



Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Energy

Assessment of the
**QUEENSLAND RIVER AND INSHORE BEAM TRAWL
FISHERY**

February 2019

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Disclaimer

This document is an assessment carried out by the Department of the Environment and Energy of a commercial fishery against the Australian Government *Guidelines for the Ecologically Sustainable Management of Fisheries – 2nd Edition*. It forms part of the advice provided to the Minister for the Environment on the fishery in relation to decisions under Parts 13 and 13A of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Minister for the Environment or the Australian Government.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE ASSESSMENT OF THE QUEENSLAND RIVER AND INSHORE BEAM TRAWL FISHERY

On 7 December 2018, the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (QDAF) submitted an application for the Queensland River and Inshore Beam Trawl Fishery (the fishery) to the Department of the Environment and Energy for assessment under the provisions of Part 13 (protected species) and Part 13A (wildlife trade) of the EPBC Act, against the Australian Government 'Guidelines for the Ecologically Sustainable Management of Fisheries – 2nd Edition'. A public comment period was open from 14 December 2018 until 21 January 2019. No comments were received.

The fishery

The fishery is managed by QDAF under the *Queensland Fisheries Act 1994*, the Queensland Fisheries Regulations 2008, and the Queensland Fisheries (East Coast Trawl) Management Plan 2010.

The fishery operates in state waters off the Queensland east coast and a number of Queensland east coast river estuaries, within three nautical miles from shore. Fishing operations are subdivided laterally into five regions (T5-T9), each with individual licence symbols, from the Brisbane river in the south to Cape York in the north with the main area of operation being southern Queensland (T5). Total number of licences with access to the fishery is 83, however, the total number of active licences within the fishery is 48.

Harvest method is via beam trawl, a form of bottom trawling where the net is held open with a solid metal beam that drags along the seafloor. Bait and cast nets are also permitted. The fishery is managed primarily by input and output controls including limited licencing, regional management, temporal and spatial closures, gear restrictions, vessel restrictions, mandatory use of turtle excluder devices and bycatch reduction devices, as well as minimum legal size and possession limits.

Target stocks

The fishery targets short-lived penaeid prawns with one year life cycles. Target species include: Greentail (Bay) Prawn (*Metapenaeus bennettiae*), Banana Prawn (*Penaeus merguensis*) and School prawn (*Metapenaeus macleayi*).

The stock status for species retained in the fishery was reported in *Status of Key Australian Fish Stocks* (SAFS) 2018 as:

- greentail prawns - stock status 'undefined' due to lack of information on the composition of 'bay prawn' catch, but considered at low risk of being overfished because of high fecundity
- banana prawns - sustainably fished
- school prawns - undefined in Queensland, however nominal catch rates are stable.

Protected species and ecosystems

A number of EPBC Act protected species occur within the area of the fishery, such as dugong and cetaceans in Moreton Bay, sea snakes and grey nurse sharks in shallow coastal waters.

The 2015 ecological risk assessment indicated that the fishery represents a relatively low risk of causing damage to ecosystems and there are unlikely to be incidental interactions with protected species. Short shot duration, slow trawl speed, low catch weights, gear restrictions and substantial area closures combine to minimise risks to EPBC Act protected species resulting from the operation of the fishery.

Conclusion

The Department recognises that major reforms are underway as part of the Queensland Government's Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017–2027. These reforms are expected to significantly improve the management of the fishery and address issues identified in the Department's assessments. This includes providing a more strategic management framework and greater means to collect and validate important fishery data, greater enforcement capacity, and better assessment and management of fishery performance to ensure ecological risks are managed effectively. These important reforms are reflected in conditions associated with the proposed approvals, at Section 4 of this report and include:

- a. Finalise and implement ecological risk assessments to assess the fishery's impact on target and non-target species, including protected species and implement those measures to mitigate the ecological risks in the fishery.
- b. Publish ecological risk assessments

Based on the Department's assessment of the application against the Australian Government 'Guidelines for the Ecologically Sustainable Management of Fisheries – 2nd Edition', the Department recommends that the fishery be granted export approval for three years until 11 February 2022, by declaring the fishery an approved wildlife trade operation and amending the list of exempt native specimens under the EPBC Act.

Unless a specific time frame is provided, each condition must be addressed within the period of the approved wildlife trade operation declaration for the fishery.

SECTION 1: ASSESSMENT SUMMARY OF THE QUEENSLAND RIVER AND INSHORE BEAM TRAWL FISHERY AGAINST THE GUIDELINES FOR THE ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF FISHERIES (2ND EDITION), CONSISTENT WITH THE EPBC ACT

Guidelines assessment	Meets	Partially meets	Does not meet	Details
Management regime	5 of 9 (1 n/a)	3 of 9		Generally robust management regime, although would be improved by more regular evaluation of performance.
Principle 1 (target stocks)	8 of 11 (2 n/a)	1 of 11		Generally robust management of target stocks. 1.1.4 – validation of logbooks some concern as no independent observer program in Queensland .
Principle 2 (bycatch and TEPS)	5 of 12 (4 n/a)	3 of 12	a	some concerns for bycatch and protected species interactions as no independent observer program in Queensland .
Principle 2 (ecosystem impacts)	1 of 5	4 of 5		Ecosystem impacts likely to be low due to fishing method and fishing zones. 2.3.2 to 2.3.4 - Performance Management System not reviewed since 2008, updated reference points/triggers would enable more responsive management interventions.
EPBC requirements	Meets	Partially meets	Does not meet	Details
Part 12	Meets requirements Operates in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and the Temperate East Marine regions. Selective fishing method and fishing areas unlikely to have an impact on ecological values.			
Part 13	Meets requirements Accreditation currently in place and remains valid.			
Part 13A	Meets requirements subject to conditions specified at Section 4 of this report. The fishery is consistent with the Objects of Part 13A. Declaration of the fishery as a Wildlife Trade Operation for three years, until 11 February 2022 is recommended, subject to conditions detailed in Section 4 of this report.			
Part 16	Meets requirements Appropriate precautionary measures are in place to prevent serious or irreversible environmental damage being caused by this fishery.			

