

Class Notification under the Commonwealth *Native Title Act 1993*

Variation of licence conditions to include conversion ratios for sea cucumber species in the Torres Strait Beche-de-mer Fishery

Date of Issue: 27 September 2019

SECTION OF NTA	Subsection 24HA(2) of the Commonwealth <i>Native Title Act 1993</i>
DEPARTMENT/AGENCY	Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) on behalf of the Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA)
CONTACT NAME	Steve Hall
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TELEPHONE NO.	07 4069 1990
REFERENCE NO.	NT2019-11 – Variation of licence conditions to include conversion ratios for sea cucumber species in the Torres Strait Beche-de-mer Fishery (BDM Fishery)

The Protected Zone Joint Authority intends to do the following act:

TYPE OF APPROVAL	Variation of BDM Fishery endorsed Traditional Inhabitant Boat (TIB) licence conditions under section 22 of the Commonwealth <i>Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984</i> (the Act)
NUMBER OF APPROVALS	Licence condition variation for all BDM Fishery endorsed TIB licences
UNDER WHAT ACT	Section 22 of the Act

The approvals, if granted, will permit the following activity to happen:

NATURE OF ACTIVITY	<p>Under subsection 22(1) of the Act a licence granted under section 19 is subject to conditions specified in the licence. Subsection 22(2) allows the Minister to vary or revoke the conditions of the licence or specify further conditions to which the licence is subject to.</p> <p>Subject to PZJA approval, the proposed management action would vary BDM Fishery endorsed TIB licence conditions to include conversion ratios for sea cucumber (beche-de-mer or BDM) species. The conditions that are the subject of this notification would only apply to TIB licences granted by the PZJA to take BDM species in the area of waters of the BDM Fishery.</p> <p>The proposed conversion ratios would be used to convert processed weights of BDM (e.g. boiled and salted, or dried) back to a single standard unit of weight (wet weight gutted). Using this conversion will allow for a better understanding of total catches in the BDM Fishery and improve monitoring of reported catches against total allowable catch (TAC) limits.</p> <p>The proposed conversion ratios for BDM can be found in Attachment C. These ratios have been developed through previously dedicated research projects supported by the PZJA Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee (TSSAC), have been</p>
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	<p>recommended by the PZJA Torres Strait Hand Collectables Working Group (HCWG) and are subject to PZJA approval.</p> <p>It is expected that conversion ratios may be updated over time as new information becomes available.</p> <p>Further information on the proposed management action is provided in Attachment B.</p>
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The above activity will be located within:

LOCATION OF ACTIVITY	The proposed management action would apply to the area of the BDM Fishery. The extent of the BDM Fishery is described in Item 1, Schedule 2 to the <i>Torres Strait Fisheries Regulations 1985</i> (the Regulations). The Regulations can be accessed online at: https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2016C00633
MAPS/PLANS	Attachment D shows the area of the BDM Fishery, as described in Item 1, Schedule 2 to the Regulations.
NAME OF REGISTERED NATIVE TITLE CLAIMANT GROUP/S OR NAME OF REGISTERED NATIVE TITLE BODY CORPORATE	Malu Lamar (Torres Strait Islander) Corporation RNTBC The applicant for the Torres Strait Regional Sea Claim (Part B) Ipima Ikaya Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC North Eastern Peninsula Sea Claim Group PNG Gas Pipeline ILUA – Cape York Region Cape York Land Council Kaurareg People #1 Kaurareg People #2
NAME OF NATIVE TITLE REPRESENTATIVE BODY	Torres Strait Regional Authority Cape York Land Council

If approved, after consideration of all comments, the proposed management action will be implemented for the following period of time:

DURATION OF APPROVAL	The proposed management action would apply from the commencement of the 2020 BDM Fishery fishing season which starts on 1 January 2020.
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You are invited to comment upon the class of proposed future act outlined above by close of business 8 November 2019. If you would like to extend the response period, please contact AFMA by 8 November 2019.

Any comments must be **in writing** to:

By mail addressed to:
Australian Fisheries Management Authority
Att: Steve Hall
PZJA Secretariat
PO Box 7051
Canberra Business Centre
CANBERRA ACT 2610

Or by email to: fisheriesTI@afma.gov.au

Background Information

What are the changes to Traditional Inhabitant Boat (TIB) licence conditions?

