals and sea lions, syngnathids (seahorses, seadragons and pipefish), sawfishes (green, dwarf and freshwater), crocodiles, dugongs, sharks (great white, grey nurse, silky shark, shortfin mako, longfin mako and porbeagle) and all seabirds are protected under the EPBC Act. You must report all interactions with these species under the EPBC Act.

A full listing of protected species is published online by DCCEEW and available online at https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/epbc/our-role/approved-lists#toc_1. AFMA has also provided a Protected Species Identification Guide which can be found at <https://www.afma.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-02/protected-species-id-guide.pdf>.

10.4.6 AFMA assistance with reporting obligations

To assist operators in fulfilling their reporting obligations, AFMA provides a protected species interaction summary report to the DCCEEW on a quarterly basis; on behalf of fishers who report interactions in their logbook. These reports are published on the AFMA website at www.afma.gov.au/sustainability-environment/protected-species-management/protected-species-interaction-reports.

10.4.7 Interactions with tagged wildlife

Researchers investigating wildlife species will periodically tag animals (or use bands in the case of seabirds) to help improve the understanding of their biology and population.

Operators who capture a tagged animal should:

- record the details in the Listed Marine and Threatened Species form, with the band or tag number inserted in the appropriate section of the form.
- record the following details in the comments section: tag or band number and colour; species identification or description (photos are very useful); size; sex; and time, date and position of capture.
- if the tagged animal is captured alive, operators should record as many details as possible about the animal then release it as carefully as possible; noting the condition in which it was released. AFMA will arrange to notify the appropriate researchers.

REMEMBER: DON'T GET CAUGHT, JUST REPORT!

10.5 Management arrangements for protected species

Under the Act and the EPBC Act, AFMA has obligations to ensure the protection of native species, and in particular, prevent the extinction of, and promote the recovery of, threatened species. Additionally, where there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be considered a reason for postponing measures.

AFMA, in consultation with the DCCEEW and other stakeholders, has developed management strategies for a range of species groups, including seabirds.

The CSF automatic longline permit holders must abide by the Threat Abatement Plan 2018 for the incidental catch (or bycatch) of seabirds during oceanic longline fishing operations (TAP). A copy of the TAP can be found on the Australian Antarctic Division website at www.antarctica.gov.au/about-antarctica/environment/plants-and-animals/threat-abatement-plan-seabirds/.

Trigger rate

In accordance with the TAP, CSF longline operators are required to keep seabird interaction rates below 0.01 interactions (this includes dead and alive interactions) per 1,000 hooks set. Additional management measures may be enforced if interactions exceed this rate.

Demersal longline and dropline mandatory seabird mitigation measures

Offal must not be discharged while setting or hauling. An exemption for small boats may be given by AFMA. To apply for an exemption, please contact the Northern Fisheries Team at northernfisheries2@afma.gov.au.

10.6 Fishing in Marine Parks

The Coral Sea Fishery overlaps the Coral Sea Marine Park. Fishers who are currently fishing or intend to fish in the Coral Sea Marine Park, should be aware that some fishing methods are not allowed in certain zones. Please make sure you understand which fishing methods are allowed in each of the marine park zones prior to fishing.

Class approvals outline the areas where commercial fishing can occur, the fishing methods that can be used, and the conditions that need to be followed while operating or transiting through Australian Marine Parks. Remember that you need to keep a hard or electronic copy of the class approval on board your vessel. Class approval also requires a navigational chart showing the boundaries of the approved zones in which the approved actions are being conducted to be kept aboard or otherwise accessible.

Transiting is allowed through all zones in the Coral Sea Marine Park. When transiting a zone where your fishing method is not allowed you are required to:

- Keep all fishing gear stowed and secured.
- Travel at a speed more than 5 knots.
- Commercial fishing vessels are not allowed to stop and anchor in a National Park Zone.

Fish can only be processed in zones where your fishing method is allowed. This is for compliance purposes so that it is clear to park surveillance officers where fish are being taken from. However, exceptions can be made for individual circumstances, where this rule creates operational constraints on normal fishing activities. Any exceptions need to be authorised by the Director of National Parks so please contact us to discuss if this applies to you.

More information about the Coral Sea Marine Park can be found at the following links or by contacting marineparks@dcceew.gov.au.