Notes:

Assessment history:

- 1st assessment finalised February 2006 - 12 recommendations
- 2nd assessment finalised February 2009 – 3 conditions and 12 recommendations
- 3rd assessment finalised April 2012 – 4 conditions and 5 recommendations
- 4th assessment finalised February 2015 – 5 conditions and 1 recommendation

Fishery reporting:

Queensland fishery summary report 2018:

<https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/resources/documents/fisheries/sustainable-fisheries2/sustainable-fisheries/Queensland-Fisheries-Summary-Report.pdf>

Australian Government Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, 2014. Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2014, GBRMPA, Townsville.

<http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/our-work/reef-strategies/great-barrier-reef-outlook-report>. (Sourced: February 2019):

biological information key species :2011 Annual Status Report at:

https://www.daff.qld.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0019/65701/RIBTF-ASR-2011.pdf (Sourced: February 2019):

QDAF Fisheries Symbols

<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/licences/fisheries-symbols>
(Sourced: February 2019):

Enforcing legislation:

The fishery is managed in accordance with provisions in the following Queensland legislation and regulations available at <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/> and Commonwealth legislation available at <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2017C00279> (Sourced: February 2019):

- – Queensland *Fisheries Act 1994*
- Queensland Fisheries Regulation 2008
- Queensland *Fisheries (East Coast Trawl) Management Plan 2010*
- *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 1983

Ecological Risk Assessment

- The most recent ERA is available at https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1402672/Sth-QLD-Trawl-ERA-Final.pdf
- Ecological Risk Assessments (Queensland Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017-2027): <https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/fisheries/sustainable-fisheries-strategy/ecological-risk-assessment-guidelines>
- Harvest strategy framework (Queensland Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017-2027): <https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/fisheries/sustainable-fisheries-strategy/harvest-strategy>

SECTION 2: DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE QUEENSLAND RIVER AND INSHORE BEAM TRAWL FISHERY AGAINST THE GUIDELINES FOR THE ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF FISHERIES (2ND EDITION)

Guidelines criteria	Comment
THE MANAGEMENT REGIME	
The management regime does not have to be a formal statutory fishery management plan as such, and may include non-statutory management arrangements or management policies and programs. The regime should:	
Be documented, publicly available and transparent.	Meets The Fisheries Act 1994 , the Fisheries Regulation 2008 and the Fisheries (East Coast Trawl) Management Plan 2010 are publicly available on the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries website https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/ .
Be developed through a consultative process providing opportunity to all interested and affected parties, including the general public.	Meets The original management arrangements were developed through consultation with stakeholders. A statutory process is in place for public consultation and advisory committees. A Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) process is used as the main mechanism for ongoing consultation.
Ensure that a range of expertise and community interests are involved in individual fishery management committees and during the stock assessment process.	Meets Consultation is completed through a formal RIS and/or show cause process –Section 63 of <i>Queensland Fisheries Act 1994</i> . There is ongoing scientific research and management expertise within the QDAF. The Queensland RIS guidelines can be found on the Queensland Department of Treasury website https://www.treasury.qld.gov.au/publications-resources/ris-system-guidelines/ris-system-guidelines.pdf
Be strategic, containing objectives and performance criteria by which the effectiveness of the management arrangements are measured.	Partially meets Objectives are found in the Fisheries (East Coast Trawl) Management Plan 2010 under the Queensland Fisheries Act 1994 . The Performance Measurement System (PMS) contains objectives, performance indicators, and performance measures which were measured annually up until 2012. The PMS has not been used to measure performance of the fishery since 2012. A trawl working group formed under the Queensland Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017-2027 will develop a harvest strategy for the fishery. The group are currently developing a harvest strategy for the East Coast Otter Trawl Fishery, with the fishery to follow.
Be capable of controlling the level of harvest in the fishery using input and/or output controls.	Meets The fishery is managed through a complex series of input and output controls that includes (among others): limited licencing, regional management, temporal and spatial closures, gear restrictions, vessel restrictions, mandatory use of turtle excluder devices (TEDs) and bycatch reduction devices (BRDs), minimum legal size and possession limits. Commercial fishers are required to submit logbook records of their catches; this provides QDAF with the means to monitor and then control fishing activity in the commercial sector.
Contain the means of enforcing critical aspects of the management arrangements.	Meets Legislation includes enforcement provisions, Queensland Boating and Fishing Patrol carry out enforcement on a risk based schedule.

Provide for the periodic review of the performance of the fishery management arrangements and the management strategies, objectives and criteria.	Partially meets The Status of Key Australian Fish Stocks (SAFS) assessment is conducted every two years. SAFS assess the biological sustainability of key wild-caught fish stocks, QDAF uses this assessment to measure against the PMS. Other performance measures have not been used since 2012.
Be capable of assessing, monitoring and avoiding, remedying or mitigating any adverse impacts on the wider marine ecosystem in which the target species lives and the fishery operates.	Partially meets The PMS strategy, which contains objectives against which adverse impacts can be identified and measured, has not been used for fishery since 2012. The QDAF advises that ongoing data collection will occur during fishing operations and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of QDAF can implement a Direction under the <i>Fisheries Act 1994</i> to stop fishing, if any adverse effects on the ecosystem are discovered. In June 2017, the Queensland Government released the <i>Queensland Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017–2027</i> . The strategy outlines the government's reform agenda for fisheries management over the next ten years.
Requires compliance with relevant threat abatement plans, recovery plans, the National Policy on Fisheries Bycatch, and bycatch action strategies developed under the policy.	N/A There are no relevant threat abatement plans, recovery plans, policies or strategies that fishery operators are required to comply with in the area of operation.
PRINCIPLE 1 - A fishery must be conducted in a manner that does not lead to over-fishing, or for those stocks that are over-fished, the fishery must be conducted such that there is a high degree of probability the stock(s) will recover.	
Objective 1 - The fishery shall be conducted at catch levels that maintain ecologically viable stock levels at an agreed point or range, with acceptable levels of probability.	
Information requirements	
1.1.1 There is a reliable information collection system in place appropriate to the scale of the fishery. The level of data collection should be based upon an appropriate mix of fishery independent and dependent research and monitoring.	Meets Commercial fishers have a legal obligation to report information about their fishing activities in a compulsory daily logbook. All trawl fishers must contribute data about their day's catch, the location fished, the apparatus used and any interactions with species of conservation interest. Logbook are present for the fishery, however reliability of the information would be improved by independent validation.
Assessment	
1.1.2 There is a robust assessment of the dynamics and status of the species/fishery and periodic review of the process and the data collected. Assessment should include a process to identify any reduction in biological diversity and /or reproductive capacity. Review should take place at regular intervals but at least every three years.	Meets Stock assessments for key target species (<i>Metapenaeus bennettiae</i> , <i>Penaeus merguensis</i> and <i>Metapenaeus macleayi</i>) are periodically undertaken as part of the East Coast Otter Trawl Fishery and SAFS. East Coast Otter Trawl Fishery – Annually Queensland River and Inshore Beam Trawl Fishery – Biennially

