Recreational fishing in Queensland

Fishery management proposals consultation report

Queensland Government

This publication has been compiled by Fisheries Queensland.

The Department of Primary Industries proudly acknowledges all First Nations peoples (Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders) 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

Summary

Public consultation on a range of proposed recreational fishing management options was conducted between 14 March and 9 May 2024. This was done through the release of the discussion paper *Recreational fishing in Queensland: Consultation on fishery reforms.*

In total, 1,158 submissions were received, of which 1,016 were responses to the discussion paper survey and 142 were written submissions.

Survey respondents included recreational fishers, fishing tackle retailers, industry peak bodies, fish stocking groups, Traditional Owners/fishers, commercial fishers, charter fishers, environmental groups, hospitality industry, seafood industry, interested community members and other stakeholders.

Feedback was sought on the following overarching topics:

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.**

Background

Recreational fishing is part of the Queensland 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.

While harvest strategies and other management initiatives effectively manage commercial fisheries, they have less control over the total harvest of recreational fisheries – as there is no formal sector allocation or not enough data to accurately determine recreational harvest.

Some working groups and the Sustainable Fisheries Expert Panel have expressed concern regarding the growing impact of recreational fishing on Queensland's fisheries resources.

The Queensland population 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.

[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.

The fishery working groups and several fishing sectors have noted the increasing fishing capacity of the recreational sector, including:

- higher boat registration numbers and larger average vessel size
- rapid and widespread information-sharing on social media
- increased technical advances (e.g. anchoring (spot lock), navigational, location, ocean bathymetry, echolocation and sounding technology) and their increasing affordability.

Public consultation on potential management proposals for recreational fishing was conducted between 14 March and 9 May 2024. This report summarises the submissions received.

Consultation process

A discussion paper and online survey were released on 14 March 2024, with the public consultation running over an 8-week period until 9 May 2024.

The following communication activities were undertaken to inform stakeholders about the consultation process*:*

- All fishery working group members were notified directly via email.
- Recreational peak bodies (including Sunfish, the Freshwater Fishing and Stocking Association of Queensland and the Mackay Recreational Fishing Alliance) were notified directly via email.
- The Australian Fishing Trade Association, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, fish stocking groups and relevant fishery working groups were notified directly via email.
- Broader stakeholders were notified via social media and the Fisheries Queensland website.

Survey questions were primarily presented as multiple choice. An opportunity was provided at the end of each question to add comments and suggest practical alternatives and viewpoints.

No decisions have been made at this point in time.

Find out more about the sustainable management of Queensland fisheries:

> Recreational fishing rules

> *Queensland Sustainable Fisheries Strategy: 2017–2027*

Next steps

Feedback from this consultation and the range of management options proposed will be used to guide future sustainable management strategies – underpinning future decision-making to ensure the ecological, economic and social objectives of the relevant recreational fishery are achieved in the long term. Results of this report will be discussed with the relevant fishery working groups and the Sustainable Fisheries Expert Panel before any decisions are made.

Consultation results and analysis

Respondents

In total, 1,158 submissions were received, including 1,016 submissions through the online form and 142 written submissions. The majority of respondents were recreational fishers (78.2%), followed by interested community members (23.2%).

Survey respondents also included recreational fishing peak bodies, fish stocking groups, commercial fishers, charter fishing operators, Traditional Owners/fishers, seafood wholesaler/marketers, hospitality owner/workers, fishing tackle retailers, environmental groups, other non-government organisations and other stakeholders.

Some respondents selected multiple stakeholder groups (e.g. recreational fisher and stocking group).

Table 1: Breakdown of submissions

Stakeholder group	Number of submissions	Percentage of submissions
Recreational fisher	906	78.2%
Interested community member	269	23.2%
Environmental group	73	6.3%
Commercial fisher	36	3.1%
Fishing tackle retailer	26	2.2%
Charter fishing operator	25	2.2%
Stocking group – Stocked Impoundment Permit Scheme (SIPS)	24	2.1%
Traditional fisher/Traditional Owner	16	1.4%
Other non-government organisation	15	1.3%
Stocking group – non-SIPS	12	1%
Seafood wholesaler/marketer	5	0.4%
Industry peak body	5	0.4%
Hospitality owner/worker	4	0.3%
Other	32	2.8%
Total	1,158*	

* **Note:** 1,448 stakeholder groups selected in total

Banning opera house style traps

Opera house style yabby traps are a popular form of recreational fishing gear in Queensland freshwater systems. 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.

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.

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.

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. While it also requires less 'active' working of the gear, studies have shown that when open top lift nets are actively worked, they are effective in catching yabbies. 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.

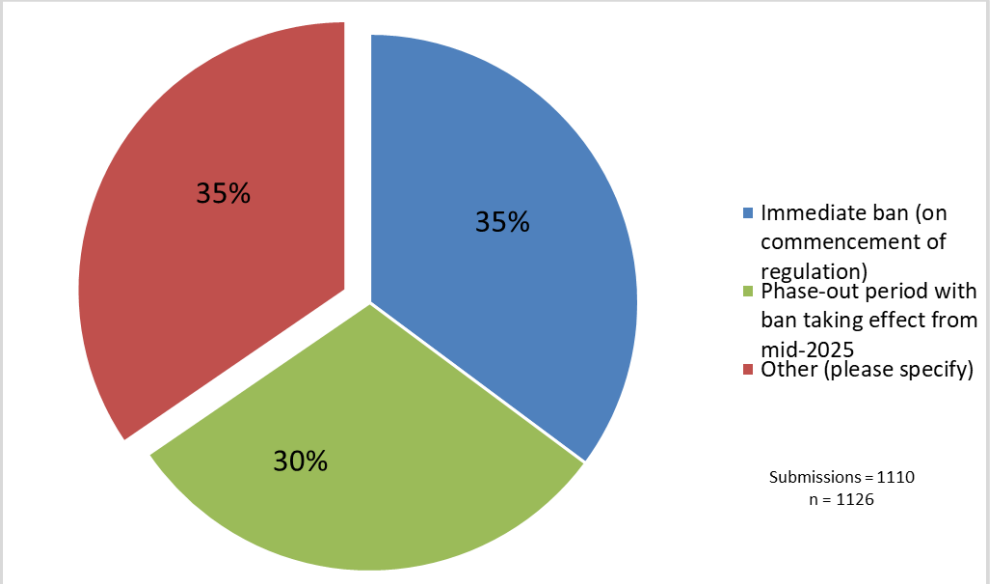

Figure 1: Responses to survey question – If opera house style traps were banned in Queensland waters, would you prefer an immediate ban or a phase-out period with the ban taking effect from mid-2025?

The majority (65%) of submission responses supported either a phase out or immediate ban of opera house traps. The remaining submissions responded as other (35%), with most of these submissions suggesting that a ban was not necessary for a range of reasons, most commonly that the existing restrictions were sufficient. Some submissions also suggested the option of banning the use of opera house style traps on the east coast outside of impoundments where the majority of fishing occurs for redclaw crayfish.

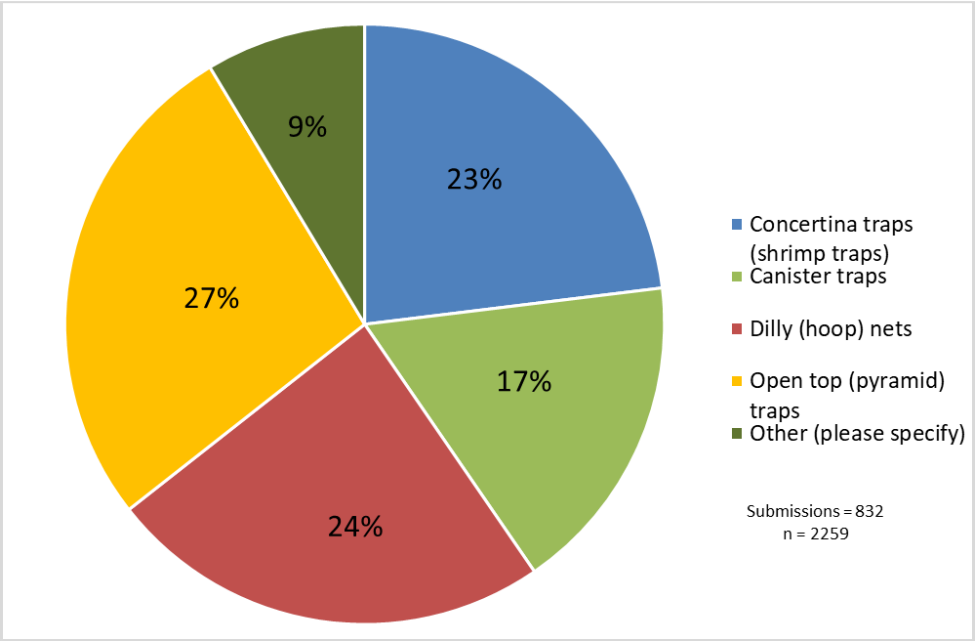

Figure 2: Responses to survey question – Which of the following gear should continue to be used in Queensland non-tidal waters?

