

TORRES STRAIT BÊCHE-DE-MER FISHERY

TRADITIONAL AND COMMERCIAL FISHING IN THE TORRES STRAIT PROTECTED ZONE



Sandfish*

Surf redfish



Black teatfish

White teatfish



Elephant trunkfish

Prickly redfish



Curryfish

Lollyfish

A brief guide to rules and regulations as at 30th
June 2004 **

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Torres Strait Bêche-de-mer (sea cucumber) fishery is an important commercial fishery to traditional inhabitants. The fishery was based primarily on sandfish in the past, however harvesting of this species has been stopped while stocks recover. Current fishing effort focuses on white teatfish, prickly redfish and to a lesser extent, several lower value species.

Fishing for sea cucumbers in the Torres Strait is mainly by free diving from dinghies crewed by 2-3 fishers or by hand collection along reefs at low tide. Once collected, the animal is gutted, graded, cleaned, boiled, smoked and dried (bêche-de-mer). This is a labour intensive process usually carried out on processing vessels or at shore based facilities. This fishery is particularly at risk to over-harvesting and is therefore subject to a range of input and output controls. These controls primarily aim to prevent overfishing, but also allow traditional inhabitants to benefit from the use of sea cucumber stocks.

TRADITIONAL FISHING

The following rules apply when you are traditionally fishing for food or *kai kai* for you or your family.

- ✓ You **can only** have 3 bêche-de-mer (sea cucumber) per person without a dinghy
- ✓ You **can only** have 3 bêche-de-mer (sea cucumber) per person or a maximum 6 per dinghy if there is more than one person in the dinghy at anytime
- ✓ You can collect any size sea cucumber

COMMERCIAL (COMMUNITY) FISHING UNDER A TRADITIONAL INHABITANT BOAT LICENCE (TIB)

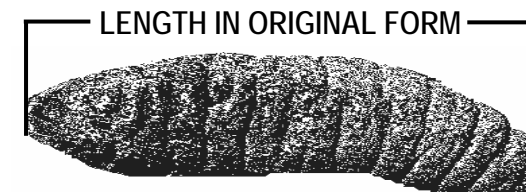
The following rules apply when you are commercially fishing and going to sell your catch.

Size Limits and Measurement

- ✓ You **can only** collect sea cucumbers equal or above the following minimum size limits -
- | | |
|---|--------|
| White teatfish (<i>Holothuria nobilis</i>) | 320 mm |
| Prickly redfish (<i>Thelenota ananas</i>) | 300 mm |
| Deepwater redfish (<i>Holothuria echinites</i>) | 120 mm |
| Black fish (<i>Actinopyga miliaris</i>) | 220 mm |

Lollyfish (<i>Holothuria atra</i>)	150 mm
Curry fish (<i>Stichopus hermanni</i>)	270 mm
Elephant's trunk fish (<i>Holothuria fuscopunctata</i>)	240 mm

- ✓ They must be measured from their **longest points** when they are in their **original form** (see following illustration).



No Take Species

- ✗ You are **not** allowed to collect sandfish, black teatfish and the surf redfish.

Sandfish (<i>Holothuria scabra</i>)	180 mm
Black teatfish (<i>Holothuria whitmaei</i>)	250 mm
Surf redfish (<i>Actinopyga mauritiana</i>)	220 mm

Gear Restrictions

- ✓ You **can** only collect sea cucumbers by hand or hand held non-mechanical implements.
- ✗ You **cannot** use hookah gear or SCUBA gear.

Boat Restriction

- ✓ Dinghies must be **less** than 7 metres in length.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information please contact either the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) on (07) 4069-1990 or Queensland Boating and Fishing Patrol (QB&FP) on (07) 4069-1772.

* Underwater photographs of live sea cucumbers reproduced from Sea-Ex Australia - www.sea-ex.com

** Please note that this information in this brochure is provided only as a guide and that the regulations may have changed since publication.

