



Commercial Coastal Line Fishery Management changes

Why the changes?

Management changes are necessary to ensure the future sustainability of reef fish stocks around Darwin, and maintain a viable commercial fishery to provide fresh local fish.

Golden snapper and black jewfish stocks in the Darwin region are currently being overfished and catches must be reduced. Catches of other vulnerable reef fish species must also be contained. Taking action to recover stocks will improve the future health of our fisheries. Delay will see fish stocks continue to decline, impacting on the viability of commercial fishing and the quality of recreational fishing and fishing tourism around Darwin.

Catch limits for black jewfish and golden snapper were put in place for the commercial fishery in 2010. These limits have been further reduced in light of updated scientific information which indicated reductions across all sectors were needed to ensure long-term sustainability. These catch limits will complement a new suite of management changes to ensure ongoing viability of the commercial fishery.

Changes will also be made to the management arrangements for recreational and fishing tour operator sectors to recover “at risk” reef species (see separate fact sheets).

What are the changes?

The Commercial Coastal Line Fishery (CLF) will be subject to a number of new management conditions including:

- Restricted access to a designated area around Darwin – the Western Zone which stretches from the WA/NT border to Vashon Head on Cobourg Peninsula (figure 1) – for operators who meet the new access criteria.
- The catch limits in the Western Zone of 145 tonne of jewfish and 4.5 tonne of golden snapper will be allocated as quota to licence holders who satisfy the entry criteria.
- Quota will be fully transferable – those licences that are not allocated quota can lease or purchase it on the open market.
- All CLF licences will become ‘unrestricted’ and be transferable.
- Coastal Line Fishery commercial operators, recreational fishers and fishing tour operators will not be allowed to fish in designated reef fish protection areas. For further detail on the reef fish protection areas, refer to the Reef Fish Protection Areas fact sheet.
- New measures will be put in place to ensure the effective monitoring of quota against the catch limits.
- Fishing gear inside the Western Zone will be limited to methods that target black jewfish, the primary commercial target species in this zone, to avoid increased catches of other “at risk” reef species.
- New management arrangements for areas outside the Western Zone will be developed in consultation with the Northern Territory Seafood Council to ensure the sustainability of operations, increase business and investment certainty; and outline clear pathways for the regional development within the fishery.

