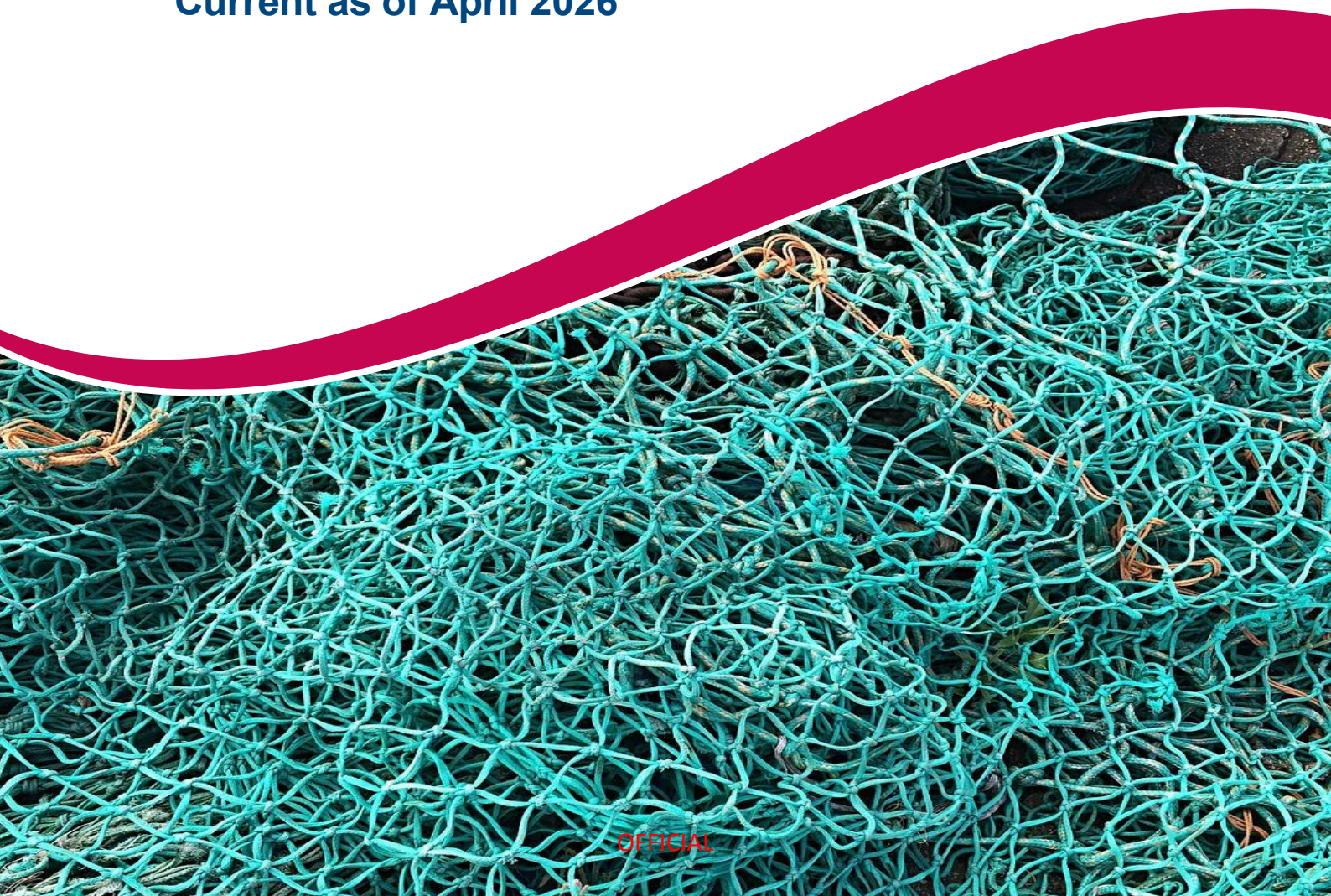
Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Torres Strait Prawn Fishery Management Arrangements Booklet 2026

Current as of April 2026



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Version	Updates	Approver
Version 1.0	New legislation included changes to bycatch reduction devices and new harvest strategy policy.	Darci Wallis
Version 1.1	Minor edits to fix typos, changes to list of section 16 legislative instruments.	

About this document

Torres Strait Prawn Fishery Management Arrangements Booklet 2026

Edited and revised in 2026 by the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA).

Important Note:

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this booklet is correct and accurate at the time of printing. However, the information provided is intended to serve as a guide only, and therefore AFMA will not be liable for any loss caused, whether due to negligence or otherwise, arising from the use of or reliance upon this booklet. The booklet is not intended to replace any conditions or requirements of an operator's fishing licence, any Torres Strait Fisheries Management Notices or Instruments, the *Torres Strait Prawn Fishery Management Plan 2009*, the *Torres Strait Fisheries Regulations 1985* and the *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984*. Some of the items in this booklet may not apply to a particular fishing operation and management arrangements may be subject to change within a fishing season (or the life of this booklet). Operators should refer to the key documents listed in this booklet and contact AFMA to check the current arrangements.

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Introduction

The Torres Strait Prawn Fishery (TSPF) handbook provides TSPF licence holders with important information for operating in the TSPF, including relevant management, social and cultural information for the fishery and surrounding region. As of 2016, the handbook has no longer been updated on an annual basis, but periodically, such as with this publication. However a separate data report is issued to licence holders, and published on the PZJA website, annually. This report will include catch and effort data, observer and licensing updates and any other relevant updates for the fishery.

The information in this handbook is a guide and does not replace legislation including the *Torres Strait Prawn Fishery Management Plan 2009* (the Plan) and associated Fisheries Management Instruments, or detailed advice specific to individual circumstances. For more information readers should make use of the contacts listed inside the back cover. Legislation current for February 2026 can be found in Section 10 of the handbook, however the Federal Register of Legislative Instruments website (https://www.legislation.gov.au/) should always be consulted for an accurate complete list of legislation relevant to the fishery.

The information in this handbook in no way limits the powers and decisions of the PZJA in its determinations, or in its considerations of any matters placed before it. Individual applicants wishing to participate in Torres Strait fisheries or vary the conditions under which they participate should be aware that the powers are vested with the PZJA to consider each application on its individual merits.



Acronyms

ABARES	Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics and Sciences
AFMA	Australian Fisheries Management Authority
AMSA	Australian Maritime Safety Authority
BRD	Bycatch Reduction Device
CPUE	Catch per Unit Effort
ERA	Ecological Risk Assessment
FMI	Fisheries Management Instrument (replaces FMN below)
FMN	Fisheries Management Notice (old name for FMI)
ECOTF	Queensland East Coast Otter Trawl Fishery
EPBC Act	Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
NPF	Northern Prawn Fishery
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PZJA	Protected Zone Joint Authority
QDPI	Queensland Department of Primary Industry
TAE	Total Allowable Effort
The Act	*Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984*
The Plan	*Torres Strait Prawn Fishery Management Plan 2009*
The Regulations	*Torres Strait Fisheries Regulations 1984*
TIB licence	Traditional Inhabitant Boat Licence
TSIRC	Torres Strait Islander Regional Council
TSPMAC	Torres Strait Prawn Management Advisory Committee
TSPF	Torres Strait Prawn Fishery
TSPZ	Torres Strait Protected Zone
TSRA	Torres Strait Regional Authority
TVH License	Transferrable Vessel Holder licence
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System

Fishery Snapshot

OVERVIEW OF TORRES STRAIT PRAWN FISHERY MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS	
Fishing season	Fishery season runs from 6pm 1 February until 6am 1 December each year.
Target Species Names	• The Brown Tiger Prawn (*Penaeus esculentus*). • Blue Endeavour Prawn (*Metapenaeus endeavouri*).
Main byproduct species*	• Red Spot King Prawn (*Penaeus longistylus*). • Moreton bay bugs (*Thenus orientalis*). • Squid. *not targeted, but some are retained and sold when incidentally caught.
Management System	The TSPF Fishery is managed through units of fishing capacity issued under the Plan. 9,200 units exist under the Plan, and 6,867 are allocated to Australian license holders. 2,333 are reserved for use by Papua New Guinea (PNG) through catch sharing arrangements under the Torres Strait Treaty.
License requirements	**TVH** sector: • a TVH licence; • with a Torres Strait Prawn Fishery entry; and • a master fisherman's licence • unused fishing days in your annual use entitlement **TIB** sector: • there are no TIB licences in the TSPF
Fishery rules	• Maximum of 88m of headrope length across all nets including the largest try net onboard. • Mandatory use of bycatch reduction and turtle excluder devices (see section 3.9). • Mandatory use of Vessel Monitoring System (see section 5). • Prohibition on retaining certain species (see table 1). • Fishing **boats must be 20 m or less** in length unless operating under the grandfather clause (a boat replacement policy applies to TVH licences). • Each licenced boat must display its unique **boat mark.** • Only species listed within part 1 and 2 of Schedule 3 the TSPF Management Plan can be taken during fishing.

1 A reminder of changes from the 2026 fishing season

1.1 Allowable species to take in the TSPF

The only species which can be taken in the TSPF are those listed within part 1 and 2 of schedule 3 of the *TSPF Management Plan 2009*. No other species can be taken (retained for sale or personal use) and must be discarded:

PART 1 – TARGET SPECIES

The target species are:

- *Metapenaeus endeavouri* (Blue endeavour prawn)
- *Penaeus esculentus* (Brown tiger prawns)
- *Melicertus longistylus* (Red sport king prawn)

PART 2 – BY-PRODUCT SPECIES

The by-product species are:

- *Penaeus spp*. (tiger prawn) other than those listed in Part 1
- *Metapenaeus spp.* (endeavour prawn) other than those listed in Part 1
- *Melicertus spp.* (king prawn) other than those listed in Part 1
- *Thenus spp* (Moreton Bay Bugs)
- *Teuthoidea* (including *Loliolus, Nototodrus, Photololigo and Seioteuthis spp.*) (Squid)
- *Metasepia sp. and Sepio spp.* (Cuttlefish)
- *Metapenaeopsis spp.* (coral prawn)
- *Octopus spp.* (Octopus)

1.2 No take of crab

Some licence holders have been retaining crab incidentally caught during TSPF fishing, as per allowances within the Queensland ECOTF. Retention of crab is not allowed in the TSPF, as per the information above. All crab must be discarded.

1.3 No take of finfish

Before 2025, TSPF licences holders have been allowed to hold up to 20kg (at any one time) of finfish incidentally caught during trawling for sale or private consumption. This is no longer allowed. All finfish incidentally caught must be discarded. The change has been implemented through a new licence condition ***"The licence holder must not take, process or carry fish other than those authorised under this licence as indicated by the symbol(s) noted on this licence".***

Further, the number of Mackerel caught (and discarded) must be reported in the logbooks to genus level. See below on details of how to report mackerel (and TRL) in your logbooks.

1.4 Reporting of TRL and Mackerel in e-logs and NP16

In 2023, TSPF licence holders were asked to start report TRL catch (and discards) in their logbooks. Information on how to report within logbooks was sent to licence holders in a letter in November 2022. Reporting the number of TRL (and Mackerel) is now mandatory.

Please report the number of TRL and/ or Mackerel (to genus level) caught on every day they are caught.

We expect counts to be accurate when caught in low numbers; however, understand that on the rare occasions when large numbers of TRL are caught, the figure reported is likely to be an estimate.

How to report TRL and Mackerel in your E-logs

When completing your e-log, please include an extra entry for mackerel and TRL under the same catch section you enter your target species. You can enter catch numbers (instead of weight) in this section.

How to report TRL and Mackerel in your logbook

When completing your NP16 logbook, please include an extra line item under the "product" section for "TRL" and/ or "Mackerel". Enter the number caught within the grade column.

Please see the enclosed logbook image for an example of how to report TRL and mackerel caught in the NP16 logbook.

Australian Fisheries Management Authority.
Box 7051
Canberra Business Centre ACT 2610

Northern & Torres Strait Prawn Fisheries Daily Fishing Log – NP16

Boat Name	Distinguishing Symbol	Log No	Page No
ACME Master	LML173		

Please note: This is a daily fishing log and non-fishing days must also be recorded.

EXTENDED NON-FISHING PERIOD:
I did not work between: 10/ 4 /06 and 15/ 4 / 06

NON-FISHING CODES: (Circle)
1 - Bad weather. **2** - Unloading/Refuelling. **3** - Broken Down.
5 - Night Off/Crew Change. **10** - Refit. **12** - Other Fishery:

		16/4/06	17/4/06	18/4/06	19/4/06	20/4/06	21/4/06
DATE							
NON-FISHING CODE (if applicable)							5
LOCATION OF OPERATION	Latitude (dd,mm)	16,25	16,20	15,30	15,26	15,46	,
	Longitude (ddd,mm)	138,50	140,30	141,20	138,20	138,14	,
	Fishing Ground	Mornington	Karumba	Nassa	Tully	Tully	
Hours Searched (Bananas Only)		6:30	12:00	11:30			
Hours Trawled (hr, min)		9 | 00	—	6 | 30	12 | 00	14 | 00	|
Total Number of Shots		3	1	6	2	4	
Target Species		B	B	B	B	B	

CATCH DETAILS

PRAWNS – U10, 10/15, S/B etc **FISH** – **W** = Whole **F** = Fillets **HG** = Headed and & gutted **GG** = Gilled & gutted **MOLLUSCS** – **W** = Whole **SH** = Shell only **MT** = Meat only **CRUSTACEANS** – **L** = Live **W** = Whole and dead **T** = Tails (Note - All bugs must be landed whole) **UNGRADED** species code = **U/G**

Product (specify species)	Grade	Total Weight (kg)	Total Weight (kg)	Total Weight (kg)	Total Weight (kg)	Total Weight (kg)	Total Weight (kg)
Banana Prawn	U/10	100	20	120	120	300	
	U/15	230			10		
	10/20	85		90			
Bugs	W	10		5			
Squid	W	5		7		10	
TRL (number of individuals)	5						

Note. The retention of shark, ray & sawfish species is banned in the Northern Prawn Fishery

TURTLES and SAWFISH

Turtle Species Code: **FBT** Flatback **GRN** Green **HAW** Hawksbill **LBT** Leatherback **LGT** Loggerhead **PRT** Pacific Ridley **Condition Codes:** **A** - Alive **D** - Dead **J** - Injured

Sawfish Species Code: **NAS** Narrow Sawfish **GRS** Green Sawfish **DWS** Dwarf Sawfish **FWS** Freshwater Sawfish

TURTLES Species Code / Number and Condition of Release (eg 1D, 2A, 1J)	FBT | 1A			HAW/FBT | 1A/1J			
SAWFISH Species Code / Number and Condition of Release (eg 1D, 2A, 1J)		NAS | 2D			NAS/GRS | 1D/1A		
SEA SNAKES (total number)	1A,2D						
SYNGNATHIDS (total number) (seahorses, pipefish, seadragons)		1A,2D					

(Refer to list on the inside of the fold-out flap for other protected species)

Please indicate if you had an interaction with any **other Listed Marine or Threatened Species** (Circle)	Yes	(No)	Yes	(No)	(Yes)	No	Yes	(No)	Yes	No	Yes	No

Details of all Interactions must be recorded in the Listed Marine and Threatened Species Form at the back of the logbook.

I certify that the information I have provided on this form is a true and accurate record.

Concession Holder or Authorised Person

Printed Name: Joe Bloggs

Signature: Joe Bloggs

WHITE – Original Send to AFMA

Please provide an estimate of the time taken to complete this form. 15 **minutes**

Date: 20/4/06

2 Fishing respectfully in the Torres Strait

The TSPF is a multi-species prawn fishery which operates in the eastern part of the Torres Strait region. The Torres Strait is located between the tip of Cape York Peninsula and PNG and is a culturally distinct area within Australia, being home to Australia's indigenous Melanesian people - the Torres Strait Islanders.

The region consists of over one hundred islands and reefs and the islands are divided into inner, eastern, central, western, and top-western island groups; 18 of which are currently inhabited in Torres Strait and 2 in the Northern Peninsula area.

It is important that fishers operating in the Torres Strait understand the culture and lifestyle of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as fishing operations are occurring in their home area. By working with communities to honour the peoples, land and seas of the region as their home, it can foster respectful relationships, aiding in more effective stakeholder engagement during decision making processes for the fishery. There are also a number of obligations to license holders discussed below.

2.1 Torres Strait Islanders and their lifestyle

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a strong relationship with the sea, coast and reefs. The significance of the sea as a basis of their livelihoods and food source can be appreciated by the fact that average rates of consumption of seafood in the Torres Strait are amongst the highest in the world. This is reflected in their myths and legends that contain many references to fish, turtle, dugong and shellfish. Marine resources, particularly dugong and turtle, are important in community ceremonies such as weddings and tombstone openings.

Everyday life on island communities revolves around maintaining essential services, schooling and supporting other members of the community as well as duties to the various churches of the islands. Torres Strait Islanders today use outboard motors and dinghies for fishing and inter-island travel rather than dugouts as they did in the past. They are involved in the commercial fishing for lobster, sea cucumbers, mackerel and reef fish, trochus and pearl shell. The taking of turtle and dugong is restricted to Torres Strait Islanders for eating and traditional uses. The sale of either species (including the shell of the turtle) is strictly prohibited. Women often handline for fish which is consumed by their immediate and extended family.

