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Northern Territory
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NORTHERN TERRITORY FISHERIES JOINT AUTHORITY

REPORT FOR THE PERIOD

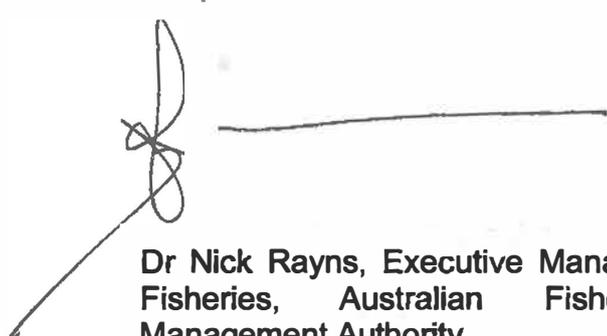
1 JULY 2015 TO 30 JUNE 2016

Fisheries Management Act 1991
(Commonwealth)

Fisheries Act 1988
(Northern Territory)

**NORTHERN TERRITORY
FISHERIES JOINT AUTHORITY
ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD**

1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016



**Dr Nick Rayns, Executive Manager,
Fisheries, Australian Fisheries
Management Authority**



**Mr Ian Curnow, Executive Director
Fisheries, Northern Territory
Department of Primary Industry and
Fisheries**

**Deputy to the Commonwealth
Member,**

**Senator the Hon. Anne Ruston,
Assistant Minister for Agriculture
and Water Resources**

**Deputy to the Northern Territory
Member,**

**The Hon. Ken (Kenneth) Edwards
MLA,
Northern Territory Minister for
Primary Industry and Resources**

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Australian Government
Australian Fisheries Management Authority



**Northern
Territory
Government**

Ref: MNMT16-00294

4 October 2016

Senator the Hon. Anne Ruston
Assistant Minister to the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Assistant Minister

We have much pleasure in presenting to you the annual report of the Northern Territory Fisheries Joint Authority (NTFJA) for the financial year ended 30 June 2016.

The report reflects the Joint Authorities legislative reporting requirements and has been prepared in accordance with subsection 70(1) of the *Public Service Act 1999*, which requires us to provide a report for you to present to the Parliament.

This report has been prepared in accordance with section 10 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014*. We are satisfied that the Joint Authority agencies have in place appropriate fraud control mechanisms to meet our needs and comply with the guidelines relevant to this annual report.

We ask that you table the NTFJA report for the period 2015-2016 in accordance with section 46 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* and subsection 70(1) of the *Public Service Act 1999*.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Yours sincerely

Dr Nick Rayns
Executive Manager Fisheries
Australian Fisheries Management
Authority

Ian Curnow
Executive Director Fisheries
Northern Territory Department of Primary
Industry and Resources

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1. Introduction

This is the twenty fifth annual report of the Fisheries Joint Authority. This report details the activities undertaken during the period 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 as well as information on the status of the fisheries.

The Joint Authority has responsibility for the management of the following fisheries in all waters adjacent to the Northern Territory:

- Timor Reef Fishery;
- Demersal Fishery;
- Offshore Net and Line Fishery.

2. Enabling legislation

The NTFJA was established in February 1983, under the then Commonwealth legislation (*Commonwealth Fisheries Act 1952*) to provide for the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory to jointly manage declared fisheries and fisheries resources in waters adjacent to the Northern Territory. With the passage of the Offshore Constitutional Settlement Agreement of 1987, management of the Northern Territory (NT) pearl oyster fishery passed to the Northern Territory Fisheries Joint Authority (NTFJA).

On 3 February 1995, the NTFJA, subject to the provisions of the Commonwealth [*Fisheries Management Act 1991*](#) and the Northern Territory [*Fisheries Act 1988*](#), assumed responsibility, in waters adjacent to the NT, for the Demersal, Timor Reef, Offshore Net and Line and Finfish Trawl Fisheries. A copy of the arrangement is found at Attachment A. Day to day administration of these fisheries is provided by the Fisheries Division of the NT Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPIF).

