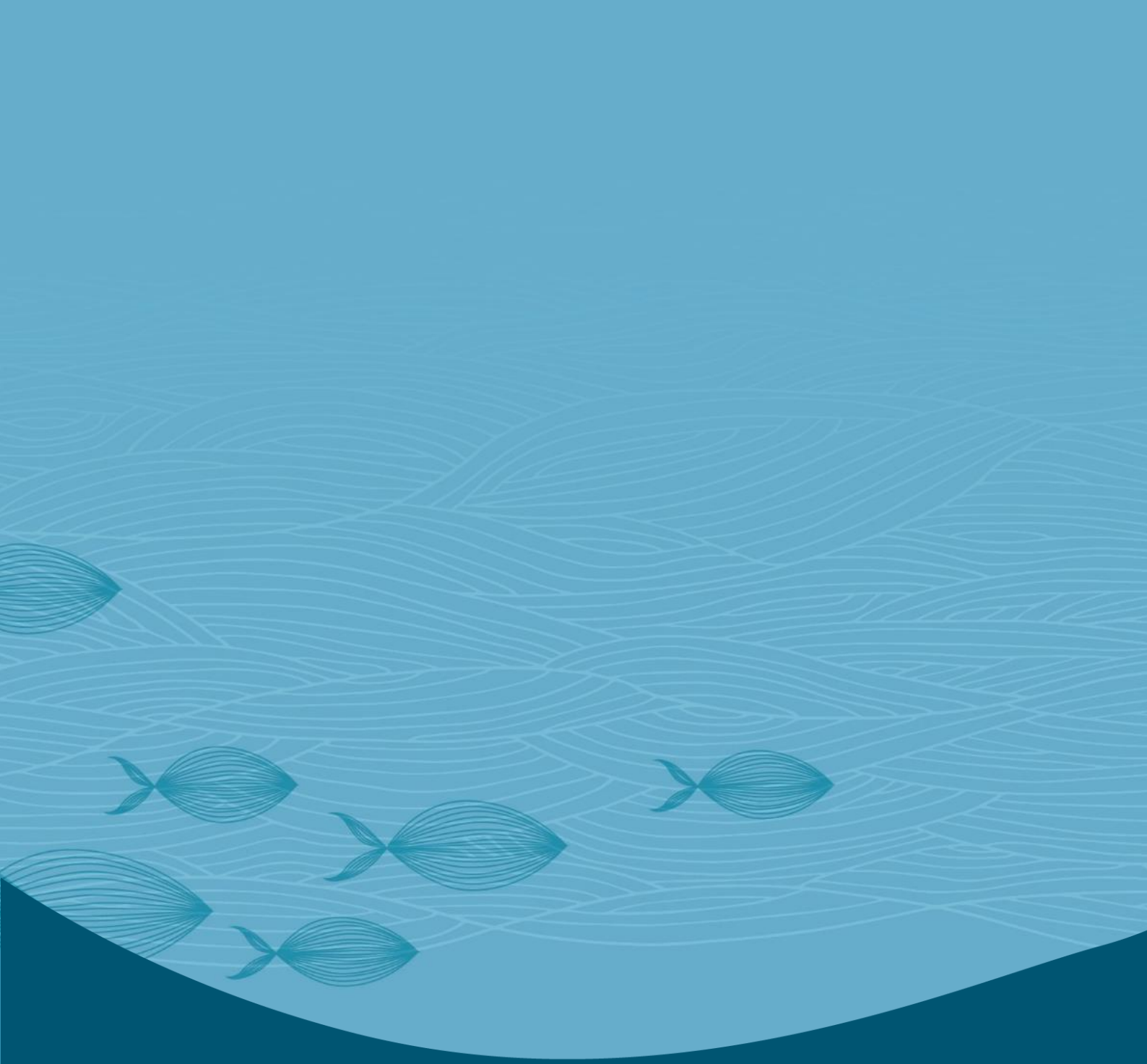

Recreational fishing in Queensland

Consultation on fishery reforms

Discussion paper

Queensland Government

This publication has been compiled by Fisheries Queensland.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries proudly acknowledges all First Nations peoples (Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples) and the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the country on which we live and work. We acknowledge their continuing connection to land, waters and culture and commit to ongoing reconciliation. We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Contents

Have your say

No decisions have been made and none will be made until after consultation

Fisheries Queensland is seeking feedback from fishers and other sectors in the community on management reform options presented in this discussion paper. Feedback on this discussion paper will be used to guide future management strategies to ensure the sustainable management of our fisheries.

Different management reform options will have different impacts on sectors (e.g. recreational fishers, commercial fishers, tackle retailers and environmental organisations). Therefore, it is important to understand the preferences of people who have an interest in the affected fisheries.

The fastest and easiest way to provide your feedback is to complete the online survey.