The Torres Strait region is a unique part of Australia and as such requires the need for all visitors to follow cultural protocols to ensure social cohesion and understanding. When visiting a specific Island community, it is important to understand the following:

- Torres Strait has native title over the majority of land and sea. This means that there are traditional owners over nearly all areas of the region except for those areas that are held privately under freehold title or are designated government facilities or spaces.
- It is important that fishers operating in the Torres Strait understand the culture, governance and suggested protocols for culturally respectful engagement. For some members of the Torres Strait communities, having people in the area fishing may feel akin to have someone visiting your own home or backyard.
- Before coming onto a Community, you must seek permission from the Islands Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC) and Council office. You must also sign in at Council on arrival, before going to any other areas of the Island.

2.2 Protocols when visiting communities

Always contact the local Torres Strait Islander Regional Council (TSIRC) office to request permission to visit a community. The booking form can be found on the TSIRC website at Travelling to our Communities | Torres Strait Island Regional Council (tsirc.qld.gov.au).

All islands are considered private domains and are not open to general traffic. The communities are managed by elected Chairpersons and Councillors in the same way as local councils are on the mainland.

Visitors to communities are reminded that resources on communities are limited. Water and telephone and medical services are designed for community use only. When visiting a community for medical help or to connect with an airline service, visitors are asked to respect community standards and remember that you are on someone else's home or property. There are accepted protocols for visiting island communities, including wearing appropriate clothing and covering up tattoos and piercings from impressionable young community members.

2.3 Seeking permission prior to landing on Torres Strait islands (inhabited and uninhabited)

Before coming ashore any of the Torres Strait Islands (inhabited or uninhabited) you should contact the council office and speak to the local councillor or clerk and preferably also the PBC Chairperson. Please explain why you wish to come to the island and how long you will be staying. You also need to go straight to the council office to sign in when coming onto an inhabited island, or the next business day if arriving after hours. More information regarding this process is available on the Torres Strait Island Regional Council website, under the “travelling to communities” section (tsirc.qld.gov.au).

Contacts for Council members can be found here:

A current list of contacts for the relevant TSIRC Councillors can be found at www.tsirc.qld.gov.au/contact-us/contact-info

When coming ashore an uninhabited island, only the PBC chair needs contacting. A full and most current list of relevant PBCs can be obtained from the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) office in Torres Strait (Ph: 07 4069 0700).

It is the responsibility of TSPF licence holders to ensure that skippers and crew are familiar with cultural sensitivities. It is encouraged that people read the cultural guide to researchers which is available on the PZJA website or through contacting AFMA. This contains detailed information about working in and around Torres Strait communities.

3 Current Management Arrangements

The TSPF is managed under the Plan and using the TSPF harvest strategy.

3.1 Fishing season

The TSPF season dates are 6pm on 1 February to 6am on 1 December each year.

3.2 Effort units

A total of 9,200 effort units were initially allocated under the Plan. 6,867 of these were issued to Australian TSPF boat licence holders when the plan was introduced, where one effort unit was issued for each fishing day held by a licence holder immediately before the commencement of the Plan (allocations did not include temporarily allocated fishing days including PNG days). Where a licence holder held multiple licences, these units were pooled together and can be used on any licensed boats that licence holder operates in the fishery. The other 2,333 units are set aside for use by PNG through treaty arrangements.

3.2.1 Annual use entitlement

Each season, effort units are converted into an annual use entitlement for each licence holder, depending on the total allowable effort (TAE) that is set for each year. The TAE is divided equally between all current effort units (note the total number of units in the fishery may change if licences and units are surrendered and currently sits at 6,833 due to past licence package surrenders). The TAE has been set at 9,200 days since 2006.

Under the new TSPF harvest strategy, the TAE is “continuous” and will remain at 9,200 days unless it requires changing based on triggers within the harvest strategy being reached. The TAE can be changed between seasons, or during a season by emergency determination if there exists a significant threat to the fishery’s resources or to a fish or fish habitat.

3.2.2 Temporary transfer of effort units

Under the Plan, TSPF boat licence holders can temporarily transfer unused effort units to another holder of a TSPF boat licence for one season. A licence holder must apply to AFMA as the PZJA licensing delegate (see contacts section of handbook) to register a transfer of a specific number of effort units. These units can only be used by the transferee for the season in which they are transferred. Any temporarily transferred units cannot be transferred on by the transferee. The system automatically transfers the temporary units back to the transferor before the commencement of the following season.

If a licence holder wishes to temporarily transfer a given number of fishing days, it is the transferor and transferee’s responsibility to determine the equivalent number of effort units. Contact the AFMA licensing team to discuss the mechanisms for transferring units (licensing@afma.gov.au) and refer to section 3.4 of this handbook.

There is a maximum of 61 licences allowed in the TSPF. A number of licences in the TSPF are currently inactive licences with no boat attached. An up-to-date summary of license and effort unit numbers along with a catch and effort data summary will be provided through the annual data summary.

3.2.3 Catch sharing with Papua New Guinea (PNG)

Under the *Torres Strait Treaty 1985*, PNG is entitled to 25 per cent of the effort allocation in the Australian TSPF (located within the Australian waters of the Protected Zone). Likewise, Australia is entitled to 25 per cent of any effort allocation in PNG's prawn fishery in the PNG waters of the Protected Zone. To meet this obligation 2,333 of the 9,200 available units of fishing capacity are set aside for use by PNG under the Plan. Each season, the PZJA determines how many of the 2,333 PNG units will be available for PNG's use based on catch sharing discussions. Any PNG boat fishing in Australian waters must operate under the same rules and regulations that as Australian boats. If TSPF fishers choose to activate their entitlement to fish in the Papua New Guinea area of jurisdiction, there will be requirements around Australian quarantine, customs and immigration laws which must be adhered to. PNG fishers have not accessed their entitlement to fish the Australian TSPF entitlement since 2004 and Australian fishers have never activated their PNG entitlement.

3.3 What do I need to fish in the TSPF?

The following minimum requirements are in place to fish in the TSPF.

- A Torres Strait Master Fisherman's licence.
- A Torres Strait Fishing Boat Licence endorsing you to take prawns in the area of the fishery (with a prawn (PR) fishing entry).
- Unused Units of Fishing Capacity (fishing days).
- An approved Turtle Excluder Device and Bycatch Reduction Device.

The complete requirements for TSPF operators are outlined in the following documents.

- The *Commonwealth Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984* (the Act).
- The *Torres Strait Prawn Fishery Management Plan 2009*.
- The *Torres Strait Fishery Regulations 1985* (the Regulations).
- Various Fishery Management Instruments (formally Fisheries Management Notices; see index page 58).
- The *Fisheries Levy (Torres Strait Prawn Fishery) Regulations 1998*.
- The *Torres Strait Treaty 1985*.

It is the responsibility of operators to familiarise themselves with these documents and understand the requirements when fishing within the TSPF (a current list of legislation including links is available at: http://pzja.gov.au/the-fisheries/torres-strait-prawn-fishery/).

3.4 Licensing

3.4.1 Licences

There is a limit of 61 licences in the TSPF under the Plan and no new licences will be issued for the fishery. Licences can be surrendered, sold (permanent transfer) or temporarily transferred to other people.

3.4.2 Renewal of licences

Subject to the payment of levies, a TSPF licence comes into effect on the date of issue and expires on date specified in your licence conditions.

3.4.3 Surrender of licences

TSPF licence holders may surrender their licences by written notice to the PZJA;

Licensing Officer - Torres Strait Fisheries
Australian Fisheries Management Authority
BOX 7051
CANBERRA ACT 2610
Fax: (02) 6225 5540
Email: licensing@afma.gov.au

3.4.4 Transfers of licences and Units of Fishing Capacity (UFCs)

Permanent transfer of licences and UFCs

A TSPF boat licence holder (the transferor) may permanently transfer (i.e. sell) their licence to another person (the transferee) as set out in section 25 of the Act and Part 3 of the Plan. The transferee must be an Australian citizen. If the licence is the transferor's last licence, all of their units of fishing capacity must be transferred before or at the same time as the licence transfer. The transferor and transferee must apply to the PZJA using the appropriate form and pay the transfer fee.

The PZJA must not transfer a licence if:

(a) A proceeding for an offence under the Act or the Regulations has been brought against the transferor or the transferee and has not been decided; or
(b) Levy due and payable by the transferor or the transferee has not been paid.

Temporary transfer of licences

Licence holders can apply to the PZJA to have their TSPF licence temporarily transferred to a third party for one fishing season. The system for temporarily transferring TSPF licences is similar to that used for the temporary transfer of effort units. Licence holders can transfer their TSPF licence before and throughout a given TSPF season up until the license expiry date for the relevant year. As TSPF licences expire each year, temporary transfers of TSPF licences cannot be granted for multiple seasons. Further to this, the temporary transfer of a TSPF licence cannot be processed unless all levies associated with the licence have been paid in full. Licence holders interested in the temporary transfer of their TSPF licence should contact the PZJA licensing delegate.

Temporary transfer of UFCs

The holder of a TSPF boat licence (the transferor) that has unused units for a fishing season may temporarily transfer the unused units to the holder of another TSPF boat licence (the transferee) for a season. A temporary transfer of Australian units:

(a) Must be of whole unused units only.
(b) Does not take effect until it is registered.
(c) Entitles the transferee to use the temporarily transferred units during the fishing season for which the temporary transfer is registered.
(d) Remains in force for that season, after which the PZJA will automatically transfer the units back to the transferor before the commencement of the following season.

The transferor and transferee must apply to the PZJA using the approved form for the temporary transfer to be registered and pay the transfer fee. The PZJA must not register the temporary transfer if:

(a) A proceeding for an offence under the Act or Regulations has been brought against the transferor or transferee and has not been decided; or
(b) Levy due and payable by the transferor or transferee has not been paid.

A person who holds Australian units as the result of a temporary transfer is not entitled to transfer or temporarily transfer those units.

3.4.5 Licence Conditions and other requirements

Licence holders and operators are reminded they are required to adhere to all conditions on their fishing licence, and the other requirements of the Plan and other relevant legislative instruments. This specifically includes the requirement that:

- An AFMA approved VMS is fitted and operational at all times;
- All nets comply with the specific requirements within the relevant fisheries management instruments, including the use of AFMA approved bycatch reduction devices (BRDs) and turtle exclusion devices (TEDs); and
- Bycatch must not be mistreated. Mistreatment means taking or failing to take, any reasonable action or actions, which result or is likely to result in the death of, injury to or causing physiological stress to any bycatch.

3.5 Mandatory Logbook reporting

Logbook reporting in the TSPF is compulsory, unless you receive an exemption from AFMA. TSPF fishers can either use the NP16 paper logbook or electronic logbooks (e-logs; see below).

Logbooks are designed to provide a continuous record of fishing operations undertaken by licence holders. AFMA logbooks are used to collect information about:

- When and where you are fishing,
- The type of gear you are using,
- The composition of your catch, and
- Any interactions with endangered, threatened or protected (ETP) species.

This information is important for determining the status of fish stocks and making management decisions, including managing the fishery within the parameters of the harvest strategy.

Licence holders or their authorised agents are required to ensure all fields contained in the logbook are fully completed by no later than one day after the day on which the fishing activities took place. All calendar days must be accounted for (even when the vessel is not fishing) so an accurate logbook should account for every day of each month in the year.

3.5.1 Completing and submitting logbooks

Paper logbooks contain full instructions on how the logbook should be completed and submitted to AFMA. Instructions for e-logs can be found on the AFMA website (www.afma.gov.au). Vessels must submit their completed up to date paper logsheets to AFMA each time they return to port or rendezvous with a mothership that holds an AFMA Carrier Boat Permit. All remaining logsheets must be submitted to AFMA within two weeks of the Season end.

Licence holders or their authorised agents should refer to the current Fisheries Logbook Instrument listed on the Federal Register of Legislative Instruments for legal requirements regarding logbooks. Logbooks are supplied by AFMA and a new logbook may be acquired by contacting:

AFMA Logbook Section
PO Box 7051
Canberra Business Centre
Canberra 2610 ACT
Or *AFMA Direct:* 1300 723 621
Or licensing@afma.gov.au

3.5.2 Registration for use of e-logs

Electronic logbooks (e-logs) are computer programs/software on fishing boats that allow the entry and submission of daily fishing logs as an alternative to paper logs.

To use e-logs you must purchase and install an e-logs software package that has been accredited by AFMA (E-logs Information | Australian Fisheries Management Authority). Operators also need to register for GOFish, AFMA's online business facility.

For information on e-logs, please visit the AFMA website (E-logs Information | Australian Fisheries Management Authority) or contact Narelle Williams direct on 02 6225 5542 or 1300 723 621 or email dataentry@afma.gov.au

If e-logs are used, the NP16 Logbook **must** be carried on board the vessel at all times and must be used if the e-log system is not operational at any time during the season.

IMPORTANT REMINDER

COMPLETING AND RETURNING LOGBOOKS ON TIME

Licence holders or their authorised agents are asked to ensure that logbooks have all fields fully completed and the logsheet copies sent to AFMA as per the instructions contained in the logbook, "a vessel must submit their completed up to date logsheets to AFMA each time they return to port or rendezvous with a mothership that holds an AFMA carrier boat permit".

Late and irregular returns create difficulties for staff processing the data and result in incomplete information for reports such as annual data summaries.

The penalty for failure to supply or complete logbook returns correctly is up to $10,000 and/or cancellation of licence.

3.6 Harvest Strategy

A harvest strategy sets out the management actions necessary to achieve defined biological and economic objectives and must contain a process for monitoring and conducting assessments to the conditions of the fishery, and rules that control the intensity of fishing activity (known as harvest control rules).

The Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy (CHSP) was first implemented in 2007 and updated in 2018 (DAWR 2018, a and b). The policy, together with a set of guidelines, are the framework used to guide the development of Commonwealth fisheries harvest strategies. Although Torres Strait Fisheries are not Commonwealth Fisheries, and thus not required to operate under the policy, the TSPF harvest strategy has been developed in accordance with the policy and guidelines.

A review of the TSPF harvest strategy was recently completed, with the revised harvest strategy now in effect following endorsement by the PZJA in June 2024. The key changes to the TSPF harvest strategy implemented the following main changes:

- Introduction of a “continuous TAE limit”, of 9,200 days, given the stock level will be managed by the new biomass triggers, which would be reached well before the TAE limit would be. A TAE is still required in order to allow the allocation of the effort across the licence holders based on their fishing until holdings, as per section 4.3 of the Plan. The TAE will only seek to be changed, if harvest strategy triggers are breached, or other signals indicate fishing effort should be limited.
- Harvest strategy triggers changed from effort (days) and catch (kg) to biomass triggers (CPUE) which provide a better indication of stock health in an effort controlled fishery.
- Introduction of a precautionary trigger, in addition to the target reference point and limit reference points. This precautionary trigger indicates the stock is moving away from the target reference point, providing sufficient time for TSPMAC and PZJA to consider necessary management action before the stock reaches the limit reference point.

The new triggers under the harvest strategy are:

- **Target reference point**: B_{60} (equivalent to CPUE 141kg/day/boat)
- **Trigger 1 (precautionary trigger):** B_{40} (equivalent to CPUE of 93kg/day/boat)
- **Limit reference point**: B_{25} (equivalent to CPUE of 58kg/day/boat)

The new TSPF harvest strategy is available on the PZJA website at www.pzja.gov.au.

3.7 Bycatch

Bycatch is defined in the *Commonwealth Fisheries Bycatch Policy* as a species that is incidentally either:

- Taken in a fishery and returned to the sea.
- Killed or injured as a result of interacting with fishing equipment in the fishery, but not taken.

Typically, bycatch can be considered as either general bycatch or bycatch relating to EPBC Act (listed species).

General bycatch describes all bycatch species in a fishery that are not listed under the EPBC Act. The large variation of species in this category calls for various assessment and management approaches.

Species listed under the EPBC Act are managed separately to other bycatch species due to their special status under the EPBC Act.

Byproduct species can be defined as those that make some contribution to the value of the catch in a fishery but less than that of key commercial species. These stocks may be rarely encountered and usually retained or frequently encountered and occasionally retained.

Table 1 is a list of limits on catch of some bycatch and byproduct species, bans on others, and information on other species licence holders often enquire about.

SPECIES	SPECIES RULES
Moreton Bay Bug	No quantity limit. 75mm minimum carapace width restriction on retained product.
Squid and cuttlefish	There are no restrictions or limits to take of these species.
Finfish (including mackerels)	No take. All finfish must be discarded. Licence holders are also required to report the number of mackerel (by genus) caught and discarded (see page 9 for further detail). NOTE: this is a change in rule from the 2025 fishing season, implemented through the following new licence condition: **"*The licence holder must not take, process or carry fish other than those authorised under this licence as indicated by the symbol(s) noted on this licence*".** This licence condition has been in place for the other Torres Strait Fisheries for a number of years.
Shark	No take. All caught individuals must be discarded.
Shark fin	No take.
Tropical rock lobster	No take. All caught individuals must be discarded. Reporting of all discarded TRL is required within the logbooks. See page 10 for further detail.
Pearl shell	No take. All caught individuals must be discarded.
Turtle	No take. All caught (or interacted with) individuals must be discarded and reported in logbooks (refer to NP16 logbook instructions).
Coral	No take. All caught individuals must be discarded.
Crabs	No take. All caught individuals must be discarded. Note, this rule is different to that in the Queensland East Coast Otter Trawl Fishery.