The majority of submission responses (91%) supported retaining the existing trap/hoop net types in non-tidal waters. A number of submission comments (9%) were submitted, with the majority of the 9% supporting the continued use of funnel/opera house style traps.

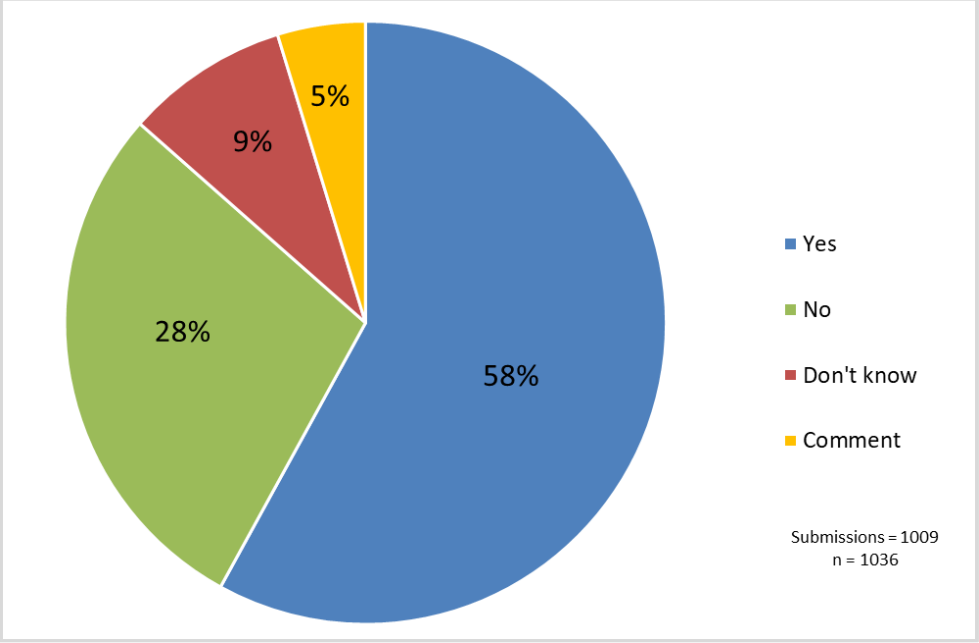

Figure 3: Responses to survey question – Do you support introducing trap boat limits (consistent with limits for crab gear)?

The majority (58%) of submission responses supported introducing boat limits for freshwater traps to be consistent with limits for crab apparatus used in tidal waters. The submission comments generally included the additional impost and questioning why trap limits were required when targeting redclaw crayfish outside its natural range.

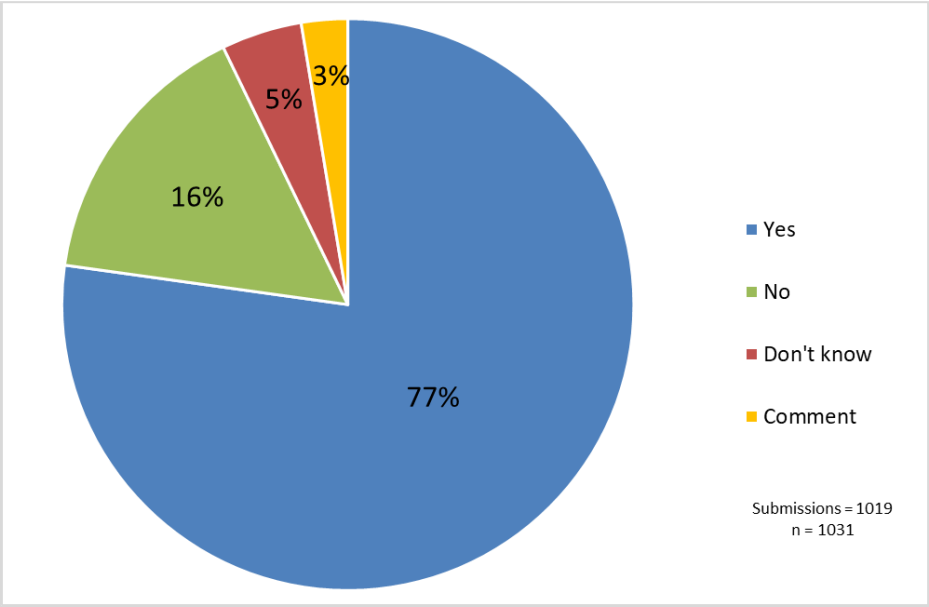

Figure 4: Responses to survey question – Do you support introducing requirements to mark traps (consistent with crab gear)?

The majority (77%) of submissions supported introducing the requirements to mark freshwater traps (non-tidal waters) consistent with crab apparatus marking requirements (tidal waters).

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.

Due to easy access to this fishery, mud crabs are one of the most recreationally harvested crustaceans in Queensland. 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.

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.

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

Banning lightweight crab pots in Queensland waters

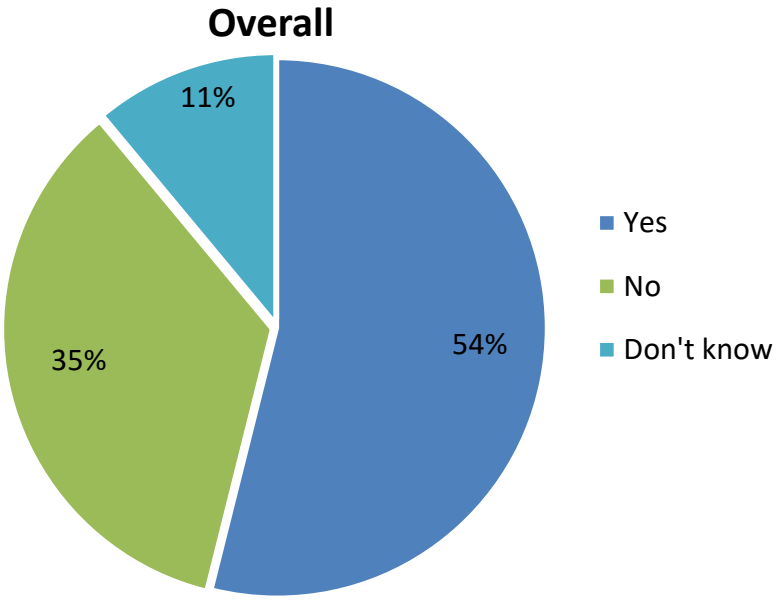

Figure 5: Responses to survey question – Do you agree with banning the use of lightweight crab pots in Queensland waters?