The survey questions are also available at the end of this document if you would prefer to print the survey and post your submission to:

Recreational fishing discussion paper
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
GPO Box 46
Brisbane Qld 4001

PLEASE NOTE: The survey questions are designed to seek your input – **they are not a voting tool**. Answers to these questions will be used to help develop options for fisheries management action and provide an insight into the preferences of all stakeholders.

Submissions close 5 pm, Thursday 9 May 2024

For more information, email fisheriesmanagers@daf.qld.gov.au or call 13 25 23.

Background

Recreational fishing is part of Queensland's way of life. It provides immense socio-economic benefit to the State and is worth more than $2.5 billion[1] annually to the economy.

The *Queensland Sustainable Fisheries Strategy: 2017-2027* seeks to reform Queensland's commercial, charter and recreational fisheries through a commitment to developing fishery harvest strategies in consultation with the fisheries working groups and Sustainable Fisheries Expert Panel. Harvest strategies and other management reforms effectively manage commercial fisheries; however, they have less control over the total harvest of recreational fisheries where there is no formal sector allocation or there is not enough data to accurately determine recreational harvest. Conversely, we also have a diverse array of high-quality stocked fisheries in our freshwater impoundments. Some working groups and the Sustainable Fisheries Expert Panel have expressed comments regarding the effective control of the growing impact of recreational fishing on Queensland's fisheries resources.

Post COVID-19, the Queensland population has grown significantly and continues to grow faster than any other state at around 1.4% (approximately 74,000 people) per year.[2] Many people move to Queensland for the outdoor lifestyle, including fishing. In 2019, it was estimated that 19% of Queenslanders (around 943,000 people) over the age of 5 had fished recreationally.

Fisheries Queensland is aware that the fisheries working groups and several fishing sectors have noted the increasing fishing capacity of the recreational fishing sector. This increase in capacity includes higher boat registration numbers and larger average vessel size, the rapid and widespread sharing of information on social media, increased technical advances (e.g. anchoring (spot lock), navigational, location, ocean bathymetry, echolocation and sounding technology), and the increasing affordability of these technical advances.

This discussion paper outlines management issues and reform options to identify suitable, sustainable management controls that can support expanding recreational fishing capacity, focusing on increased sector responsibility, and ensure the ongoing sustainability of Queensland's fisheries and non-target species.

The management reforms for consideration are:

1. recreational fishing gear changes
    - banning opera house style traps
    - banning lightweight crab pots, and new minimum gear specifications
2. size and possession limit changes, and new closed season
    - separating possession limits for crimson and saddletail snapper and other considerations
    - new black jewfish closed season
    - increasing possession limits for black jewfish
3. expanding the Stocked Impoundment Permit Scheme
4. banning recreational take of coral.

[1] Moore, A, Schirmer, J, Magnusson, A, Keller, K, Hinten, G, Galeano, D, Woodhams, J, Wright, D, Maloney, L, FRDC, ABARES, UC, 2023, National Social and Economic Survey of Recreational Fishers 2018-2021, February. CC BY 3.0.
[2] Australian Bureau of Statistics, 28 June 2022.

While these proposed reforms are intended to address management issues in the recreational sector, some of the proposals (e.g. black jewfish) may also be of interest to the commercial sector, First nations peoples and conservation groups.

1. Recreational fishing gear changes

Banning opera house style traps

Opera house style yabby traps are a popular form of recreational fishing gear in Queensland freshwater systems. They are cheap, effective and require very little effort to use.

This trap poses risks to air-breathing animals, including threatened species such as platypus and turtles. As a result, most states and territories have already either banned or further restricted the use of this trap. Banning opera house style traps in Queensland would provide a consistent approach across Australia.

New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory have all moved to prohibit the use of opera house style in recent years. To achieve more national consistency and improved environmental outcomes from recreational yabby and redclaw fishing, Fisheries Queensland is committed to considering how a phase-out of opera house style traps could be best implemented in all Queensland waters.

Currently, opera house style traps (funnel traps, including round traps), shrimp traps (concertina traps), dilly (hoop) nets, pyramid traps and canister traps can be used in Queensland freshwater systems.

While there are no platypus present in large areas of the state west of the Great Dividing Range, there are other native fauna such as water birds, turtles and native water rats. These species are managed under federal and state environmental legislation and would benefit from the adoption of more environmentally friendly recreational fishing methods.

In 2015, new regulations were introduced to reduce bycatch of air-breathing animals in Queensland's dams, weirs, rivers and streams – including restrictions on freshwater trap opening dimensions and where the traps could be used. A new open-topped pyramid trap was also permitted for use in non-tidal waters. This equipment has been shown to be effective in catching yabbies and redclaw when checked regularly by recreational fishers.

Voluntary withdrawal of opera house style traps from major retailers has not resulted in a reduction of their use. Redclaw and yabby fishers prefer to use this trap and it can easily be bought online and from small and medium retailers. Past consultation with the fishing tackle industry and its peak body, the Australian Fishing Trade Association has shown there is in principle support for Queensland to follow the approach of other jurisdictions and adopt a more nationally consistent set of fishing regulations.