- General information: <https://parksaustralia.gov.au/marine/parks/coral-sea/>
- Management Plan: <https://parksaustralia.gov.au/marine/parks/coral-sea/plans/>
- Class approval: https://parksaustralia.gov.au/marine/pub/class-approvals/Signed-Attach_D-Coral_Sea_Marine_Park_Commercial_Fishing_Class_Approval.pdf
- Coordinates and maps: <https://parksaustralia.gov.au/marine/parks/coral-sea/maps/>

An overview of rules that apply for activities undertaken in the Coral Sea Marine Park can be found at **Figure 4**.

Overview of rules for activities (refer to the plan for full details)					
Activity		Special Purpose Zone (Trawl) (IUCN VI)	Habitat Protection Zone (IUCN IV)	Habitat Protection Zone (Reefs) (IUCN IV)	National Park Zone (IUCN II)
GENERAL USE, ACCESS, AND WASTE MANAGEMENT	Ballast water discharge and exchange	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Disposal of waste from normal operations of vessels (MARPOL)	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Camping	A	A	A	A
	Recreational use (non-fishing, nature watching, boating, etc.)	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Non-commercial remote piloted aircraft, drones etc.	A	A	A	A
COMMERCIAL SHIPPING	Anchoring	✓	X ^B	X ^B	X ^B
	Vessel transiting	✓	✓	✓	✓
COMMERCIAL FISHING	Dropline	A	A	A	X
	Hand collection (including using hookah, scuba, snorkel)	A	A	A	X
	Hand net (hand, barrier, skimmer, cast, scoop, drag, lift)	A	A	A	X
	Longline (demersal, auto-longline)	A	X	X	X
	Longline (pelagic)	A	A	X	X
	Minor line (handline, rod & reel, trolling, squid jig, poling)	A	A	X	X
	Net (demersal)	X	X	X	X
	Net (pelagic)	X	X	X	X
	Purse seine	A	A	X	X
	Trap, pot	A	X	X	X
	Trawl (demersal)	A	X	X	X
	Trawl (midwater)	A	A	X	X
	Trotline	A	X	X	X
COMMERCIAL AQUACULTURE	Aquaculture	A	A	A	X
COMMERCIAL MEDIA	Media	A ^C	A ^C	A ^C	A ^C
COMMERCIAL TOURISM	Non-fishing related tourism (including nature watching, scuba/snorkel tours)	A	A	A	A
	Charter fishing tours (including spear diving tours)	A	A	A	X
	Commercial aviation tours (up to 3000 m above sea level)	A	A	A	A
RECREATIONAL FISHING	Recreational fishing (including spear-fishing)	✓	✓	✓	X
	Anchoring and vessel transiting	✓	✓	✓	✓
MINING	Mining operations including exploration, construction and operation of pipelines	X	X	X	X
STRUCTURES AND WORKS	Excavation, erection/maintenance of structures, works	A	A	A	A
	Dredging and disposal of dredged material	A	X	X	X
	Artificial reefs	A	A	A	A ^D
	Fish aggregating devices	A	A	A	X
RESEARCH AND MONITORING	Research	A	A	A	A
TRADITIONAL USE	Non-commercial hunting/food gathering, ceremonial and cultural use	✓	✓	✓	✓
NATIONAL SECURITY AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE	National security and emergency response	✓	✓	✓	✓

✓ Activity is allowed.
 X Activity is not allowed.
 A Authorisation required. Activity is allowable, subject to assessment.
 B Anchoring is not allowed except in anchoring areas determined under r.12.56 of the EPBC Regulations.
 C News-of-the-day reporting may be undertaken on terms determined by the Director from time to time, and subject to the Director being notified.
 D Activity is allowable only for the protection, conservation or restoration of habitats.

Note:

- Anchoring by commercial fishing and aquaculture vessels is not allowed in the National Park Zone (II), except in anchoring areas determined under the EPBC Regulations.
- Fishing gear must be kept stowed and secured at all times during transit through, or while stopping and anchoring in, a zone in which fishing activities are not authorised.
- Disposal of waste from normal operations of vessels must comply with MARPOL requirements.

Figure 4: [Overview of rules for activities in the Coral Sea Marine Park.](#)

Reporting illegal activity

If you witness or suspect there are illegal activities occurring within an Australian Marine Park, you are encouraged to report this activity. All reports are completely voluntary and anonymous, however, if you choose to include your personal details, you may be contacted to provide more information about your report.

11 Compliance

AFMA's compliance and enforcement program is ultimately designed to maintain the integrity of fisheries management arrangements and protect Australia's fishing resources. AFMA seeks to achieve a level of compliance consistent with its legislative objectives by maximising voluntary compliance and creating effective deterrents to non-compliance.