<p>1.1.3 The distribution and spatial structure of the stock(s) has been established and factored into management responses.</p>	<p>Meets</p> <p>The fishery targets short-lived penaeid prawns with one year life cycles. Target species include: <u>Greentail (bay) prawns (<i>Metapenaeus bennettiae</i>)</u> – distribution extends from Rockhampton Queensland, to the Gippsland Lakes in Eastern Victoria. This species inhabits muddy sediment of estuaries and bays to depths of approximately 20 metres (m). <u>Banana prawns (<i>Penaeus merguensis</i>)</u> – wide distribution through tropical and sub-tropical waters of the west Indo-Pacific. This species is found in turbid mangrove-lined estuaries and shallow coastal waters to depths of 45 m. <u>School prawns (<i>Metapenaeus macleayi</i>)</u> – endemic to eastern Australia in coastal waters from southern Queensland to Victoria. School prawns inhabit estuaries and associated marine waters to depths of 55 m.</p> <p>Further biological information on these species is available in the QDAF 2011 Annual Status Report at: https://www.daff.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/65701/RIBTF-ASR-2011.pdf.</p> <p>The distribution and spatial structure for target species have been determined and used to inform management decisions.</p>
<p>1.1.4 There are reliable estimates of all removals, including commercial (landings and discards), recreational and indigenous, from the fished stock. These estimates have been factored into stock assessments and target species catch levels.</p>	<p>Partially meets</p> <p>Estimates of removals are present for target species through logbooks. <u>Logbooks</u> are compulsory for all fishers. There is a separate logbook to record details of interactions with SOCI. Reporting of discards and bycatch is not compulsory.</p> <p>There is no independent observer program in Queensland. There are new projects ongoing under the Queensland Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017-2027 to improve data validation, including proposed trials of electronic monitoring</p> <p>https://publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/queensland-sustainable-fisheries-strategy/resource/dfbddd3-f0e4-47a2-ba25-644b999734d8.</p> <p>Recreational fishing surveys are carried out periodically by QDAF, the most recent being in 2013/2014.</p>
<p>1.1.5 There is a sound estimate of the potential productivity of the fished stock/s and the proportion that could be harvested.</p>	<p>Meets</p> <p>Productivity has been calculated for target species, bycatch and byproduct with historical records. This data can be found in the <u>Queensland Fisheries Summary Report 2018</u>.</p>
<p>Management responses</p>	
<p>1.1.6 There are reference points (target and/or limit), that trigger management actions including a biological bottom line and/or a catch or effort upper limit beyond which the stock should not be taken.</p>	<p>Meets</p> <p>Reference points are articulated through the SAFS process, including setting of B_{LIM}. Given the catch effort required and stringent policies placed upon the fishery, it is unlikely that the upper limits of sustainable stock levels would be reached and/or exceeded.</p>
<p>1.1.7 There are management strategies in place capable of controlling the level of take.</p>	<p>Meets</p> <p>Level of take is maintained by limits on effort hours, limited entry, spatial closures and gear restrictions.</p>

1.1.8 Fishing is conducted in a manner that does not threaten stocks of byproduct species.	<p>Meets</p> <p>The take of byproduct in the fishery is measured and considered annually. The 2015 ecological risk assessment (ERA) indicated level of take of byproduct species is low, therefore impacts on byproduct are also considered low in the fishery.</p> <p>Byproduct species permitted to be retained in the fishery include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • blue swimmer crabs • cuttlefish • squid, and • Moreton Bay bugs. <p>Byproduct species are subject to possession limits that are size, sex and species dependent.</p>
(Guidelines 1.1.1 to 1.1.7 should be applied to byproduct species to an appropriate level)	
1.1.9 The management response, considering uncertainties in the assessment and precautionary management actions, has a high chance of achieving the objective.	<p>Meets</p> <p>Likely to meet objective of setting catch levels that maintain ecologically viable stock levels at an agreed point or range, with acceptable levels of probability.</p>
<p>f overfished, go to Objective 2:</p> <p>If not overfished, go to PRINCIPLE 2:</p>	
Objective 2 - Where the fished stock(s) are below a defined reference point, the fishery will be managed to promote recovery to ecologically viable stock levels within nominated timeframes.	
Management responses	
1.2.1 A precautionary recovery strategy is in place specifying management actions, or staged management responses, which are linked to reference points. The recovery strategy should apply until the stock recovers, and should aim for recovery within a specific time period appropriate to the biology of the stock.	<p>N/A</p> <p>Not required, as target species are not considered overfished.</p>
1.2.2 If the stock is estimated as being at or below the biological and / or effort bottom line, management responses such as a zero targeted catch, temporary fishery closure or a 'whole of fishery' effort or quota reduction are implemented.	<p>N/A</p> <p>No response is required at this time as target species are not considered overfished.</p>
PRINCIPLE 2 - Fishing operations should be managed to minimise their impact on the structure, productivity, function and biological diversity of the ecosystem.	
Objective 1 - The fishery is conducted in a manner that does not threaten bycatch species.	
Information requirements	