Banning the use of opera house style traps could take effect through an immediate ban or a gradual phase-out by 2025:

- An immediate ban could be implemented upon the commencement of regulation changes; however, this would have significant impacts on recreational fishers as they would have to stop using the traps immediately and buy new compliant traps. The tackle industry has indicated it would take 6–12 months to reduce stock, as there are no other alternative markets for this trap, which would also have a significant economic impact on the tackle industry.
- A gradual phase-out can be an effective way of removing gear from the recreational fishing sector. Opera house style traps normally last 12 months if used regularly, so banning this trap from mid-2025 would allow adequate time for the tackle industry and recreational fishers to adjust. In April 2010, inverted dillies (witches' hats) were successfully removed from the crab fishery using this method.

Fisheries Queensland is also considering changes to reduce ghost fishing and black-marketing, including a boat limit of 4 traps per person and marking traps attached to a fixed location above the water line.

It is proposed that concertina traps (shrimp traps), canister traps, dilly nets and open top traps remain available for use, with minor changes to improve clarity, remove unnecessary restrictions and strengthen environmental requirements.

Banning lightweight crab pots, and new minimum gear specifications

Lightweight crab pots are a popular form of recreational fishing gear in Queensland tidal systems. They are cheap, effective and require very little effort to use.

Lightweight crab pots used incorrectly, abandoned, lost or caught in tidal currents can cause ghost fishing – trapping other fish and wildlife, including protected species such as marine turtles. There have been ongoing calls by various groups to ban the use of these crab pots.

The most recent Queensland statewide recreational fishing survey[3], reported mud crabs as one of the most recreationally harvested crustaceans, with retained catch estimated at 160 tonnes for the Queensland east coast and Gulf of Carpentaria combined. These estimates confirm the significance of non-commercial retained catch – which, if compared to reported commercial catch in the same year (2019–2020), represents around 21% of the overall take.

The main gear used by all fishers to catch crabs (other than spanner crab) is wire-mesh crab pots and trawl-mesh (nylon) collapsible traps. Due to easy access to this fishery, there is a high level of use by all sectors, which results in increased risks such as ghost pots and interactions with threatened, endangered and protected species.

[3] Teixeira, D., Janes, R. and Webley, J. (2021) 2019/20 Statewide Recreational Fishing Survey Key Results. Project Report. State of Queensland, Brisbane.

Past consultation with the fishing tackle industry and its peak body, the Australian Fishing Trade Association has shown there is in principle support to address these issues.

Marine turtle interaction records in the Strandnet database between July 1969 and April 2023 show the following:

- Of the 1,839 records flagged as being fishing related:
  - 76% of marine turtles were dead, 23% were alive and 1% had an uncertain fate
  - 24% were caught in crab pots – mostly Moreton Bay region
  - 21% were caught in the float line of crab pots – mostly Moreton Bay region
  - 18% were caught in ghost nets – mostly Gulf of Carpentaria (northern, foreign nettings)
  - 15% were caught in fishing line – mostly Moreton Bay region.
- There are 436 records of marine turtles entangled in crab pots (excluding rope entanglement), most of which have an unspecified pot type.
- Of the 118 records for which the gear type can be inferred from the report:
  - 47 were rectangular pots
  - 43 were lightweight pots (lightweight = rings <10 mm, mesh <27 ply)
  - 24 were heavy duty pots (heavy duty = ring ≥ 10 mm, mesh ≥27ply)
  - 2 were dillies
  - 2 were opera house style pots.
- Of the reported marine turtles caught in crab pots, >90% were dead.

The Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol (QBFP) commits significant resources to monitoring and inspecting fishing gear compliance and cleaning up lost and abandoned crab pots. In the 2022–2023 financial year, 1,048 abandoned or non-compliant crab pots were seized by QBFP officers across the state.

Queensland is the last jurisdiction in Australia that allows the use of lightweight crab pots in tidal waters. In 2019, Fisheries Queensland undertook a public consultation on banning the use of lightweight crab pots, with general support received for the proposal. However, the proposal was deferred for later consideration due to business implications arising from COVID-19.

Banning the use of lightweight crab pots remains a key priority for Fisheries Queensland to minimise the broader ecological risks of ghost pots.

The proposal is to ban the use of lightweight crab pots and introduce minimum gear specifications as follows:

- Collapsible round pots must have:
  - a minimum diameter of 800 mm and not exceeding 1000 mm
    and
  - a steel wire ring of 8 mm or more and a mesh size of 50 mm or more.
- Square, rectangle or wire traps must:
  - not exceed 1000 mm in length, height or width
    and
  - have a maximum of 4 openings.

These minimum specifications are intended to help reduce the number of pots set throughout water systems and displaced by tidal currents, as heavier pots will help reduce ghost fishing.

Rope specifications and escape vents are also being considered. Reducing the amount of rope on the surface of the water would minimise the risk of gear entanglements with migrating humpback whales during the winter months and reduce the loss of fishing gear from entanglement with other fishing boats. Weighted or non-buoyant float lines would also reduce the amount of rope floating on the surface of the water, minimising the risk of animals becoming entangled and reducing the likelihood of becoming a marine hazard to others.

