



Australian Government  
Department of the Environment

The Hon Dr John McVeigh MLA  
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry  
GPO Box 46,  
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Dear Minister

I am writing to you as the Delegate of the Minister for the Environment in relation to the reassessment of the Queensland Sea Cucumber Fishery (East Coast) under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

The Queensland Sea Cucumber Fishery (East Coast) was most recently assessed under the international wildlife trade provisions of Part 13A of the EPBC Act in July 2011. As a result of the 2011 assessment, the Delegate of the then Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities declared the fishery an approved wildlife trade operation under Part 13A of the EPBC Act for a period of 3 years, until 17 July 2014. This allowed export of product from the fishery to continue during the period of the declaration.

In April 2014 the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry provided an application to the Department of the Environment seeking continued export approval for the Queensland Sea Cucumber Fishery (East Coast).

The application has been assessed for the purposes of the wildlife trade provisions of Part 13A of the EPBC Act. The assessment took into account measures that have been developed by the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry in response to the conditions and recommendations made in the 2011 export assessment under the EPBC Act.

I am pleased to advise that the assessment is now complete. The new assessment report will be available on the Department of the Environment's website at:  
<http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/fisheries/qld/sea-cucumber>.

I consider that the Queensland Sea Cucumber Fishery (East Coast) meets most of the Australian Government *Guidelines for the Ecologically Sustainable Management of Fisheries – 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Given the management arrangements and precautionary measures for the fishery including limited entry, rotational zoning, protective zoning closures, gear restrictions, logbook recording and Total Allowable Catch (TAC) limits, I am satisfied that the operation of the fishery remains consistent with the objects of the wildlife trade provisions of Part 13A of the EPBC Act.

Accordingly, I have decided to declare the Queensland Sea Cucumber Fishery (East Coast) an approved wildlife trade operation until 13 July 2017. The declaration will apply only to those classes of specimens specified in the instrument of declaration, available from the department's website, and will be subject to the conditions (**Attachment 1**) specified in the instrument of declaration.

Officers from the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the department have discussed key areas requiring ongoing attention. While there are some environmental risks associated with this fishery, I believe that Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is committed to addressing these issues and has already taken proactive measures.

The Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the department's officers have agreed to additional recommendations (Attachment 2) to be implemented before the next Australian Government assessment of the fishery.

The management regime for the Queensland Sea Cucumber Fishery (East Coast) was most recently accredited under Part 13 of the EPBC Act, for interactions with protected species, in July 2011. I am satisfied that it is unlikely that fishing operations conducted in accordance with the management regime will adversely affect the conservation status of protected species or affect the survival or recovery in nature of listed threatened species or adversely affect the conservation status of listed migratory species, cetaceans or listed marine species. I also consider that under the current management regime, operators are required to take all reasonable steps to avoid the killing or injuring of species listed under Part 13 of the EPBC Act.

I have therefore recredited the management regime for the Queensland Sea Cucumber Fishery (East Coast) under Part 13 of the EPBC Act. Accreditation will ensure that individual fishers operating in accordance with the current management regime are not required to seek permits if they are at risk of killing or injuring listed species in Commonwealth waters.

I would like to thank you for the constructive way in which your officials have approached this assessment.

As the Coral Fishery operates within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, I have copied this letter to Dr Russell Reichelt, Chairman and Chief Executive of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, for his information.

Yours sincerely



Shaneen Coulson  
Delegate of the Minister for the Environment

16 July 2014

**Conditions on the approved wildlife trade operation declaration for the Queensland  
Queensland Sea Cucumber Fishery (East Coast), July 2014**

1. Operation of the fishery will be carried out in accordance with the management regime under the Queensland *Fisheries Act 1994* and Queensland Fisheries Regulation 2008.
  2. Queensland DAFF to inform the Department of the Environment of any intended material changes to the Queensland Sea Cucumber Fishery (East Coast) management arrangements that may affect the assessment against which *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* decisions are made.
  3. Queensland DAFF to produce and present reports to the Department of the Environment annually as per Appendix B of the *Guidelines for the Ecologically Sustainable Management of Fisheries - 2nd Edition*.
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**Recommendations to the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry on the ecologically sustainable management of the Queensland Sea Cucumber Fishery (East Coast), July 2014**

1. Queensland DAFF to continue to develop and improve management arrangements for the fishery that allow for appropriate management actions to be taken, including if catch exceeds reference points, to ensure stocks levels remain ecologically viable.
  2. Queensland DAFF to encourage research relevant to management of sea cucumber species harvested in the fishery, including:
    - research identified as necessary to address current information gaps and reduce sustainability risks in the fishery, and
    - other research to continue to improve the understanding of the stock status of target species.
  3. Queensland DAFF to continue and encourage further co-operation with other relevant jurisdictions to pursue increased knowledge and complementary management of sea cucumber resources across fisheries and across jurisdictions.
  4. Queensland DAFF to compare spatial distribution of fishing effort before and after the north/south boundary in the fishery is removed and provide a report detailing the findings to the Department. Should any unsustainable trends be identified, Queensland DAFF should consider appropriate management intervention.
  5. Queensland DAFF to ensure any change to the total allowable catch for black teatfish is supported by independent scientific verification of sustainable harvest levels.
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