3. Report on the status of fisheries managed by the Joint Authority

Tables 1 and 2 (below) present a summary of the catches and status of the fisheries managed by the NTFJA. Detailed catch, effort and status information for each fishery are compiled annually and presented in the Northern Territory Fishery Status Reports, available for download at:

And in the Status of Key Australian Fish Stocks Reports at:

http://www.fish.gov.au/pages/safs_report.aspx

The **Demersal Fishery** targets mainly red snappers (*Lutjanus malabaricus*, *L. erythropterus*) and gold-band snappers (*Pristipomoides* spp.) (Table 1). Red emperor (*L. sebae*) and cods (*Family Serranidae*) are key byproduct species. Drop lines, traps and trawl are the main gears used in the fishery.

The **Timor Reef Fishery** primarily targets the higher-valued gold-band snapper (*P. multidentis*) and other *Pristipomoides* species (Table 1). Significant quantities of red snappers (*L. malabaricus*, *L. erythropterus*), red emperors (*L. sebae*) and cods (*Family Serranidae*) are also harvested.

Table 1 - Commercial catches of fin fish from 2009-2015. *Note figures for 2015 are preliminary

Species/stock	Fishery	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015 preliminary
Goldband snappers	DF/FTF	252(DF) 62(FTF)	217	392	349	267*
	TR	347	365	353	257	305*
Red snappers (<i>L. malabaricus</i> , <i>L. erythropterus</i>)	DF/FTF	163(DF) 779(FTF)	1641	1986	2160	2298*
	TR	273	212	240	182	251*
Group (other) species	DF/FTF	83(DF) 197(FTF)	370	419	456	543*
	TR	95	139	157	154	249*
Blacktip sharks (<i>C. tilstoni</i> , <i>C. limbatus</i>)	ONLF	217	356	97	66	39*
Blacktip sharks (<i>C. sorrah</i>)	ONLF	83	75	23	18	8*
Grey mackerel (<i>S. semifasciatus</i>)	ONLF	423	347	347	503	409*
Other shark spp	ONLF	426	294	81	61	28*
Other non -shark spp	ONLF	46.2	42	22	50	18*

DF- Demersal Fishery (includes finfish trawl fishery FTF from 2012); TR- Timor Reef Fishery; ONLF- Offshore Net and Line Fishery, 2015* Preliminary figures only

Table 2 – Summary of status of assessed stocks in NTFJA Fisheries

Species/stock	Stock Status
Goldband snappers (DF/FTF/TR)	Sustainably fished (2014)
Red snappers (<i>L erythropterus</i>) (DF/FTF/TR)	Sustainably fished (2014)
Red snappers (<i>L malabaricus</i>) (DF/FTF/TR)	Sustainably fished (2014)
Blacktip sharks (<i>C tilstoni</i> , <i>C limbatus</i> , <i>C sorrah</i>) (ONLF)	Sustainably fished (2014)
Grey Mackerel (ONLF)	Sustainably fished (2014)

DF- Demersal Fishery; TR- Timor Reef Fishery; ONLF- Offshore Net and Line Fishery

The commercial **Offshore Net and Line Fishery** targets black-tip sharks (*Carcharhinus tilstoni*, *C. limbatus* and *C. sorrah*) and grey mackerels (*Scomberomorus semifasciatus*) (Table 1). A variety of other sharks and pelagic finfish are also caught as byproduct. Exploitation by the FTO and recreational sectors is considered to be quite low.

According to the Status of Key Australian Fish Stocks Report 2015, the fisheries for each of the target species listed above have been assessed to be sustainable at recent harvest levels (Table 2). In all of these fisheries, catches in adjacent Indonesian waters may be significant, and impacts on the Australian fisheries will be dependent on connectivity (fish movement and mixing) between the fisheries. This issue is elaborated upon in the [Fishery Status Reports](#) and in the [Status of Key Australian Fish Stocks Reports](#).

