

Gulf of Carpentaria Line Fishery 2010

Progress against DEWHA Conditions and Recommendations



On 26 March 2009, the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries was amalgamated with other government departments to form the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation.

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Progress in implementing Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) conditions and recommendations for the Gulf of Carpentaria Line (Spanish mackerel and other fin fish) Fishery.

DEWHA made a range of recommendations to Fisheries Queensland during its initial assessment of the Gulf of Carpentaria Line (Spanish mackerel and other fin fish) Fishery (GOCLF) in 2004, in order to address perceived risks or uncertainties. DEWHA's assessment of progress against these recommendations can be found at (<http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/fisheries/qld/line/report-augo7.html>).

In August 2007 the fishery was reassessed and a new three year WTO was granted, along with a new set of conditions and recommendations. Details of the progress Fisheries Queensland has made in relation to the current recommendations are outlined in this document.

Condition 1:

Operation of the fishery will be carried out in accordance with the GOCLF management regime in force under the Queensland *Fisheries Act 1995* and the Queensland *Fisheries Regulation 2008*.

Progress: Ongoing

Operation of the fishery in 2009 was carried out in accordance with the GOCLF management regime in force under the Queensland *Fisheries Act 1995* and the Queensland *Fisheries Regulation 2008*.

Condition 2:

Fisheries Queensland to inform the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) of any intended changes to management arrangements that may affect the assessment of the fishery against the criteria on which EPBC Act decisions are based.

Progress: Ongoing

Fisheries Queensland consulted with DEWHA prior to the implementation of the following changes to the management arrangements for the GOLCF.

There has been a program of management change to simplify the regulatory framework of the Gulf of Carpentaria line fishery while reducing overall fishing capacity. This program saw the removal of latent licenses and the amalgamation of the previous L5 fishery into the L4 fishery between 2004 and 2007.

The final stage in this process was implemented in May 2009 through the amalgamation of the Queensland Fisheries Joint Authority line fishery which operated beyond the 25 n mile line and the L4 fishery that operated inside that line. The result of this program is a reduction in primary line fishing entitlements from 107 to 47 and a spreading of the remaining fishing effort throughout the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Condition 3:

Fisheries Queensland to produce and present reports to DEWHA annually as per Appendix B to the *Guidelines for the Ecologically Sustainable Management of Fisheries – 2nd Edition*.

Progress: Ongoing

The Annual Status Report for the 2009 reporting year will be completed and provided to DEWHA in May 2010.

Part 13 Condition 1:

Fisheries Queensland to prohibit the retention of all EPBC Act listed Chondrichthyan species in the GOCLF as a priority, but by no later than 31 July 2009.

Progress: Complete

This condition has been met through amendments to Queensland legislation that prohibit the take of these EPBC Act listed shark species and any members of the Pristidae family (i.e. sawfish) that took effect on 1 March 2009.

Recommendation 1:

Fisheries Queensland to prohibit the retention of all EPBC Act listed Chondrichthyan species in the GOCLF.

Progress: Complete

This recommendation has been met through the amendments to Queensland legislation described in the Progress against Part 13 Condition 1. The amendments took effect on 1 March 2009.

Recommendation 2:

Fisheries Queensland to specifically consider the management of CITES listed species, in particular members of the Pristidae family, in the GOCLF.

Progress: Complete

This recommendation was met through the amendments of Queensland legislation that prohibit the take of any members of the Pristidae family (i.e. sawfish) as described above. These amendments took effect on 1 March 2009. Queensland Fisheries Legislation also prohibits the take of the CITES listed humphead wrasse.

Recommendation 3:

Fisheries Queensland to continue to improve estimates of recreational and Indigenous harvest. Once available, Fisheries Queensland to take estimates of IUU fishing, recreational and Indigenous harvests into account in stock assessments and to introduce management arrangements to mitigate any risks identified.

Progress: Ongoing

Fisheries Queensland are currently undertaking a state-wide recreational diary program which will provide some coverage of the Gulf of Carpentaria. This program is an ongoing diary program focused on recreational boat owners. A state-wide telephone survey will be undertaken in 2010.

The number of IUU fishing vessel incursions in northern Australian waters has decreased significantly.

The Australian Customs and Border Protection Service are confident this is a result of their policies to actively reduce the number of vessel incursions in Australian waters. The greatly reduced level of illegal foreign fishing is mitigating the sustainability risks these fishing activities pose to commercial fish stocks in the Gulf of Carpentaria region.

Recommendation 4:

As a part of the development of the Performance Measurement System, Fisheries Queensland to include a reference point related to protected species interactions and to refine the current reference point for Spanish mackerel.

Progress: In progress

Fisheries Queensland developed an interim review reference point for protected species impacts related to fishing in the GOCLF. Annual reporting of protected species interactions recorded through the Species of Conservation Interest logbook continues to demonstrate on an annual basis that the GOCLF has a negligible impact.

A sustainability reference point has not been developed for Spanish mackerel in the GOCLF. Samples are being collected from the fishery through the Long Term Monitoring Program; however these are yet to be analysed.

Recommendation 5:

Fisheries Queensland to monitor the status of the fishery in relation to the Performance Measurement System once finalised. Within 3 months of becoming aware that a performance measure has not been met, Fisheries Queensland to finalise a clear timetable for the implementation of appropriate management responses.

Progress: Ongoing

The fishery continues to be monitored through compulsory daily fisher logbooks as well as Fishery Observers and a long-term biological monitoring program for the main target species. The fishery has been measured against indicators in the Performance Measurement System and reported on annually through the Annual Status Reports http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/28_10916.htm. A performance measure for Spanish mackerel harvest was triggered in the 2009 season. Within three months, Fisheries Queensland will undertake a review of likely causes for triggering the review reference point, and its implications for sustainable management of the fishery. Pending the outcome of that review Fisheries Queensland will finalise a timetable for the implementation of appropriate management responses.