Table 1. Byproduct and bycatch species limits and rules in the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery.

3.7.1 Minimising Bycatch

The most effective means of reducing bycatch in the fishery are TEDs and BRDs. Effectively used TEDs eliminate nearly all catch of adult turtles and other large animals. The permitted BRDs also significantly reduce bycatch.

It is compulsory that all nets rigged for fishing in the TSPF are fitted with both BRDs and TEDs for the entire fishing year. A summary of the approved specifications for both BRDs and TEDs is included below. For exact specifications refer to Fisheries Management Instrument (FMI) No 12 and *Torres Strait Prawn Fishery (Bycatch Reduction Devices) Instrument 2024.*

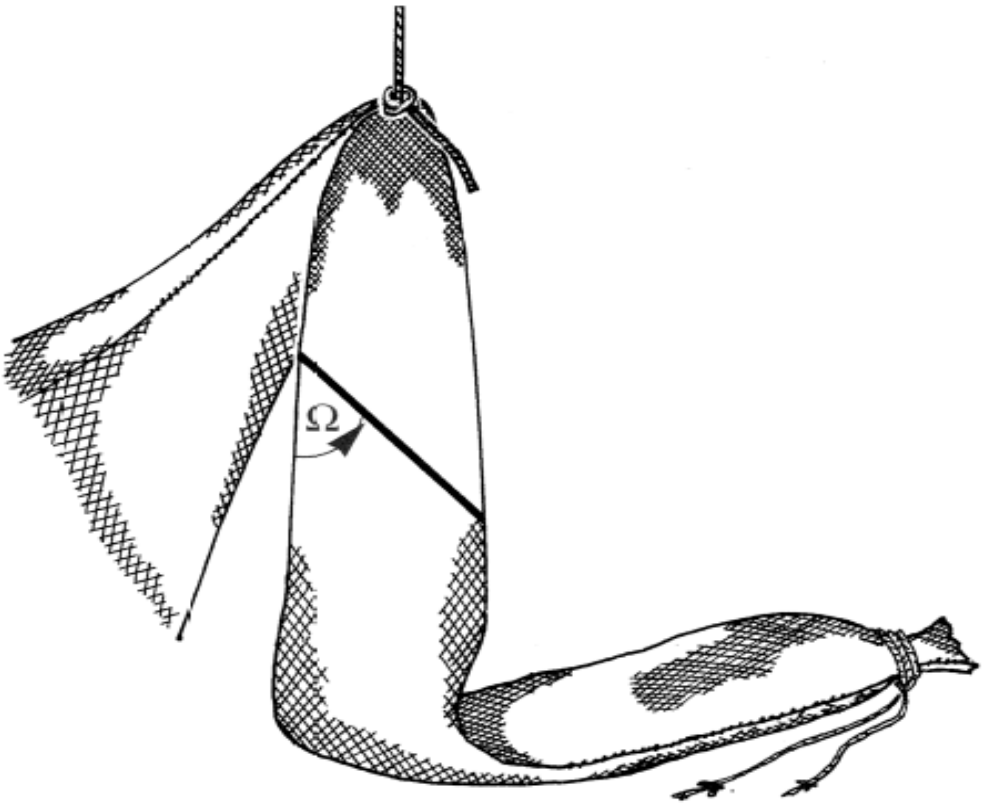
TSPF Bycatch and Discard Workplan 2024-2029

The Torres Strait Prawn Fishery Bycatch and Discarding Workplan will detail a program of actions to address priority bycatch issues in accordance with legislative and policy responsibilities. The workplan is available on the PZJA website at www.pzja.gov.au at tspf-bycatch-discard-workplan-2024-2029.pdf.

3.7.2 Mandatory use of Turtle Excluder Devices

"*Turtle Excluder Device*" or TED means a device fitted to a net, and modification made to a net, that allows turtles to escape immediately after being taken in the net. The specific parameters of the TEDs are detailed below, and in FMI No. 12 available on the Federal Register of Legislative Instruments (www.frli.gov.au).

Figure 1. Correct position for measuring angle size on turtle excluder devices (angle must be 30 - 55˚).



Measuring the grid angle.

Single Flap TED Specifications

- Must be on the outside of the trawl
- Must be a panel not less than 338cm x 132 cm, with the 338cm edge attached to the forward edge of the opening
- Trailing edge of each panel must not extend more than 61 cm behind the posterior edge of the grid
- Maximum bar spacing of 120mm between bars.
- Floats as specified below and in the current fisheries management instrument.

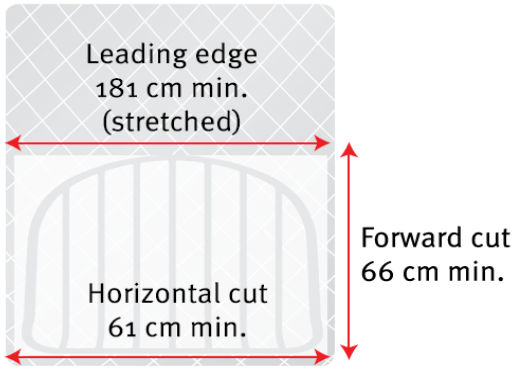


Figure 2. Measurements for rectangular escape opening with single flaps.

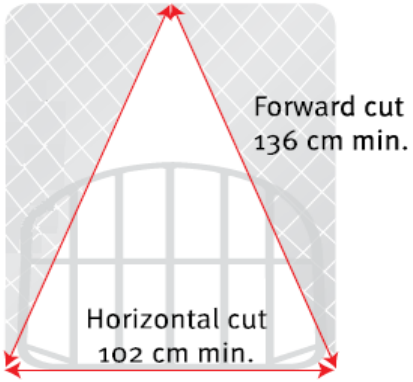


Figure 3. Measurements for triangular escape opening with single flaps.

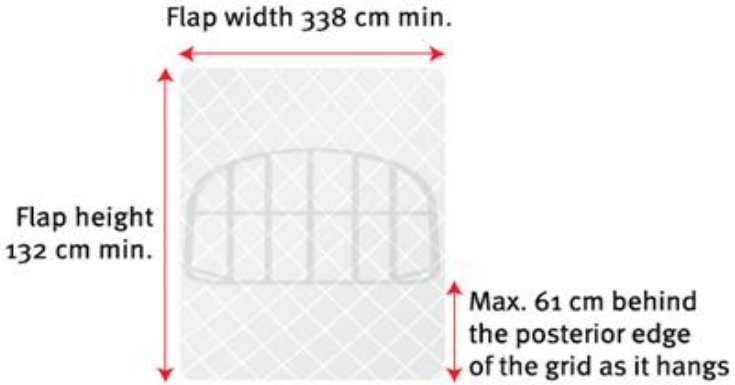


Figure 4. Measurements for single flap configuration.

Figure 1. Dimensions of the escape opening of a TEDs with a single triangular net opening.

Double Flap TED Specifications

- Must be on the outside of the trawl
- Must have two equal size rectangular panels, each a minimum of 147cm wide
- Panels may overlap no more than 38cm
- Panels may be sewn together only along the leading edge of the cut
- Panels may be sewn down the entire length of the outside edge of each panel
- Trailing edge of each panel must not extend more than 61 cm behind the posterior edge of the grid
- Maximum bar spacing of 120mm between bars.
- Floats as specified below and in the current fisheries management instrument.

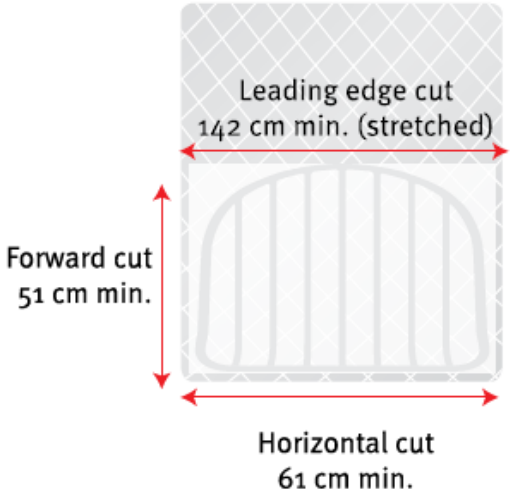


Figure 5. Measurements for rectangular escape opening with double flaps

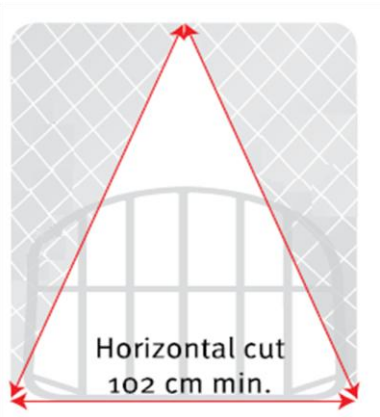


Figure 6. Measurements for triangular escape opening with double flaps

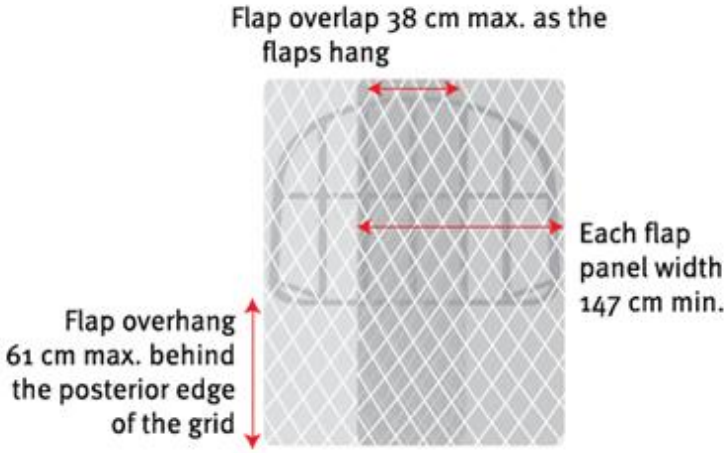


Figure 7. Measurements for double flap configuration

Other TED requirements

- It is not permitted to attach any weights, chains or other devices on the escape flap which may prevent the flap from opening.
- If the escape hole is in the bottom of the net, the following floats must be attached to the grid—
  i) If the grid has a circumference of no more than 3050mm, at least 2 small floats or 1 medium float;
  (ii) if the grid has a circumference of more than 3050mm, at least 4 small floats or 2 medium floats;
  (iii) if plastic floats are to be used, regardless of the grid circumference 3 small plastic floats or 2 medium plastic floats or 1 large plastic float.

In reference to floats the following meanings apply:

"**attached**" means secured to the top half of the grid—

(i) inside the net and behind the grid; or

(ii) outside the net but not secured to a flap.

"**large plastic float**" means a float made of hard plastic that is at least 250mm in diameter.

"**medium float**" means a float made of ethylene vinyl acetate or polyvinyl chloride that is at least 222mm long and 172mm in diameter.

"**medium plastic float**" means a float made of hard plastic that is at least 200mm, but less than 250mm, in diameter.

"**small float**" means a float made of ethylene vinyl acetate or polyvinyl chloride that is at least 180 mm, but less than 222 mm, long; and 147 mm, but less than 172 mm, in diameter.

"**small plastic float**" means a float made of hard plastic that is at least 150 mm, but less than 200mm, in diameter.

"**weight**" means weight expressed in grams or kilograms.

3.7.3 Mandatory use of Bycatch Reduction Devices (BRDs)

As outlined in *Torres Strait Prawn Fishery (Bycatch Reduction Devices) Instrument 2024,* all Torres Prawn Fishery boats are required to use an approved Bycatch Reduction Device (BRDs); in each net while fishing.

"*Bycatch Reduction Device*" means a device that allows fish and other animals to escape immediately after being taken in the net and is constructed in accordance with Schedule 1 in *Torres Strait Prawn Fishery (Bycatch Reduction Devices) Instrument 2024*[1] which can be found on the PZJA website (http://pzja.gov.au/the-fisheries/torres-strait-prawn-fishery/).

3.7.4 Changes to BRDS from the 2024 TSPF fishing season

As of the 2024 fishing season, changes have occurred to the Fisheye and Bigeye BRDs to bring specifications into alignment with the Queensland East Coast Otter Trawl Fishery.

The v-cut flap, square mesh codend, square mesh panel and radial escape panel are no longer permitted for use in the TSPF (unless being used as a secondary/ additional BRD in a net in addition to one of the approved BRDS.

Please contact AFMA (see contacts inside back cover) with respect to the trialling of BRDs in the TSPF or any other enquiries about the operation of BRDs, noting a permit is required to trial a BRD that does not meet the requirements in the instrument. There are currently 6 allowable BRDs (as of April 2024) in the TSPF (detailed below).

Tom's Fisheye

The Tom's Fisheye is an escape opening device installed in a net rigged for fishing to the following specification:

(a) one device with the aft edge of the device located at 60 meshes from the codend drawstrings; and
(b) a vertical escape opening held open by a rigid frame that supports a rigid enclosed cone; and
(c) an escape opening measuring no less than 360 mm wide by 200 mm high and must face the codend; and
(d) a rigid cone measuring no less than 340 mm wide by 185 mm high by 290 mm in length fixed to the rigid frame; and
(e) with an escape gap between the rigid frame and rigid cone of 94 mm; and
(f) with an escape gap clear of any obstructions (including mesh ties).

[1] Note, there are changes occurring to TSPF legislative instruments during the 2026 fishing season. Instruments are being combined, to simplify legislation in the fishery. When these changes come into effect, license holders will be notified via a letter. Changes are largely administrative, amalgamating several instruments into 1, rather than changes fishery rules.

Figure 8. Tom's Fisheye placement in the codend.

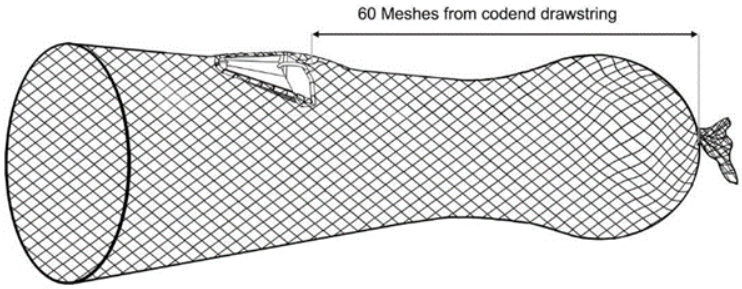
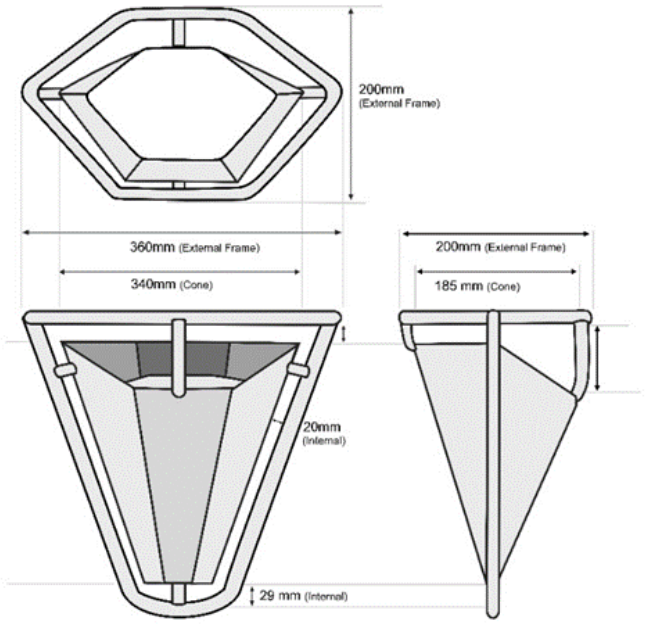
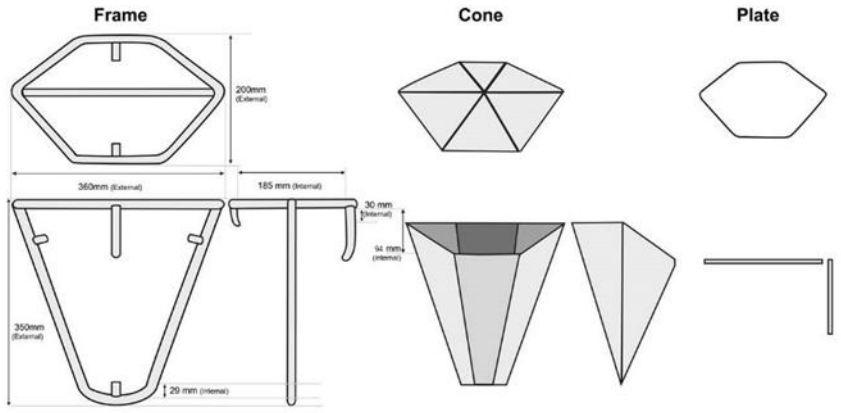


Figure 9. Tom's Fisheye dimensions





Kon's Covered Fisheye

The Kon's Covered Fisheye is a two escape opening device installed in a net rigged for fishing to the following specification:

(a) one escape opening device with the aft edge of the device located at 78 meshes from the codend drawstrings; and
(b) one escape opening device with the aft edge of the device located at 55 meshes from the codend drawstrings; and
(c) for which each escape opening device has the following characteristics prior to being installed in a net rigged for fishing:
  (i) vertical escape opening held open by a rigid frame that encloses a rigid cone; and
  (ii) an escape opening measuring no less than 430 mm wide by 205 mm high and must face the codend; and
  (iii) a rigid cone measuring no less than 295 mm wide by 145 mm high by 275 mm in length fixed to the rigid frame; and
  (iv) with an escape gap between the rigid frame and the rigid cone of 55 mm.