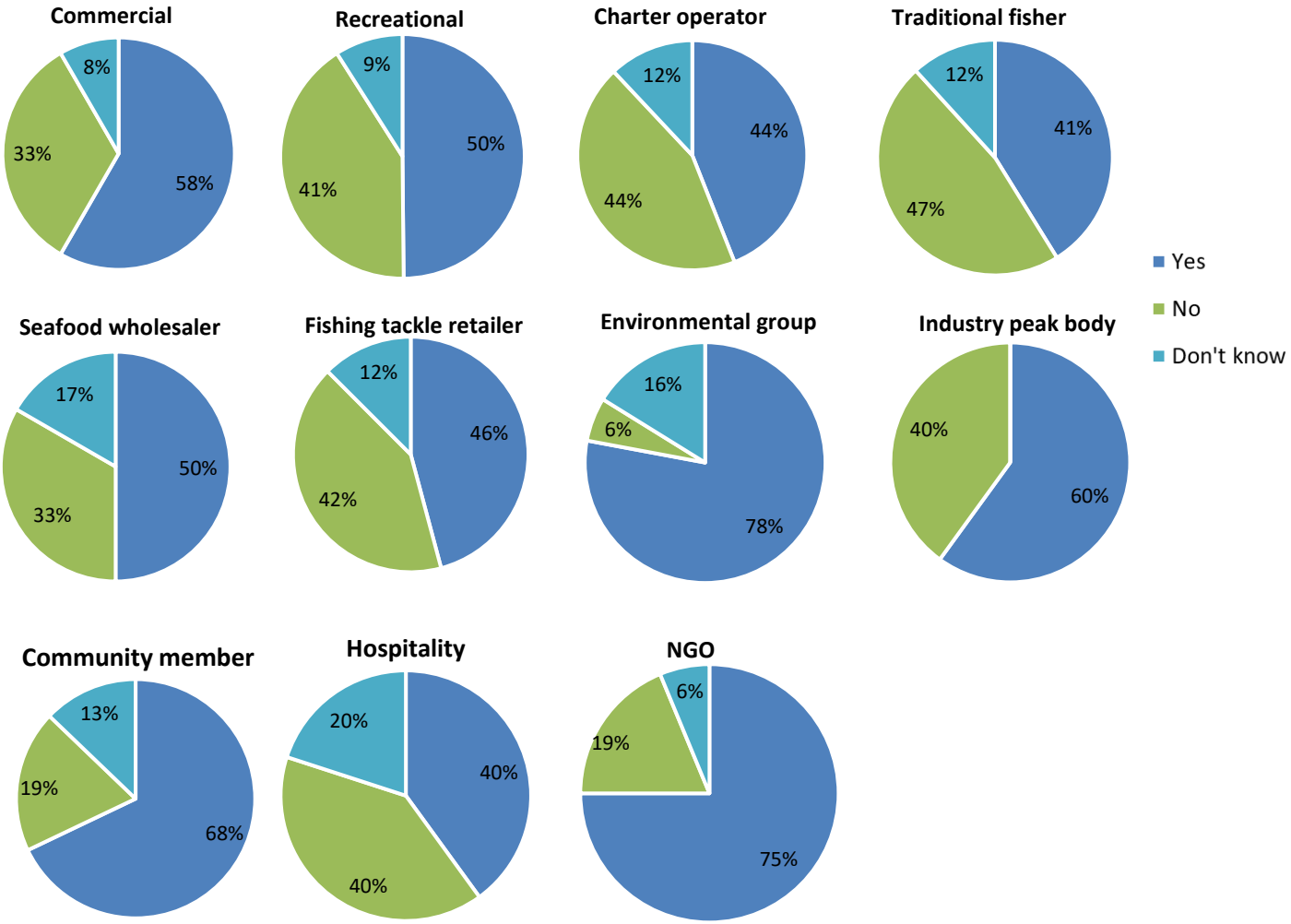

Figure 6: Breakdown of responses by stakeholder group to survey question – Do you agree with banning the use of lightweight crab pots in Queensland waters?

The majority of survey respondents (54%) agreed with the proposal to ban the use of lightweight crab pots in Queensland waters. All stakeholder groups largely support banning the use of lightweight crab pots in Queensland waters. However, there was feedback along with submissions within stakeholder groups.

Stakeholders provided several comments as to why they did not support the proposal, including:

- Potential added costs to fishers and gear manufacturers involved in disposing of current lightweight pot materials and purchasing new gear.
- Important part of reducing ghost pots is the education of the recreational sector. The need to implement further educational resources and compliance monitoring measures prior to banning.

Stakeholders provided several comments in support of the proposal, including:

- Lightweight crab pots have significant impacts on both their intend catch and bycatch. For sustainability and regeneration of the species affected, lightweight pots should be banned.
- May prevent ghost pots and interactions with marine species, particularly threatened, endangered and protected species.
- May reduce the risk of gear entanglements, particularly at times and locations where risk of interaction with migrating humpback whales is increased.
- Could decrease ocean waste from users of cheaper lightweight pots ‘setting and forgetting’.

Phasing-out lightweight crab pots in Queensland waters

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

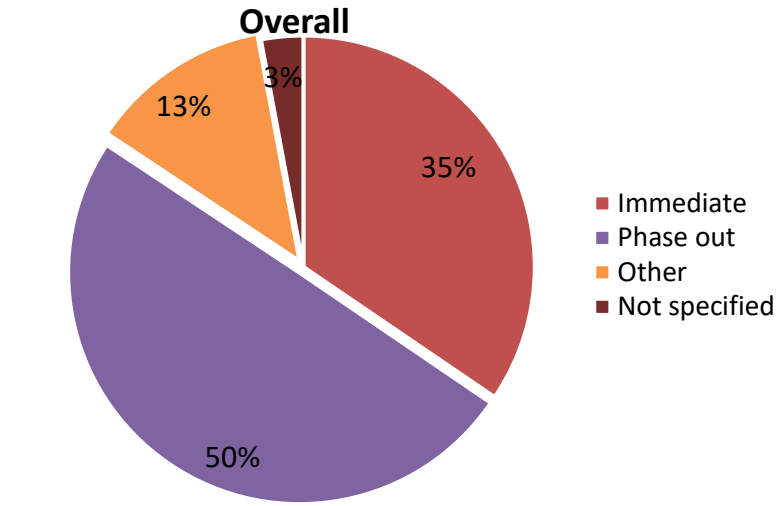

Figure 7: Responses to survey question – If lightweight crab pots were banned, would you prefer an immediate ban or a phase-out period with the ban taking effect from mid-2025?