The main functions of the compliance program include:

- ensuring compliance with AFMA's domestic fisheries management measures
- ensuring licensed boats comply with fishing conditions within the AFZ
- ensuring that there are no unlicensed foreign boats operating in the AFZ
- managing port access for foreign boats
- surveillance and apprehension of foreign boats fishing illegally in the AFZ.

The National Compliance and Enforcement Program is conducted via the use of a risk based approach, which enables AFMA's resources to be targeted to the areas where they are most needed and where they will prove most effective. It involves a series of steps to identify and assess non-compliance risks and then apply appropriate enforcement actions to mitigate these risks.

Risk-based compliance has a range of benefits³:

- **Improved compliance outcomes** – AFMA can tailor or target compliance measures to effectively deal with the most significant non-compliance risks.
- **Efficiency gains** – the target of compliance measures to the most significant risks ensures resources are concentrated in the areas where they are most likely to improve compliance outcomes.
- **Greater industry support for compliance programs/measures** – risk management processes are widely understood by the fishing industry and the community as a whole.

In addition to the risk treatment model, it is essential that AFMA maintains a general deterrence program. By maintaining a presence at fishing ports (and at sea) AFMA discourages those members of the fishing community who do not wish to comply with the rules and regulations. It also reassures those who are complying that non-compliant activity is likely to be detected. Further, AFMA officers can assist those wishing to comply (but not knowing how) by providing advice and/or instructions on operator's responsibilities.

11.2 Navigation regulations

Additional regulations were introduced regarding navigation in closures through an amendment to the FMR 2019 (see Part 9, division 3, regulation 86).

Under the regulations a boat must maintain a speed over 5 knots when navigating in a closure. If the closure is in effect for less than 24 hours (such as daylight closures) the boat must either be stationary or travelling faster than 5 knots. A breach of the regulations is an offence of strict liability, equal to 25 penalty units, or \$5250.

³ Source: Risk-based Compliance information is available at [Guide to Better Regulation](https://www.treasury.nsw.gov.au/finance-resource/best-practice-regulation-guidelines) (<https://www.treasury.nsw.gov.au/finance-resource/best-practice-regulation-guidelines>).

Speed is calculated via the boat's vessel monitoring system (VMS). Therefore, it is recommended that the most direct route is taken when travelling through a closure, so the boat does not appear to be navigating at less than 5 knots. If the boat is stationary within a closure, the boat is required to remain in that closure for greater than 30 minutes.

If the master of a boat is unable to comply with any of the navigation requirements due to an unforeseen emergency (e.g., crew safety, breakdowns etc.) then the master must contact AFMA as soon as possible to request an exemption from the regulation.

11.3 Vessel monitoring system (VMS)

11.3.1 VMS reporting

It is the permit holder's responsibility to ensure that any boat nominated to their permit is fitted with a VMS of a category specified in the register of AFMA approved units. This register can be found on the AFMA website under List of approved units:

<https://www.afma.gov.au/monitoring-tools/vessel-monitoring-systems/list-approved-vessel-monitoring-system-devices>

The VMS unit must remain switched on at all times that the boat is nominated to a Commonwealth permit, including when in port or engaged in State fishing. The permit holder must ensure the VMS is reporting correctly before going out to sea for the first time and that no interference occurs with the correct operation of the VMS unit. On becoming aware of a problem with the VMS functioning, the permit holder must advise AFMA as soon as practicable via:

Phone: (02) 6225 5369 (if prompted, follow instructions on the voice mail) or

Fax: (02) 6225 5440 or

Email: ausvms@afma.gov.au

If the VMS is not operating or is malfunctioning the boat must remain in port until the VMS is inspected, repaired if necessary and AFMA has received confirmation from an authorised technician that the automatic location communicator (ALC) is functioning normally.

11.3.2 Directions to return to port

Depending on the circumstances, and in accordance with its enforcement decision principles as outlined in the National Compliance and Enforcement Policy, if a nominated boat's VMS unit stops reporting, AFMA may require the boat to immediately return to, and/or remain in port until such a time as AFMA is satisfied the problems with the VMS unit have been rectified.

11.3.3 Manual reporting

If a nominated boat's VMS unit stops reporting, the permit holder must ensure that the operator manually reports the boat's position at a frequency specified by AFMA.