<p>2.1.1 Reliable information, appropriate to the scale of the fishery, is collected on the composition and abundance of bycatch.</p>	<p>Partially meets</p> <p>There are currently no requirements to log discarded bycatch species unless the species is of conservation concern listed in the EPBC Act. Logbooks are available; however reporting of bycatch should be improved</p>
<p>Assessment</p>	
<p>2.1.2 There is a risk analysis of the bycatch with respect to its vulnerability to fishing.</p>	<p>Meets</p> <p>The 2015 ERA of the fishery included fishing areas and operations of the East Coast Otter Trawl Fishery (ECOTF) south of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (GBRMP). Results from the assessment indicate that trawling represents a relatively low risk for the majority of ecological subcomponents that were assessed. Of the 171 ecological subcomponents assessed, 87.8% were low to intermediate risk from trawling.</p> <p>Twenty-one species were assessed as at high or high-intermediate risk of being overfished in the ECOTF south of the GBRMP, but not in the fishery.</p> <p>Species groups at relatively high risk are: Elegant sea snake (<i>Hydrophis elegans</i>); cuttlefish (<i>Sepia</i> spp.), goatfish (<i>Parupeneus</i> spp.), catsharks (<i>Asymbolus</i> spp., <i>Figaro boardmani</i>), and batoids i.e. skates (<i>Dipturus</i> spp.), Australian butterfly ray (<i>Gymnura australis</i>), Eastern shovelnose ray (<i>Aptychotrema rostrata</i>), Blackspotted whiplay (<i>Himantura astra</i>), maskrays (<i>Neotrygon</i> spp.), stingarees (<i>Trygonoptera testacea</i> and <i>Uropholus</i> spp.).</p> <p>Together these make up only 12% of the 171 bycatch species assessed. The risk posed to these species by the fishery is considered to be negligible in comparison to the ECOTF for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elegant sea snake - trawl induced mortality of sea snakes in the fishery is minimal due to the short shot times and small catch weights; the relative abundance of this species in the fishery is much lower than in the ECOTF; the observed fishery catch in research surveys was 4 animals v 178 animals in the ECOTF. • Goatfish - all four higher risk goatfish species are reef associated and have not been reported in bycatch research south of the GBRMP or in inshore areas where banana prawns are targeted. • Cuttlefish - median annual 2008-13 fishery catch was < 0.5 t v 27 t in the ECOTF, noting additional information on the species ecological component would help to refine future risk assessments. • Cat sharks and some batoid species - are expected to interact more frequently with the ECOTF than the fishery as they inhabit waters deeper further offshore than those in which the fishery operates (< 20 metres). • Other batoid species -are likely to interact with the fishery (<i>Gymnura australis</i>, <i>Aptychotrema rostrata</i>, <i>Himantura astra</i>, <i>Trygonoptera testacea</i>, <i>Uropholus kapalensis</i> and <i>Neotrygon</i> spp.) tolerate well the short shot times (< 1 hour) and contact with relatively low total catch weights in the fishery.
<p>Management responses</p>	
<p>2.1.3 Measures are in place to avoid capture and mortality of bycatch species unless it is determined that the level of catch is sustainable (except in relation to endangered, threatened or protected species). Steps must be taken to develop suitable technology if none is available.</p>	<p>Meets</p> <p>The use of Turtle Excluder Devices (TED) and Bycatch Reduction Devices (BRD) are mandatory in accordance with the Fishery (East Coast Trawl) Plan 2010. Best practice trawling methods conducted in the fishery such as, short-shot trawls and the use of BRDs, reduces interactions with non-target species. Protected species interactions are reported to the Department of the Environment on a quarterly basis.</p>

<p>2.1.4 An indicator group of bycatch species is monitored.</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>There is currently no monitoring of indicator groups of bycatch species in place for the fishery.</p> <p>Based on the 2015 ERA, the likelihood of interaction of bycatch in the fishery, or adverse outcomes from interactions, is likely to be insignificant for each of these species identified at 2.1.2. With a significant annual reduction in fishing effort since 2009, removal of 17 fishery licence symbols under the 2014 east coast structural adjustment buy-back, and the mandatory use of TEDs and BRDs, significant reductions in risk are almost certain under the fishery's operations.</p>
<p>2.1.5 There are decision rules that trigger additional management measures when there are significant perturbations in the indicator species numbers.</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>There are currently no monitoring of indicator groups of bycatch species in place for the fishery and therefore no associated management triggers based on the 2015 ERA.</p> <p>It is possible that the ERA for the fishery, being done under the Queensland Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017–2027, will identify indicator groups of bycatch species.</p>
<p>2.1.6 The management response, considering uncertainties in the assessment and precautionary management actions, has a high chance of achieving the objective.</p>	<p>Partially meets</p> <p>The management response is likely to achieve the objective, however validation is required for bycatch. Projects to improve data validation, including proposed trials of electronic monitoring are being developed under the Queensland Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017–2027.</p>
<p>Objective 2 - The fishery is conducted in a manner that avoids mortality of, or injuries to, endangered, threatened or protected species and avoids or minimises impacts on threatened ecological communities.</p>	
<p>Information requirements</p>	
<p>2.2.1 Reliable information is collected on the interaction with endangered, threatened or protected species and threatened ecological communities.</p>	<p>Meets</p> <p>In accordance with <i>Fisheries Act 1994</i>, the Fisheries Regulation 2008 and Fisheries (East Coast Trawl) Management Plan 2010, all interactions with EPBC Act protected species are reported to the Department. There are no EPBC Act listed threatened ecological communities within the area of the fishery.</p>
<p>Assessments</p>	
<p>2.2.2 There is an assessment of the impact of the fishery on endangered, threatened or protected species.</p>	<p>Meets</p> <p>The 2015 ERA included fishing areas and operations of the ECOTF south of the GBRMP. Results from the assessment indicate that trawling represents a relatively low risk for the majority of ecological subcomponents that were assessed. Of the 171 ecological subcomponents assessed, 87.8% were low to intermediate risk from trawling. Twenty-one species were assessed as at high or high-intermediate risk of being overfished in the ECOTF south of the GBRMP, but not in the fishery.</p> <p>Species groups at relatively high risk are: Elegant sea snake (<i>Hydrophis elegans</i>); cuttlefish (<i>Sepia</i> spp.), goatfish (<i>Parupeneus</i> spp.), catsharks (<i>Asymbolus</i> spp., <i>Figaro boardmani</i>), and batoids i.e. skates (<i>Dipturus</i> spp.), Australian butterfly ray (<i>Gymnura australis</i>), Eastern shovelnose ray (<i>Aptychotrema rostrata</i>), Blackspotted whiplay (<i>Himantura astra</i>), maskrays (<i>Neotrygon</i> spp.), stingarees (<i>Trygonoptera testacea</i> and <i>Uropholus</i> spp.).</p> <p>Together these make up only 12% of the 171 bycatch species assessed. The risk posed to these species by the fishery is considered to be negligible as the likelihood of interaction for each of these species is low.</p>

