



# **Submission for the reassessment of the Queensland Gulf of Carpentaria Developmental Fin Fish Trawl Fishery Wildlife Trade Operation approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity and Conservation Act 1999***

A report prepared by the Queensland Department of  
Agriculture and Fisheries

This publication has been compiled by Malcolm Keag of Fisheries Queensland, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

© State of Queensland, 2015.

The Queensland Government supports and encourages the dissemination and exchange of its information. The copyright in this publication is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia (CC BY) licence.

Under this licence you are free, without having to seek our permission, to use this publication in accordance with the licence terms.



You must keep intact the copyright notice and attribute the State of Queensland as the source of the publication.

For more information on this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/deed.en>

The information contained herein is subject to change without notice. The Queensland Government shall not be liable for technical or other errors or omissions contained herein. The reader/user accepts all risks and responsibility for losses, damages, costs and other consequences resulting directly or indirectly from using this information.

## Fishery Description

The Gulf of Carpentaria Developmental Fin Fish Trawl Fishery (DFFTF) is a limited-entry, quota managed, semidemersal trawl fishery. The fishery area comprises of Gulf of Carpentaria waters beyond 25nm from shore. The DFFTF remains a developmental fishery operating under permit.

DFFTF operators predominantly capture red snappers (*Lutjanus erythropterus*—crimson snapper and *L. malabaricus*—saddletail snapper). Most of the product is sold to domestic processors as whole fish.

## Management

The DFFTF is managed by the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) under the *Fisheries Act 1994*, *Fisheries Regulation 2008*. It has operated under Queensland Fisheries Joint Authority (QFJA) jurisdiction since June 1998. The QFJA was established under the *Fisheries Act 1994* to manage all northern demersal and pelagic fin fish in waters adjacent to Queensland in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

## Management changes over the previous WTO period

There have been two main management changes over the previous WTO period.

In 2012, a new permit condition was issued to require the use of Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs):

“The permit holder or any person under the direction of the permit holder involved in the authorised activities must have installed and operational a Turtle Excluder Device (TED) in trawl fishing apparatus for trawl shots of longer than 2 hours. The holder may be required to provide evidence of the duration of shots when a TED is not used.”

In 2014, the Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) was reduced from 1250 t to 450 t. This change was based on the stock model developed as a part of FRDC Project No. 2009/037, “Sustaining productivity of tropical snappers using new monitoring and reference points” (O'Neill, Leigh *et al.* 2011). Results from that research were presented to industry at three face-to-face meetings held in Brisbane on 14 March 2011, 24 July 2014 and 9 October 2014.

## Catch data

Commencing in 2012 there has been a decline in effort within Queensland Gulf of Carpentaria waters. In 2014 permit holders did not fish in the Queensland DFFTF at all.

Earlier commercial catch statistics for this fishery can be found in the *Queensland Fisheries Summary 2015* report (see [www.daf.qld.gov.au/fisheries/monitoring-our-fisheries/data-reports/sustainability-reporting/queensland-fisheries-summary/gulf-of-carpentaria-developmental-fin-fish-trawl-fishery](http://www.daf.qld.gov.au/fisheries/monitoring-our-fisheries/data-reports/sustainability-reporting/queensland-fisheries-summary/gulf-of-carpentaria-developmental-fin-fish-trawl-fishery)).

## Status of target stocks

### Saddletail snapper

Saddletail snapper were most recently assessed in 2014, based on data up to 2013<sup>1</sup>. The Northern Australian biological stock, of which fish in the Queensland Gulf of Carpentaria are a part, was classified as a **sustainable stock**.

<sup>1</sup> Martin, J., Keag, M., Newman, S. and Wakefield, C. 2014. Saddletail Snapper *Lutjanus malabaricus*, in M Flood, I Stobutzki, J Andrews, C Ashby, G Begg, R Fletcher, C Gardner, L Georgeson, S Hansen, K Hartmann, P Hone, P Horvat, L Maloney, B McDonald, A Moore, A Roelofs, K Sainsbury, T Saunders, T Smith, C Stewardson, J Stewart & B Wise (eds) 2014, Status of key Australian fish stocks reports 2014, Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, Canberra.