Escape vents allow undersized crabs and other non-target species to escape, while still allowing the gear to catch legal-sized crabs. Escape vents are already required on commercial crab gear. This is achieved by having one large rectangular escape vent (120 mm x 50 mm) or one round escape vent (105 mm diameter). It is proposed that any item of crab gear used by a recreational fisher would need to have either one large rectangular escape vent or one round escape vent installed, consistent with the measurements above.

A phase-out period to mid-2025 would be the most effective way to remove and ban the use of lightweight crab pots and introduce new gear specifications. This would allow retailers to adjust to the new specifications and ensure fishers have enough time to buy compliant gear.

2. Possession limit changes, and new closed season

Separate possession limits for crimson and saddletail snapper and other considerations

The reef line fishery working group reviewed management arrangements and available scientific information for crimson snapper (*Lutjanus erythropterus*) and saddletail snapper (*L. malabaricus*) in December 2021 and April 2022. These discussions were informed by new stock assessments – the biomass estimates indicate separate management of these species is required.

The working group supported splitting the combined possession limit for these species and increasing size limits to reflect the size of maturity.

Crimson and saddletail snapper are long-lived, slow-growing species. They are susceptible to fishing pressure, barotrauma and localised depletion.

Existing data from the recreational fishing surveys and commercial fishing logbooks indicate around 70% of saddletail snapper catch is taken by recreational fishers. Estimates based on 2019–2020 survey data indicated approximately 162-165 tonnes of saddletail snapper were harvested by recreational fishers that year.[4] Based on statewide recreational creel surveys[5], saddletail snapper is the fifth most harvested species by recreational fishers in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. The popularity of this species is also reflected in the charter fishing sector – logbook data indicates a peak in catch in 2016–17 of 29 tonnes and a 5-year average harvest of 17 tonnes.

In 2003–2004, a minimum size limit (40 cm) and a combined possession limit (9) for crimson and saddletail snapper were introduced for recreational fishers, with a quota management system was implemented for the commercial reef line fishery. Both species were managed together because they are often caught together and look similar at around 40 cm. At a larger size these species are more easily distinguished. In the commercial sector, these species are managed as part of the 'other species' individual transferable quota category in the coral reef fin fish fishery.

Many recreational, charter and commercial fishers selectively fish for the more coveted saddletail snapper or will release crimson snapper in order to harvest more saddletail snapper. This preference has led to saddletail snapper being identified as high risk in the reef line fishery level 2 ecological risk assessment.[6]

[4] Teixeira, D., Janes, R. and Webley, J. (2021) 2019/20 Statewide Recreational Fishing Survey Key Results. Project Report. State of Queensland, Brisbane.
[5] Fisheries Queensland Boat Ramp Survey Program, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, 2023, https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/fisheries/monitoring-research/monitoring-reporting/boat-ramp-survey-program/dashboard
[6] Walton, L., Jacobsen, I., and Larkin, J. (2021) Level 2 Ecological Risk Assessment – Reef Line Fishery 2021 Update. Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. https://era.daf.qld.gov.au/id/eprint/8427/1/Reef%20Line%20Fishery%20Level%202%20ERA%202021%20Update%20%5bFINAL%5d.pdf

To address stakeholder concerns about saddletail snapper and the high-risk rating in the ecological risk assessment, the first east coast saddletail snapper stock assessment was undertaken in 2021. The assessment was based on available data from 1961 to 2020. This was also the first ever stock assessment of any east coast reef line fish species in the 'other species' quota category. The biomass estimates across all scenarios ranged from 13% to 73% of unfished levels. The most likely model scenario, based on scientific expert advice, estimated the saddletail snapper biomass at 23%.[7] In this assessment, the crimson snapper stock was estimated at 44% of unfished levels.

Under the *Reef Line Fishery Harvest Strategy 2020–2025*, low biomass estimates would require application of decisions rules to rebuild the east coast saddletail snapper stock. However, given long recovery times for the stock due to their biology and the high levels of uncertainty in the biomass estimates, application of decision rules would require large-scale management changes. Therefore, incremental changes are proposed in the first instance, such as separate possession limits. As discussed below, it is proposed to split the combined crimson snapper and saddletail snapper possession limit (9 fish) into a separate limit for each species.

Separate possession limits

Crimson and saddletail snapper now have separate stock assessments and display different stock conditions, so they should be managed separately. This is particularly important given the popularity of saddletail snapper and its susceptibility to fishing pressure.

Separate possession limits are proposed for crimson and saddletail snapper. Boat ramp survey data from 689 trips out across the state between November 2015 and September 2023 indicated the majority (77%) of recreational fishers kept between 0 and 2 saddletail snapper each (Figure 1 overleaf).