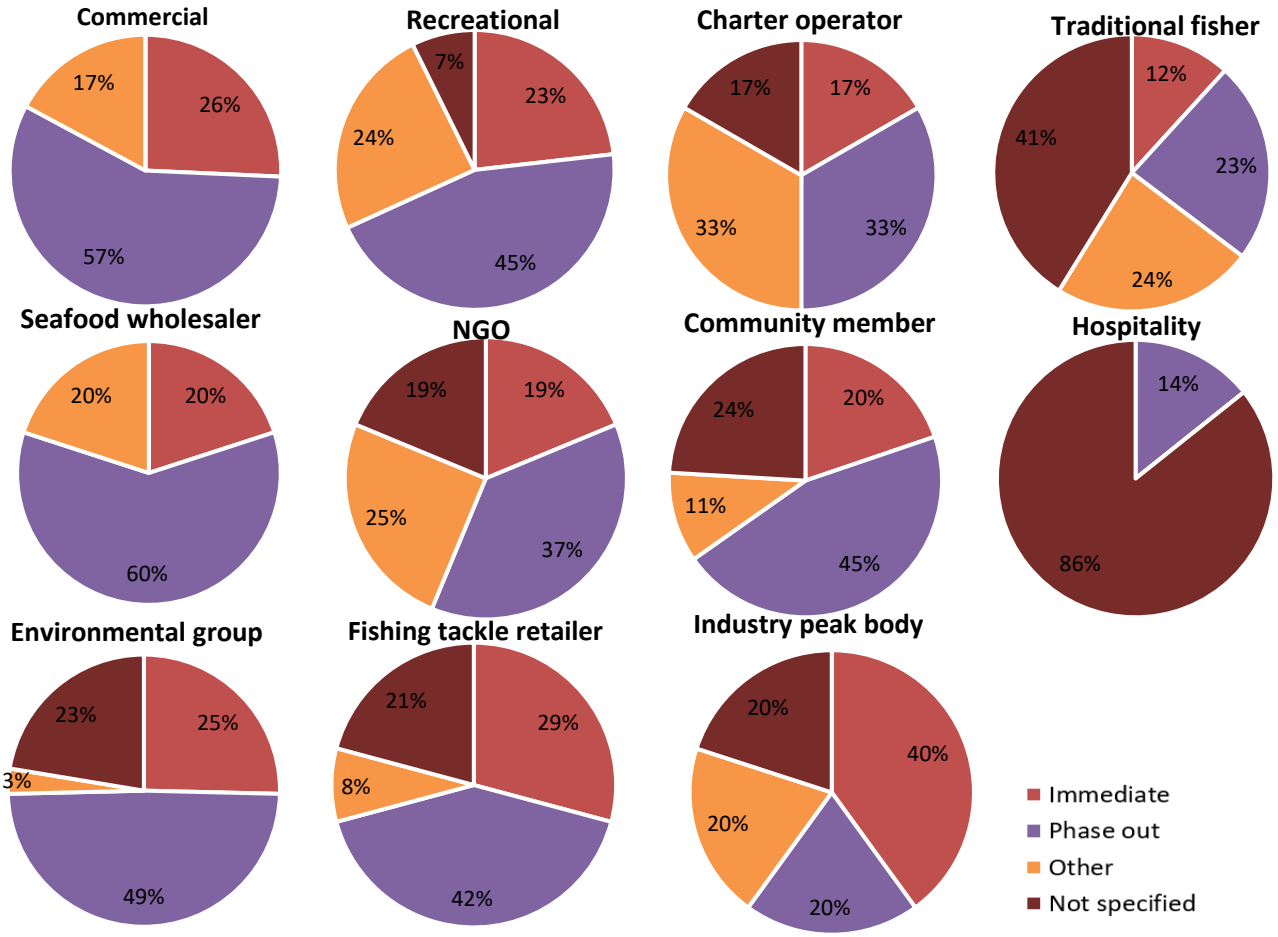

Figure 8: Breakdown of responses by stakeholder group to survey question – If lightweight crab pots were banned, would you prefer an immediate ban or a phase-out period with the ban taking effect from mid-2025?

The majority of survey respondents (50%) preferred a phase-out period with the ban taking effect from mid-2025; however, there were split levels of support within stakeholder groups.

The strongest levels of support for a phase-out came from commercial fishers, seafood wholesalers, environmental groups and fishing tackle retailers. In contrast, industry peak bodies largely preferred an immediate ban.

Stakeholders provided several comments as to why they did not support the proposal, including:

- Phase out date for lightweight pots as mid-2025 but provides no indication as to when manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers, and crabbers will be notified of such a change which is a commercially unviable option.
- Increased waste and environmental impacts that would take place if every lightweight crab pot in QLD was disposed of immediately or within a 12-month period based on proposals.
- Educating the recreational crabbing sector instead to reduce the chance of pots being swept away would prevent ghost pots and desired outcomes.

Stakeholders provided several comments in support of the proposal, including:

- Many responses agreed with a phase-out approach however, any proposed changes would need to be managed carefully to be able supply demand and that the lightweight pots are recycled or repurposed.
- The clarification of timelines is required for any phase out of lightweight crab pots and the use of a staggered introduction to the ban.

Introducing minimum crab pot specifications for recreational fishers

The proposed minimum pot 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 reduce the loss of fishing gear from entanglements with other vessels and minimise the risk of gear entanglements with marine animals such as migrating humpback whales during the winter months. 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.

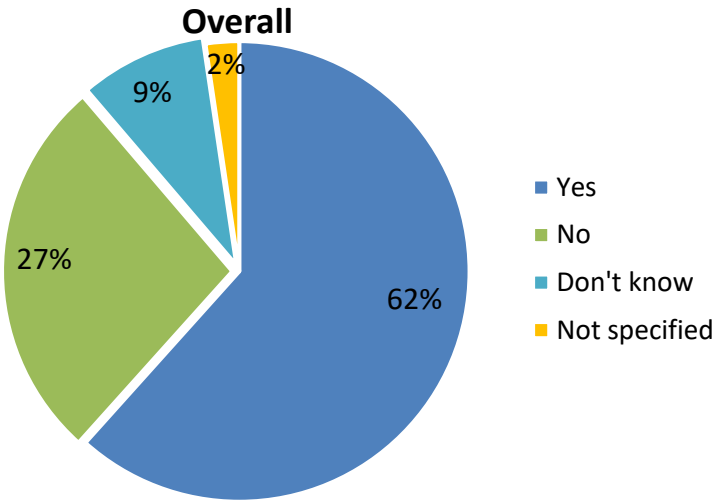

Figure 9: Responses to survey question – Do you agree with introducing minimum crab pot specifications for recreational fishers?

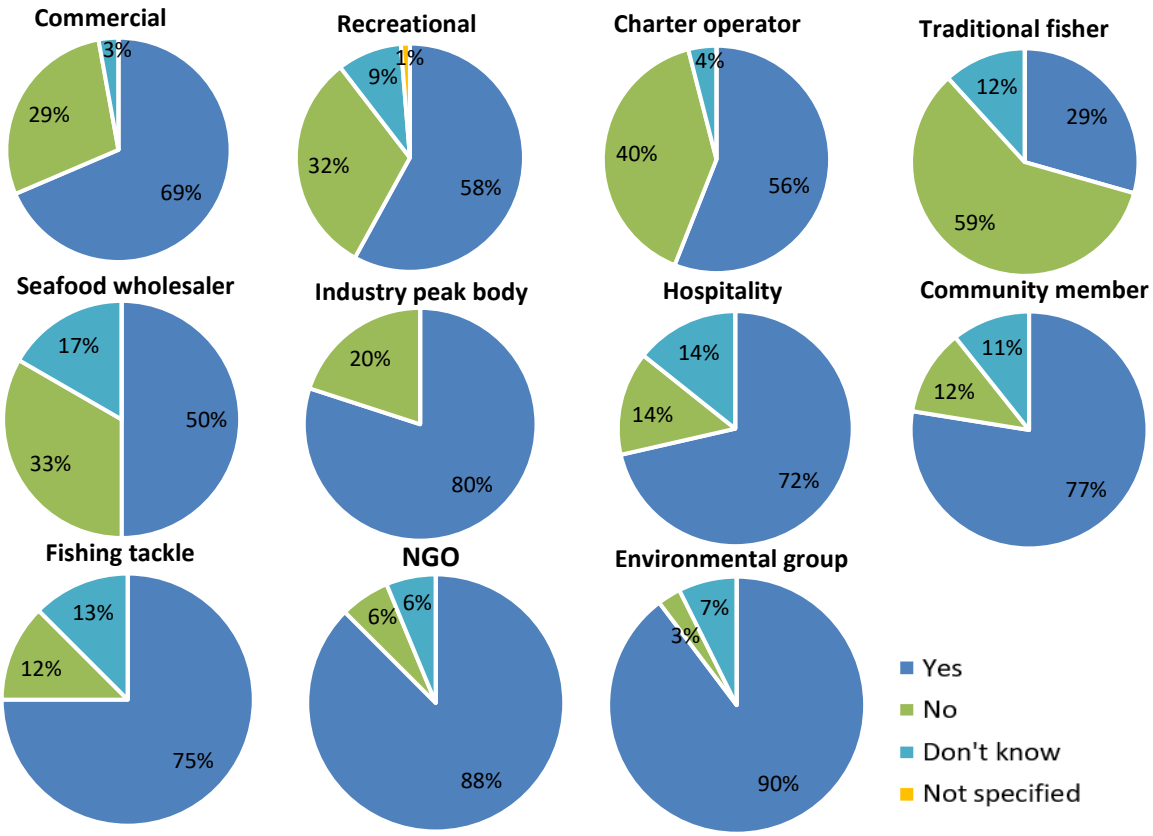

Figure 10: Breakdown of responses by stakeholder group to survey question – Do you agree with introducing minimum crab pot specifications for recreational fishers?

The majority of survey respondents (62%) agreed with the proposal of introducing minimum crab pot specifications for recreational fishers; however, there were split levels of support within stakeholder groups.

The strongest levels of support (>80%) came from environmental groups, non-government organisations, and industry peak bodies. In contrast, Traditional Owner fishers and charter operators largely (>40%) did not agree with introducing minimum crab pot specifications for recreational fishers.

