

Gulf of Carpentaria Line Fishery

2011 fishing year report



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The Gulf of Carpentaria Line Fishery (GOCLF) is a multi-species fishery which harvests a range of pelagic (open water) and demersal (bottom-dwelling) fish. Spanish mackerel accounts for the vast majority of the fishery's catch. Other species taken include trevally and small mackerels that are caught using surface trolling methods, and demersal tropical snappers, cods and emperors that are primarily caught on coral and rocky reefs between 1–30 m deep using hand lines. The fishery operates under an L4 fishery symbol endorsement, with fishing grounds including all tidal waters in the Queensland Gulf of Carpentaria from Slade Point near the tip of Cape York Peninsula to the Queensland–Northern Territory border (Figure 1).



The report provides an update to fishing statistics to 31 Dec 2011.

Figure 1: Fishing area of the fishery.

Main features of the fishery in 2011

Feature	Details
Species targeted	Spanish mackerel and demersal fin fish species
Fishery symbols	L4
Current management regime	The Queensland Fisheries Joint Authority (QFJA), through the <i>Fisheries Act 1994</i> , manages all targeted fishing for northern demersal and pelagic fin fish in waters adjacent to Queensland in the Gulf of Carpentaria
Gear:	Commercial: surface trolling and handlining Recreational: line fishing
Main management methods	Commercial & Recreational: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gear restrictions – including restrictions of the type of apparatus that can be used (numbers of lines and hooks) and size of the boat and number of tenders that can be used in the fishery • Species specific size and number regulations – size limits and number of fish regulations apply to a range of in-possession species Commercial only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited entry • Closed area restrictions – South Mitchell River • Prohibition on retaining barramundi (<i>Lates calcarifer</i>), black jewfish (<i>Protonibea diacanthus</i>), blue and king threadfin (<i>Eleutheronema tetradactylum</i> and <i>Polydactylus macrochir</i>), scaly jewfish (<i>Nibea squamosa</i>), giant queenfish (<i>Scomberoides commersonianus</i>) and silver javelin (<i>Pomodasys argenteus</i>)
Quota	No
Fishing season	1 January to 31 December

Commercial fishery licences in 2011	22
Management changes in 2011	Nil
Accreditation under the EPBC Act (Part 13 and 13A)	Part 13: accredited 25 th August 2010 Part 13A: current accreditation (Wildlife Trade Operation) expires 30 August 2013
Total annual harvest by sectors	Commercial: 220 t Charter: 36 t Recreational (2010): approximately 53 000 fish
Product price and GVP	Spanish mackerel: \$7/kg Other mackerels: between \$5–7/kg Demersal reef species: between \$6–12/kg GVP : Approximately \$1.53 million
Stock status	Sustainably fished: 1 (Spanish mackerel) Uncertain: 3 (red emperor, crimson snapper, saddletail snapper)
Ecological risk assessments	Last completed 2006 (Zeller & Snape 2006)
Monitoring	Commercial logbooks (CFISH), biological data (fishery dependent) for Spanish mackerel, at-sea observing (nil days in 2011).
Catch and effort data validation	Nil in 2011
Compliance and enforcement	Units inspected by Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol in 2011: 10 Offences detected in 2011: 1
Complementary management	Fisheries researchers and managers from Queensland, Northern Territory, Western Australia and the Commonwealth meet annually at the Northern Australia Fisheries Management Forum to review and set research priorities, and consider strategies to facilitate complementary management initiatives for shared resources.
Stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The QFJA undertakes consultation on the management of the fishery on a needs basis. • Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol (QBFP) perform a communication and education role as part of their compliance program. • Fisheries Queensland consults with industry members through attendance at industry association meetings, port visits, newsletters and other means.

GOCLF summary

Catch and effort statistics

Commercial

Total harvest in the GOCLF increased 17 t to 220 t in 2011, with catch rates remaining stable (Figure 2). The majority of the harvest (97%) consisted of Spanish mackerel (Table 1).