4. Report on activities of the Joint Authority during the reporting period

An annual meeting of the NTFJA is held in the first or second quarter of each financial year (reporting period) or as required. At each meeting key issues within the NTFJA fisheries are discussed and decisions regarding these issues may be made. Attachment B contains the 2015 meeting minutes and decision record. The Commonwealth and Territory members of the NTFJA for the 2015/16 reporting period, along with the deputies for both members, are listed in Table 3.

Table 3 – NTFJA Members and deputies for the period 2015/16

Role	Commonwealth	Northern Territory
Member	<p>Senator the Hon. Richard Colbeck, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, (30 June 2015 – 20 September 2015).</p> <p>Senator the Hon. Anne Ruston, Assistant Minister for Agriculture, (21 September 2015 – 30 June 2016)</p>	<p>The Hon. Willem Westra Van Holthe MLA, NT Minister for Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources. (1 July 2015 – 14 February 2016)</p> <p>The Hon. Gary Higgins MLA, NT Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries (15 February 2016 - 30 June 2016)</p>

Deputy	Dr Nick Rayns, Executive Manager, Fisheries, Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA)	Mr Glenn Schipp, Director Fisheries and Aquaculture, Northern Territory Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries.
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Attachment A - Excerpt of the Northern Territory Government Gazette of February 1995

ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN THE COMMONWEALTH AND THE NORTHERN TERRITORY IN RELATION TO THE NORTHERN SHARK FISHERY

An ARRANGEMENT entered into between the Commonwealth of Australia (the Commonwealth) of the one part and the Northern Territory (the Territory) of the other part.

WHEREAS-

- (a) paragraph 4(i)(a) of the Acts Interpretation Act 1901 of the Commonwealth provides that where an Act is enacted on or after the date of commencement of this section that it is not to come into operation immediately upon its enactment, is expressed to confer power, inter alia, to make an instrument of a legislative or administrative character, then, unless the contrary intention applies, the power may be exercised, and anything may be done for the purpose of enabling the exercise of the power, before the Act concerned comes into operation as if it had come into operation;
- (b) subsection 2(2) of the Fisheries Management Act 1991 of the Commonwealth (the Management Act) provides that Part 5 of the Management Act, which provides for co-operation with the States and Northern Territory in the management of fisheries, commences upon the repeal or the ceasing to have effect (as the case may be) of Part IVA of the *Fisheries Act* 1952 of the Commonwealth;
- (c) by subsection 7(3) of the Fisheries Legislation (Consequential Provisions) Act 1991 of the Commonwealth (the Consequential Provisions Act) as amended by section 24 of the Primary Industries and Energy Legislation Amendment Act 1993 Part IVA of the *Fisheries Act* 1952, unless sooner repealed, ceases to have effect at the end of the period of 3 years beginning 3 February 1992, the day on which section 7 of the Consequential Provisions Act commenced;
- (d) paragraph 7(4)(a) of the Consequential Provisions Act provides that upon the commencement of Part 5 of the Act, the Northern Territory Fisheries Joint Authority, established by subsection i2D(i) of the *Fisheries Act* 1952, continues in existence as if it had been established under Part 5 of the Management Act;
- (e) arrangements were entered into under section 12H (4) of the *Fisheries Act* 1952 between the Commonwealth and the Territory in relation to the:
 - (i) Pelagic Fishery, published in the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette No 8109 on 14 April 1988;
 - (ii) Pelagic Fishery except with pelagic gillnets in waters within 12 nautical miles seaward of the baseline or by trolling, published in the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette No 8109 on 14 April 1988;
- (f) paragraph 7(4) (b) of the Consequential Provisions Act provides that upon the commencement of Part 5 of the Act, any arrangement made with a State or Territory under subsection i2H(i) or (4) of the *Fisheries Act* 1952 that was in force immediately before that commencement continues in force as if it had been made under Part 5 of the Management Act;