Stakeholders provided several comments as to why they did not support the proposal, including:

- The proposed minimum specifications in the discussion paper are not workable or practical and may not address the entrapment of marine turtles in crab pots.
- Increased costs to recreational crabbers as well as fishing tackle retailers and manufacturers.

Stakeholders provided several comments in support of the proposal, including:

- Minimum pot specifications were largely favoured however, the proposed specifications would need to be heavily consulted on with the appropriate stakeholders before any changes are made or implementation. This is to ensure any proposed changes are effective, economical and are best practice.
- The introduction of minimum pot specifications would reduce ghost pots marine animal entanglement and interaction.

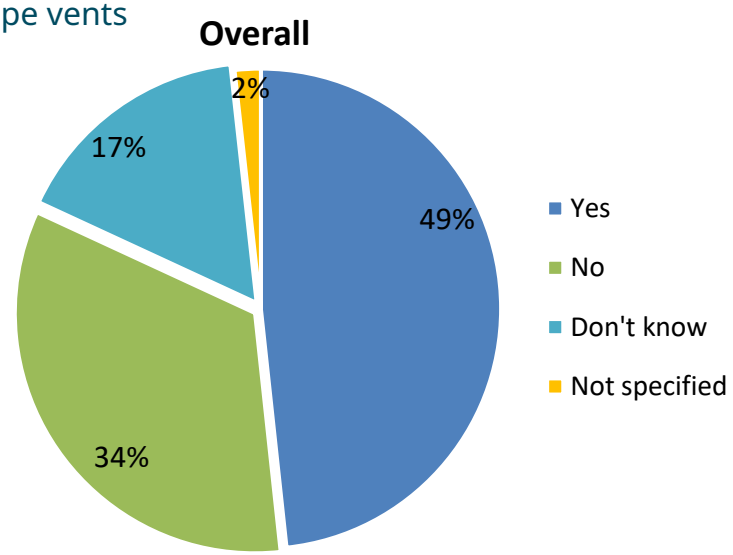

Figure 11: Responses to survey question – Do you agree with the requirement for crab pots used by recreational fishers to have escape vents installed (as per the specifications included in this discussion paper)?

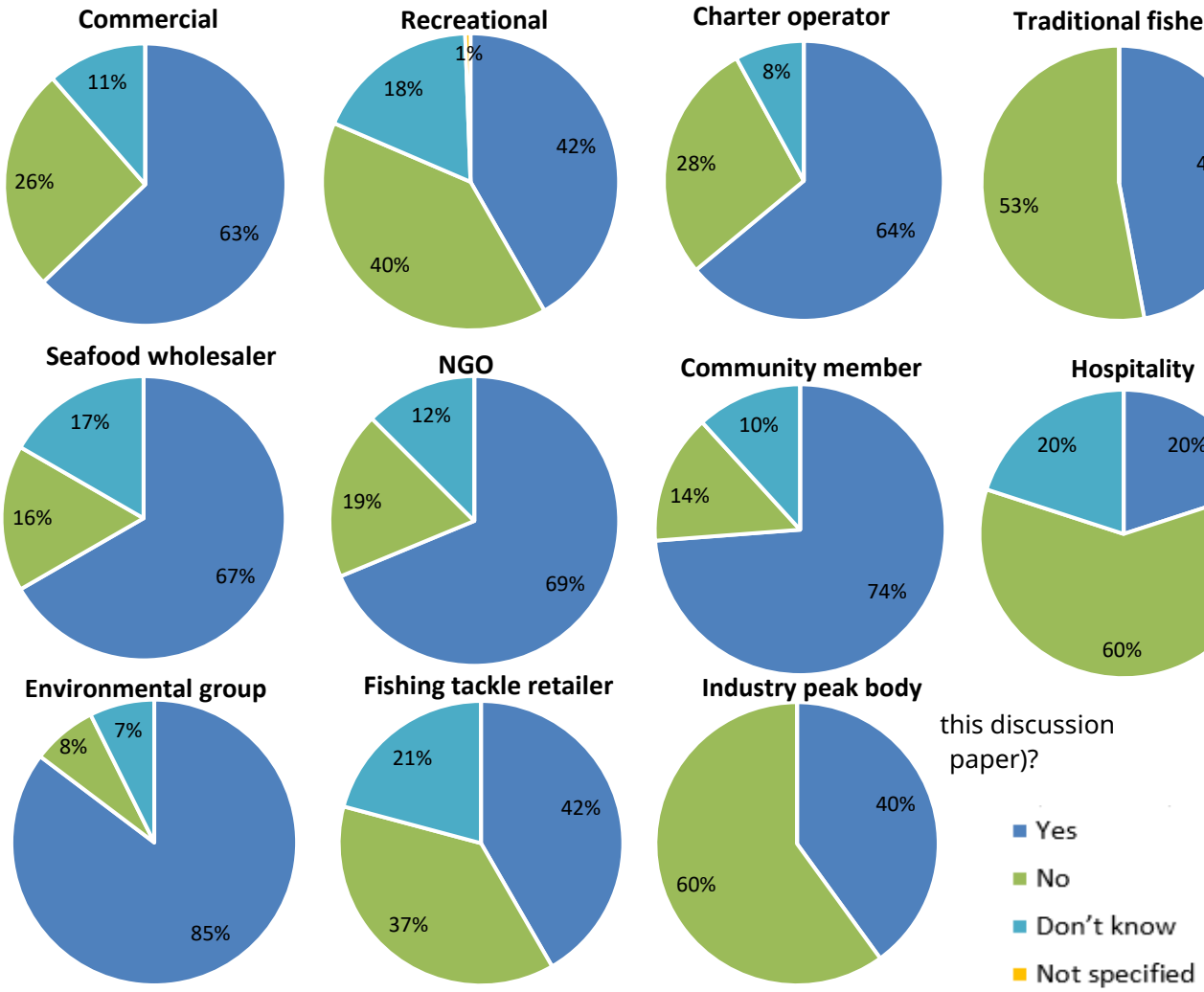

Figure 12: Breakdown of responses by stakeholder group to survey question – Do you agree with the requirement for crab pots used by recreational fishers to have escape vents installed (as per the specifications included in this discussion paper)?

The majority of survey respondents (49%) agree with the requirement for crab pots used by recreational fishers to have escape vents installed; however, there were split levels of support within stakeholder groups.

The strongest levels of support came from environmental groups, interested community members, non-government organisations seafood wholesalers and commercial fishers.

In contrast, Traditional fishers, hospitality workers and industry peak bodies largely did not agree with the requirement for crab pots used by recreational fishers to have escape vents installed.

Stakeholders provided several comments as to why they did not support the proposal, including:

- Increased costs to recreational crabbers as well as fishing tackle retailers and manufacturers.
- Educating the recreational crabbing sector in the first instance and regulate recreational crabbers to check pots more regularly to reduce the chance of pots being swept away and prevent non-target species entrapment.

Stakeholders provided several comments in support of the proposal, including:

- Will reduce the need for compliance officers and clean-up jobs as a result of illegal and ghost pots.
- Introduction of escape vents into all recreational crab pots will reduce bycatch and the potential damage to female or undersized crab in the pot. In additional, if a pot does become a ghost pot the damage to the environment may be reduced over time.
- The legislation be improved or made clearer before the introduction of escape vents into the recreational sector, such as improving the definition of a crab pot.

Separate possession limits for crimson snapper (*Lutjanus erythropterus*) and saddletail snapper (*Lutjanus malabaricus*) and other considerations

Crimson snapper 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.

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, and a quota management system was implemented for the commercial reef line fishery. 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.

The reef line fishery working group reviewed management arrangements and available scientific information for crimson snapper and saddletail snapper 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.