2.2.3 There is an assessment of the impact of the fishery on threatened ecological communities.	N/A The fishery does not impact or have interactions with any ecological communities due to the fishery's location.
Management responses	
2.2.4 There are measures in place to avoid capture and/or mortality of endangered, threatened or protected species.	Partially meets The use of TEDs and BRDs are mandatory in accordance with the Queensland Fisheries (East Coast Trawl) Management Plan 2010. Best practice trawling methods conducted in the fishery, such as, short-shot trawls and the use of BRDs, reduces interactions with non-target species. The 2015 ERA identifies minimal potential for interactions to occur with species listed as threatened under the EPBC Act. However, independent validation is required to improve confidence in reported levels of interactions with protected species and that the avoidance methods are reliable. Projects to improve data validation, including proposed trials of electronic monitoring are being developed under the Queensland Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017–2027.
2.2.5 There are measures in place to avoid impact on threatened ecological communities.	N/A No EPBC Act listed threatened ecological communities in the area of the fishery.
2.2.6 The management response, considering uncertainties in the assessment and precautionary management actions, has a high chance of achieving the objective.	Meets Considered likely to achieve the objectives of avoiding mortality of, or injuries to, endangered, threatened or protected species and avoids or minimises impacts on threatened ecological communities.
Objective 3 - The fishery is conducted, in a manner that minimises the impact of fishing operations on the ecosystem generally.	
Information requirements	
2.3.1 Information appropriate for the analysis in 2.3.2 is collated and/or collected covering the fishery's impact on the ecosystem and environment generally.	Partially meets Methods of data collection are in place. Logbooks are in use, however not all bycatch species are recorded. Protected species interactions are reported to the Department. The most recent ERA does not assess the impact on ecosystems and environment generally due to data inadequacies.
Assessment	

<p>2.3.2 Information is collected and a risk analysis, appropriate to the scale of the fishery and its potential impacts, is conducted into the susceptibility of each of the following ecosystem components to the fishery.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Impacts on ecological communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benthic communities • Ecologically related, associated or dependent species • Water column communities 2. Impacts on food chains <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure • Productivity/flows 3. Impacts on the physical environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical habitat • Water quality 	<p>Meets</p> <p>The 201 ERA assessed the impacts of the fishery on target, bycatch and TEP species, and the fishery's impact on ecological communities, food chains and the physical environment as minor.</p> <p>The fishery operates over fine mud to sand substrates. Benthic fauna are characteristically deposit and suspension feeders associated with fine sediments and tidal currents, many of them capable of burrowing to avoid trawl capture. Observational evidence indicates that beam trawl related physical disturbance is minimal in areas where the fishery occurs, such as mud flats. Redistribution of submerged mangrove debris is the main physical disturbance from beam trawling (Dredge 1983), but is likely to have a negligible ecological impact compared to other human activities prevalent in shallow estuarine and inshore areas.</p>
<p>Management responses</p>	
<p>2.3.3 Management actions are in place to ensure significant damage to ecosystems does not arise from the impacts described in 2.3.1.</p>	<p>Partially meets</p> <p>Management measures to ensure significant damage to ecosystems does not occur as a result of trawl practices are limited. These measures include spatial and temporal closures.</p>
<p>2.3.4 There are decision rules that trigger further management responses when monitoring detects impacts on selected ecosystem indicators beyond a predetermined level, or where action is indicated by application of the precautionary approach.</p>	<p>Partially meets</p> <p>Performance measures in place in PMS for species but not for ecosystems. The fishery is not monitored in its entirety (refer to the QDAF Submission). PMS has not been used to assess performance since 2012.</p>
<p>2.3.5 The management response, considering uncertainties in the assessment and precautionary management actions, has a high chance of achieving the objective.</p>	<p>Partially meets</p> <p>The management arrangements, considering any precautionary management actions, appear to have a moderate chance of achieving the objective of ensuring that the fishery is conducted in a manner that minimises the impact of fishing operations on the ecosystem generally.</p>

SECTION 3: ASSESSMENT OF THE QUEENSLAND RIVER AND INSHORE BEAM TRAWL FISHERY AGAINST THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE EPBC ACT

The table below is not a complete or exact representation of the EPBC Act. It is intended to show that the relevant sections and components of the EPBC Act have been taken into account in the formulation of advice on the fishery in relation to decisions under Part 13 and Part 13A.

Part 12 – Identifying and monitoring biodiversity and making bioregional plans

Section 176 Bioregional Plans	Comment
(5) Minister must have regard to relevant bioregional plans	<p>The <i>Marine bioregional plan for the Temperate East Marine Region</i> has been considered in the preparation of advice in relation to decisions under section 303DC and section 303FN.</p> <p>Harvesting of living resources and bycatch have been identified as pressures operating within the Temperate East Marine Region in which part of the fishery operates. Bycatch reduction devices and turtle exclusion devices are mandatory in this fishery, which has significantly reduced turtle and large species bycatch.</p> <p>Recent research has refined the use of particular bycatch reduction devices to reduce sea snake capture and extension of these results to industry has been successful in reducing bycatch in the fishery. No target or byproduct species have been assessed as overfished in the <i>Status of Key Australian Fish Stocks 2016</i> and no principal species were assessed to be at more than intermediate risk from trawling operations in the <i>Ecological risk assessment of the Southern Queensland East Coast Otter Trawl Fishery and River & Inshore Beam Trawl Fishery</i>.</p>