- (g) the Arrangements referred to in paragraph (e) of this Arrangement were made under Division 3 of Part FVA of the *Fisheries Act 1952*;
- (h) subsection 75(1) of the Management Act provides that an Arrangement under Division 3 of Part 5 of the Management Act may be terminated by instrument approved by the Governor-General and the Governor or Governors of the State or States concerned;
- (i) section 59 of the Management Act provides:
 - (i) that Part 5 of the Management Act Has effect as if the Northern Territory was a State
 - (ii) that a reference in that Part to the Governor of a State shall be read, in relation to the Northern Territory, as a reference to the Administrator of the Territory;
- (j) subsection 33 (3) of the Acts Interpretation Act 1901 provides inter alia that where an Act confers a power to make any instrument, the power shall, unless the contrary intention appears, be construed as including a power exercisable in the like manner and subject to the like conditions (if any) to repeal any such instrument;
- (k) subsection 8(1) of the Interpretation Act 1978 of the Territory provides that where a provision of an Act is expressed to confer power, or to amend a provision of another Act in such a manner that the other Act, as amended, will confer power, to take any action, including power to make an appointment or to make an instrument of a legislative or administrative character then, before the first-mentioned provision or the second-mentioned provision as amended, as the case may be, comes into operation, that power may be exercised and anything may be done for the purposes of enabling the exercise of the power or of bringing the appointment or instrument into effect;
- (l) subsection 64(2) of the *Fisheries Act 1988* of the Territory (the Territory Act) empowers the Territory to terminate an arrangement under Part 5 of the Management Act;
- (m) subsection 71(1) of the Management Act provides that the Commonwealth may make an arrangement with a State or States represented on a Joint Authority that the Joint Authority is to have the management of a particular fishery in waters relevant to that State or any of those States;
- (n) subsection 74(1) of the Management Act provides that an arrangement under, inter alia, section 71 is to be made by an instrument approved by the Governor-General and the Governor or Governors of the State or States concerned;
- (o) subsection 64(1) of the Territory Act as amended by section 37 of the Fisheries Amendment Act 1994 of the Territory empowers the Territory to make an arrangement under Part 5 of the Management Act;
- (p) both the Commonwealth and the Territory are desirous of exercising their powers to make a further Arrangement in relation to the fishery referred to in clause 2 of this Arrangement.

NOW THEREFORE, in pursuance of the Management Act and the Territory Act and of all the powers so enabling, it is mutually arranged as follows:

1. The Arrangements entered into between the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory as referred to in paragraph (e) of the recitals to this Arrangement are, pursuant to subsection 75 (i) of the Management Act and subsection 64(2) of the Territory Act, terminated.
2. The Commonwealth and the Territory hereby arrange that the fishery, being for any purpose other than recreation, in waters relevant to Northern Territory, being coastal waters and waters of the Australian fishing zone that lie within the area described in Schedule 2 to the Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1967 under the heading "Area that includes the Adjacent Area in respect of the Northern Territory", for:
 - (a) all fish of the Class Chondrichthyes (cartilaginous fishes) using any fishing method;

but excluding fish to which this paragraph otherwise would apply taken in the exercise of a right conferred in relation to another fishery by a fishing concession granted by the Australian Fisheries Management Authority under the Management Act;

- (b) all fish of the Class Osteichthyes (bony fish) taken in the exercise of a right conferred by a licence or other authority granted by the Territory on behalf of the Northern Territory Fisheries Joint Authority for the fish to which paragraph (a) applies;

is to be managed by the Northern Territory Fisheries Joint Authority in accordance with the law of the Territory.

3. The Minister responsible for administering the Management Act and the Minister responsible for administering the Territory Act may agree in writing to the maximum quantity of other fish the subject of paragraph 2(b) that may be taken from time to time under a licence or other authority referred to in that paragraph and on matters of mutual interest in relation to the fishery.
4. This Arrangement shall, upon being executed on behalf of the Commonwealth and of the Territory and upon being approved by the Governor-General of the Commonwealth and the Administrator of the Northern Territory, take effect on 3 February 1995.
5. Without affecting the construction which this Arrangement would have if no provision of this Arrangement or part thereof is invalid, it is the intention of this Arrangement that if any provision of this Arrangement or part thereof is invalid, the remainder of that provision or part thereof was not included in this Arrangement even if the result is to extend the fishery by this Arrangement.