An indication of the impacts on the harvest of saddletail snapper because of different possession limits is shown in Figure 2 (overleaf). This is based on the same boat ramp survey data and an average weight for recreationally landed saddletail snapper of 2.96 kg. The average fish weight is based on the average length of saddletail snapper from the boat ramp survey data and a published length–weight relationship.[8]

The proposed possession limits would be set at 4 crimson snapper and 4 saddletail snapper, resulting in a 10% reduction in the recreational harvest of saddletail snapper.

[7] Campbell, A. B., Fox, A. R., Hillcoat, K. B., and Sumpter, L. (2021) Stock assessment of Queensland east coast saddletail snapper (*Lutjanus malabaricus*), Australia. Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. https://era.daf.qld.gov.au/id/eprint/8225/1/Saddletail%20snapper%20stock%20assessment%20report%202021.pdf

[8] McPherson, G. R., Squire, L., and O'Brien, J. (1992) Reproduction of three dominant *Lutjanus* species of the Great Barrier Reef inter-reef fishery. In. Asian Fisheries Science 5.1, pp. 15–24.

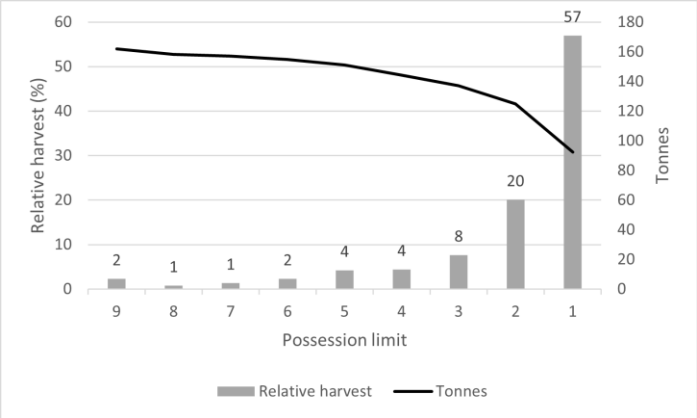

Figure 1: The proportion of the total harvest of saddletail snapper related to the number kept per fisher from boat-based fishing trips, for example if one fish was caught between 2 people on a boat, then number kept per fisher would be 0.5 (source – Boat Ramp Survey data from November 2015 – September 2023)

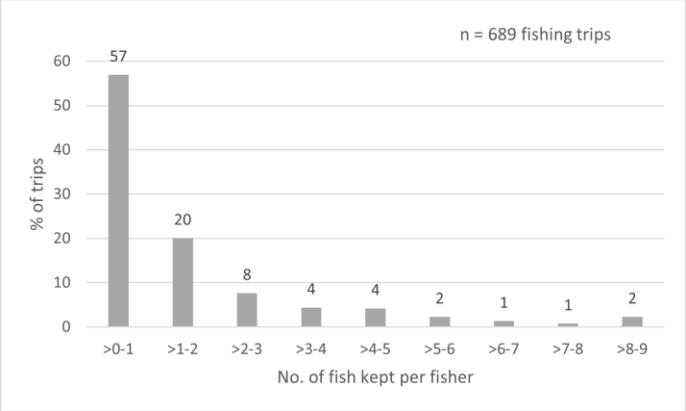

Figure 2: Impact of reduced possession limit on recreational harvest of saddletail snapper (sources – Boat Ramp Survey data from November 2015 – September 2023 and 2019–20 Statewide Recreational Fishing Survey)

Other considerations for saddletail snapper and crimson snapper

Research has shown the size of maturity for saddletail snapper and crimson snapper is much larger than the current minimum size limit of 40 cm. Saddletail snapper live to at least 39 years of age, start to breed when they reach 58–61 cm total length (5–6 years of age) and do not fully mature until at least 78 cm total length (9 years of age).[9] Crimson snapper are known to live to at least 35 years of age and start to breed when they reach around 51 cm total length (4–5 years of age).[10]

In line with the principle of setting a size limit that allows fish to reach sexual maturity, this would require increasing the minimum size limit for both species. Susceptibility to barotrauma, an increase in post-release mortality and simplicity would be considered, which could result in new a minimum size limit of 55 cm (the same as red emperor). However, 50% of saddletail snapper would not have reached maturity at this size and few crimson snapper would be caught and retained above this size.

Changing size limits are not proposed at this time and will be further considered once new information becomes available from the next saddletail snapper stock assessment. However, stakeholder views are sought on setting optimised size limits in line with biological information and use of other measures, such as voluntary recreational catch reporting.

Many stakeholders have expressed a desire for better recreational catch data for saddletail snapper. Improved monitoring and research reporting is also a foundational reform of the *Queensland Sustainable Fisheries Strategy: 2017–2027* and includes several actions relating to improved data collection, additional monitoring of key biological stocks and the use of novel technologies such as apps. Using the QLD Fishing app to voluntarily report Spanish mackerel catches has been announced and expected to commence from 1 July 2024. Fisheries Queensland looks forward to continuing to work closely with stakeholders on the voluntary reporting program.

