

# TORRES STRAIT TROPICAL ROCK LOBSTER FISHERY

## TRADITIONAL AND COMMERCIAL FISHING IN THE TORRES STRAIT PROTECTED ZONE



A brief guide to rules and regulations from 30th  
June 2004 \*

### GENERAL INFORMATION

The Torres Strait Tropical rock lobster fishery is the second most valuable commercial fishery in Torres Strait and very important to many Torres Strait Islanders. The fishery is based on a single species, the ornate or tropical rock lobster (*Panulirus ornatus*).

Lobster, *kaiar* and *kaier* in the traditional languages are taken by hand, scoop net or a short handspear by divers working from dinghies. Most divers free dive on shallow reef tops but others use hookah (surface air supplied) to dive the large areas of open bottom in Torres Strait. Most fishing occurs during neap tides when currents are slower and the water is clearer. Commercial fishing occurs from December to September, inclusive, with a peak during March-August.

### 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 lobsters per person without a dinghy.
- You can only have 3 lobsters per person or a maximum 6 lobsters per dinghy if there is more than one person in the dinghy at anytime.
- You can collect any size lobster anytime.
- Gear restrictions apply to traditional fishing (see following).

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

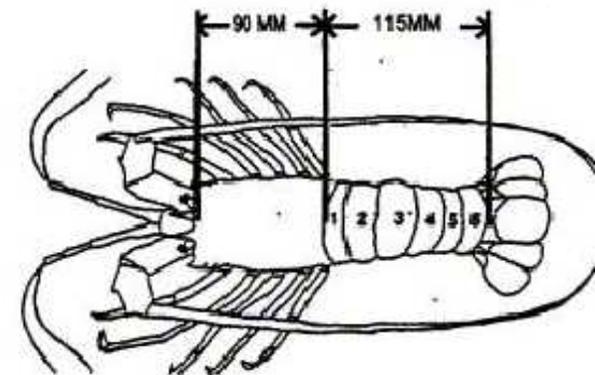
The following rules apply when you are commercially fishing and going to sell your catch.

#### Size Limits and Measurement

- Lobster bodies (carapace) must not be less than 90mm in length; or
- Lobster tails must not be less than 115mm in length (see following illustration).

#### Closed Season

- You are not allowed to catch lobster commercially between 1st October and 30th November.
- You are not allowed to use hookah gear between 1st October and 31st January the following year.



### Gear Restrictions

- You can only collect lobsters by hand or with the use of a spear, scoop net or other hand held implement.
- You can only use hookah gear to assist in breathing underwater from 1st February to 30th September.
- You cannot use hookah gear during scheduled spring tide closures.

### Carrying Meat

- You cannot process or carry meat of the lobster that has been removed from any part of a lobster. Shells must be kept on.

### Boat Replacement

- A boat replacement policy exists in this fishery, please consult with one of the following contacts.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

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

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