Figure 10. Kon's Covered Fisheye placement in the codend.

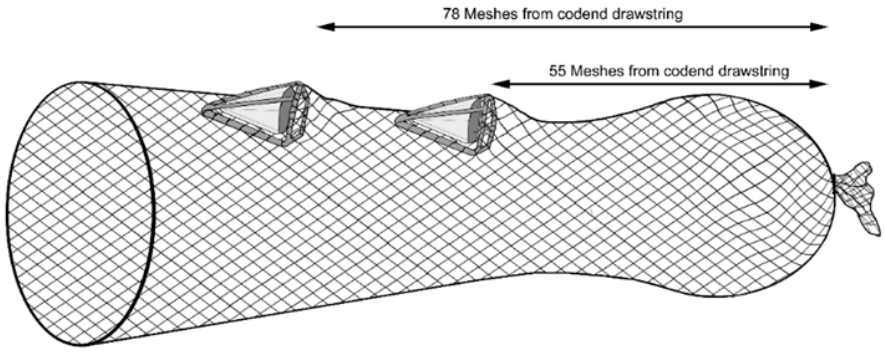
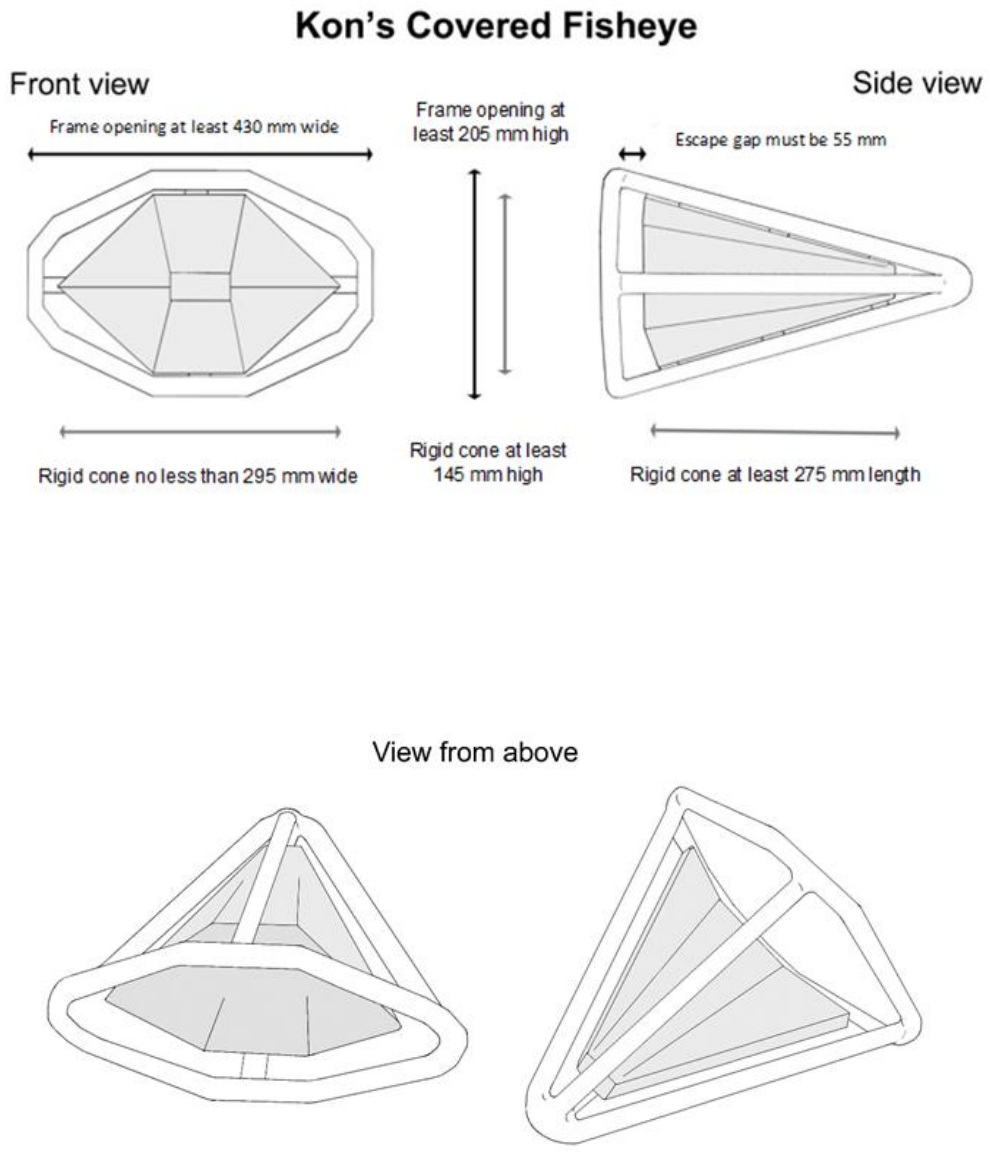


Figure 11. Kon's Covered Fisheye dimensions.



FishEX 70

The FishEX 70 is a single escape opening device installed in a net rigged for fishing to the following specification:

(a) one device with the aft edge of the device located at 65 meshes from the codend drawstrings; and
(b) with an escape gap clear of any obstructions (including mesh ties); and
(c) for which the escape opening device has the characteristics detailed in Figure 1 prior to being installed in a net rigged for fishing.

Figure12. FishEX 70 placement in the codend.

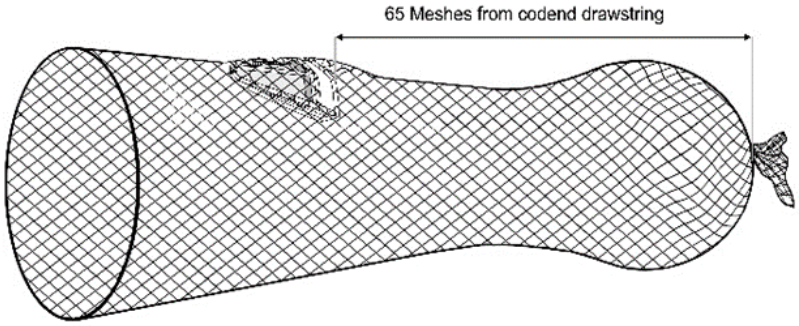
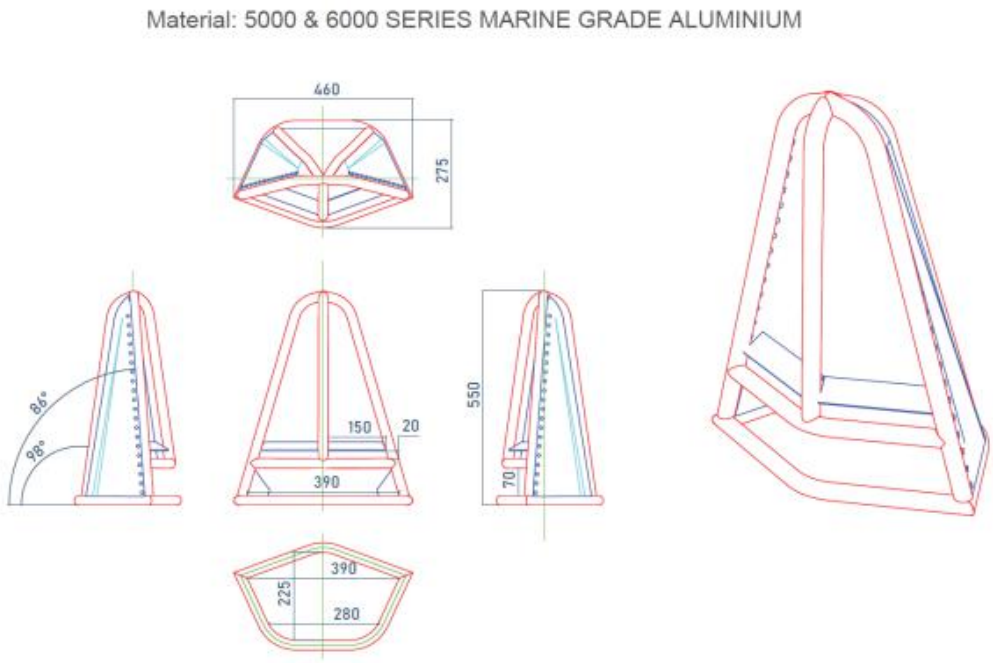


Figure 13. FishEX dimensions.



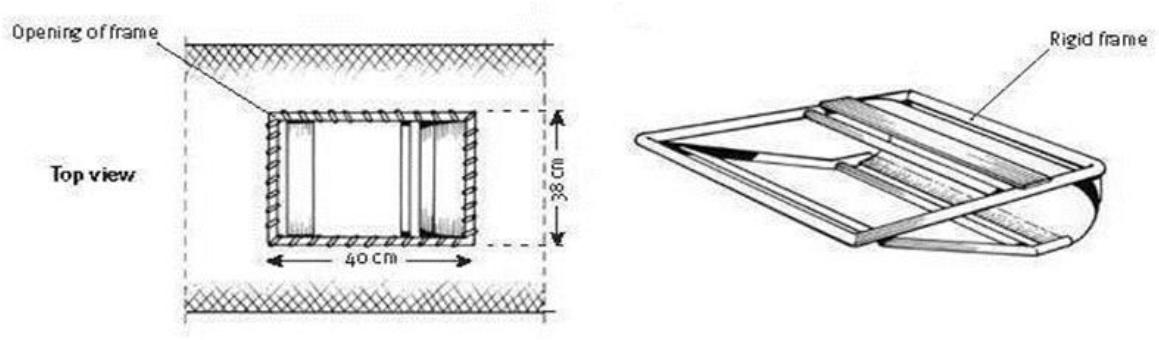
Popeye Fishbox at 70 Meshes

The Popeye Fishbox is a single escape opening device installed in a net rigged for fishing to the following specification:

(a) one device with the aft edge of the device located no further forward than 70 meshes, from the codend drawstrings; and
(b) a vertical escape opening held open by a rigid frame; and
(c) an escape opening measuring no less than 375 mm wide x 375 mm high; and

(d) a rigid foil positioned at the forward edge of the Bycatch Reduction Device no less than 200 mm in depth; and
(e) no pieces of netting or other material covering any escape openings, nor any opening closed by any other means, during fishing operations

Figure 14. Popeye Fishbox dimensions.



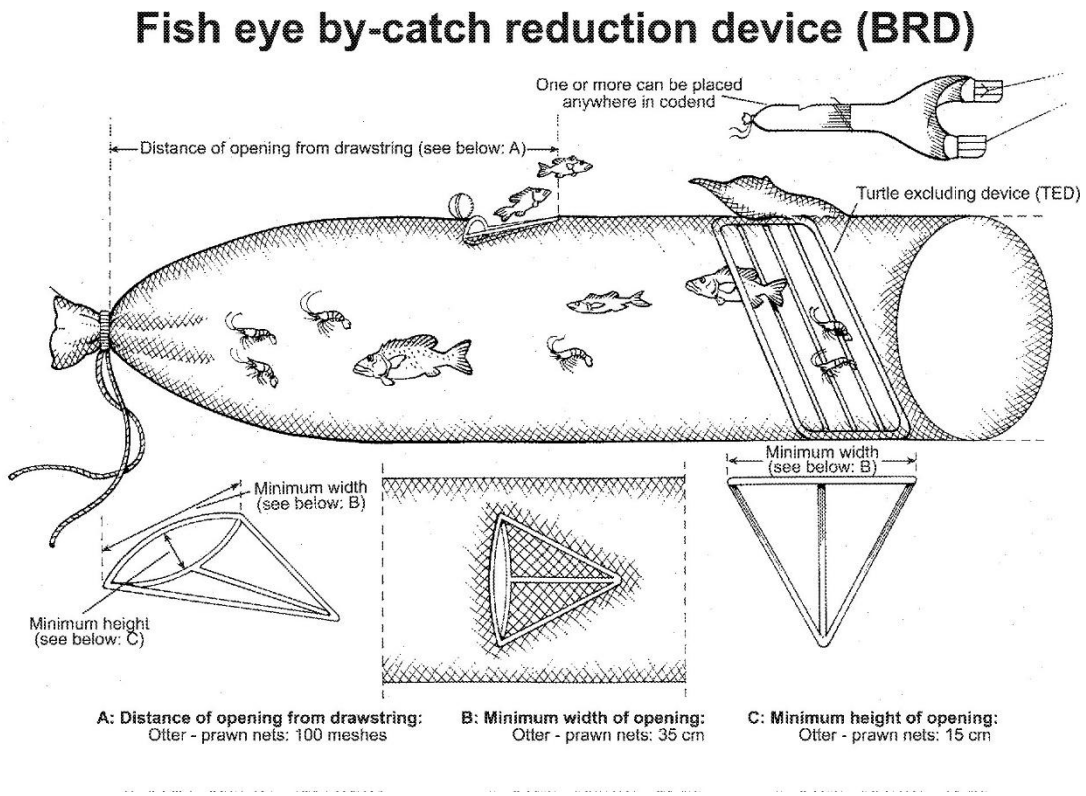
Optional guiding funnel

The Popeye Fishbox can also contain a guiding funnel to prevent prawn escapement (see below). The guiding funnel is kept open by the use of a small float.

Fisheye

(1) An opening, commonly known as a fisheye, in a net is a recognised Bycatch Reduction Device if the opening complies with this section.
(2) The opening must be—
  (a) held open by a rigid frame that consists of—
    (i) a semicircular-shaped frame; and
    (ii) an isosceles triangle-shaped frame; and
  (b) no more than 66 meshes from the codend drawstrings of the net.
(3) The rigid frame must be installed so that the apex of the equal sides of the isosceles triangle-shaped frame point towards the opening of the net.
(4) The semicircular-shaped frame must be—
  (a) at least—
    (i) 350mm wide; and
    (ii) 150mm high; and
  (b) divided in half by a rigid bar; and
  (c) attached, by a rigid bar—
    (i) from the midpoint of the semicircular-shaped part of the frame; and
    (ii) to the apex of the equal sides of the isosceles triangle-shaped frame.
(5) The shortest side of the isosceles triangle-shaped frame must be—
  (a) equal to the width of the semicircular-shaped frame; and
  (b) attached, perpendicularly, to the widest part of the semicircular-shaped frame.
(6) During trawling, nothing must cover any part of the opening.

Figure 15. The Fish Eye BRD.



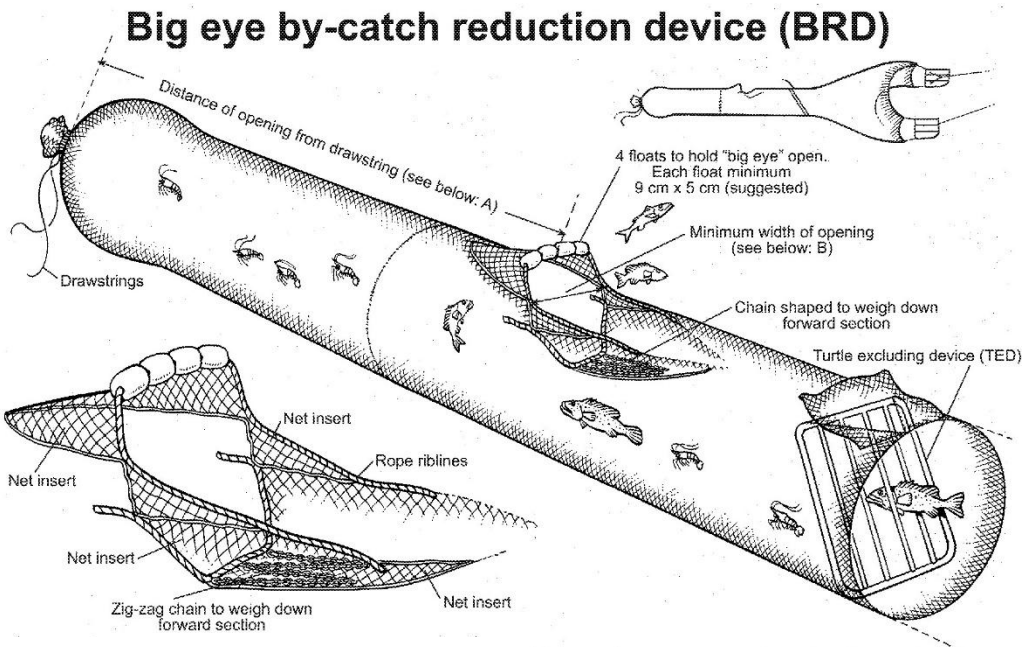
Bigeye

(1) An opening, commonly known as a bigeye, in a net is a recognised BRD if the opening complies with this section.
(2) The opening must be—
  (a) in the top of the net; and
  (b) at least 350mm across the width of the net; and
  (c) no more than 66 meshes from the codend drawstrings of the net.
(3) The edges of the opening must not overlap by more than 200mm.
(4) During trawling—
  (a) the part of the opening closest to the mouth of the net must be weighted by an approved chain or 300g of other weights; and
  (b) the part of the opening closest to the codend drawstrings of the net must be buoyed by at least 2 floats, each of which is at least—
    (i) 90mm wide; and
    (ii) 50mm in diameter; and
  (c) nothing must cover any part of the opening.
(5) In this section—

approved chain means a chain that—

  (a) weighs at least 300g; and
  (b) contains at least the following number of links—
    (i) for a chain with links 4mm in diameter—42;
    (ii) for a chain with links 6mm in diameter—12;
    (iii) for a chain with links 8mm in diameter—6;
    (iv) for a chain with links 10mm in diameter—3.