Other jurisdictions, such as Victoria and South Australia, have introduced mandatory recreational catch reporting for at-risk or high-value species, such as rock lobster and snapper. There are a range of ways that recreational catch can be reported in a timely and cost-effective way, such as using modern technology like smartphone apps and stakeholder views are sought on recreational catch reporting.

[9] Hillcoat, K. 2023. Latitudinal Variations in the Age-based Demography of Two Large Predatory Reef Fishes (Lutjanus malabaricus and Lutjanus sebae) in Queensland, Australia. PhD. James Cook University, Townsville Australia.
[10] McPherson, G. R. and Squire, L. (1992) Age and growth of three dominant *Lutjanus* species of the Great Barrier Reef inter-reef fishery. In. Asian Fisheries Science 5.1, pp. 25–36.

New black jewfish closed season and changes to possession and boat limits

The black jewfish (*Protonibea dicanthus*) research project confirmed that this species spawns over 4 months (November to February) and this period would be considered the optimal scientific window for protecting spawning stock.

From a practical point of view, many members of the East Coast Inshore Fishery Working Group showed strong support for a spawning closure to align with the barramundi closed season. Implementing a closed season would provide extra protection by offsetting the time fishers target and catch black jewfish until spawning is complete.

With black jewfish stocks at healthy levels, it is also timely to review the current possession limit for recreational fishing for the species to complement increases in commercial catch limits.

Black jewfish is taken in both the recreational and commercial fishing sectors. The commercial fishery is focused on Central Queensland and has recently experienced a large shift in commercial effort and gear types. Black jewfish was historically considered a byproduct species within the inshore net fishery but has now become a targeted line-caught species. This is expected to continue following the current structural adjustment to phase-out gillnet fishing in the Great Barrier Reef.

Black jewfish spawn over 4 months from November to February each year. This period would be considered the optimal scientific window for protecting spawning stocks. In November 2018, during consultation on proposed management changes to protect black jewfish, a seasonal closure (based on the barramundi closed season) received support from both the commercial and recreational sectors.

The black jewfish stock assessment found that the biomass is most likely at or above the target reference point of 60% unfished biomass. Despite assessment of the stock being in a healthy state, there is strong support from the commercial fishery to not target black jewfish when they are spawning. This protects spawning stock, as well as improving market opportunity, as the recovery rate from whole fish to meat and swim bladder in a black jewfish is poorer during this time compared with the rest of the year.

A spawning closure for black jewfish was considered by the East Coast Inshore Fishery Working Group, with many members showing strong support for the closure to align with the barramundi closed season, which runs between 1st November and 31 January on the east coast and 7 October to 31 January in the Gulf of Carpentaria each year. The Working Group also reviewed the stock assessment for this species in October 2022 and discussed management arrangements for the 2023 season. Most members supported a spawning closure and recreational fishers.

With black jewfish stocks as sustainable levels, the recreational fishers on the Working Group also requested an increase to the possession limit of 1 fish to complement the recent increase in the commercial total allowable catch limit and to reflect the healthy state of the fishery. Stakeholder feedback and comment is invited on this matter.

3. Expanding the Stocked Impoundment Permit Scheme

Changes to the Stocked Impoundment Permit Scheme (SIPS) are proposed to include additional impoundments. The *Guideline on the administration of Queensland's Stocked Impoundment Permit Scheme* allows impoundments to be added and removed from the scheme.

In August and September 2022, stocking groups lodged expressions of interest for changes to the scheme. After consultation with both SIPS and freshwater working groups, the addition of 3 impoundments was supported – Enoggera Reservoir, Mount Morgan No.7 Dam and Paradise Dam.

Queensland's Stocked Impoundment Permit Scheme (SIPS) supports funding and activities aimed at creating recreational fisheries in designated impoundments across Queensland. The intent of SIPS is to provide recreational fishing opportunities, with flow on socio-economic benefits to regional communities, while also reducing fishing pressure on wild fish stocks.

Fisheries Queensland periodically calls for expressions of interest from stocking groups that would like to be added or removed from the Stocked Impoundment Permit Scheme (SIPS). Dams must meet the mandatory requirements for SIPS impoundments and additional requirements are assessed by Fisheries Queensland using the *Guideline on the administration of Queensland's Stocked Impoundment Permit Scheme*.

Applications for impoundments to be added or removed from the scheme were sought on 15 August 2022. Stocking groups had until 30 September 2022 to submit their application.

Five applications to add impoundments were submitted – Enoggera Reservoir, Lake Manchester, Ross River Dam, Mount Morgan No. 7 Dam and Paradise Dam. The following assessments were made for each dam by the SIPS and Freshwater working group.

Enoggera Reservoir

Enoggera Reservoir is conveniently located in inner city Brisbane and is stocked by Brisbane Valley Anglers Fish Stocking Association Incorporated. It has both paddlecraft and shore-based access and established recreational facilities. This dam is unique due to its inner-city location, making it easily accessible to a higher population and serving as a family friendly dam by limiting travel distance. Due to this, the scheme would benefit by having Enoggera Reservoir added to SIPS.

