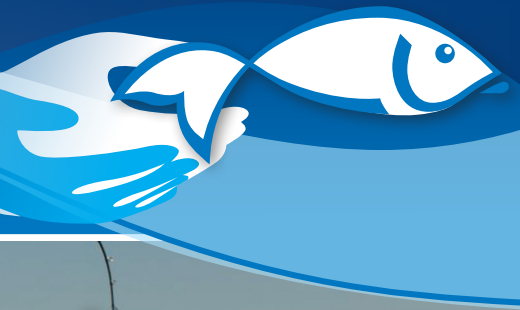


Tomorrow's fishing starts **TODAY**



Changes to recreational fishing rules

Why the changes?

Scientific evidence shows that golden snapper and black jewfish are being overfished and the sustainability of other popular reef fish species is under threat in the Darwin area. In order to protect breeding fish and allow fish stocks to recover, catches by the recreational, fishing tourism and commercial fishers around the greater Darwin area must be reduced. New measures to apply across all fishing sectors will allow coastal reefs to replenish and improve our fishing future.

Following extensive public consultation, a suite of contemporary management measures has been developed that balances biological requirements to rebuild stocks while still providing fishing opportunities. In addition to the new limits, changes in fishing behaviour to reduce the impacts of barotrauma is required to rebuild stocks in the face of future growth and technology advances in recreational fishing in the Territory.

All fishing sectors, including the commercial and fishing tour operator sectors are undergoing significant management changes to allow vulnerable reef fish stocks to rebuild to sustainable levels.

What are the changes?

Possession limits, size limits and vessel limits

Following the release of the "Protecting our Reef Fish" consultation paper in September 2013, Fisheries coordinated a broad survey of stakeholders to get feedback from recreational fishers and fishing tour operators. The results of this survey indicate clear support for management changes to protect and improve the quality of fishing in the Northern Territory.

Possession and size limits are standard management tools used to control recreational fishing catches. They protect fish stocks by restricting the number or size of fish that can be taken. Size limits may not however be practical for fish prone to barotrauma. A new two-tiered vessel limit will also help reduce large catches of "at risk" reef fish by boats carrying large numbers of fishers. Aggregations of spawning schools of fish such as jewfish and golden snapper may be particularly vulnerable to concentrated fishing effort.

General personal possession limit of 15

The general personal possession limit (GPL) will be reduced from 30 to 15 fish. This will help reduce the impact of increasing numbers of recreational fishers. Capping the personal possession limit at 15 fish per person still provides a generous quantity of fish to feed a family, while also ensuring fishing remains at sustainable levels. New specific possession limits for individual species will help protect vulnerable reef fish species and ensure high quality fishing opportunities continue into the future.

Some of the key changes include:

- A reduction in the personal possession limit (PPL) limit for golden snapper from 5 to 3.
- A combined PPL of 10 red snapper (all species), within the overall GPL of 15 fish.
- A minimum size limit for mangrove jack of 35cm (total length).
- A maximum size limit of 90cm for barramundi and king threadfin taken in the Daly or Mary River Fish Management zones. A vessel limit of one barramundi and king threadfin over 90cm will apply to allow the retention of a fish that is unfit for release.
- Species historically not subject to a species specific limits will have a default limit of five per person.
- A possession limit of 5 fish per species unless otherwise specified.

Tables 1, 2 and 3 detail the new and existing personal possession and size limits for amateur fishers in the NT.

Table 1: New and existing personal possession and size limits for fin fish

Species	Personal Possession Limit	Special controls and key information	Size limit (cm total length unless otherwise specified)
General Personal Possession Limit (GPL)	15		
Golden snapper	3		
Mangrove jack	3		35 min
Cod and groper	5		120 max
Barramundi	5	3 per person and vessel limit of 1 fish over 90 cm in the Mary and Daly River Fish Management zones. Use of a spear gun to take fish no longer prohibited.	55 min
King threadfin	3	Vessel limit of 1 fish over 90 cm (fork length) in the Mary and Daly River Fish Management zones	
Marlin and sailfish	1		
Red snappers – saddletail, crimson, Indonesian	10	Any combination to a limit of 10 total	
Bream (<i>Acanthopagrus sp</i>)	15		
All other fish species not subject to specific individual limits	5		
Unchanged limits			
Black jewfish	2		
Spanish mackerel	2		
Sharks (excluding protected species)	3	Any combination to a limit of 3. Sawfish, northern river and speartooth sharks are protected and must not be taken	

Vessel limits

Vessel limits apply to species listed in table to the right.