Part 13 – Species and communities

Accreditable plan, regime or policy (Division 1, Division 2, Division 3, Division 4)	Comment
s. 208A (1) (a-e) , s.222A (1) (a-e), s.245 (1) (a-e), s.265 (1) (a-e) Does the fishery have an accreditable plan of management, regime or policy?	Yes The fishery is managed under the <i>Queensland Fisheries Act 1994 (Fisheries Act 1994)</i> , <i>Queensland Fisheries Regulation 2008 (Fisheries Regulation 2008)</i> and the <i>Queensland Fisheries (East Coast Trawl) Management Plan 2010</i> and arrangements established under this legislation.
Division 1 Listed threatened species, Section 208A Minister may accredit plans or regimes	Comment
(f) Will the plan, regime or policy require fishers to take all reasonable steps to ensure that members of listed threatened species (other than conservation dependent species) are not killed or injured as a result of the fishing?	Yes Commercial fishers are required to report all interactions with protected species to QDAF within a month after cessation of each fishing trip. This allows QDAF to monitor and respond to emerging issues.
(g) And, is the fishery likely to adversely affect the survival or recovery in nature of the species?	No The 2018 ecological risk assessment (ERA) indicates that the fishery has minimal interactions with listed threatened species. Given the current measures in place in the fishery, (in Table 1), the Department considers the current operation of the fishery is not

	likely to adversely affect the survival or recovery in nature of any listed threatened species. The Department further considers that the current accreditation under Part 13 of the EPBC Act for the fishery remains valid.
Division 2 Migratory species, Section 222A Minister may accredit plans or regimes	Comment
(f) Will the plan, regime or policy require fishers to take all reasonable steps to ensure that members of listed migratory species are not killed or injured as a result of the fishing?	Yes Measures outlined for listed threatened species (Division 1 (f) in this section of the report) also apply to listed migratory species. Given the available information, the Department considers that all reasonable steps are being taken to prevent the killing or injuring of members of listed migratory species.
(g) And, is the fishery likely to adversely affect the conservation status of a listed migratory species or a population of that species?	No QDAF indicates that there have been no interactions with listed migratory species. Therefore, the Department considers the current operation of the fishery is not likely to adversely affect the conservation status of a listed migratory species or a population of that species. The Department further considers that the current accreditation under Part 13 of the EPBC Act for the fishery remains valid.
Division 3 Whales and other cetaceans, Section 245 Minister may accredit plans or regimes	Comment
(f) Will the plan, regime or policy require fishers to take all reasonable steps to ensure that cetaceans are not killed or injured as a result of the fishing?	Yes Measures outlined for listed threatened species (Division 1 (f) in this section of the report) also apply to listed migratory species. Given the available information, the Department considers that all reasonable steps are being taken to prevent the killing or injuring of members of whales and other cetaceans.
(g) And, is the fishery likely to adversely affect the conservation status of a species of cetacean or a population of that species?	No The report provided by QDAF indicates that there have been no interactions with cetaceans in the fishery. Therefore, the Department considers the current operation of the fishery is not likely to adversely affect the conservation status of a species of cetacean or a population of that species. The Department further considers that the current accreditation under Part 13 of the EPBC Act for the fishery remains valid.
Division 4 Listed marine species, Section 265 Minister may accredit plans or regimes	Comment
(f) Will the plan, regime or policy require fishers to take all reasonable steps to ensure that members of listed marine species are not killed or injured as a result of the fishing?	Yes Measures outlined for listed threatened species (Division 1 (f) in this section of the report) also apply to listed migratory species. Given the available information, the Department considers that all reasonable steps are being taken to prevent the killing or injuring of members of listed marine species.
(g) And, is the fishery likely to adversely affect the conservation status of a listed marine species or a population of that species?	No The 2015 ERA indicates that the fishery has minimal interactions with listed marine species (including syngnathids and seasnakes). Therefore, the Department considers the current operation of the fishery is not likely to adversely affect the conservation status of a listed marine species or a population of that species. The Department further considers that the current accreditation under Part 13 of the EPBC Act for the fishery remains valid.

Section 303AA Conditions relating to accreditation of plans, regimes and policies	Comment
(1) This section applies to an accreditation of a plan, regime or policy under section 208A, 222A, 245 or 265.	The Department considers that the accreditation of the fishery's management regime remains valid under sections 208A, 222A, 245 and 265.
(2) The Minister may accredit a plan, regime or policy under that section even though he or she considers that the plan, regime or policy should be accredited only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) during a particular period; or (b) while certain circumstances exist; or (c) while a certain condition is complied with. In such a case, the instrument of accreditation is to specify the period, circumstances or condition.	The Department considers that no conditions are required for the accreditation of the management regime for the fishery under Part 13.
(7) The Minister must, in writing, revoke an accreditation if he or she is satisfied that a condition of the accreditation has been contravened.	Not applicable.

Part 13A

Section 303BA Objects of Part 13A	
(1) The objects of this Part are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) to ensure that Australia complies with its obligations under CITES and the Biodiversity Convention; (b) to protect wildlife that may be adversely affected by trade; (c) to promote the conservation of biodiversity in Australia and other countries; (d) to ensure that any commercial utilisation of Australian native wildlife for the purposes of export is managed in an ecologically sustainable way; (e) to promote the humane treatment of wildlife; (f) to ensure ethical conduct during any research associated with the utilisation of wildlife; and (h) to ensure the precautionary principle is taken into account in making decisions relating to the utilisation of wildlife. 	
Section 303 CG Minister may issue permits (CITES species)	Comment
(3) The Minister must not issue a permit unless the Minister is satisfied that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the action or actions specified in the permit will not be detrimental to, or contribute to trade which is detrimental to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the survival of any taxon to which the specimen belongs; or 	Not applicable - No specimens listed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) are permitted to be harvested in the fishery. Therefore, no assessment of the fishery's impact on specimens listed under CITES has been conducted.
(ii) the recovery in nature of any taxon to which the specimen belongs; or	Not applicable – The fishery does not harvest species listed under CITES.
(iii) any relevant ecosystem (for example, detriment to habitat or biodiversity); and	Not applicable – The fishery does not harvest species listed under CITES.