Lake Manchester

Lake Manchester is located on Cabbage Tree Creek in the mid-Brisbane River and is stocked by Brisbane Valley Anglers Fish Stocking Association Incorporated. It has both paddlecraft and shore-based access and established recreational facilities. Lake Manchester does not have 'pull-up' launching facilities and requires a level of portage or walking to access the impoundment, making it inaccessible for those with mobility issues and impractical for fishers with a large amount of equipment.

Ross River Dam

Ross River Dam is a large impoundment located on the Ross River near Townsville and is stocked by the Townsville Barramundi Restocking Group. Currently, there is no public access to the dam. This would need to be resolved before the impoundment could be added to SIPS. Townsville City Council is presently developing a recreation plan with expanded recreational access being considered. Despite accessibility issues, the stocking group is seeking provisional approval should access be granted in the near future.

Mount Morgan No. 7 Dam

Mount Morgan No.7 Dam is a large impoundment on the Dee River in Mount Morgan and close to Rockhampton. The dam is stocked by Mount Morgan Promotional & Development Incorporated. The dam has an established fishery, with several different types of fish attracting structures already installed. The dam is easily accessible with established recreational facilities, including the newly installed playground, outdoor gym equipment and upgraded picnic area and barbeque facilities. Historically, the dam has been used as the community water source, which meant very low dam levels could be experienced from time-to-time. However, this issue has now been rectified and the dam level will be maintained within adequate stocking levels.

Paradise Dam

Paradise Dam is a large impoundment located on the Burnett River near Biggenden and is stocked by the Paradise Stocking Association Incorporated. It has a number of boat and shore-based angling opportunities with 2 primary recreation sites. While some disruption is expected over the coming years due to ongoing dam safety and reinstatement works, Paradise Dam is expected to return to full operational status.

It should be noted that Paradise Dam operates at a reduced stocking capacity due to the presence of endangered lungfish communities. Adding the impoundment to SIPS would not result in any change to this reduced stocking capacity. However, many SIPS impoundments are stocked at similar rates due to financial limitations. Adding Paradise Dam to the scheme would be dependent on further discussions with the water service provider.

Supported impoundments

After consultation with both the SIPS and freshwater working groups, three impoundments were supported to join the scheme – Enoggera Reservoir, Mount Morgan No.7 Dam and Paradise Dam. Ross River Dam and Lake Manchester were not supported by the stocking groups as they did not currently meet the accessibility criteria as per the SIPS administration guideline. Fisheries Queensland has also assessed the applications and agreed with the conclusion reached by the stocking groups, subject to public consultation and further consideration of specific concerns. Sunwater has recently announced that further works will be required at Paradise Dam, including the potential construction of a new dam wall. Fisheries Queensland will consult with Sunwater to determine any impacts to stocking prior to a final decision on the impoundments addition to SIPS being made.

There were no applications asking to be removed from the SIPS. One impoundment (Beehive Dam) is proposed to be administratively removed due to loss of recreational access and the closure of the stocking group.

The unique nature of these impoundments (location and characteristics) will add variability to SIPS, and it is expected that their addition will benefit the scheme overall. If the impoundments are successfully added to the scheme, there may be some impact to the overall distribution of funds between SIPS impoundments until popularity and awareness increases at the new dams. Given the current year-on-year financial performance of SIPS, it is predicted the impact on other impoundments will be marginal.

4. Banning recreational take of coral

The recreational take of coral is already prohibited under both federal and state marine park legislation. Banning recreational take of coral in all waters is proposed to help address compliance risks and provide greater protection of our coral reefs.

Internationally, corals have been recognised as species of concern and are listed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Coral reefs are under pressure from multiple human activities and natural threats. These include climate change, poor water quality due to land-based pollution, pests such as the coral-eating crown-of-thorns starfish, fishing, coastal development and extreme weather events.

In Queensland, the recreational take of coral is already prohibited under both federal and state marine park legislation. This includes the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, Great Sandy Marine Park and Moreton Bay Marine Park. Recreational take of coral is also constrained by regulations that do not allow recreational fishers to use underwater breathing apparatus (SCUBA or hookah).

Currently, the take of coral is allowed outside of federal and state marine parks (i.e. between the southern boundary of the Great Sandy Marine Park and the northern boundary of the Moreton Bay Marine Park). This creates compliance risks as there are no rules currently in place regarding number or size for each coral species that can be taken.

In consideration of the ecological value of coral reefs, Fisheries Queensland is proposing to ban recreational take of coral in all waters. This would help address compliance risks and provide greater protection of our coral reefs for the future.

The needs of hobbyists and aquarium enthusiasts will continue to be met through the Queensland commercial coral fishery, which is a niche hand-collection fishery operating under strict input and output controls, including sustainable harvest limits.[11]

In recognition of the importance of Queensland's coral reefs and the need for more precautionary management of CITES-listed species, it is proposed to ban the recreational take of all coral species, dead or alive, in all Queensland waters.