- Vessels with 4 or less people on board, each person can take their personal possession limit.
- Vessels with 5 to 7 people on board can take a maximum of 4 times the personal possession limit of designated “at risk” species (Table 2). The balance of the GPL can be made up of other fish.
- Vessels with 8 or more people on board can take a maximum of 8 times the personal possession limit of designated “at risk” species (Table 2). The balance of the GPL can be made up of other fish.

Table 2: At risk species

Common name	Scientific name	Personal possession limit
Black jewfish	<i>Protonibea diacanthus</i>	2
Golden snapper	<i>Lutjanus johnnii</i>	3
Mangrove jack	<i>Lutjanus argentimaculatus</i>	3
Tricky snapper (Grass emperor)	<i>Lethrinus laticaudus</i>	5
Stripey snapper (Spanish flag)	<i>Lutjanus carponotatus</i>	5
Cod (all species)	<i>Epinephelus spp.</i>	5
Russells’ snapper	<i>Lutjanus russellii</i>	5
Tuskfish	<i>Cherodon spp.</i>	5
Coral trout	<i>Plectropomus spp.</i>	5
Red emperor	<i>Lutjanus sebae</i>	5



Table 3: New and existing personal possession and size limits for crustaceans, molluscs and baitfish

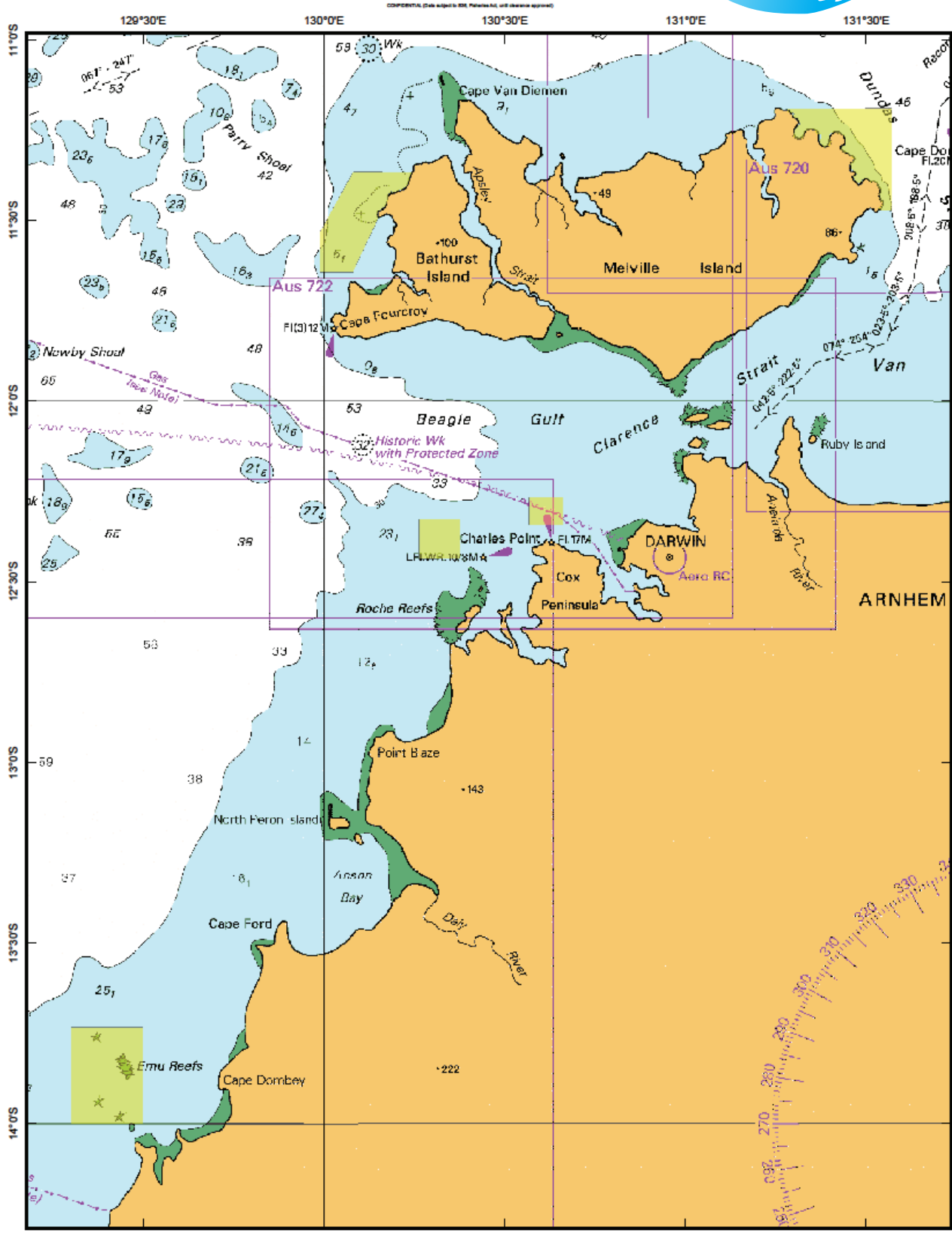
Species exempt from the 15 fish GPL	Personal Possession Limit	Special controls and key information	Size limit (cm total length unless otherwise specified)
Tropical rock lobster	5	Vessel limit of 15 when 3 or more people are on board. Tropical rock lobsters must not be taken using underwater breathing apparatus.	
Whiting and/or mullet and/or garfish (combined)	50		
Pilchards and/or sardines and/or herring (combined)	100		
Crabs (other than mud crab)	30		
Saltwater prawns (all species combined)	10 litres (intact in shell)		
Octopus, cuttlefish and squid (combined)	30		
Unchanged limits			
Mud crab	10	Females with eggs must be released unharmed Vessel limit of 30 when 3 or more people are on board	13cm male (carapace width) 14cm female (carapace width)
Freshwater crustaceans (cherabin / redclaw) (combined)	30	Within the Daly River Fish Management Zone: A combined personal possession limit of 30 which includes a maximum of 10 cherabin. A combined vessel limit of 90 when 3 or more people are on board with a maximum limit of 30 cherabin. Females with eggs must be released	