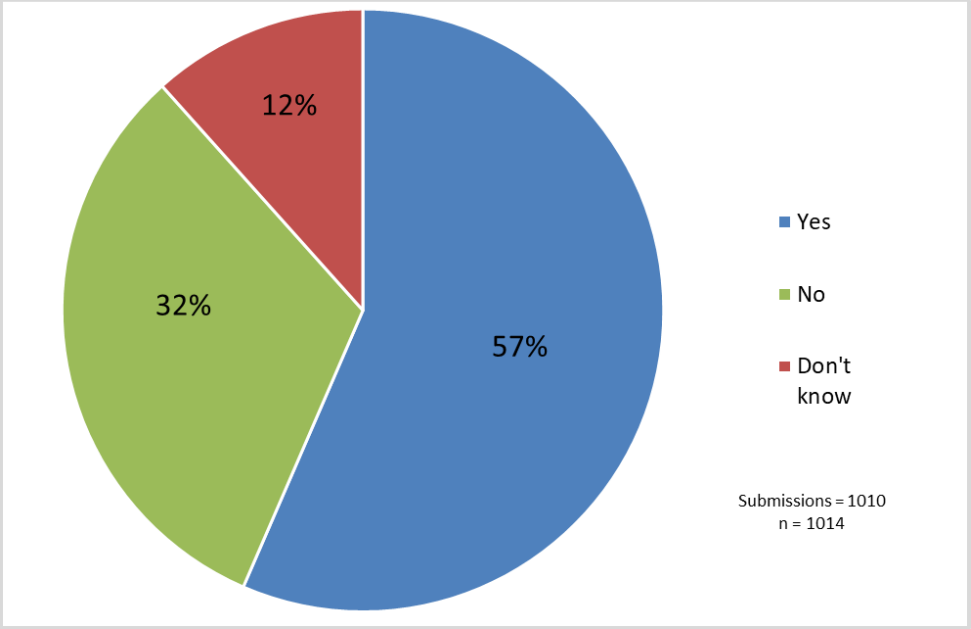

Figure 13: Responses to survey question – Do you support having separate possession limits for crimson and saddletail snapper?

The majority (57%) of submission responses supported having separate possession limits for crimson snapper and saddletail snapper. Some of the comments for supporting separate possession limits were each species needs to be managed indivdually, no reduction to current possession of nine, saddletail are good eating and crimson are not, will help stop upgrading of crimson to saddletail and saddletail is main target species by recreational fishers not crimson.

A minority (32%) of submission responses did not support having separate posession limits. Some of the comments for not supporting separate possession limits were current limits are sufficent for stock, these species are not easily identified at smaller sizes by recreational fishers, rules are too complicated, combined limit allows flexibilty in catch retained, will create wasted fish from upgrading, shark depredation a bigger issue to resolve, massive no fish zones are sufficent to protect stock.

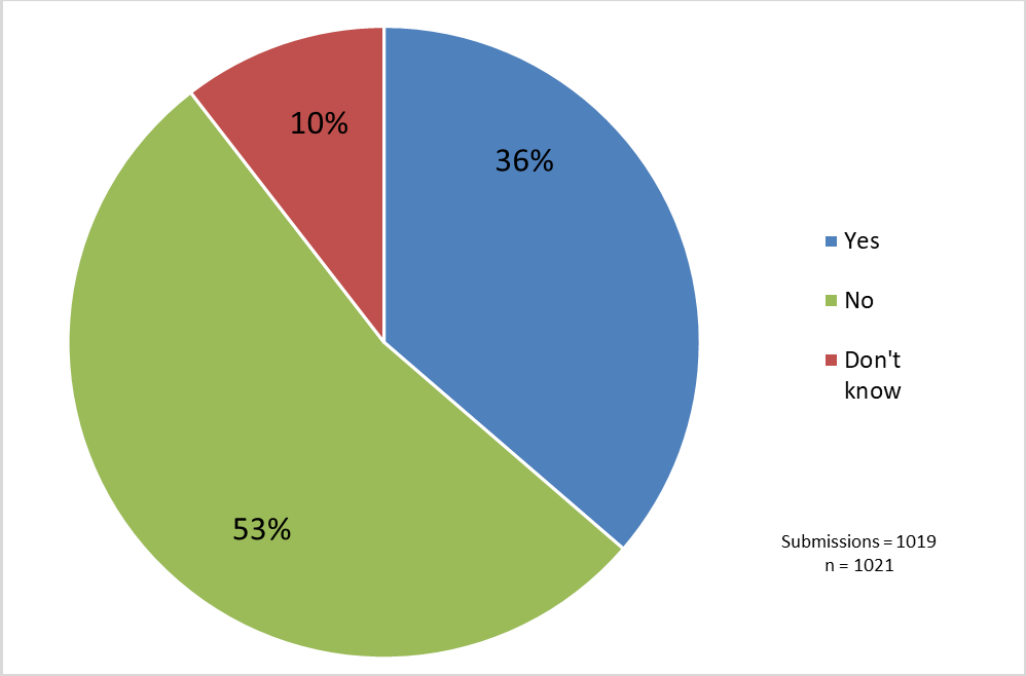

Figure 14: Responses to survey question – Do you support the proposed possession limits of 4 saddletail snapper?

The majority (53%) of submission responses did not support the proposed possession limits of four saddletail snapper.

Some of the comments for not supporting the proposed possession limit were the current limit and no fish areas is sufficent for the stock, needs to be based off accurate stock assessment/ science, a limit of four is too restrictive (cost of fishing, distance offshore fished and fishing trips per year), reduced limit will put more pressure on other fish species and upgrading of fish could result in more fish being wasted (depredation and barotrauma). Several comments suggested an alternate possession limit of between five and eight per person.

A minority (36%) of submission responses supported the proposed possession limits of four saddletail snapper. Some of the comments for supporting the proposed possession limits were if a reduction for all sectors is applied, if that's what the science and stock requires and catch and release of this species is not viable in the long term due to barotrauma and depredation.

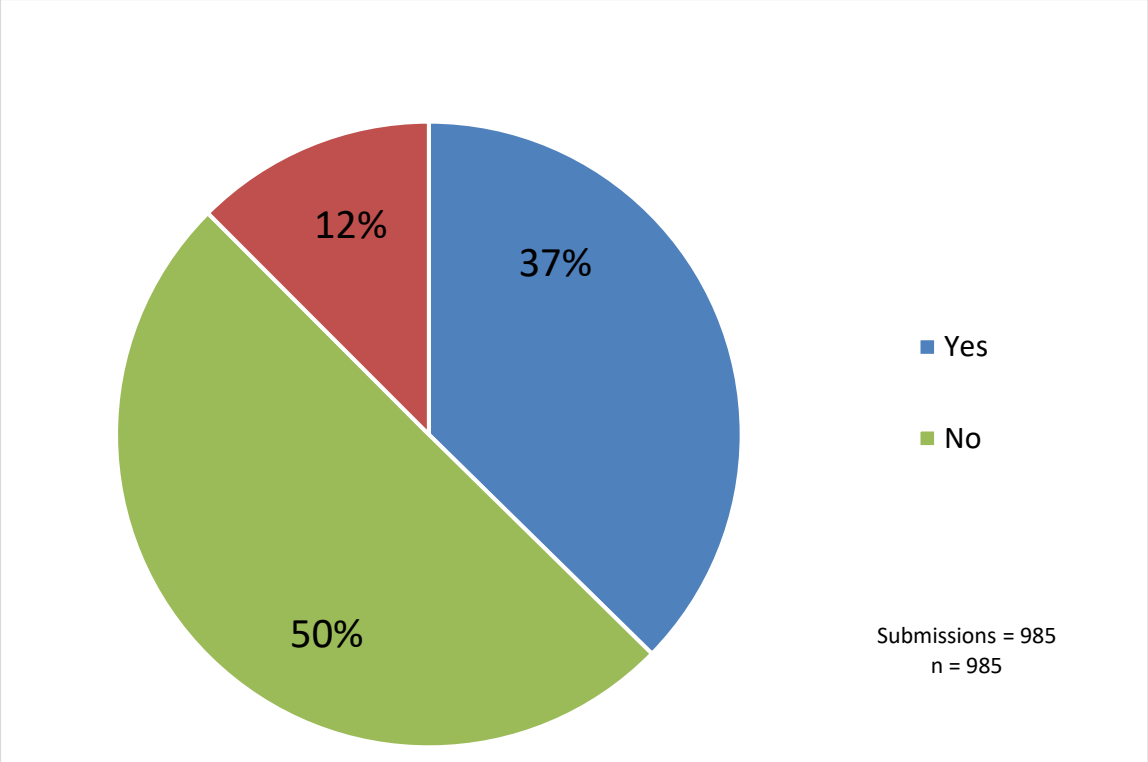

Figure 15: Responses to survey question – Do you support the proposed possession limits of 4 crimson snapper?