Dated 19th December, 1994

Signed for and on behalf of the
Commonwealth of Australia by the
Honourable DAVID PETER BEDDALL,
Minister for Resources

In the presence of
P. STEVEN

Signed for and on behalf of the
Northern Territory by the
Honourable MICHAEL JAMES PALMER
Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries

In the presence of
A.R.SPRIGG

MEETING OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY FISHERIES JOINT AUTHORITY

11:42AM, 23 September 2015
AFMA Offices, Northbourne Ave, Canberra, ACT
Canberra

RECORD OF DECISIONS

Attendance

Members:

Deputy for the Australian Government
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry
Dr Nick Rayns

Deputy for the Northern Territory Minister for
Primary Industry and Fisheries
Mr. Glenn Schipp

Secretary
David Mckey (NT DPIF)

Observers:

Scott Spencer (QDAF)
Shane Fava (AFMA)
Kieran Macdonell (DAWR)
Rick Fletcher (WA FISH)
Heather Brayford (WA FISH)

Nick Rayns (Chair) opened the meeting at 11:42am.

1. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

Officials of the Commonwealth and NT Fisheries met on 23 September 2015 to discuss current issues relevant to the NTFJA. Details of the discussion and recommendations below from the meeting are detailed.

1.1 Identification of Member's Deputies, Secretary and Delegations

The identification of present delegates and deputies to the meeting was noted, as was the appointment of a secretary and the identification of observers.

Officials of the Commonwealth and NT Fisheries confirmed that their status as members' deputies was in order. Mr David McKey (NT DPIF) acted as the secretary to the NTFJA. Observers at the meeting were noted and are recorded as present in this record.

1.2 Confirmation of Agenda

Members confirmed the agenda.

1.3 Record of Decisions arising from the NT Fisheries Joint Authority (NTFJA) meeting of 26 November 2014

The Record of Decisions arising from the NTFJA meeting of 26 November 2014 was reviewed. It was noted all recommendations had been actioned and was deemed to be an accurate reflection of decisions taken.

2. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION / INFORMATION

2.1 Update on status of NTFJA fisheries

2.1.1 Timor Reef Fishery

Member's noted the information provided in the background papers attached to the agenda and the Northern Territory delegate provided a summary of the Timor Reef Fishery to members and observers as follows:

An Offshore Snapper Fisheries Advisory Committee (OSFAC) was established in 2013-14 to assist the Director of Fisheries and Aquaculture in the ongoing administration of the fisheries.

A Memorandum of Understanding between AFMA, NT Police and NT Fisheries was signed January 2012 ensuring effective compliance of the quota arrangements in the TRF. AFMA undertakes day to day compliance activities related to the TRF on behalf of the NT Police via an agreed 'fee for service' arrangement.

Members noted the above arrangement was working well and no significant decision rule triggers have been met to date this year. Triggers to initiate further data collection had been met and research/monitoring programs established according to the decision framework as a result.

As per the management framework decision rules, additional costs for this fishery are levied back to licence holders each year at licence renewal time. Members noted total levies for 2014-15 were ~\$144 k, being for offsetting costs for administration, compliance monitoring, combined fishery Red Emperor Stock Reduction Analysis (SRA) and a Stock Structure study to three snapper species (shared research project with Western Australia).

Members noted the concept (initiated by OSFAC) of industry contribution of funds to provide dedicated resources to progress the actions initiated through OSFAC for the management of the Demersal Fishery and Timor Reef Fishery. The pro-rata 1st year industry funding for ~ AO6 level Manager for ~2 years is available and recruitment to this position is underway.