Molluscs	10 litres (in shell)	Giant clams are protected and must not be taken.	

Temporary reef fish protection areas

A new network of fit for purpose temporary protection areas will be implemented in the Northern Territory to aid in the protection and recovery of “at risk” reef fish species. Fisheries have consulted extensively on the location of these areas and have taken into consideration the views of the public in balancing the protection of fish stocks with ensuring ongoing fishing opportunities. Some of the closures protect known healthy stocks of reef fish, while others will allow reefs that have been depleted by overfishing to recover. In developing the final network of protected areas, every effort was made to reduce the impact on fishers while also achieving the protection and recovery objectives to ensure sustainability.

There will be no recreational fishing of any form allowed within these areas, however fishers may traverse through a protected area provided no lines or rods are rigged for the purpose of fishing.

An overview of the new protected areas can be seen in figure 1 over page. More detailed maps of each individual area can be found on the fisheries website at www.fisheries.nt.gov.au.



<p>NT Fisheries Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries GPO Box 2010 Darwin NT 0801 www.nt.gov.au</p> <p>Data Source: Coastal Region - GP Fisheries data - GP Coastal State of the State - Queensland Australia GCS WGS 1984</p>	<p>Reef Fish Protection Areas - All</p> <p> Protection Area</p> <p>Map is indicative only</p>	<p>© Copyright 2013 Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries</p> <p>All Rights Reserved. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. This document is for informational purposes only and does not constitute an offer or a contract. It is subject to change without notice. For more information, please contact the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries.</p> <p>DPIF MapID: 2014-003-06 09 December 2014</p>
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Figure 1: Reef Fish Protection Areas

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