## Crimson snapper

Crimson snapper were most recently assessed in 2014, based on data up to 2013<sup>2</sup>. The Northern Australian biological stock, of which fish in the Queensland Gulf of Carpentaria are a part, was classified as a **sustainable stock**.

## Golden snapper

Golden snapper were most recently assessed in 2014, based on data up to 2013<sup>3</sup>. The Gulf of Carpentaria (Queensland) management unit was classified as an **undefined stock**.

## Goldband snapper

Goldband snapper were most recently assessed in 2014, based on data up to 2013<sup>4</sup>. The Northern Australian biological stock, of which fish in the Queensland Gulf of Carpentaria are a part, was classified as a **sustainable stock**.

## Red emperor

Red emperor were most recently assessed in 2014, based on data up to 2013<sup>5</sup>. The Gulf of Carpentaria management unit was classified as an **undefined stock**.

## Mangrove jack

The species is not assessed as part of the national status of key Australian fish stocks process. Mangrove jack were assessed in 2015 at a Queensland stock status workshop, however the results of that assessment are not yet available. The workshop noted a concern about falling catches and catch rates of this species and also that there has been very low effort in the fishery for the last three years.

## Impacts on the fishery on the ecosystem

The last ecological risk assessment for this fishery was conducted in 2004 (<http://secure.environment.gov.au/coasts/fisheries/qld/finfish-trawl/pubs/finfish-trawl-submission.pdf>).

---

<sup>2</sup> Martin, J., Keag, M., Newman, S. and Wakefield, C. 2014. Crimson Snapper *Lutjanus erythropterus*, in M Flood, I Stobutzki, J Andrews, C Ashby, G Begg, R Fletcher, C Gardner, L Georgeson, S Hansen, K Hartmann, P Hone, P Horvat, L Maloney, B McDonald, A Moore, A Roelofs, K Sainsbury, T Saunders, T Smith, C Stewardson, J Stewart & B Wise (eds) 2014, Status of key Australian fish stocks reports 2014, Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, Canberra.

<sup>3</sup> Saunders, T., Newman, S., Keag, M. and Errity, C. 2014. Golden Snapper *Lutjanus johnii*, in M Flood, I Stobutzki, J Andrews, C Ashby, G Begg, R Fletcher, C Gardner, L Georgeson, S Hansen, K Hartmann, P Hone, P Horvat, L Maloney, B McDonald, A Moore, A Roelofs, K Sainsbury, T Saunders, T Smith, C Stewardson, J Stewart & B Wise (eds) 2014, Status of key Australian fish stocks reports 2014, Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, Canberra.

<sup>4</sup> Martin, J., Keag, M., Newman, S. and Wakefield, C. 2014. Goldband Snapper *Pristipomoides multidens*, in M Flood, I Stobutzki, J Andrews, C Ashby, G Begg, R Fletcher, C Gardner, L Georgeson, S Hansen, K Hartmann, P Hone, P Horvat, L Maloney, B McDonald, A Moore, A Roelofs, K Sainsbury, T Saunders, T Smith, C Stewardson, J Stewart & B Wise (eds) 2014, Status of key Australian fish stocks reports 2014, Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, Canberra.

<sup>5</sup> Newman, S., Martin, J., Keag, M. and Wakefield, C. 2014. Red Emperor *Lutjanus sebae*, in M Flood, I Stobutzki, J Andrews, C Ashby, G Begg, R Fletcher, C Gardner, L Georgeson, S Hansen, K Hartmann, P Hone, P Horvat, L Maloney, B McDonald, A Moore, A Roelofs, K Sainsbury, T Saunders, T Smith, C Stewardson, J Stewart & B Wise (eds) 2014, Status of key Australian fish stocks reports 2014, Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, Canberra.