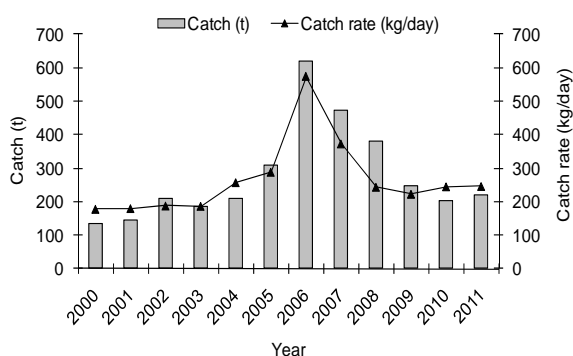


Figure 2: Total commercial catch (tonnes) and catch rate (kg/day) in the GOCLF from 2000–11 (Source: Fisheries Queensland CFISH Database, 8 May 2012).

Charter

Charter catch remained steady at 36 t, despite a decrease in effort from 923 days in 2010 to 743 days in 2011.

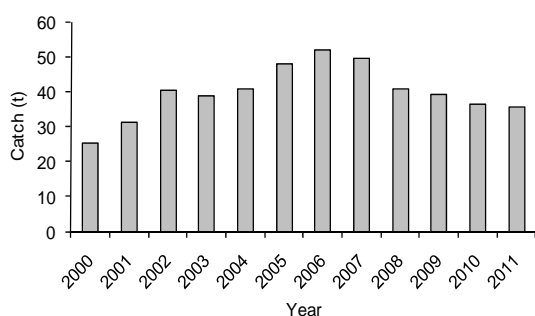


Figure 3: Total charter catch (tonnes) from 2000–2011 (Source: Fisheries Queensland CFISH Database, accessed 5 May 2012).

Recreational

Fisheries Queensland undertook the latest state-wide recreational fishing survey in 2010, with preliminary results now available.

Estimates are now able to be separated by species and region. In 2010, approximately 15 t¹ of Spanish mackerel were harvested by recreational fishers in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Table 1: GOCLF catch, effort and economics 2008–2011 (Source: Fisheries Queensland CFISH Database, accessed 8 May 2012).

	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total catch (t)	380	247	203	220
Total effort (days)	1561	1108	829	896
Licences (active)	35	28	22	22
GVP (\$A million)	\$2.4	\$1.5	\$1.4	\$1.5
Spanish mackerel (t)	285	189	190	213
Grey mackerel (t)	9	3	<1	1.5
Saddletail snapper (t)	7	0	4	0
Crimson snapper (t)	9	0	4	<1

Species of conservation interest (SOCI) interactions

No interactions have been reported through the SOCI logbook in 2011.

Research

There were no new research projects in 2011.

¹ Based on a conversion of 7.6kg per fish.

Performance against fishery objectives

The Performance Measurement System (PMS) functions as a reporting framework that is a transparent, defensible set of criteria for evaluating the performance of the fishery against management objectives. The full PMS for the GOCLF including the links between the objective, indicators and performance measures can be found at http://www.daff.qld.gov.au/28_11060.htm

Table 3: Performance measures and outcomes for the GOCLF in 2011.

Performance measure	Performance
<i>Target species</i>	
Spanish mackerel Estimated catch by all sectors exceeds the estimated sustainable yield of Spanish mackerel.	<i>Not measured</i> A sustainable yield for Spanish mackerel has not yet been developed. A review of the PMS, including the development of a suitable sustainable yield indicator, is planned for 2013.
Aggregate landings by all sectors reach 90% of the sustainable yield (by whole weight) and/or total fishery catch declines by 30% over the calendar year (by whole weight).	<i>Not triggered</i> Total fishery catch increased in 2011.
By-product in the GOCLF increases by 20% of the total landings of the calendar year (by whole weight).	<i>Not triggered</i> The commercial catch of by-product species is less than 3% for 2011.
<i>Bycatch and protected species</i>	
Bycatch in the GOCLF increases by 10% of the total catch over the calendar year (whole weight).	<i>Not measured</i> Bycatch information in the fishery has not been collected since 2009.
Level of interaction with endangered / threatened / protected species in the GOCLF increases significantly.	<i>Not triggered</i> There have been no reported interactions in 2011.

Compliance statistics

During 2011, ten commercial fishing vessels were inspected in the GOCLF. One Fisheries Infringement Notice was issued to a fisher during the period for contravening a regulated waters declaration.

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Cover Image

Spanish mackerel (*Scomberomorus commerson*)