The majority (50%) of submission responses did not support the proposed possession limits of four crimson snapper. A minority (37%) of submission responses supported the proposed possession limits of four crimson snapper. The majority of comments for this question were similar to the comments for saddletail snapper. Some of the other comments were that crimson snapper are in nuisance numbers so why protect them further, don't target this species and fuel costs are pricing us out of fishing.

Responses to survey question – What are your views on changing the size limit for saddletail and crimson snapper to improve management of these stocks?

Approximately 80% of submissions provided views about changing the size limit for saddletail and crimson snapper to improve management of these stocks. The majority of submission responses (~45%) did not support a change to the current size limits for saddletail and crimson snapper.

The main reasons stated for not wanting a change to the size limit was that it would not help the stock because of the issue with barotrauma when releasing fish and depredation of fish from sharks. Many submissions that stated barotrauma and/or depredation said they would be wasting more fish to keep less and therefore have a negative impact on the stock and their catch. Some submissions stated that targeting smaller fish can reduce the loss of fish from depredation.

Many submissions stated that the stock was ok from current management restrictions (closed areas/size and possession limits) with some respondents stating they had noticed increases in stock and fish in areas they previously did not occur (close to shore and in rivers).

Some of the other reasons for not supporting a change included the smaller size fish are better eating than larger fish, weather and distance off shore helps protect stock from recreational fishers, prefer to fish less and keep more fish than fish more often, change will negatively impact economic benefit from recreatonal fishing.

A minority of submissions (~35%) supported a change to the current size limits for saddletail and crimson snapper. The main reasons for supporting a change included the size limit should reflect the size at maturity, increase the size limit by a small amount (5cm), will help keep the spawning stock in the ocean for longer and if the science supports it. Some of the other reasons for supporting a change included need education about barotrauma, release weights should be required on all vessels and if the rules are reviewed more regulalrly.

Some of the other submissions (~19%) about size limit changes included that a fix to the shark depredation issue will help the stock, weather is the best protector of the stock, identification issue between crimson and saddletail snapper when they are small, commerical catch quantity is an issue as very few recreational fishers can access these high biomass areas, why change the rules when not required, biomass estimates are not correct, and more rigourous studies on these species are required.

Responses to survey question – What are your views on recreational catch reporting to support management for at-risk or high value species such as saddletail snapper?

Approximately 80% of submissions provided views on recreational catch reporting to support management for at-risk or high value species such as saddletail snapper. The majority of submissions (~46%) did not support recreational catch reporting.

The main reasons for not supporting were because recreational fishers will not report data, the data would not be accurate and could be misleading, it would not work well logistically, should just increase enforcement, and it is a burden on recreational fishers with too many rules already. Some of the other reasons for not supporting were no need for the data, too hard to enforce, history and trust issues with how the data will be used, and increase boat ramp surveys to get data on the fishery.

A smaller proportion of submissions (~39%) supported recreational catch reporting. The main reasons for support were it would need to be easy to use and report, decisions need to be on accurate recreational harvest data, all species and recreational catch should be reported, work with stakeholders to develop a suitable mechanism for reporting and utilise a phone app that's easy to use.

Some of the other reasons for supporting were it should be voluntary to report, consider incentives to support reporting, if charter and commercial report than recreational should report too, should use a tag system for high value fish and if it gives a better insight to the species.

Some of the other submissions (~15%) about recreational catch reporting included saddletail snapper is not an at risk species, at risk and high value species should be managed separately as the same strategy will not work for both, current rules are sufficent to protect the stock and reduce trawling effort on juvenile habitat to help stock.

Possession limit changes for black jewfish (*Protonibea dicanthus*)

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 fishing.

With black jewfish stocks at 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.

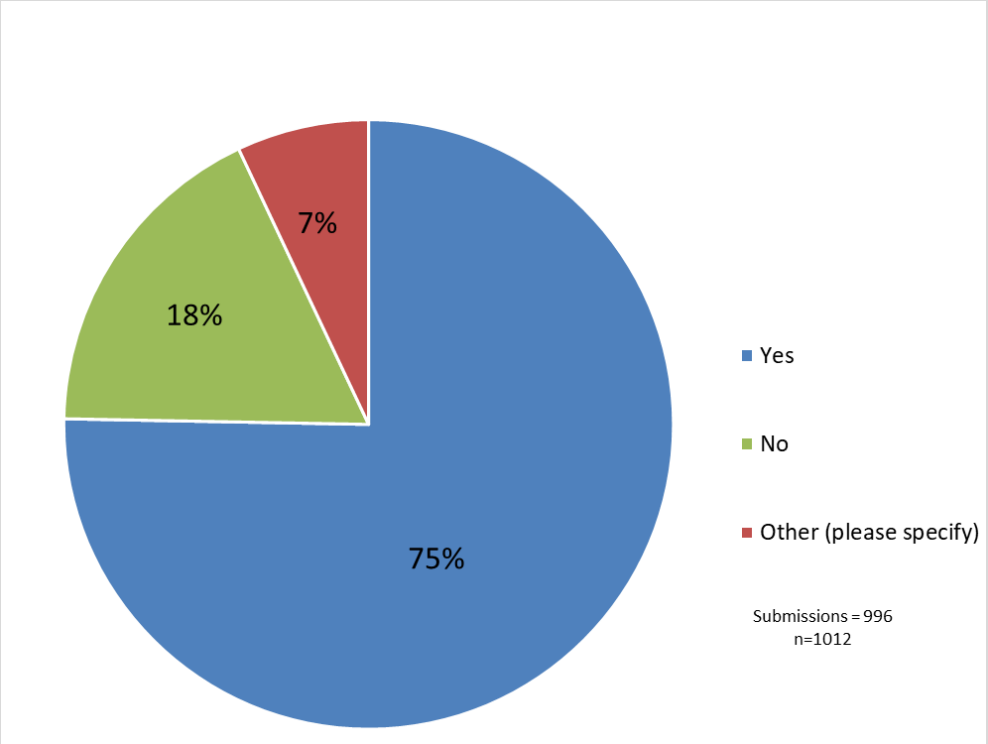

Figure 16: Responses to survey question – Do you support introducing an annual black jewfish closed season (to protect them during spawning) from 1 November to 31 January

The majority of submissions (75%) supported introducing an annual black jewfish closed season from 1 November to 31 January to protect this species during spawning. Only 18% of submissions that responded to this question did not support an annual closed season.

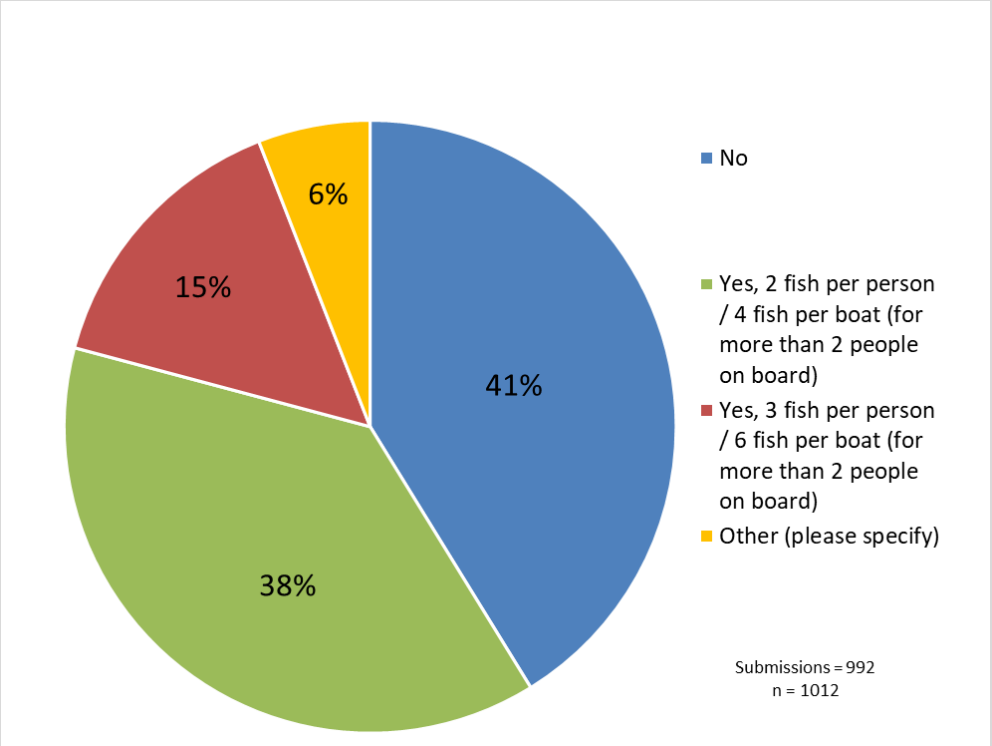

Figure 17: Responses to survey question – Do you support an increase in the in-possession limit for black jewfish?