1. Under subsection 22(1) of the *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984* (the Act) a licence granted under section 19 is subject to conditions specified in the licence. Subsection 22(2) allows the Minister to vary or revoke a condition of the licence or specify further conditions to which the licence is subject to.
2. TIB licence conditions for Torres Strait Beche-de-mer Fishery (BDM Fishery) endorsed licences currently include total allowable catch (TAC) limits for a number of sea cucumber species measured in tonnes of gutted wet weight. Subject to Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) approval, conversion ratios for sea cucumber species would be included in the TIB licence conditions for BDM Fishery endorsed licences.
3. Conversion ratios are used to convert processed weights of beche-de-mer (BDM) (e.g. boiled and salted, or dried) back to a single standard unit of weight (wet weight gutted). This converted weight will then be used to understand total catches in the BDM fishery and to monitor reported catches against TACs.
4. The conversion ratios to be included in the TIB licence conditions for BDM Fishery endorsed licences are listed in **Attachment C**. These conversion ratios have been developed through previously dedicated research projects supported by the PZJA Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee (TSSAC) and have been recommended by the PZJA Torres Strait Hand Collectables Working Group (HCWG).
5. It is expected that conversion ratios may be updated over time as new information becomes available.

Why are the licence conditions being changed?

6. TACs in the BDM Fishery are measured in wet weight gutted form. In the Torres Strait, sea cucumber can be landed in different processed forms ranging from wet-gutted to boiled and boiled and salted. Changing the licence conditions to include conversion ratios will allow for these weights to be converted back to wet weight gutted, regardless of the processing method the fisher has utilised. This converted weight will then be used to understand total catches in the BDM Fishery and to monitor reported catches against TACs.
7. In developing the draft BDM Harvest Strategy, the HCWG has recommended weight conversion ratios for sea cucumber species based on analysis and advice from CSIRO as they are currently outlined in the draft BDM Harvest Strategy (see **Attachment C**). The HCWG further recommended that the conversion ratios, and the way in which they are applied are sufficient to support the monitoring of reported catches against TACs, noting that they are subject to change as more information becomes available. Where there are known information gaps, AFMA's approach, based on HCWG advice to be agreed by the PZJA is to apply the most conservative ratio for that same processing method available for another species.

How will this benefit Traditional Inhabitants?

8. The proposed management action gives effect to the variation of TIB licence conditions to include conversion ratios for BDM which will benefit the future sustainable management of the BDM Fishery by providing researchers and fisheries managers with important information to avoid potentially over or under-estimating total catches and will also support the implementation of the draft BDM Harvest Strategy.

Attachment B

9. Understanding accurate levels of BDM harvest in the BDM fishery will result in a flow-on benefits to Traditional Inhabitants by ensuring the sustainability of the BDM Fishery and in turn, facilitating long term access to the resource.
10. Given that many of the world's sea cucumber fisheries are fully or over-exploited, and that demand looks to be increasing, the BDM Fishery will likely be more valuable in the future. A sustainable BDM Fishery will provide a source of income and employment for Torres Strait Islander communities and downstream industries.

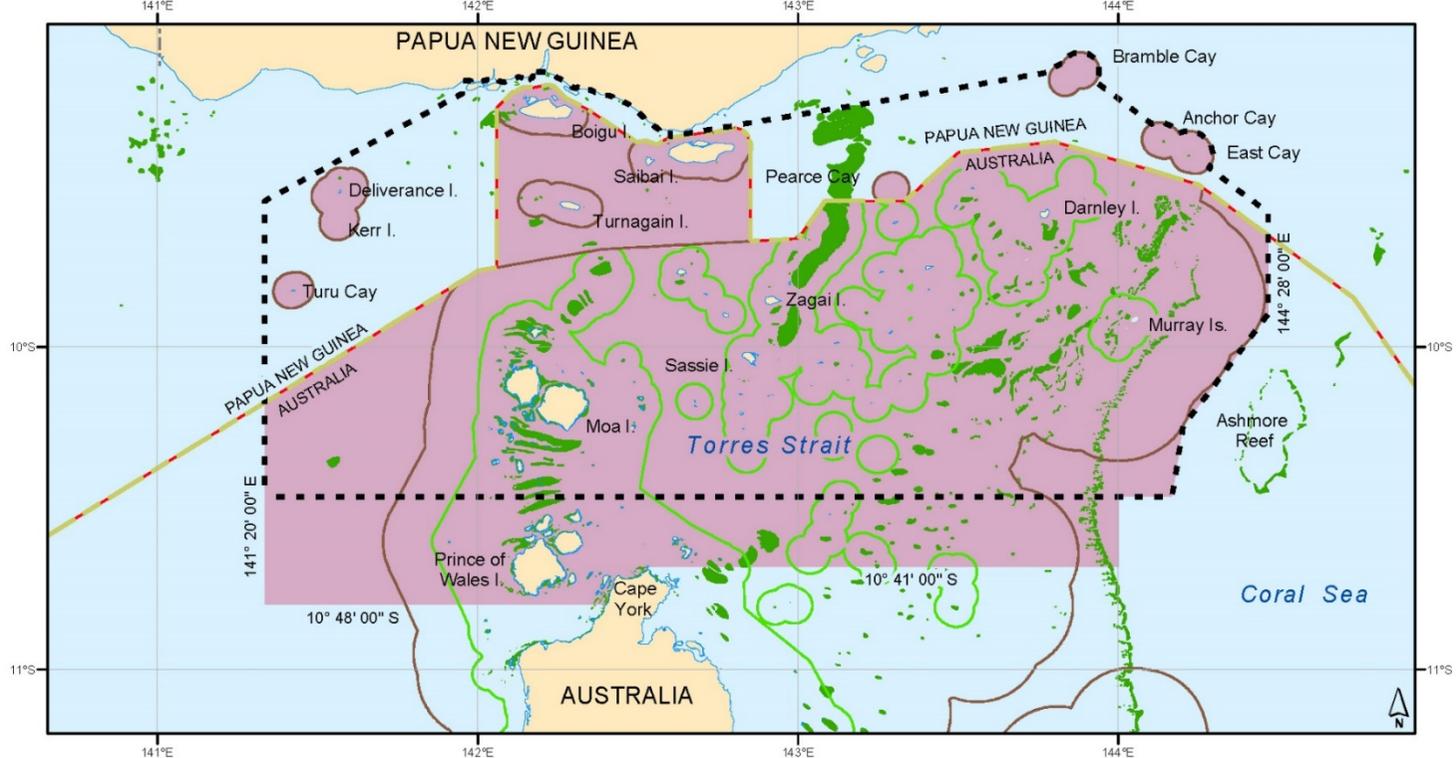
Table 1: Conversion ratios for sea cucumber species in the Torres Strait Beche-de-mer Fishery