Figure 16. The Big Eye BRD.



A: Distance of opening from drawstring of cod-end: no more than 66 meshes

B: opening at least 350mm across the width of the net

4 Wildlife Interactions

It is an offence to kill, injure, or move a protected species listed under Part 13 of the EPBC Act in Commonwealth waters without the appropriate approval issued under that Act.

4.1 What is a protected species?

The classification of a species as “protected” provides for the recovery of populations and/or the long-term conservation of a species. The EPBC Act establishes categories of protected species in Commonwealth 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** – whales, dolphins and porpoises.

Protected species occurring, or potentially occurring, in the TSPF include seabirds, sea snakes, turtles, syngnathids (sea horses and pipefish), sawfishes), crocodiles and dugongs. There are also a number of sharks and rays. A full listing of protected species is available on the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) website at: dcceew.gov.au/environment/epbc/what-is-protected/approved-lists#species-and-ecological-communities.

4.2 What is an interaction with a protected species?

"Interaction" means any physical contact that you (personally, your boat or your fishing gear) has with a protected species. This includes any incidental collision, catching, hooking, netting, entangling, or trapping of a protected species.

4.3 Reporting an Interaction

The TSPF been assessed and accredited under the EPBC Act on the basis that the Plan. Therefore, any operator who interacts with a protected species are listed in Part 13 of the EPBC Act AND is acting in accordance with the Plan will not commit an offence if their operations are consistent with the TSPF Plan.

- TSP operators must report all interactions with protected species in the Torres Strait Prawn Fisheries Daily Fishing Log (NP16) or the e-log.
- Operators, who have an interaction with a turtle, sawfish, seasnake, or a syngnathid (seahorse, pipefish, sea dragon) must record the interaction on the daily catch and effort log page.
- Operators, who have an interaction with a protected species other than those listed on the log page, are required to circle Yes in the box at the bottom of the log page and fill out the Listed marine and threatened species form located at the back of the logbook. The completed form must be returned to AFMA with the corresponding logsheets at the end of the fishing trip.

If there is an observer present, immediately inform them of the interaction. You are still required to report the interaction in your logbook.

Remember: Don't get caught just report!

4.4 Further information on interactions with protected species

Further information on interactions with protected species can be obtained from AFMA Direct on 1300 723 621.

4.5 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; and
- 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 that animal then release it as carefully as possible, noting the condition in which it was released. AFMA will arrange to notify the appropriate researchers.

4.6 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 while keeping crew members safe. A copy of the guide is available on the AFMA website at: afma.gov.au/protected-species/reducing-bycatch/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.

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 minor[4] 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 board.

Principle 6: Compliance with approved bycatch management plans

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

Indo–Pacific marine turtles



Dermochelys coriacea (Leatherback turtle)



Lepidochelys olivacea (Olive ridley turtle)



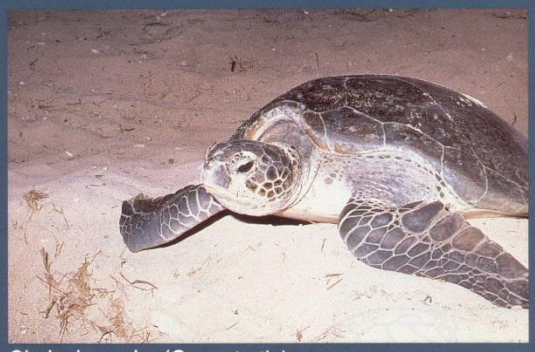
Eretmochelys imbricata (Hawksbill turtle)



Caretta caretta (Loggerhead turtle)



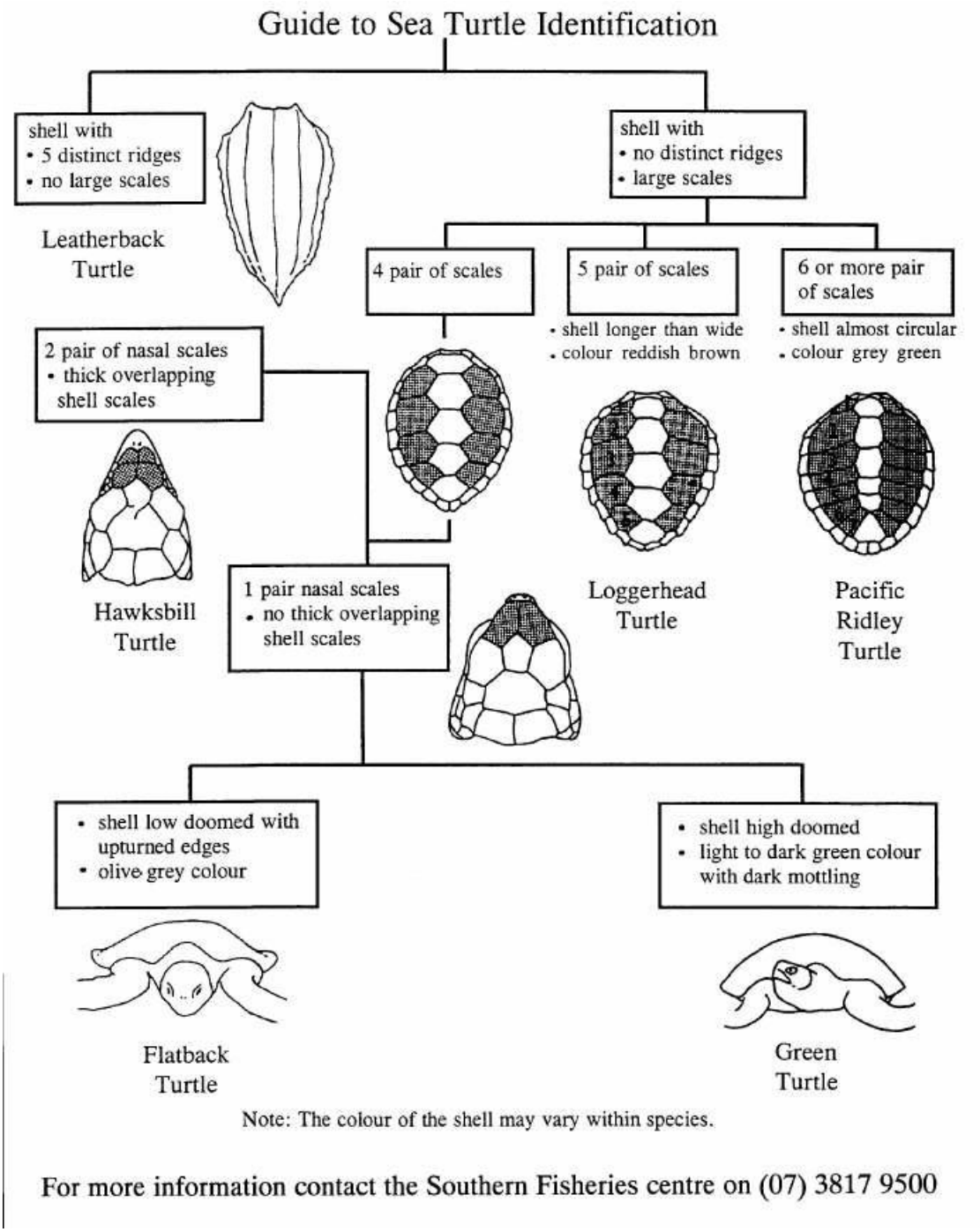
Natator depressus (Flatback turtle)



Chelonia mydas (Green turtle)

Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage

Figure 17. guide for identifying sea turtle species.



5 Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) Requirements

It is the licence holder's responsibility to ensure that any vessel nominated to their concession is fitted with a vessel monitoring system (VMS) in a category specified on the list of approved VMS units on the AFMA website (afma.gov.au/fisheries-services/vessel-monitoring/).

The VMS must remain switched on at all times even when the boat is in port, or fishing under a State or Territory concession unless you have been granted approval (by AFMA) to temporarily turn it off.

The concession holder must ensure the VMS is reporting correctly before going out to sea for the first time for the season and that no interference occurs with the correct operation of the VMS unit. On becoming aware of a problem with the VMS functioning, the concession holder must advise AFMA's Monitoring and Surveillance Unit as soon as practicable on the details below.

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 VMS unit is functioning normally. AFMA's Monitoring and Surveillance Unit is responsible for the monitoring of the VMS. If you have any queries, please contact:

AFMA Direct on 1300 723 621 (follow the prompts)
Email: ausvms@afma.gov.au
After hours contact – AFMA Duty Officer: 0428 196 114 or (02) 6275 5818 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

Failure to have a fully functional VMS including and failing to seek approval for switching your unit off, is a breach of your fishing licence. Breaches to VMS requirements may result in compliance action being taken which may include your boat being ordered to return to port and operator/licence holder may face further compliance action.

5.1 How is VMS to be used in the fishery?

The primary role of VMS is to monitor (count) fishing days and where people are fishing as a compliance and management tool.

5.2 How will VMS be used to count fishing days?

When a boat enters the TSPF it is automatically determined by VMS and every subsequent day is monitored whilst the boat remains in the fishery.

Whilst in the area of the fishery "fishing days" will only be deducted if:

1. The boat is in an area where prawns are permitted to be taken; and
2. The boat is not within the area of one of the designated anchorages specified below in section 4.2; and
3. The boat has moved more than 250 metres at any time between 1800 hours local time on one day and 0600 hours local time on the next day; or
4. No boat position reports are received via the VMS or through another arrangement entered into with PZJA (i.e. the VMS is malfunctioning and an alternate arrangement hasn't been entered into with the PZJA).

5.3 How will I know if my VMS has broken down?

It is your responsibility to ensure that your VMS is working at all times, and to inform AFMA if the VMS unit has broken down. You can contact the AFMA VMS team periodically to have them check your VMS system is providing reports to AFMA (see duty officer contacts above). AFMA will also notify you when the VMS is detected not to be functioning, however it remains the licence holders responsibility to monitor and manage this.

5.4 What must I do if my VMS breaks down?

If your VMS unit malfunctions when a vessel is not in port, the master must notify the PZJA immediately after the master becomes aware of the malfunction in a way described in item 4.4 of the VMS Guidelines. AFMA will advise you if manual reporting is permissible. If it is, instructions will be provided regarding the time period a vessel is to manually report before the vessel will be ordered back to port to have the VMS unit repaired.

Upon identifying that a VMS unit has ceased reporting, the vessel operators/concession holder must take immediate steps to have the unit repaired or replaced upon returning to port.

Manual position reports should include:

- The vessel's name;
- The vessel's distinguishing symbol;
- The vessel's present latitude and longitude (in degrees, minutes and seconds); and
- The date and time of the position.

Manual position reports are to be made by:

- **Phone:** (02) 6225 5369 (follow instructions on the Voicemail); or
- **Email:** ausvms@afma.gov.au

The AFMA Duty Officer is available in an emergency on 0419 205 329.

5.5 Allocated fishing days and VMS detection

Each month, licence holders that are fishing are sent a 'Torres Strait Prawn Fishery Use of Fishing Days' statement. The statement lists the fishing days recorded as being used for that month. If you think that there is a day recorded that you didn't fish, you should submit evidence to demonstrate that the boat was not fishing on that particular day. To avoid delays in processing applications, they should be lodged as soon as possible after receiving the notice.

These applications are subject to the decision of the PZJA delegate. You should not use a trawl fishing day on the presumption that an application will be successful. You must await the delegate's decision.

Please forward all correspondence and supporting documents to:

Licensing Officer - Torres Strait Fisheries
AFMA
BOX 7051
CANBERRA BC ACT 2610
Ph: (02) 6225 5555 Fax: (02) 6225 5540 licensing@afma.gov.au

5.6 Applying for an Exemption from reporting via the VMS

An operator may apply for permission for a temporary switch off for a VMS unit under specific circumstances:

1. A TSO will only be granted where a vessel has a VMS unit installed which has been polling for AFMA.
2. TSOs will not be issued for vessels without a continuously operational VMS unit polling for AFMA.
3. A TSO may be granted to a concession holder in cases where:
    a. A nominated vessel is undergoing maintenance or repair-type activity and electrical equipment on board this vessel is required to be shut down.
    b. A nominated vessel is not undertaking any fishing activity, and this vessel is in an extended berth at a single port.
    c. A nominated vessel is in circumstances which make continual operation of the VMS impractical and AFMA deems it necessary, on a case-by-case basis.

A fact sheet detailing requirements and methods for applying for a temporary switch off is available here on the AFMA website at www.afma.gov.au. An application for an exemption may be provided to the PZJA in the manner set out in the AFMA temporary switch off information sheet (www.afma.gov.au). After submission of application to AFMA, the holder of a TSPF boat licence will then require written approval from AFMA before turning off the VMS unit for the period of a maintenance exemption or non-fishing exemption. It must remain on for all other exemptions.

If an operator is found to have not complied with the manual reporting requirements, the vessel will be ordered to return to port immediately and operator/concession holder may face further compliance action.

The person to whom the manual reporting obligation applies must also comply with the reporting requirements described in Section 5.6 of the Plan.

5.6.1 Designated anchorages

The geographical co-ordinates used in these areas are in **WGS84**.

AUREED ISLAND

That area of waters bounded by a line:

(1) commencing at the point of intersection of the parallel of Latitude 9° 55' 59.10" South and the meridian of Longitude 143° 18' 56.10" East;
(2) running thence south-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 57' 18.54" South, Longitude 143° 19' 22.38" East;
(3) thence south-westerly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 58' 47.22" South, Longitude 143° 18' 02.28" East;
(4) thence west along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 58' 31.02" South, Longitude 143° 15' 52.92" East;
(5) thence north along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 57' 28.32" South, Longitude 143° 15' 51.24" East;
(6) thence north-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 56' 00.18" South, Longitude 143° 17'10.08" East;
(7) thence easterly along the meridian to the point of commencement where it terminates.

YORKE ISLANDS

That area of waters bounded by a line:

(1) commencing at the point of intersection of the parallel of Latitude 9° 43' 11.82"
(2) South and the meridian of Longitude 143° 27' 38.82" East;
(3) running thence south-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 43' 47.04"South, Longitude 143° 28' 01.86" East;
(4) thence south along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 44' 42.72" South, Longitude 143° 28' 04.38" East;
(5) thence south-westerly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 45' 27.48" South, Longitude 143° 27' 35.22" East;
(6) thence south-westerly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 45' 51.18" South, Longitude 143° 26' 45.42" East;
(7) thence south-westerly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 46' 02.34" South, Longitude 143° 25' 43.68" East;
(8) thence south-westerly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 46' 21.42" South, Longitude 143° 24' 33.30" East;
(9) thence north-westerly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 46' 05.88" South, Longitude 143° 23' 49.68" East;
(10) thence north-westerly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 45' 22.80" South, Longitude 143° 23' 25.86" East;
(11) thence north-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 44' 45.90" South, Longitude 143° 23' 36.84" East;
(12) thence north-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 43' 15.96" South, Longitude 143° 26' 33.90" East;
(13) thence easterly along that meridian to the point of commencement where it terminates.

DUGONG ISLAND

That area of waters bounded by a line:

(1) commencing at the point of intersection of the parallel of Latitude 10° 30’ 19.62" South and the meridian of Longitude 143° 04’ 27.78" East;
(2) running thence east along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 10° 30’ 19.08" South, Longitude 143° 05’ 48.54" East;
(3) thence south-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 10° 30’ 36.00" South, Longitude 143° 06’ 44.16" East;
(4) thence south-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 10° 31’ 05.88" South, Longitude 143° 07’ 22.92" East;
(5) thence south along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 10° 31’ 55.38" South, Longitude 143° 07’ 25.56" East;
(6) thence south-westerly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 10° 32’ 30.66" South, Longitude 143° 07’ 04.86" East;
(7) thence south-westerly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 10° 32’ 37.68" South, Longitude 143° 06’ 14.64" East; and
(8) thence north-westerly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 10° 31’ 26.94" South, Longitude 143° 03’ 56.64" East;
(9) thence north-easterly along that meridian to the point of commencement where it terminates.