[11] For more information, visit https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/fisheries-profiles/commercial-harvest-fisheries/coral

Survey questions

Your say matters and we want to hear from you about which management measures you prefer. The questions with an asterisk (*) are mandatory.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries is collecting the information on this form to inform future management of Queensland's fisheries under the *Fisheries Act 1994* and subordinate legislation.

This information is being collected for the purpose of obtaining feedback on proposed changes to management actions. Your personal information will not be disclosed to any other parties unless authorised or required by law.

Question 1. Your information

Name:

Address:

Postcode*:

Email address*:

Organisation name (if applicable): _____

Question 2. What sector of the fishing industry are you part of? * *(Please select all that apply)*

☐ Commercial fisher

☐ Recreational fisher

☐ Charter fishing operator

☐ Traditional fisher/Traditional Owner

☐ Seafood wholesaler/marketer

☐ Hospitality (restaurant, café, fish and chip shop) owner/worker

☐ Fishing tackle retailer

☐ Environmental group,

☐ industry peak body,

☐ Interested community member

☐ Stocking Group – SIPS

☐ Stocking Group – Non-SIPS

☐ Other non-government organisation

☐ Other (*Please specify*)_____

Banning opera house style traps

Question 3. If opera house style traps were banned in Queensland waters, would you prefer an immediate ban or a phase-out period with the ban taking effect from mid-2025?

- ☐ Immediate ban (on commencement of regulation)
- ☐ Phase-out period with ban taking effect from mid-2025
- ☐ Other (*Please specify)*_____

Comments:

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Question 4. Which of the following gear should continue to be used in Queensland non-tidal waters? *(Please select all that apply)*

- ☐ Concertina traps (shrimp traps)
- ☐ Canister traps
- ☐ Dilly (hoop) nets
- ☐ Open top (pyramid) traps
- ☐ Other (*Please specify)*_____

Comments:

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Question 5. Do you support introducing trap boat limits (consistent with limits for crab gear)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Comments:

Question 6. Do you support introducing requirements to mark traps (consistent with crab gear)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Comments:

Banning lightweight crab pots, and new minimum gear specifications

Question 7. Do you agree with banning the use of lightweight crab pots in Queensland waters?

- ☐ Yes.
- ☐ No (*If no, what changes would you recommend to reduce ghost pots and threatened, endangered and protected species entrapment?*)
- ☐ Don't know

Comments:

Question 8. If lightweight crab pots were banned, would you prefer an immediate ban or a phase-out period with the ban taking effect from mid-2025?

☐ Immediate ban

☐ Phase-out period with ban taking effect from mid-2025

☐ Other (*Please specify)*_____

Comments:

Question 9. Do you agree with introducing minimum crab pot specifications for recreational fishers?

☐ Yes.

☐ No (*If no, what changes would you recommend to reduce wildlife entanglements?)*

☐ Don't know

Comments:

Question 10. Do you agree with the requirement for crab pots used by recreational fishers to have escape vents installed (as per the specifications included in this discussion paper)?

☐ Yes

☐ No (*If no, please explain why*)

☐ Don't know

Comments:

Separate possession limits for crimson and saddletail snapper and other considerations

Question 11. Do you support having separate possession limits for crimson and saddletail snapper?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

Comments:

Question 12. Do you support the proposed possession limits of 4 saddletail snapper?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

Comments:

Question 13. Do you support the proposed possession limits of 4 crimson snapper?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

Comments:

Question 14. What are your views on changing the size limit for saddletail and crimson snapper to improve management of these stocks?

Comments:

Question 15. What are your views on recreational catch reporting to support management for at-risk or high value species such as saddletail snapper?

Comments:

New black jewfish closed season

Question 16. Do you support introducing an annual black jewfish closed season (to protect them during spawning) from 1 November to 31 January?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (*If no, please explain why*)
- ☐ Other (*Please specify)*_____

Comments:

Possession limit changes for black jewfish

Question 17. Do you support an increase in the in-possession limit for black jewfish?

- ☐ No, maintain existing limits of 1 fish per person / 2 per boat (for more than 2 people on board)
- ☐ Yes, increase the in-possession limit to 2 fish per person / 4 fish per boat (for more than 2 people on board)
- ☐ Yes, increase the in-possession limit to 3 fish per person / 6 fish per boat (for more than 2 people on board)

Comments:

Expanding the Stocked Impoundment Permit Scheme

Question 18. Which of the following impoundments should be added to the Stocked Impoundment Permit Scheme? (*(Please select all that apply)*

- ☐ Enoggera Reservoir
- ☐ Mount Morgan No.7 Dam
- ☐ Paradise Dam
- ☐ None (*If you disagree with adding any of the above impoundments, please provide reasons why*)

Comments:

Banning recreational take of coral

Question 19. Do you support banning the recreational take of coral in all Queensland waters?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

Comments:

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Thank you for your submission and for taking the time to provide feedback on these important management considerations.