## Main features of the fishery in 2014

Feature	Details
Species targeted	Crimson snapper ( <i>Lutjanus erythropterus</i> ) and saddletail snapper ( <i>Lutjanus malabaricus</i> ). Main byproduct species are mangrove jack ( <i>Lutjanus argentimaculatus</i> ), goldband snapper ( <i>Pristipimoides multidens</i> ), golden snapper ( <i>Lutjanus johnii</i> ), sweetlip (various spp.)
Fishery symbols	Developmental fishery (no symbol)
Current management regime	<i>Fisheries Act 1994; Fisheries Regulation 2008; Queensland Fisheries Joint Authority, Queensland Government Developmental Fishery Permit.</i>
Gear	These species may be taken by otter trawl.
Main management methods	<p>The following management measures are in place for the GOCDFTF under permit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximate boundaries the fishery are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>north of a line <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>commencing at a point of latitude 15 degrees 17.5 minutes south, longitude 138 degrees 30 minutes east;</li> <li>to a point of latitude 15 degrees 34.3 minutes south, 139 degrees 30 minutes east;</li> <li>to a point of latitude 15 degrees 00 minutes south, 139 degrees 30 minutes east;</li> <li>along the line of latitude 15 degrees 00 minutes south to where it intersects the mainland shore; and</li> </ul> </li> <li>west of longitude 141 degrees 48 minutes east; and</li> <li>not between the 25 nautical mile line and the shore, nor in a waterway.</li> </ul> </li> <li>The permit prescribes the use and specifications of the trawl gear.</li> <li>A target-species TAC is mandated for each permit holder.</li> <li>By product species take is limited: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May only take and possess golden snapper (<i>Lutjanus johnii</i>), moose perch (<i>Lutjanus russelli</i>), striped snapper (<i>Lutjanus vitta</i>), maroon perch (<i>Lutjanus lemniscatus</i>) and mangrove jack (<i>Lutjanus argentimaculatus</i>) their combined landed whole wet weight is not more than 50% of the landed whole wet weight of red/scarlet snapper (<i>Lutjanus erythropterus</i>) and saddletail snapper (<i>Lutjanus malabaricus</i>).</li> </ul> </li> <li>The following species may not be taken: tuna, barramundi, sharks, tuna and tuna-like fish (namely yellowfin, southern bluefin tuna, bigeye tuna, longtail tuna, albacore tuna, northern bluefin tuna and skipjack tuna), all pomfrets (Family Bramidae) and all billfish.</li> <li>These species have limited take: black jewfish, queenfish, king salmon, blue salmon, grey mackerel, Spanish mackerel and squid</li> <li>Nets must have installed and operational a Turtle Excluder Device (TED) in trawl</li> </ul>

	fishing apparatus for trawl shots of longer than 2 hours. The holder may be required to provide evidence of the duration of shots when a TED is not used.
Fishing season	1 January - 31 December
Commercial fishery licences	Total number of permits in the fishery – 3 Number of active permits – 0
Accreditation under the EPBC Act (Part 13 and 13A)	Part 13: accredited 25 November 2010 (first accredited 2004) Part 13A: current declared Wildlife Trade Operation expires 25 November 2015
Total annual harvest by species	No effort in 2014
GVP	No effort in 2014
Monitoring	Catch and effort logbook, Vessel Monitoring System
Catch and effort data validation	Routine – logbook data entry checks, data extraction checks and range checks

## Progress in implementing conditions and recommendations (August 2015)

**Condition 1:** Fisheries Queensland, by September 2012, taking into consideration the results of bycatch reduction trials, to implement appropriate bycatch reduction devices as an operational requirement in the Gulf of Carpentaria Developmental Fin Fish Trawl Fishery.

**Progress:** Complete

In October 2012 Fisheries Queensland wrote to the Department advising that a new permit condition had been added to the QFJA Developmental Fishing Permits (effective September 2012) requiring the use of a Turtle Excluder Device.

**Recommendation 1:** Operation of the Gulf of Carpentaria Developmental Fin Fish Trawl Fishery will be carried out in accordance with the Queensland Fisheries Act 1994 and the Queensland Fisheries Regulation 2008.

**Progress:** Ongoing

All operations between 2010 and 2015 were carried out under the appropriate legislation. Little to no effort has been recorded in the fishery in recent years. Since 2010, a total of five inspections have been conducted with a 100% compliance rate.

**Recommendation 2:** Fisheries Queensland to inform the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities 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

The Department was informed in writing of the change to permit conditions, as per Condition 1 above. The Department was informed in writing of the cessation of the observer program in 2012.