COCONUT ISLAND

That area of waters bounded by a line:

(1) commencing at the point of intersection of the parallel of Latitude 10° 02’ 24.18" South and the meridian of Longitude 143° 04’ 00.72" East;
(2) running thence south-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 10°02’ 25.98" South, Longitude 143° 04’ 29.46" East;
(3) thence south-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 10° 02’ 40.14" South, Longitude 143° 06’ 01.08" East;
(4) thence east along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 10° 02’ 27.12" South, Longitude 143° 07’ 11.46" East;
(5) thence south-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 10° 02’ 43.50" South, Longitude 143° 07’ 53.46" East;
(6) thence south-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 10° 03’ 38.46" South, Longitude 143° 08’ 10.32" East;
(7) thence south-westerly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 10° 04’ 20.88" South, Longitude 143° 06’ 36.48" East;;
(8) thence west along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 10° 04’ 26.82" South, Longitude 143° 04’ 33.72" East;
(9) thence north-westerly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 10° 03’ 20.88" South, Longitude 143° 02’ 43.02" East;
(10) thence north-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 10° 02’ 31.92" South, Longitude 143° 03’ 29.94" East;
(11) thence north-easterly along that meridian to the point of commencement where it terminates.

6 Closures and Exclusion Zones

Seasonal area closures and exclusion zones are an important management tool in the TSPF. The closures protected sensitive areas, seagrass beds, or restrict fishing during certain times of year such as during the recruitment of small prawns to the fishery.

The summaries given below are to be used only as a guide and do not replace the formal legislation in FMNs. It is strongly recommended that you contact AFMA if you have any questions.

6.1 Seasonal closure of the entire fishery

The entire TSPF is closed between 0600 hours local time on 1 December in any year and 1700 hours local time on 1 February in the following year (specified in the Plan and FMI 10).

Carriage of equipment: During the seasonal closure of the entire fishery all equipment that is capable of being used for any kind of trawling, or being used for taking Prawns (this includes nets, boards, beams, and skids) must be carried either in the racks or on the deck; except;

1. between 1200 hours and 1700 hours local time on 1 February (in any year) if the boat is anchored; or
2. between 0600 hours and 1800 hours local time on 1 December (in any year);
    - if all equipment is out of the water; or
    - if any part of the equipment is in the water - that part is drawn up to the boat and is visible from nearby aircraft or boat, and if the equipment includes cod ends, the cod ends are open.

Carriage of prawns: The carriage of prawns is prohibited in the area of the TSPF from 0600 local time on 15 December to 1700 hours local time on 1 February each year. This is provided for in FMI10).

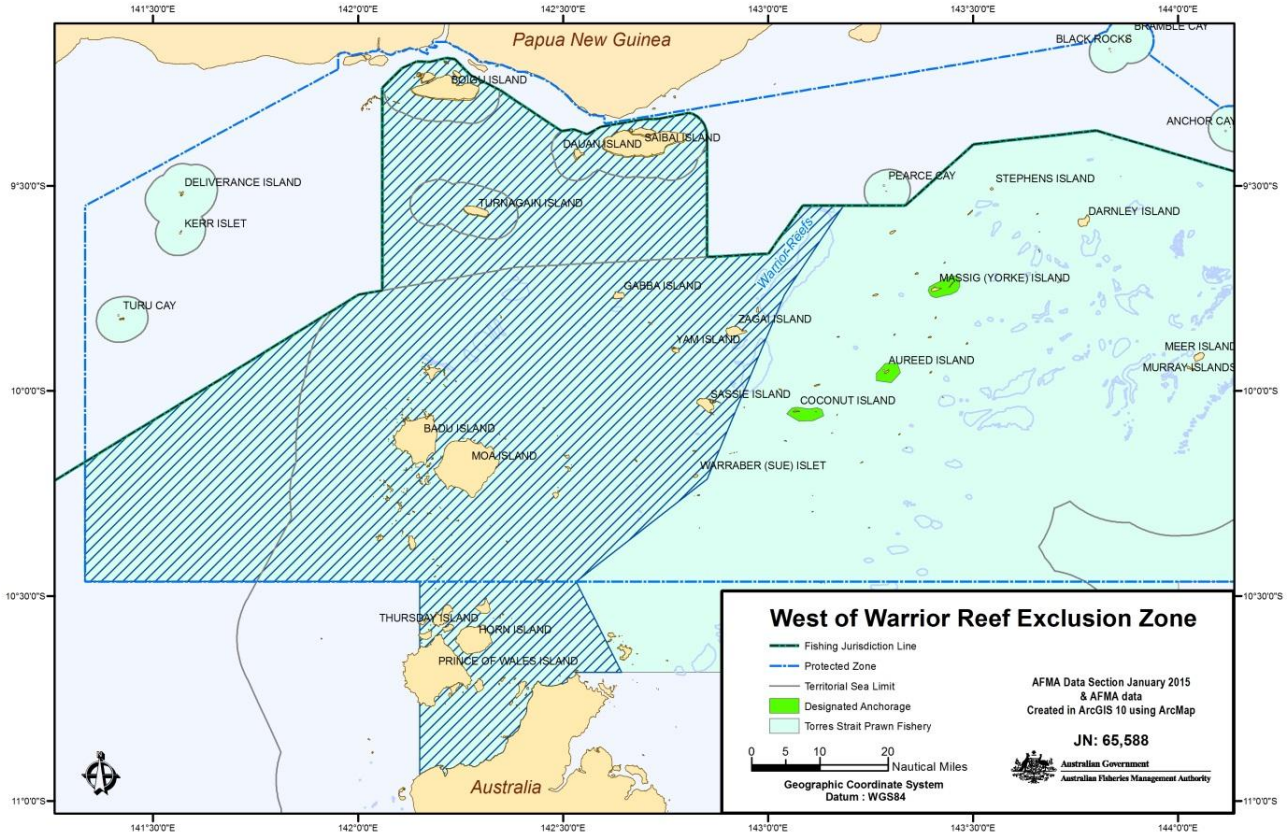
6.2 West of Warrior Reef exclusion zone

The taking of prawns in the area west of Warrior Reef is permanently prohibited (Figure 18). This is currently provided for in FMI No. 2. The prohibition also specifies that prawns may not be carried in this area with the exception of the transit zone as described in Schedule 1 of FMI No. 10.

This closure, as well as providing some protection for smaller prawns, was introduced taking into consideration that most of the inhabited islands are in this region and that a significant concentration of traditional fishing for tropical rock lobster occurs in this area.

Carriage of equipment: In the west of Warrior Reef exclusion zone all equipment that is capable of being used for any kind of trawling or taking Prawns (this includes nets, boards, beams, and skids) must be carried either in the racks or on the deck.

Figure 18. Map of West Warrior Reef exclusion zone.

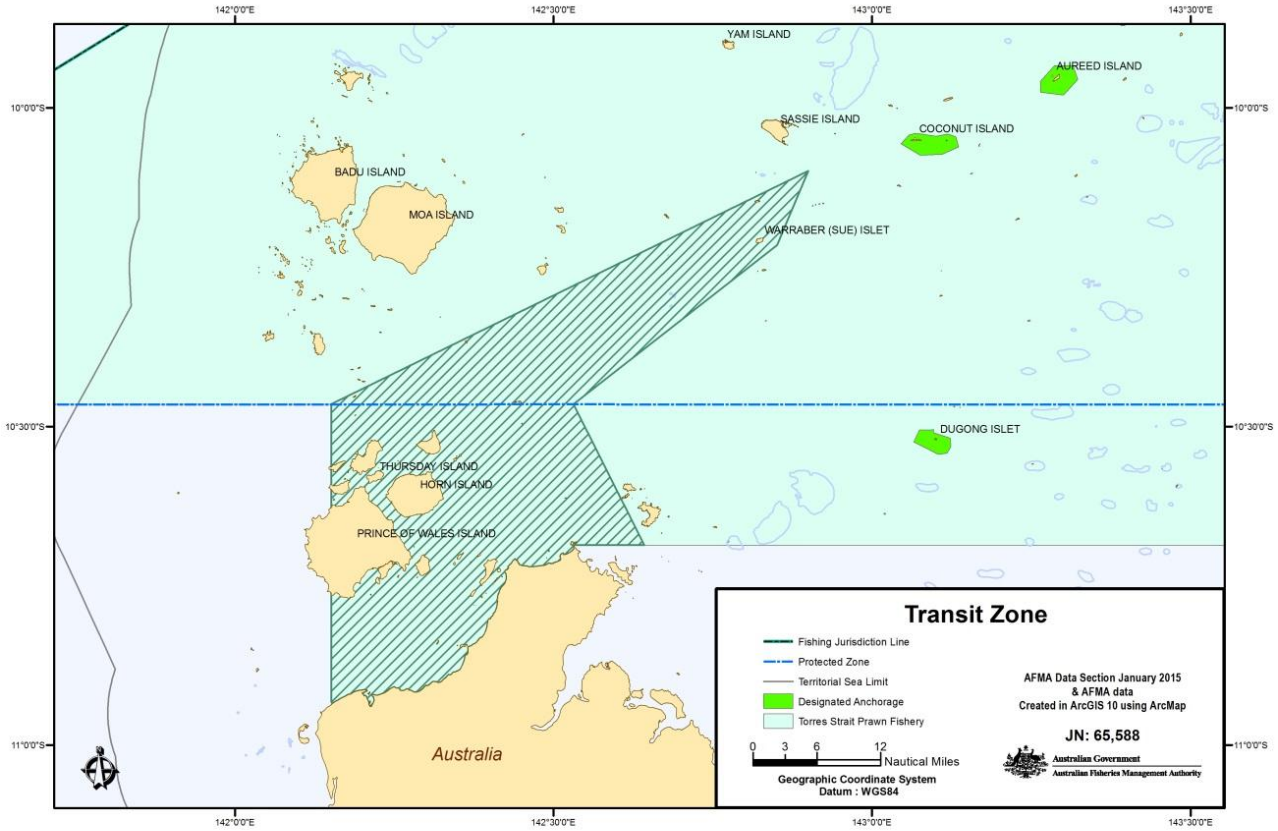


6.3 Transit zone - exemption to exclusion zone

The transit zone (Figure 19), which overlaps the west of Warrior Reef exclusion zone, was designed to allow vessels safe passage into Thursday Island and further south.

Carriage of equipment: In the transit zone all equipment that is capable of being used for any kind of trawling, or being used for taking Prawns (this includes nets, boards, beams, and skids) must be carried so that all of the equipment is out of the water, or if any part of the equipment is in the water that all codends are open and drawn up to the boat so that the codends would be visible from an aircraft or another boat and the boards are at the blocks.

Figure 19. Map transit zone.

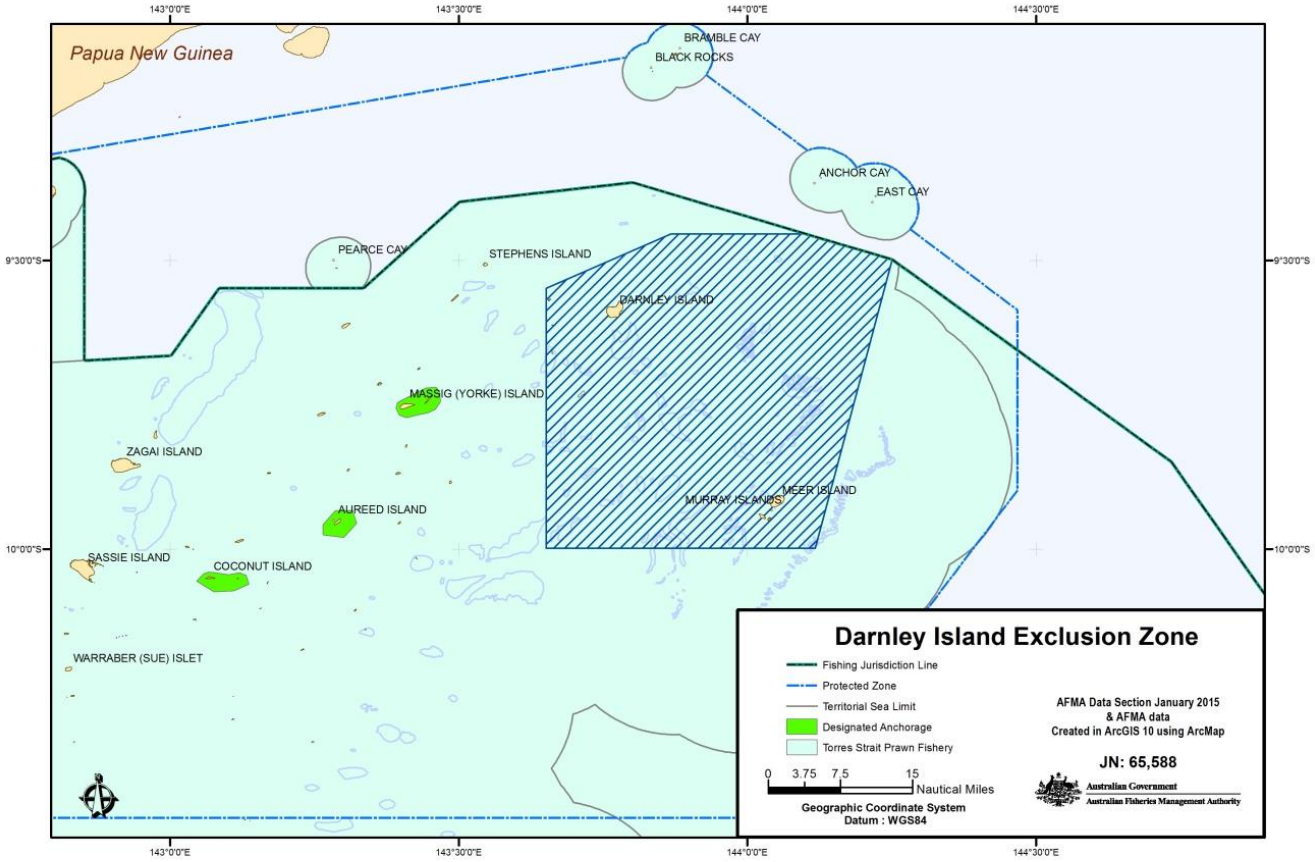


6.4 Darnley Island exclusion zone

The Darnley Island exclusion zone (Figure 20) was introduced in response to traditional inhabitants concerns in relation to the potential for trawling to damage pearl shell beds in the area.

Carriage of equipment: In the Darnley Island exclusion zone all equipment that is capable of being used for any kind of trawling, or being used for taking Prawns (this includes nets, boards, beams, and skids) must be carried so that all of the equipment is out of the water, or if any part of the equipment is in the water that all codends are open and drawn up to the boat so that the codends would be visible from an aircraft or another boat and the boards are at the blocks.

Figure 20. Map of Darney Island exclusion zone.

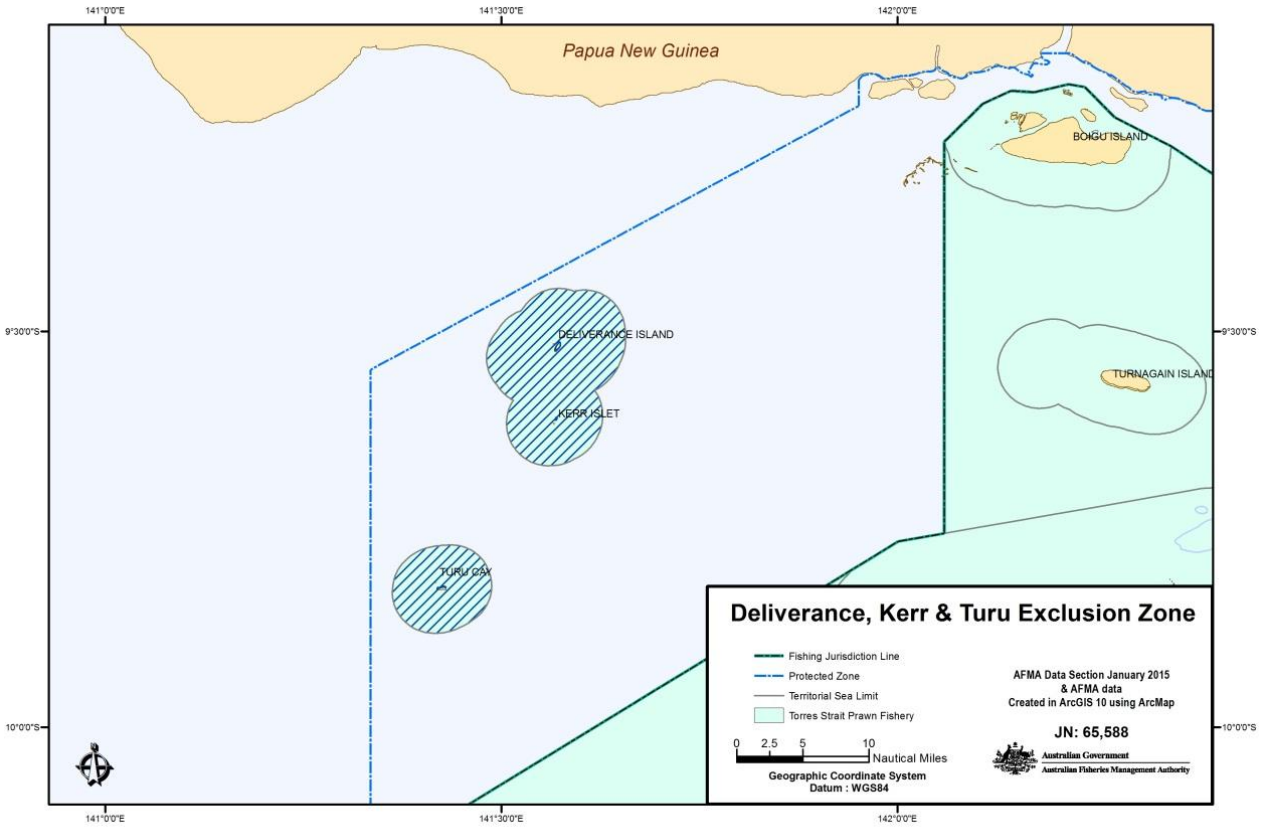


6.5 Deliverance, Kerr and Turu exclusion zones

In May 2008 the PZJA agreed to implement exclusion zones under the Plan around Deliverance Island, Kerr Islet, and Turu Cay (Figure 21). These areas have been excluded from the fishery in response to concern about the important nesting areas for Green and Flatback turtles. Excluding the areas from the fishery means fishing for prawn is not allowed there.