2.1.2 Demersal Fishery

Member's noted the information provided in the background papers attached to the agenda and the Northern Territory delegate provided a summary of the Demersal Fishery to members and observers as follows:

The Fishery has a 5yr WTO accreditation until 27 November 2015 and Fisheries is currently working with DoE to meet the conditions and recommendations for the fishery. In 2015-16, NT Fisheries introduced a licence condition mandating the installation of a Bycatch Reduction Device (BRD) prior to the cod-end of a finfish trawl net.

Since the introduction of the ITQ's, 4 finfish trawl vessels and 1-3 fish-trap and drop-line vessels are operating, an increase of 3 trawlers. The objectives of the NTFJA relating to better utilisation of fish stocks, particularly red snappers have been achieved with ~77% of available stocks being utilised in 2014-15.

A Memorandum of Understanding between AFMA, NT Police and NT Fisheries came into effect mid- 2012. AFMA undertakes day to day compliance activities related to the DF on behalf of the NT Police via an agreed 'fee for service' arrangement.

NT Fisheries monitors the recorded harvests from the fishery to ensure that the appropriate management action is taken when reference triggers as detailed in the Decision Rules are met. Members noted no significant decision rule triggers have been met to date this year. Triggers to initiate further data collection had been met and research/monitoring programs established according to the decision framework as a result.

As per the management framework decision rules, additional costs for this fishery are levied back to licence holders each year at licence renewal time. Members noted total levies for 2014-15 were ~\$208 k, being for offsetting costs for administration, management, compliance monitoring, Red snapper SRA, Goldband SRA, a combined fishery Red Emperor SRA and a Stock Structure study to three snapper species (shared research project with Western Australia).

2.1.3 Offshore Net & Line Fishery

Member's noted the information provided in the background papers attached to the agenda and the Northern Territory delegate provided a summary of the Offshore Net and Line Fishery to members and observers as follows:

The Fishery has WTO accreditation until 24 September 2015 and is currently working with SEWPac to meet the conditions and recommendations for the

fishery. The Department of Environment has recently published a positive Non Detriment Finding (NDF) assessment for the Hammerhead complex. This assessment was necessary because of the recent CITES listing of Scalloped hammerhead.

An Advisory Committee with broad sector membership is assisting the NTFJA with a comprehensive review of the management arrangements of the Offshore Net and Line Fishery.

Members noted the information provided in the background paper and outcomes in relation to a major review of future management and research directions for shark fisheries. The intent and likely timeline of that review was discussed and noted with the Deputy for the Australian Government noting the importance for ongoing dialogue regarding progress and outcome.

2.2 Update to effective management of shared red snapper stocks in GoC.

Member's noted the information provided in the update on the status of the red snapper stocks in the GoC and QLD and NT's intention to continue this work in 2015-16.

The project is on-hold until further communications with the NTSC have been held. These discussions are required in order for the project to gain full NTSC support.

The Offshore Snapper Fisheries Advisory Committee (OSFAC), established in 2013-14 is tasked with providing options to progress the development of shared stock management arrangements. Qld and Commonwealth Fisheries Managers are appointed observers and members respectively to this committee.

3. OTHER BUSINESS

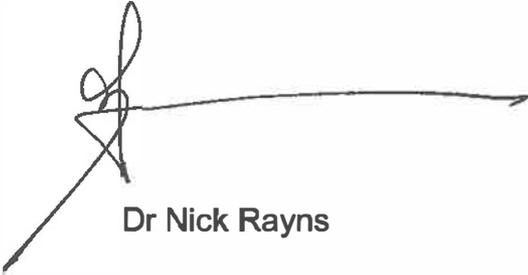
Glenn Schipp provided information to the meeting indicating that discussions will be held between DPIF and AFMA relating to VMS services provided by AFMA for selected NT 'inshore' fisheries. DPIF reported a Memorandum of Understanding between DPIF and AFMA had been progressed with VMS to be introduced into the Barramundi Fishery 1 February 2016.

4. NEXT MEETING

Members agreed the next meeting of the NTFJA would be held in conjunction with NAFC 2016.