The manual position reports must include:

- *the boat's name*
- *the boat's distinguishing symbol*
- *the boat's present latitude and longitude (in degrees and minutes)*
- *the date and time.*

Manual position reports are to be made by:

Phone: (02) 6225 5369 (if prompted, follow instructions on the voice mail); or

Fax: (02) 6225 5440; or

Email: ausvms@afma.gov.au

11.3.4 Temporary switch off (TSO) arrangements

A TSO is a formal arrangement that allows a unit to be legitimately switched off. If a nominated vessel is undergoing maintenance, berthed for an extended period or in other exceptional circumstances that render VMS operation impractical, the permit holder can apply for a TSO by filling out an 'Application for VMS Temporary Switch Off' form (www.afma.gov.au/fisheries-services/vessel-monitoring/). Using the webform function is preferred, but if you cannot access this then please manually fill out the form and send to AFMA via email: ausvms@afma.gov.au.

The request needs to be made prior to the VMS being switched off. A TSO is not automatically granted, and AFMA considers a variety of factors, including previous VMS non-compliance and whether the need is genuine before permission being granted.

Further information can be found on the AFMA website under Vessel Monitoring Systems <https://www.afma.gov.au/fisheries-services/vessel-monitoring>.

Note: *Switching off a unit without first obtaining a TSO will constitute an offence. It is also an offence for a vessel to be moved, from the place stipulated under the TSO, without approval from AFMA.*

11.4 Illegal/suspicious fishing

If you suspect illegal fishing operations are occurring or witness any suspicious activity involving fish or fishing type activity (e.g., selling fish off the back of vessels or vehicles whilst offering a reduced price, questionable landing sites etc.) you can either contact AFMA's freecall CRIMFISH hotline on **1800 274 634** (1800 CRIMFISH) or you can contact AFMA's Duty Officer on 0419 205 329 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) as soon as possible after you discover the event. More information is available on the CRIMFISH page on the AFMA website ('Fisheries Management' – Compliance' - 'Report illegal fishing – CRIMFISH').

<https://www.afma.gov.au/fisheries-management/compliance/report-illegal-fishing>.

Reports may be made anonymously and all information received will be treated in the strictest confidence. Ideally any information supplied should be as detailed as possible to assist AFMA to investigate the incident and should include the following:

- the date, time and location that the activity took place
- the names of any verifying witnesses
- any photographs and/or other evidence

If you sight a vessel you believe may be involved in illegal fishing please contact the AFMA National Surveillance & Response Unit, based at Maritime Border Command Operations on Freecall 1800 06 1800 (attended 24 hours a day, 7 days per week). All information received will be treated as strictly confidential.

Contact details

Coral Sea Fishery- Management	
Senior Manager – Brodie Macdonald	02 6225 5368
Manager- Darci Wallis	02 6225 5408
Policy, Environment, Economics & Research	
Senior Manager – Ryan Murphy	02 6225 5433
Licensing and Data Services	
Licensing, Quota Management and Logbook	
Acting Manager – Karen Cullen	02 6225 5452
Licensing and Data Officers	1300 723 621
Licensing and Data facsimile	02 6225 5440
Licensing and Data email	licensing@afma.gov.au
Manager, Electronic Monitoring	1300 723 621
Levies	
Senior Debt Recovery Officer – Simone Pont	02 6225 5314
Compliance	
Compliance	
Duty Officer	0419 205 329
Compliance email	domestic.compliance@afma.gov.au
Domestic Compliance	
Senior Manager National Compliance Strategy – Tod Spencer	02 6225 5312
Manager National Compliance – Josh Froggatt	02 6225 5467
Intelligence	
Senior Manager National Compliance Strategy – Tod Spencer	02 6225 5312
Manager National Intelligence	02 6225 5555
State Fisheries	
Queensland	
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries	13 25 23 (within QLD) or 07 3404 6999

Acronyms

ABARES	Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences
AFMA	Australian Fisheries Management Authority
AFZ	Australian Fishing Zone
CDR	Catch disposal record
CPUE	Catch per unit effort
CSF	Coral Sea Fishery
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
DCCEEW	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
EBFM	Ecosystem based fishery management
EPBC Act	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>
ERA	Ecological risk assessment
ERM	Ecological risk management
ESD	Ecologically sustainable development
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
PEER	Policy, Environment, Economics and Research (AFMA)
TAC	Total allowable catch
TAP	Threat Abatement Plan 2018 for the incidental catch (or bycatch) of seabirds during oceanic longline fishing operations
TED	Turtle excluder device
the Act	<i>Fisheries Management Act 1991</i>
TSO	Temporary switch off
VMS	Vessel monitoring system
WTO	Wildlife trade operation