Section 303DC Minister may amend list (non CITES species)	Comment
<p>(1) The Minister may, by legislative instrument, amend the list referred to in section 303DB [list of exempt native specimens] by:</p> <p>(a) doing any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) including items in the list; (ii) deleting items from the list; (iii) imposing a condition or restriction to which the inclusion of a specimen in the list is subject; (iv) varying or revoking a condition or restriction to which the inclusion of a specimen in the list is subject; or <p>(b) correcting an inaccuracy or updating the name of a species.</p>	<p>The Department recommends that specimens derived from species harvested in the fishery, other than specimens that belong to species listed under Part 13 of the EPBC Act, be included in the list of exempt native specimens while the fishery is subject to a declaration as an approved wildlife trade operation.</p>
<p>(1A) In deciding to amend the LENS, the Minister must rely primarily on outcomes an assessment under Part 10, Divisions 1 or 2</p>	<p>No assessment of the fishery has been carried out under Part 10 of the EPBC Act.</p>
<p>(1C) The above does not limit matters that may be considered when deciding to amend LENS.</p>	<p>Meets The Department considers that it has taken into account all matters relevant to making an informed decision to amend the list of exempt native specimens to include product taken in this fishery.</p>
<p>(3) Before amending the LENS, the Minister must consult:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) other Minister or Ministers as appropriate; and (b) other Minister or Ministers of each State and self-governing Territory as appropriate; and (c) other persons and organisations as appropriate. 	<p>Meets The Department considers that it has taken into account all matters relevant to making an informed decision to amend the list of exempt native specimens to include product taken in this fishery.</p>
Section 303FN Approved wildlife trade operation	Comment
<p>(2) The Minister may, by instrument published in the <i>Gazette</i>, declare that a specified wildlife trade operation is an approved wildlife trade operation for the purposes of this section.</p>	<p>The fishery is eligible for declaration as an approved wildlife trade operation.</p>
<p>(3) The Minister must not declare an operation as an approved wildlife trade operation unless the Minister is satisfied that:</p> <p>(a) the operation is consistent with the objects of Part 13A of the Act; and</p>	<p>Meets The operation of the fishery is consistent with Objects of 13A – see assessment against the Guidelines (Section 2).</p>
<p>(b) the operation will not be detrimental to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the survival of a taxon to which the operation relates; or (ii) the conservation status of a taxon to which the operation relates; and <p>(ba) the operation will not be likely to threaten any relevant ecosystem including (but not limited to) any habitat or biodiversity; and</p>	<p>Meets The fishery will not be detrimental to the survival or conservation status of a taxon to which it relates, nor will it threaten any relevant ecosystem, within the period of the new export declaration, given the management measures currently in place, which include; limited entry, spatial closures, gear restrictions and the use of BRDS and TEDs.</p>
<p>(c) if the operation relates to the taking of live specimens that belong to a taxon specified in the regulations – the conditions that, under the regulations, are applicable to the welfare of the specimens are likely to be complied with; and</p>	<p>Not applicable The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000 (EPBC Regulations) do not specify Crustacea or fish as a class of animal in relation to the welfare of live specimens.</p>

(d) such other conditions (if any) as are specified in the regulations have been, or are likely to be, satisfied.	Not applicable No other conditions are specified in relation to commercial fisheries in the EPBC Regulations.
(4) In deciding whether to declare an operation as an approved wildlife trade operation the Minister must have regard to: (a) the significance of the impact of the operation on an ecosystem (for example, an impact on habitat or biodiversity); and	Meets The fishery will not have a significant impact on any relevant ecosystem within the period of the new export declaration, given the management measures currently in place, which include the arrangements described above at s303FN 3(b). The management arrangements include; limited entry, spatial closures, gear restrictions and TACC limits.
(b) the effectiveness of the management arrangements for the operation (including monitoring procedures).	Meets The management arrangements that will be employed for the fishery, as outlined in the assessment against the Guidelines (above), are likely to be effective.
(5) In deciding whether to declare an operation as an approved wildlife trade operation the Minister must have regard to: (a) whether legislation relating to the protection, conservation or management of the specimens to which the operation relates is in force in the State or Territory concerned; and (b) whether the legislation applies throughout the State or Territory concerned; and (c) whether, in the opinion of the Minister, the legislation is effective.	Meets The fishery will be managed under the <i>Queensland Fisheries Act 1994</i> , Queensland Fisheries Regulation 2008, and the Queensland Fisheries (East Coast Trawl) Management Plan 2010, which apply throughout Queensland waters and is considered to be effective.
(10) For the purposes of section 303FN, an operation is a wildlife trade operation if, and only if, the operation is an operation for the taking of specimens and: (a) the operation is a commercial fishery.	Meets The fishery is a commercial fishery.
Section 303FR Public consultation	Comment
(1) Before making a declaration under section 303FN, the Minister must cause to be published on the Internet a notice: (a) setting out the proposal to make the declaration; and (b) setting out sufficient information to enable persons and organisations to consider adequately the merits of the proposal; and (c) inviting persons and organisations to give the Minister, within the period specified in the notice, written comments about the proposal. (2) A period specified in the notice must not be shorter than 20 business days after the date on which the notice was published on the Internet.	Meets A public notice, which set out the proposal to declare the fishery an approved wildlife trade operation and included the application from Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, was released for public comment on 14 December 2018 and closed 21 January 2019, a total of 20 business days. No comments were received.
(3) In making a decision about whether to make a declaration under section 303FN, the Minister must consider any comments about the proposal to make the declaration that were given in response to the invitation in the notice.	Not applicable No public comments about the proposal were received.
Section 303FT Additional provisions relating to declarations	Comments
(1) This section applies to a declaration made under section 303FN, 303FO or 303FP.	A declaration for the fishery will be made under section 303FN.