5. CLOSE

The meeting closed at 12:10 PM



Dr Nick Rayns

**Executive Manager, Fisheries
Australian Fisheries Management
Authority**

**Deputy for the Australian Government
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries &
Forestry**

**Northern Territory Fisheries Joint
Authority**



Mr. Glenn Schipp

Director of Fisheries and Aquaculture

**Deputy for the Northern Territory
Minister for Primary Industry and
Fisheries**

**Northern Territory Fisheries Joint
Authority**

NORTHERN TERRITORY FISHERIES JOINT AUTHORITY

CANBERRA 23rd SEPTEMBER 2015

AGENDA

12:30PM, 23 September 2015

AFMA Offices, Northbourne Ave, Canberra, ACT
Canberra

1. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

- 1.1 *Identification of Member's Deputies, Secretary and Delegations*
- 1.2 *Confirmation of Agenda*
- 1.3 *Record of Decisions arising from the NT Fisheries Joint Authority (NTFJA) meeting of 26 November 2014*

2. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION / INFORMATION

- 2.1 *Update on status of NTFJA fisheries*
 - 2.1.1 *Timor Reef Fishery*
 - 2.1.2 *Demersal Fishery*
 - 2.1.3 *Offshore Net & Line Fishery*

3. OTHER BUSINESS

4. NEXT MEETING

5. CLOSE OF MEETING

NORTHERN TERRITORY FISHERIES JOINT AUTHORITY

INFORMATION PAPER TO AGENDA ITEM 1.1

1.1 *Identification of Member's Deputies, Secretary and Delegations*

RECOMMENDATION

That members identify deputies, delegates, secretary and observers for the 2015 NTFJA meeting.

BACKGROUND

A resolution of the 2005 NTFJA meeting was that members' deputies, delegates, secretary and observers state their status for the record.

2005 meeting resolution:

'that as a rule for all NTFJA meetings, the deputies to the NTFJA declare their status, a secretary is appointed by the deputy for the Northern Territory for each meeting and all observers at the meeting are recorded in the record of decisions.'

NORTHERN TERRITORY FISHERIES JOINT AUTHORITY

INFORMATION PAPER TO AGENDA ITEM 2.1

2.1.1 *Update on status of Timor Reef Fishery*

RECOMMENDATION

That member's note the information provided in the update to the Timor Reef Fishery.

BACKGROUND

The Timor Reef Fishery management arrangements include an Individual Transferable Quota Framework and Decision Rules system operating since February 2011.

CURRENT SITUATION

The Timor Reef Fishery (TRF) is into its fourth year under the new quota management system. 2014-15. Catches in the fishery were lower last year at ~500t as active operators (who also own quota in the nearby Demersal Fishery) shifted effort to the Demersal Fishery. This level relates to ~ 19% harvested out of the potential sustainable combined catch available to the fishery.

In order to explore reasons underlying limited fishery growth under the new arrangements, An Offshore Snapper Fisheries Advisory Committee (OSFAC) was established in 2013-14 to assist the Director of Fisheries and Aquaculture in the ongoing administration of the fisheries.

Triggers met in the fisheries decision rules initiated data collection and analysis of red emperor species otoliths for age structure studies. The Committee recommended that the red emperor SRA stock assessment be undertaken in 2015.

The Committee supported a stock structure project be undertaken in conjunction with WA and covers three species across five NT locations. As detailed in the Framework all relevant costs are wholly funded by operators. The work is currently underway and continues into 2015-16. All results from this work will be incorporated into updating the stock assessments for this fishery.

The Memorandum of Understanding between AFMA, NT Police and NT Fisheries, signed January 2012 continues to ensure effective compliance of the quota arrangements in the TRF. AFMA undertakes day to day compliance activities related to the TRF on behalf of the NT Police via an agreed 'fee for service' arrangement. The cost of maintaining this arrangement is wholly funded by operators.

NT Fisheries monitors the recorded harvests from the fishery to ensure that the appropriate action is taken when reference triggers as detailed in the Decision Rules ([TRF Decision Rules](#)) are met.