Common Name	Species	Live to Gutted	Salted to Gutted	Boiled & Salted to Gutted	Dried to Gutted
Black Teatfish	<i>Holothuria whitmaei</i>	0.677	1.213	1.213	5.649
Brown sandfish	<i>Bohadschia vitiensis</i>	0.735	1.199	1.199	6.337
Burrowing blackfish	<i>Actinopyga spinea</i>	0.544	1.449	1.449	7.424
Curryfish (common)	<i>Stichopus herrmanni</i>	0.651	1.382	1.382	8.772
Curryfish (vastus)	<i>Stichopus vastus</i>	0.894	1.382	1.382	11.364
Deepwater blackfish	<i>Actinopyga palauensis</i>	0.818	1.374	1.374	5.263
Deepwater redfish	<i>Actinopyga echinites</i>	0.692	1.382	1.382	6.579
Elephants Trunkfish	<i>Holothuria fuscopunctata</i>	0.519	1.097	1.097	4.132
Golden sandfish	<i>Holothuria lessoni</i>	0.645	1.226	1.226	6.588
Greenfish	<i>Stichopus chloronatus</i>	0.894	1.382	1.382	11.364
Hairy blackfish	<i>Actinopyga miliaris</i>	0.48	1.037	1.037	4.785
Leopardfish	<i>Bohadschia argus</i>	0.665	1.286	1.286	5.841
Lollyfish	<i>Holothuria atra</i>	0.436	1.706	1.706	6.289
Prickly redfish	<i>Thelenota ananas</i>	0.667	1.358	1.358	11.364
Sandfish	<i>Holothuria scabra</i>	0.496	1.319	1.319	10.638
Stonefish	<i>Actinopyga lecanora</i>	0.894	1.372	1.372	6.329
Surf redfish	<i>Actinopyga mauritiana</i>	0.684	1.145	1.145	5.347
White teatfish	<i>Holothuria fuscogilva</i>	0.627	1.29	1.29	4.219
Unidentified BDM	<i>n/a</i>	0.894	1.382	1.358	11.364

Notes:

Grey shaded values are known information gaps and are filled using the most conservative conversion factor from that same processing method. Boiled and Salted to Gutted uses same values as Salted to Gutted as boiled process is assumed to not add or remove any weight from live weight. Unidentified beche-de-mer species use the most conservative conversion factor from that same processing method.

Torres Strait Fisheries Area of the Beche-de-mer Fishery



- Coastal Waters limit (3nm)
- Exclusive Economic Zone limit (200nm)
- - - Fisheries Jurisdiction line
- Protected Zone Boundary
- Territorial Sea limit (12nm)
- Low tide elevations and reefs
- Torres Strait Fisheries**
- Beche-de-mer Fishery



Produced by Geoscience Australia
for the Australian Fisheries Management Authority, August 2006
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Geographic
Datum: WGS84

- NOTES:
1. The area of the Fishery is sourced from the Torres Strait Fisheries Regulations 1985
 2. Within this fishery, arrangements exist between the Commonwealth and QLD, whereby the Coastal Waters of that State are deemed part of the AFZ
 3. The Fisheries Jurisdiction Line and Protected Zone shown on this map are established under the Treaty between Australia and the Independent State of Papua New Guinea. This Treaty entered into force on 15 February 1985
 4. The maritime zone boundaries shown on this map are sourced from the "Australian Maritime Boundaries (AMB) v2.0"

GeoCat #: 64841