Carriage of equipment: In the Deliverance Island, Kerr Islet, and Turu Cay exclusion zones all equipment that is capable of being used for any kind of trawling, or being used for taking Prawns (this includes nets, boards, beams, and skids) must be carried so that all of the equipment is out of the water, or if any part of the equipment is in the water that all codends are open and drawn up to the boat so that the codends would be visible from an aircraft or another boat and the boards are at the blocks.

Figure 21. Map of Deliverance, Kerr and Turu exclusion zones.



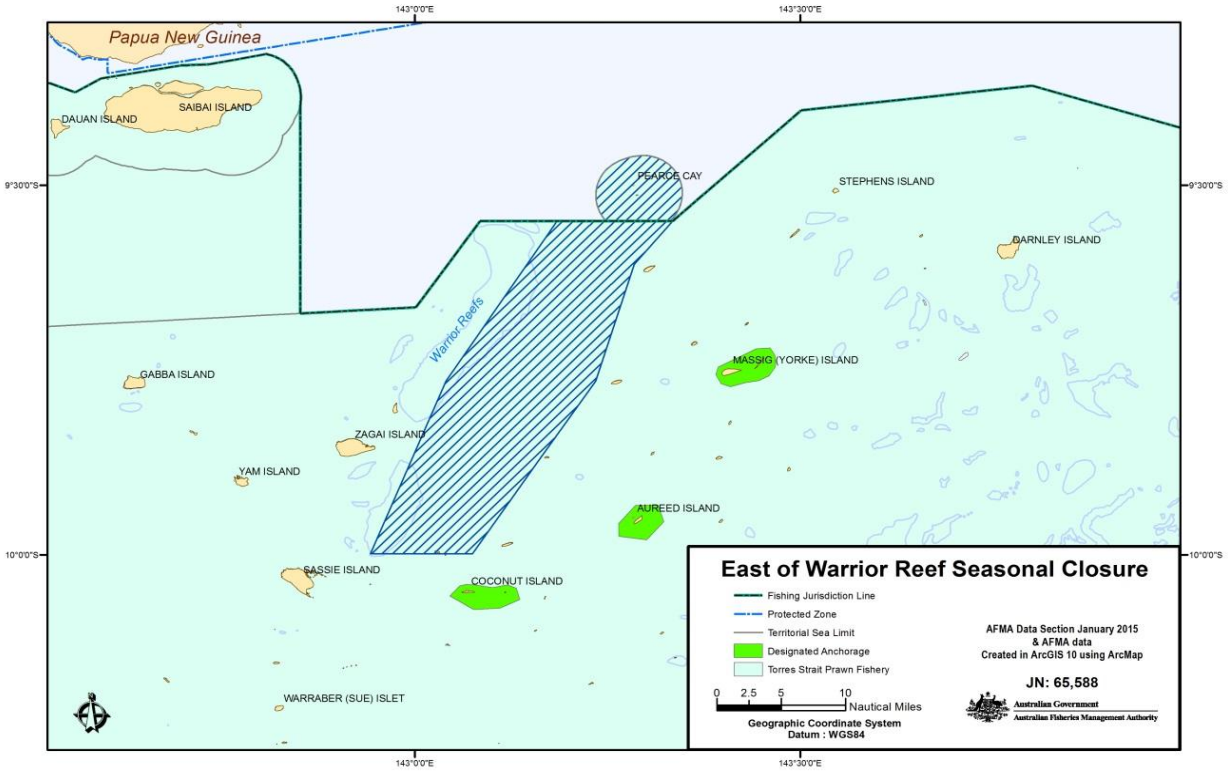
6.6 East of Warrior Reef seasonal closure

The east of warrior reef season closure (Figure 22) was introduced following a request from industry with the aim of improving the economic yield from the prawns harvested in this area by protecting juvenile prawns.

Timing: The east of Warrior Reef closure applies every year from 0600 hours local time on 1 December in any year and ends at 1700 hours local time on 31 July in the following year.

Carriage of equipment: During the seasonal closure of the entire fishery all equipment that is capable of being used for any kind of trawling, or being used for taking Prawns (this includes nets, boards, beams, and skids) must be carried either in the racks or on the deck; except between 1200 hours and 1700 hours local time on 1 February (in any year), the boat is anchored; or between 0600 hours and 1800 hours local time on 1 December (in any year), all equipment is out of the water or if any part of the equipment is in the water - that part is drawn up to the boat and is visible from nearby aircraft or boat; and if the equipment includes codends, the codends are open.

Figure 22. Map of East Warrior Reef exclusion zone.



7 Export Approval

The TSPF has been granted an exemption from requiring an export permit under the EPBC Act for a period of nine years, until 9 October 2026. A reassessment of the fishery is currently underway, to be competed before the 9 October expiry.

The fishery management arrangements have been assessed against Parts 13 (protected species provisions) and 13A (wildlife trade provisions) of the EPBC Act. The assessment took into account measures that have been developed and implemented by AFMA and the TSPF industry.

The TSPF WTO exemption will need to be reviewed if triggers under the TSPF harvest strategy are triggered, or other major changes to management arrangements occur in the fishery.

There are no other conditions under this exemption.

8 Compliance Program

Compliance of PZJA fisheries, including the TSPF is carried out by AFMA. The compliance and enforcement program is designed to maintain the integrity of fisheries management arrangements and protect the Torres Strait 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 the PZJA fisheries management arrangements and licence conditions
- ensuring that there are no unlicensed foreign boats operating in the TSPZ
- surveillance and apprehension of foreign boats fishing illegally in the Australian Fishing Zone, including the TSPZ.

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 benefits[2]:

- **improved compliance outcomes** – AFMA can tailor or target compliance measures to effectively deal with the most significant non-compliance risks
- **efficiency gains** – the targeting of compliance measures to the most significant risks ensures resources are concentrated in the areas where they are most likely to improve compliance outcomes
- **reduced industry compliance costs** – Compliance activities imposing burdens and costs on the fishing industry are only carried out where needed, thereby minimising costs. This means that businesses will only be inspected, audited or have to provide data where it is justified, and

[2] Source: National Compliance and Enforcement Program 2024 (afma.gov.au)

- **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 responsibilities.

8.1 Illegal Fishing

You can help us make sure your fish stocks are protected for the future by reporting any illegal or suspicious fishing activities you see.

Illegal fishing activities include:

- Landing catch to someone other than a licenced fish receiver (except in the TSPF where landing to a fish receiver is not required)
- Use of illegal fishing gear
- Improper use of bycatch reduction or turtle excluder devices
- Unlicensed commercial fishing
- Retaining or not reporting interactions with protected species
- Retaining TRL in the TSPF
- Fishing in closed or prohibited areas
- Commercial fishing during seasonal closures
- Unapproved Foreign fishing

8.2 How can I report illegal activities?

If you think you have seen illegal fishing operations or suspicious activity involving fishing you can contact:

AFMA's free call 'CRIMFISH' hotline on **1800 274 634 (1800 CRIMFISH)**

AFMA's Duty Officer on **0428 196 114** or **(02) 6275 5818** (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

AFMA Thursday Island Office on **(07) 4069 1990**

Email to intelligence@afma.gov.au

You can also report any incident by lodging your information on the AFMA CRIMFISH webpage: https://www.afma.gov.au/monitoring-enforcement/report-illegal-fishing-activity/

Reports may be made anonymously, and all information received will be treated with the strictest confidence.

8.3 What do I report?

The following information should be provided if possible:

- name and call sign of the boat suspected of breaching fisheries legislation;

- description of the boat involved- type of boat, distinguishing features, registration details;
- type of illegal activity (for example shark finning, fishing in a closed area, retention of TRL, non-compliant gear);
- nationality;
- where the offence took place (give as much detail as you can) e.g. latitude/longitude;
- time and date;
- description of the suspected offenders, including the clothing they were wearing;
- names of the suspected offenders and any distinguishing features (if known);
- type of fish being caught;
- fishing gear – nets, traps, trawls etc;
- photographs; or
- other information you feel may be useful or any other suspicious activity that might be associated with the offence.

9 Rules and Code of Practice for Managing Pollution and Rubbish in Torres Strait

This section of the handbook is an adaptation of the Code of Practice for Responsible Disposal of Marine Debris, a TSPMAC initiative from 2010. It aims to provide operators with information to help them to understand the rules around marine pollution as well as a code of practice to ensure best practice around these issues.

The original code of practice was produced after concern was raised regarding the amount of trawl rubbish present in some areas of the Torres Straits. Although only a component of this rubbish is likely to be associated with prawn trawling boats, the TSPMAC agreed it was worthwhile developing a code of practice to further guide the industry in ways to minimise the risk of trawl rubbish and pollution at sea.

Fishers have an added responsibility not to pollute the resource that provides their livelihood. In the Torres Strait in particular, 1000's of people in Island committees are dependent on the oceans for food and income. For this reason, irresponsible disposal of marine debris at sea has always been under the spotlight in the TSPF. When fishers make a conscious effort to minimise their impact on the region this has a positive effect on relationships with traditional inhabitant communities, hopefully leading to more effective and easier management of the fishery.

This section sets out some mandatory requirements under the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) relevant to the TSPF. In addition, it outlines voluntary guidelines and standards of behaviour for responsible fishing practices to ensure the effective conservation, management and development of resources, with due respect for the ecosystem and biodiversity. As this document is a guideline only, it is the fishers' responsibility to understand the relevant legislation and other mandatory documents such as MARPOL. Any inconsistency between this document and any PZJA or Commonwealth Government legislation such as the Act or *Protection of the Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Act 1983* should be resolved by reference to the Legislative Instruments.

9.1 Pollution from fishing vessels

Pollution of the marine environment by ships of all types, including fishing boats, is controlled by the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (known as MARPOL 73/78). Australia is a signatory to this convention. The Australian Maritime Safety Authority implements the MARPOL Convention in Australian waters. Its regulations are implemented through Commonwealth and State/NT legislation. There are heavy penalties for not complying with the laws.

The Australian MARPOL regulations apply to Australian fishing vessels wherever they are operating. Australian laws can be applied against foreign fishing vessels operating anywhere within Australia's 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone.

9.2 Onboard waste management

Every vessel of 100 gross tonnage and above, and every vessel certified to carry 15 or more persons, is required to carry a Garbage Management Plan. The Garbage Management Plan should contain procedures for collecting, storing, processing and disposing of garbage, including the use of appropriate garbage handling equipment such as storage containers, compactors or incinerators. More information on Garbage Management Plans can be found on the AMSA website (amsa.gov.au/marine-environment/marine-pollution/garbage-management).

Accidently lost fishing gear may harm the marine environment or create navigational hazards. The law states that fishing vessels must make every effort to retrieve all lost or damaged fishing gear and record the discharge of this gear in the ship's log, or in the boats garbage record book (if the ship is required to carry one).

Fishers should take immediate action to retrieve their gear if it appears to be at risk of entering a Marine Protected Area (MPA) zone where it's not allowed. Incidents should be reported immediately to the 24-hour Marine Compliance Duty Officer on 0419 293 465 or 1800 852 975.

9.3 Reporting Pollution

Under the laws pollution or potential pollution incidents should be reported to the authorities.

Discharges or probable discharges of oil, noxious liquid substances, in excess of permitted levels, or of harmful substances in packaged form should be reported. Vessels of 15 metres or more in length are also required to report any damage, failure or breakdown which affects the safety of the vessel or results in impairment of the safety of navigation.

Boats will avoid prosecution where an accident has occurred and everything has been done to minimise the pollution. Not reporting a pollution incident may result in a fine. Reporting pollution may eliminate your boat as a suspect. Please provide relevant details of the incident such as when and where incident occurred, name of the boat, type and extent of pollution and any other information.

The Australian Response Centre operates 24 hours and can be contacted through AMSA Connect:

Free call (with Australia): 1800 641 792

Outside Australia: +612 6230 6811

Alternatively, you can submit an online marine pollution report at:

amsa-forms.nogginoca.com/public/polrep.html

For further information, contact:

Australian Maritime Safety Authority

AMSAConnect@amsa.gov.au

Free call (within Australia): 1800 627 484

Outside Australia: +612 6279 5000

amsa.gov.au/marine-environment/marine-pollution

amsa.gov.au/marine-environment/marine-pollution/pollution-fishing-vessels

Pollution report messages via a Telstra Maritime Communications Station are free of charge. For further information on the legislation, contact:

Marine Environment Protection Services

Australian Maritime Safety Authority

GPO Box 2181

CANBERRA ACT 2601

Telephone: (02) 6230 6811

Freecall: 1800 641 792

Facsimile: 02 2630 6868

or visit the Australian Maritime Safety Authority at www.amsa.gov.au.

9.4 Other legislation

Marine pollution within Australia is also regulated through the *Commonwealth Protection of the Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Act 1983* and the *Navigation Act 2012*, and in QLD through the;

- Protection of the Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Act 1983
- the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995;
- the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Regulations 2008;
- the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994; and
- the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Regulations 2004.

9.5 Shore facilities

If mothership or shore facilities are not adequate for the disposal of your oil or garbage, let the marina owner or port authority know. You should also notify State/Territory and local officials of the inadequate facilities to allow the relevant bodies to consider if there is a need to upgrade the facilities.

9.6 Reporting and Retrieving ghost nets

Abandoned, lost and discarded nets, lines and traps are a big threat to marine life and are referred to as “ghost nets”. The Gulf of Capenteria (GoC) is a global hotspot for ghost nets, with over 400 tonnes of ghost gear drifting into the Gulf each year, however ghost nets are also sometimes found in the Torres Strait.

9.1.1 Where is the ghost gear coming from?

While half the nets cannot be identified by their source country, research shows only 4 per cent are from Australian sources. The rest come from countries such as Taiwan, Indonesia, Korea, Japan and Thailand, and includes mostly trawl, gillnets and long line fishing gear, some of which can be many kilometres long.

9.6.2 What can you do to help?

As an operator in the TSPF, you are in the best position to help remove these nets and improve the marine environment of the Torres Strait. You can help by removing the ghost gear:

- Ideally, the ghost nets need to be removed from the ocean. If you and your crew are able to do this, disposal needs to happen in line with Australian Biosecurity requirements. AFMA can sometimes assist with collecting and disposing of ghost nets at port.
- Call the Darwin duty officer and provide some photos so they can advise on any assistance that AFMA may be able to provide.
- Please note that whilst the Australian Government is committed to the removal and elimination of Ghost Gear, remuneration to operators is not guaranteed and is subject to Commonwealth Procurement Rules.
- Where operators are unable or unwilling to recover ghost gear you are encouraged to contact the AFMA duty officer and include information regarding position of the net, date and estimates of the size as soon as possible.

Contacts: AFMA Duty Officer: 0428 196 114 or (02) 6275 5818 (24 hours a day, 7 days)

9.7 Mandatory Requirements for TSPF licence holders under MARPOL

Section 2.7 details a Code of Practice for managing waste for the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery, which was developed by the TSPMAC, with leadership from the TSPF industry members. The code of practice is a set of guidelines to follow, however obligations under the legislation are still mandatory, and it is the licence holders responsibility to ensure all crew are aware of their obligations. Below is a list of some of the key obligations, under MARPOL 73/78:

- A total ban on the disposal of plastics at sea;
- A total ban on the discharge of sewage into the sea, except when the ship has in operation an approved sewage treatment plant and within other certain specification.
- A ban on any disposal of garbage within 12 nautical miles of land, or 500m of a floating platform.

NOTE: The MARPOL 73/78 definition of “nearest land” prohibits operational discharges in the Torres Strait region.

- A ban on the discharge of oil or chemicals into the sea;
- All vessels of 12 metres or more in length are required to display placards setting out the disposal requirements of MARPOL 73/78. (For further details see Marine Notice 6/1997 and 6/1998);
- The only allowable discharge of an oily mixture is at a rate of 15 parts of oil to one million parts of water; and

Any other waste oil and oily residues must be stored on board for disposal at port waste disposal facilities including bilge water with any concentration of oil.