<p>(4) The Minister may make a declaration about a plan or operation even though he or she considers that the plan or operation should be the subject of the declaration only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) during a particular period; or (b) while certain circumstances exist; or (c) while a certain condition is complied with. <p>In such a case, the instrument of declaration is to specify the period, circumstances or condition.</p>	<p>The standard conditions applied to commercial fishery wildlife trade operations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • operation in accordance with the management regime • notifying the Department of changes to the management regime, and • annual reporting in accordance with the requirements of the Australian Government Guidelines for the Ecologically Sustainable Management of Fisheries – 2nd Edition. <p>The wildlife trade operation instrument for the fishery specifies the standard and any additional conditions applied.</p>
<p>(8) A condition may relate to reporting or monitoring.</p>	<p>Meets One of the standard conditions relates to reporting.</p>
<p>(9) The Minister must, by instrument published in the <i>Gazette</i>, revoke a declaration if he or she is satisfied that a condition of the declaration has been contravened.</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>
<p>(11) A copy of an instrument under section 303FN, or this section is to be made available for inspection on the internet.</p>	<p>Meets The wildlife trade operation instrument for the fishery made under sections 303FN and the conditions under section 303FT will be registered as a notifiable instrument and made available through the Department's website.</p>

Part 16 – Precautionary principle and other considerations in making decisions

Section 391 Minister must consider precautionary principle in making decisions	Comment
<p>(1) Minister must take account of the precautionary principle in making a decision, to the extent that the decision is consistent with other provisions under this Act.</p> <p>(2) The precautionary principle is that lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing a measure to prevent degradation of the environment where there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage.</p>	<p>Meets The Department has accounted for the precautionary principle in the preparation of its advice. Recognising the potential risks to biodiversity from the operation of the fishery identified in Ecological Risk Assessments for the fishery, QDAF has implemented precautionary management measures which reduce the risks of adverse impacts, for example, limited entry, gear restrictions and spatial closures. The Fishery Management regime for the fishery sets out performance indicators and trigger points against which the performance of the fishery is evaluated regularly.</p>

SECTION 4: QUEENSLAND RIVER AND INSHORE BEAM TRAWL FISHERY – SUMMARY OF ISSUES REQUIRING CONDITIONS, JANUARY 2019

Issue	Condition
<p><u>General Management</u></p> <p>Export decisions relate to the arrangements in force at the time of the decision. To ensure that these decisions remain valid and export approval continues uninterrupted, the Department of the Environment and Energy (the Department) needs to be advised of any changes that are made to the management regime and make an assessment that the new arrangements are equivalent or better, in terms of ecological sustainability, than those in place at the time of the original decision. This includes operational and legislated amendments that may affect sustainability of the target species or negatively impact on byproduct, bycatch, <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (EPBC Act) protected species or the ecosystem.</p>	<p>Condition 1:</p> <p>Operation of the Queensland River and Inshore Beam Trawl Fishery will be carried out in accordance with the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries management plan in force under the <i>Queensland Fisheries Act 1994</i>, Queensland Fisheries Regulation 2008 and the Fisheries (East Coast Trawl) Management Plan 2010.</p> <p>Condition 2:</p> <p>The Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to inform the Department of the Environment and Energy of any intended material changes to the Queensland River and Inshore Beam Trawl Fishery management arrangements that may affect the assessment against which <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> decisions are made.</p>
<p><u>Annual Reporting</u></p> <p>It is important that reports be produced and presented to the Department annually in order for the performance of the fishery and progress in implementing the conditions in this report, and other managerial commitments to be monitored and assessed throughout the life of the declaration. Annual reports should follow Appendix B to the '<i>Guidelines for the Ecologically Sustainable Management of Fisheries - 2nd Edition</i>' and include a description of the fishery, management arrangements in place, research and monitoring outcomes, recent catch data for all sectors of the fishery, status of target stock, interactions with EPBC Act protected species, impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem in which it operates and progress in implementing the Department's conditions. Electronic copies of the guidelines are available from the Department's website at http://www.environment.gov.au/resource/guidelines-ecologically-sustainable-management-fisheries.</p>	<p>Condition 3:</p> <p>The Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to produce and present reports to the Department of the Environment and Energy annually as per Appendix B of the <i>Guidelines for the Ecologically Sustainable Management of Fisheries - 2nd Edition</i>.</p>
<p><u>Ecological Risk Assessment</u></p> <p>Ecological risk assessments (ERAs) are commonly used to identify and prioritise management of risks in fisheries.</p> <p>The Department acknowledges the work done by QDAF in publishing the 2017 ERA for the fishery, analysing any possible risks and implementing appropriate management responses for bycatch as a result of fishing effort within the fishery.</p> <p>As part of the Queensland Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017-2027, QDAF commits to updating ERA's for priority fisheries, including the Queensland River and Inshore Beam Trawl Fishery. The ERAs are proposed to be completed by the end of 2020. The program has commenced and is being delivered in accordance with new ERA Guidelines</p>	<p>Condition 4:</p> <p>The Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> complete the Queensland River and Inshore Beam Trawl Fishery ecological risk assessment by January 2021. ensure that any unacceptable risks to bycatch identified through the risk assessment are mitigated. <p>All precautionary risk management strategies should be developed and implemented in consultation with relevant experts and stakeholders, and performance should be monitored and reported annually in accordance with Condition 3.</p>

Issue	Condition
The Department of Environment and Energy considers it important that any changes to the risk profile of bycatch species are appropriately identified, monitored and managed to ensure ecological sustainability of the fishery.	

Issue	Recommendation
<p><u>Measuring Fishery Performance</u></p> <p>Understanding bycatch composition is important in identifying threats to potentially vulnerable species within the fishery. An ERA should include this data analysis on composition and volumes to help identify risks and to ensure the fishery is ecologically sustainable. The Department recognises QDAF's risk based prioritisation of logbook validation for the Queensland trawl fisheries, and notes that planning for staged validation of logbook data in all Queensland fisheries is ongoing. There is currently no requirement, however, to report discarded bycatch species unless the species is of conservation concern listed under the EPBC Act. The Department recommends that QDAF work with fishers to accurately record bycatch to species level and report publicly on the data collected.</p>	<p>Recommendation 1:</p> <p>The Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries progress the development and implementation of an independent data collection and validation program including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Assess feasibility and complete proof of concept trials for electronic monitoring by December 2019. Implement an independent data collection and validation program in Queensland River and Inshore Beam Trawl Fishery from January 2020 (this may include electronic monitoring or alternative interim solutions) Ensure catch composition is sufficiently monitored and understood to ensure that all stocks impacted by the fishery are sustainably managed, not overfished or subject to overfishing.

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