NT Fisheries supported the concept (initiated by OSFAC) of industry contribution of funds to provide dedicated resources to progress the actions initiated through OSFAC for the management of the Demersal Fishery and Timor Reef Fishery. The pro-rata 1st year industry funding for ~ AO6 level Manager for ~2 years is available and recruitment to this position is underway.

NORTHERN TERRITORY FISHERIES JOINT AUTHORITY

INFORMATION PAPER TO AGENDA ITEM 2.1

2.1.2 Update on status of Demersal Fishery

RECOMMENDATION

That member's note the information provided in the update on the status of the Demersal Fishery.

BACKGROUND

The Demersal Fishery management arrangements include an Individual Transferable Quota Framework and Decision Rules system operating since February 2012

CURRENT SITUATION

The Fishery has a 5yr WTO accreditation until 27 November 2015 and Fisheries is currently working with DoE to meet the conditions and recommendations for the fishery. In 2015-16, NT Fisheries introduced a licence condition mandating the installation of a Bycatch Reduction Device (BRD) prior to the cod-end of a finfish trawl net.

Since the introduction of the ITQ's, 4 finfish trawl vessels and 1-3 fish-trap and drop-line vessels are operating, an increase of 3 trawlers. The objectives of the NTFJA relating to better utilisation of fish stocks, particularly red snappers have been achieved with ~77% of available stocks being utilised in 2014-15.

AFMA undertakes day to day compliance activities related to the DF on behalf of the NT Police via an agreed 'fee for service' arrangement. The cost of maintaining this arrangement is wholly funded by operators. This arrangement is working well with substantial cost-saving benefits to both parties. NT Fisheries monitors the recorded harvests from the fishery to ensure that the appropriate management action is taken when reference triggers as detailed in the Decision Rules ([Decision Rules](#)) are met.

An Offshore Snapper Fisheries Advisory Committee (OSFAC) was established in 2013-14 to assist the Director of Fisheries and Aquaculture in the ongoing administration of the fisheries. Triggers met in the fisheries decision rules initiated data collection and analysis of Goldband, Red snapper and selected Group species otoliths from vessels for age structure analysis.

The Committee supported a Stock Structure project be undertaken in conjunction with WA and covers three species across five NT locations. As detailed in the Framework all costs are wholly funded by operators. The work is currently underway and continues into 2015-16. All results from this work will be incorporated into updating the stock assessments for this fishery.

NT Fisheries recently supported the concept (initiated through OSFAC) of industry contribution of funds to provide dedicated management resources to progress the actions initiated through OSFAC for the management of the Demersal Fishery and Timor Reef Fishery. The pro-rata 1st year industry funding for ~ AO6 level Manager for ~2 years is available and recruitment to this position is underway.

NORTHERN TERRITORY FISHERIES JOINT AUTHORITY

INFORMATION PAPER TO AGENDA ITEM 2.1

2.1.3 Update on status of Offshore Net & Line Fishery

RECOMMENDATION

That member's note the information provided in the update on the status of the Offshore Net and Line Fishery and the NT's intention to continue a review of the fishery in 2015-16.

UPDATE

The Fishery has WTO accreditation until 24 September 2015 and is currently working with SEWPaC to meet the conditions and recommendations for the fishery. The Department of Environment has recently published a positive Non Detriment Finding (NDF) assessment for the Hammerhead complex. This assessment was necessary because of the recent CITES listing of Scalloped hammerhead.

An Advisory Committee with broad sector membership is assisting the NTFJA with a comprehensive review of the management arrangements of the Offshore Net and Line Fishery.

The first steps taken were to identify all contemporary issues and risks (real and perceived) associated with the various elements of the commercial, recreational and Indigenous harvests. A draft Framework for the fishery is currently being developed to appropriately address identified risks and issues. A copy of the draft framework will be distributed to members when available.

The management framework will form the basis for drafting instructions to amend the regulations. The NTFJA's 'in-principle' approval of the proposed amendments to the Regulations will be sought at the appropriate time.