As well as abiding by MARPOL and other regulations, TSPF operators will adhere to the following code of practice in relation to marine debris or garbage disposal and oil spills/pollution.







9.8 Code of Conduct for the disposal of waste and trawl rubbish

Rubbish

1. Minimise the taking aboard of potential garbage such as excess packaging;
2. all rubbish should be returned to home port or the mothership, i.e. minimise rubbish being taken to Torres Strait
3. Store all rubbish retained in suitable secure containers for return to port;
4. Not dispose of rags, glass, metal, bottles, crockery, wood or ANY OTHER refuse at sea;
5. As far as practical, collect and stow all plastic and floating garbage disposed by others and found at sea for disposal on land;
6. Cut all plastic waste which forms a continuous loop to minimise impact should these be accidentally lost at sea;
7. Where possible, pass on waste / oil etc to mother ships to avoid having large amounts of waste
8. on the vessel which would be at risk of loss or spillage.
9. When waste is in port, use product specific waste disposal facilities (oil, sewerage) where provided.

Gear

10. Make all attempts to recover any lost gear.
11. Report any unrecovered gear to the PZJA and search and rescue authorities (table 1).
12. Utilise products packaged in or made of materials other than disposable plastic to replenish ship supplies unless a reusable plastic alternative is available.

What are considered plastics?

Plastic materials used at sea include synthetic materials such as:

- trawl and fishing nets
- bait gaskets
- synthetic rope
- paints
- plastic sheeting and bags
- electrical / electronic
- "six pack" holders
- disposable eating utensils
- fibreglass

10 Index of Fisheries Management Instruments and Notices

Fisheries Management Instruments outline the rules and regulations in fisheries in addition to the rules within the Plan and the Act. A list of current instruments (at April 2026) and relevant to the TSPF is in the table below. The instruments and the Plan can be found on the PZJA website at http://pzja.gov.au/the-fisheries/torres-strait-prawn-fishery/.

Note, further changes to the below instruments will be made by the PZJA during 2026. Changes are largely to amalgamate the three instruments below into a single instrument, with few, if any changes to the actual rules governing the fishery. AFMA will notify license holders by letter when changes are made.

Instrument No.*	Description
12	*Torres Strait Prawn Fishery Management Instrument No. 12 – Turtle Excluder Devices*
NA	*Torres Strait Prawn Fishery (Bycatch Reduction Devices) Instrument 2024**
NA	Torres Strait Fisheries (Prawn) Management Instrument 2025*

* Naming conventions have changed, and instruments no longer have numbers as of 2024.

11 Maps

The map of the TSPF below is indicative only. The charts listed below are given as a reference to fishers so they can accurately plot the different closures and boundary lines within the Torres Strait Protected Zone.

AUS 376 Torres Strait (West of Warrior Reef exclusion zone) (the Fisheries Jurisdiction Line is marked on this chart).

AUS 377 Bligh entrance to Eastern Fields (Darnley Island exclusion zone) (the Fisheries Jurisdiction Line is marked on this chart).

AUS 839 Cairncross Island to Arden Island (Outside but near area of the prawn fishery).

AUS 840 Arden Island to Bramble Cay (East of Warrior Reef seasonal closure).

11.1 Fisheries jurisdiction line

Feedback from fishers indicates that the fisheries notices in this Handbook are useful for skippers to enter the co-ordinates of closures in their plotters and charts. The co-ordinates of the Australia-PNG Fisheries Jurisdiction line are defined in the Act but not specifically detailed in the notices in the Handbook. In order to assist skippers who may find this useful the co-ordinates of this line are set out below.

Co-ordinates of the Fisheries Jurisdiction Line as provided in Annex 8 to the Torres Strait Treaty.

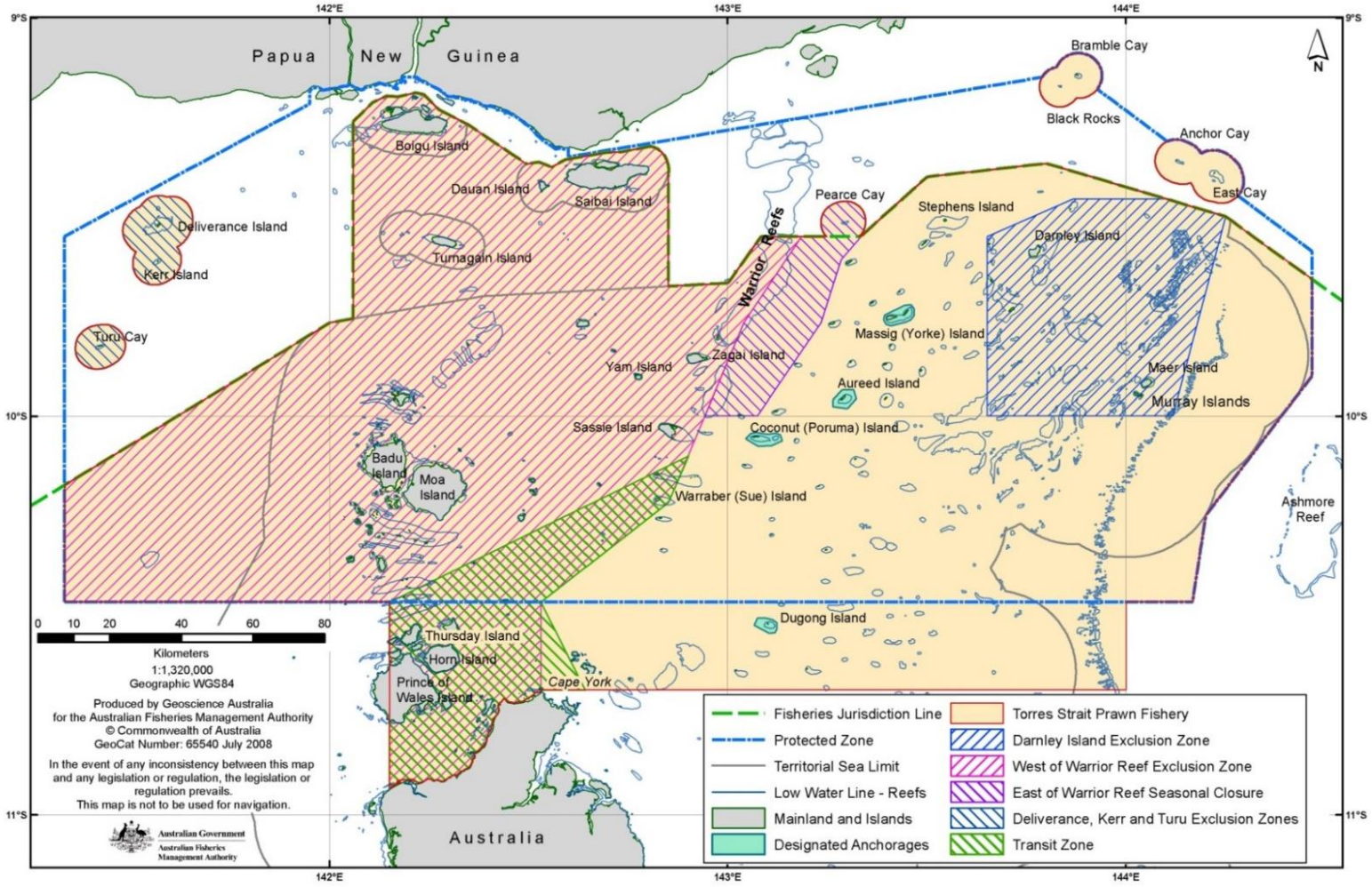
A line-

(a) commencing at the point of Latitude 10° 50’ 00”South, Longitude 139° 12’ 00”East;
(b) running thence south-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 11° 09’ 00”South, Longitude 139° 23’ 00”East;
(c) thence north-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 10° 59’ 00”South, Longitude 140° 00’ 00”East;
(d) thence north-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 46’ 00”South, Longitude 142° 00’ 00”East;
(e) thence north-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 45’ 24”South, Longitude 142° 03’ 30”East;
(f) thence north along the meridian of Longitude 142° 03’ 30”East to its intersection by the parallel of Latitude 9° 15’ 43”South;
(g) thence north-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 12’ 50”South, Longitude 142° 06’ 25”East;
(h) thence north-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 11’ 51”South, Longitude 142° 08’ 33”East;
(i) thence south-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 11’ 58”South, Longitude 142° 10’ 18”East;
(j) thence north-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 11’ 22”South, Longitude 142° 12’ 54”East;
(k) thence south-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 11’ 34”South, Longitude 142° 14’ 08”East;
(l) thence south-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 13’ 53”South, Longitude 142° 16’ 26”East;
(m) thence south-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 16’ 04”South, Longitude 142° 20’ 41”East;
(n) thence south-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 22’ 04”South, Longitude 142° 29’ 41”East;
(o) thence north-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 21’ 48”South, Longitude 142° 31’ 29”East;
(p) thence south-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 22’ 33”South, Longitude 142° 33’ 28”East;
(q) thence north-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 21’ 25”South, Longitude 142° 35’ 29”East;
(r) thence north-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 20’ 21”South, Longitude 142° 41’ 43”East;
(s) thence north-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 20’ 16”South, Longitude 142° 43’ 53”East;

(t) thence north-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 19’ 26”South, Longitude 142° 48’ 18”East where it joins the outer limit of the three mile territorial sea of Saibai Island;
(u) thence along that outer limit so as to pass to the east of Saibai Island to the point of Latitude 9° 23’ 40”South, Longitude 142° 51’ 00”East;
(v) thence south along the meridian Longitude 142° 51’ 00”East to its intersection by the parallel of Latitude 9° 40’ 30”South;
(w) thence north-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 40’ 00”South, Longitude 143° 00’ 00”East;
(x) thence north-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 33’ 00”South, Longitude 143° 05’ 00”East;
(y) hence east along the parallel of Latitude 9° 33’ 00”South to its intersection by the meridian of Longitude 143° 20’ 00”East;
(z) thence north-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 24’ 00”South, Longitude 143° 30’ 00”East;

(za) thence north-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 22’ 00”South, Longitude 143° 48’ 00”East;
(zb) thence south-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 30’ 00”South, Longitude 144° 15’ 00”East;
(zc) thence south-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 9° 51’ 00”South, Longitude 144° 44’ 00”East;
(zd) thence south-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 12° 20’ 00”South, Longitude 146° 30’ 00”East;
(ze) thence south-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 12° 38’ 30”South, Longitude 147° 08’ 30”East;
(zf) thence south-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 13° 10’ 30”South, Longitude 148° 05’ 00”East;
(zg) thence south-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 14° 38’ 00”South, Longitude 152° 07’ 00”East;
(zh) thence south-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 14° 45’ 00”South, Longitude 154° 15’ 00”East; and
(zi) thence north-easterly along the geodesic to the point of Latitude 14° 05’ 00”South, Longitude 156° 37’ 00”East where it terminates.

11.2 Map of the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery and Closures



12 Fishery Observer Program

12.1 Objective of the program

Introduced in the 2005 fishing season, the purpose of the TSPF Observer Program is to place independent scientific observers on fishing boats to collect fishery independent scientific data, including commercial catch, bycatch and ETP species information. This data is used to validate logbook data, improving the quality and certainty of data for the fishery and assisting the fishery in its reporting obligations and in managing the fishery. Since the 2010 fishing season, the observer program has also collected data on species of particular cultural significance to the Torres Strait Islander community.

The observer program has several benefits to industry including:

- Reduction in other management and reporting requirements for fishers, as validated catch information means fishers are not required to validate data in other more complex ways.
- Strong scientific data provides more certainty when setting annual catch limits, allowing them to be set at higher levels with certainty. When data is uncertain, more conservative levels must be used.
- The observer program also provides a valuable avenue for fishers to ask questions about the fishery face to face with AFMA staff and provide feedback to AFMA.

12.2 Requirements to take an observer

It is a condition of licences that licence holders take an AFMA observer on their boat when asked to do so. Refusing to take an observer may result in prosecution. More importantly, when people refuse to take observers, it can affect the usefulness of the fishery data and may result in more stringent reporting requirements being placed on all licence holders.

The number of observer days achieved each year varies and is based on 2.6 percent of the number of actual days fished in a given season.

Boat owners and masters eager to participate in the observer program should contact the Observer Coordinator to organise placement. The Observer Program wish to express their thanks for the cooperation of industry and boat crews involved in the program to date.

Observer Manager

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Phone: (02) 6225 5555 **Fax:** (02) 6225 5440 **Email:** observers@afma.gov.au



13 Other Information

13.1 Management consultative process

13.1.1 PZJA

The PZJA is responsible for making decisions and formulating policies relating to Torres Strait fisheries within the areas of Australian jurisdiction of the TSPZ under the Act. The Act gives effect, in Australian law, to Australia's obligations under the Torres Strait Treaty as they relate to fisheries. Section 30 of the Act establishes the PZJA, which consists of the Minister administering the Act, the Queensland Minister administering the laws of Queensland relating to marine fishing in the Protected Zone, and the Chairperson of the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA). The TSRA is the Commonwealth agency established under the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005* that represents the interests of Torres Strait Islanders.

The PZJA is supported by four government agencies (known as 'PZJA agencies'), namely AFMA, DAFF, QDPI, and TSRA.

AFMA is responsible for providing day-to-day fisheries management services for the PZJA including compliance and licensing, and undertakes its delegated functions in consultation with PZJA agencies.

13.1.2 Torres Strait Prawn Management Advisory Committee

The Torres Strait Prawn Management Advisory Committee (TSPMAC) was established by the PZJA to provide advice regarding management of the TSPF. There is no resource assessment group (RAG) for this fishery, so the MAC also takes on functions usually covered by a RAG. The TSPMAC includes members from industry, Traditional Inhabitant representatives and State and Commonwealth Government representatives as well as two fisheries scientists, to support more technical discussions usually the responsibility of a RAG.

TSPMAC meetings provide a forum where Government, industry and Traditional Inhabitant representatives can engage and discuss issues, identify concerns and develop solutions. It is the role of the TSPMAC to provide management and scientific advice and recommendations to the PZJA. There is typically one face to face meeting of the TSPMAC held every 12-18 months, as well as short teleconferences for urgent or small matters when required.

To have your views put forward for management consideration you should contact one of the industry representatives or traditional inhabitant representatives on the TSPMAC. These positions are generally a three-year term and any interested party that meets the requirements of the positions in Torres Strait Fisheries Management Paper no. 1 (available at www.pzja.gov.au) are invited to apply.

A list of the current industry members on the TSPMAC is provided in the contacts list at the end of this publication.

13.1.3 Native Title

AFMA, on behalf of the PZJA, consults with registered native title body corporates (RNTBC), registered native title claimants and representative Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander bodies for certain future acts as required under the *Native Title Act 1993*. In addition, Malu Lamar, a

major overarching RNTBC for the Torres Strait region is invited to all TSPMAC meetings as an invited participant(observer).

A summary of all native title notifications undertaken by AFMA since 2019 can be found on the PZJA website at https://www.pzja.gov.au/native-title-notifications.

13.2 Other reading

13.2.1 PZJA Annual Reports

The PZJA has produced an annual report since its inception in February 1985. The annual reports provide background on the Treaty and the PZJA, information on the status of each fishery under PZJA control (including prawn) and financial details and decisions of the PZJA each year. The PZJA annual reports are available online at www.pzja.gov.au.

13.2.2 ABARES Fishery Status Reports

ABARES provides regular independent assessments of the status of Commonwealth managed fish stocks and the Fishery Status Reports provide an overview on the stocks of each fishery. Over time, the reports provide a means of monitoring whether management strategies are succeeding in sustaining the resources upon which each fishery is based. The reports are available for download from the ABARES website (www.abares.gov.au).

14 List of Contacts

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Box 7051
Canberra BC ACT 2610
Phone: (02) 6225 5555/ 1300 723 621
Fax: (02) 6225 5500

Brodie MacDonald
Senior Manager, Northern Fisheries
Phone: 02 6225 5368
Email: brodie.macdonald@afma.gov.au

Darci Wallis
Manager, Torres Strait Prawn Fishery
Phone: 02 6225 5408
Email: darci.wallis@afma.gov.au

Lisa Cocking
Senior Management Officer, Torres Strait Prawn Fishery
Phone: 02 6225 5451
Email: lisa.cocking@afmal.gov.au

AFMA licensing and logbooks

Narelle Williams
Senior Licensing Officer
Phone: 02 6225 5542
Fax: (02) 6225 5500
Email. licensing@afma.gov.au

AFMA Compliance

CRIMFISH HOTLINE: 1800 274 634
AFMA's Duty Officer: **0428 196 114** or **(02) 6275 5818** (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
Email: intelligence@afma.gov.au

VMS breakdowns / questions
Canberra duty officer
Phone: (02) 6275 5818
ausvms@afma.gov.au

AMSA Search and Rescue
If it is an emergency, call 000 for help.
For assistance with search and rescue services, please call the 24-hour helplines:

Maritime
Within Australia: 1800 641 792
Outside Australia: +61 2 6230 6811

Aviation
Within Australia: 1800 815 257
Outside Australia: +61 2 6230 6899

www.amsa.gov.au/safety-navigation/search-and-rescue

www.amsa.gov.au/audiences/commercial-fisher

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