Just over half of submission responses (53%) supported an increase in the recreational in-possession limit for black jewfish. With the majority of these submissions (38%), supporting an increase in possession limit to 2 fish per person and 4 fish per boat for more than two people on board.

Some of the comments for supporting an increase to the in-possession limit included allow filleting at sea so fishers can fillet large fish that suffer barotrauma and cannot be release alive, the stock will increase with the removal of gill nets so increase the possession limit to reflect stock, and more work needs to be done on the black market of swim bladders.

A minority of submission responses (41%) did not support an increase to the current recreational in-possession limit (1 fish per person and 2 per boat for more than 2 people on board) for black jewfish. The comments for not supporting an increase included the in-possession limits are only effective when tags are required, and potential for black marketing.

Some of the other submissions responses (6%) included have a possession limit per person and removing the boat limit. Most of these submissions suggested 1 or 2 per person.

Expanding the Stocked Impoundment Permit Scheme (SIPS)

Both the SIPS and freshwater working groups, supported three impoundments 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.

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 minimal.

Beehive Dam was proposed to be removed from the scheme due to the loss of recreational access at the dam and the closure of the stocking group.

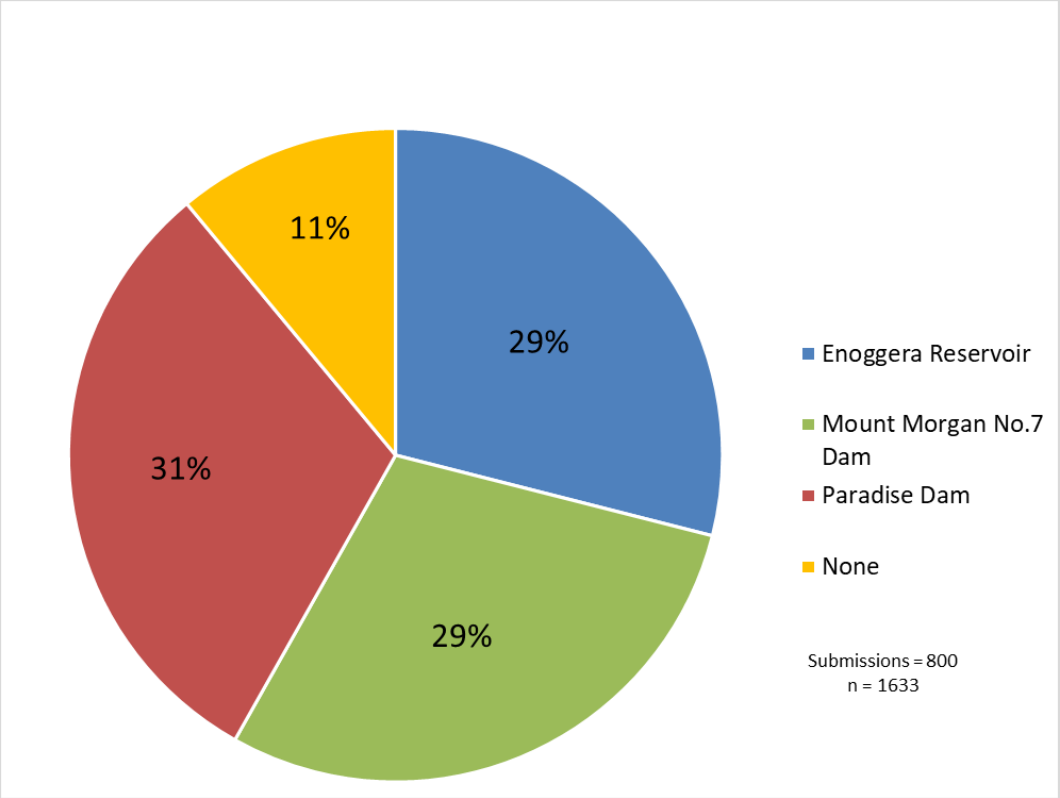

Figure 18: Responses to survey question – Which of the following impoundments should be added to the Stocked Impoundment Permit Scheme?

The majority of submission responses (89%) supported the three impoundments to be added to the SIPS. Only 11% of submissions that responded to this question did not support any of the three impoundments to be added to the SIPS.

Banning recreational take of coral

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.

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.

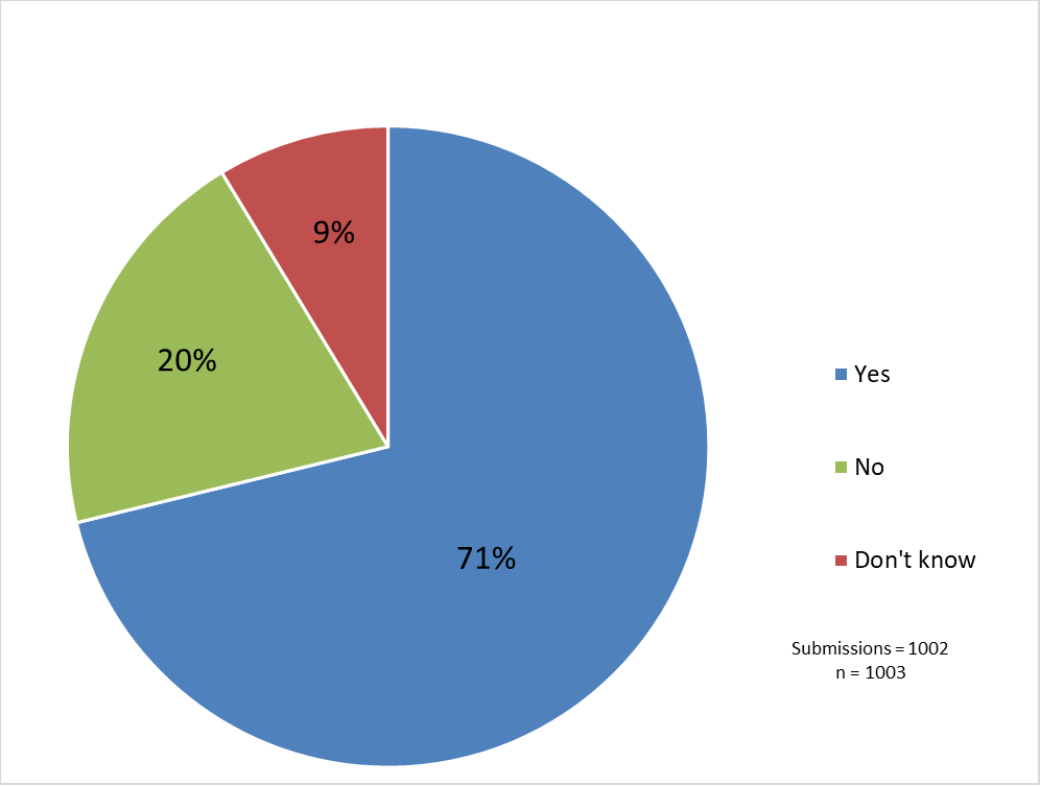

Figure 19: Responses to survey question – Do you support banning the recreational take of coral in all Queensland waters?

The majority of submission responses (71%) supported banning the recreational take of coral in all Queensland waters. Only 20% of submissions that responded to this question did not support banning the recreational take of coral in all Queensland waters.