



Australian Government

Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

Our reference: 2011/06983

The Hon Konstantine Vatskalis MLA
Minister for Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources
GPO Box 3146
Darwin NT 0801

Dear Mr Vatskalis

I am writing to you as the Delegate of the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities in relation to the reassessment of the Northern Territory Trepang Fishery under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

In April 2011, the Northern Territory Department of Resources submitted the *Progress in implementing the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities recommendations made in the 2007 assessment of the NT Trepang Fishery, April 2011*, for consideration of further export approval for the Northern Territory Trepang Fishery.

The submission has been assessed for the purposes of Part 13A of the EPBC Act, taking into account measures that have been developed by the Northern Territory Department of Resources in response to recommendations made in the 2007 assessment of the fishery.

I am pleased to advise that assessment of the Northern Territory Trepang Fishery is now complete. The new assessment report will be available on the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities' website at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/fisheries/nt/trepang/index.html>

I consider that the management arrangements for the Northern Territory Trepang Fishery meet most of the Australian Government *Guidelines for the Ecologically Sustainable Management of Fisheries - 2nd Edition*. Given the lack of bycatch and byproduct due to the hand collection methods used in the fishery and the management arrangements currently in place, which include limited entry, gear restrictions and catch performance indicators, 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. I am also satisfied that the operation of the fishery over the period of the declaration as an approved wildlife trade operation is unlikely to be detrimental to the survival or conservation status of any taxon to which the fishery operation relates, or threaten any relevant ecosystem.

Accordingly, I have decided to declare the Northern Territory Trepang Fishery an approved wildlife trade operation until 30 July 2014. The declaration will be subject to the conditions at **Attachment A**.

While there are some environmental risks associated with the Northern Territory Trepang Fishery, I believe the Northern Territory Department of Resources are committed to addressing these issues and have already taken proactive steps in some areas. Officers from the Northern Territory Department of Resources and the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities have agreed to three additional recommendations to be implemented before the next Australian Government assessment of the fishery (**Attachment B**). There is a focus on minimising the risk of localised and serial depletion, incorporating stock distribution and abundance information into management arrangements as they become available and facilitating complementary research and management with other relevant jurisdictions.

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joanne Nathan', with a stylized, flowing script.

Joanne Nathan
Delegate of the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and
Communities

27 July 2011

**Conditions on the approved wildlife trade operation declaration for the
Northern Territory Trepang Fishery**

1. Operation of the fishery will be carried out in accordance with the management regime in force under the Northern Territory *Fisheries Act* and the Northern Territory *Fisheries Regulations*.
2. The Northern Territory Department of Resources to inform the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities of any intended amendments to the Northern Territory Trepang Fishery management arrangements that may affect the assessment of the fishery against the criteria on which *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* decisions are based.
3. The Northern Territory Department of Resources to produce and present reports to the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities annually as per Appendix B to the *Guidelines for the Ecologically Sustainable Management of Fisheries - 2nd Edition*.

Recommendations to the Northern Territory Department of Resources on the ecologically sustainable management of the Northern Territory Trepang Fishery

1. The Northern Territory Department of Resources to utilise logbook data on catch location to develop and implement performance indicators to mitigate the risk of localised and serial depletion.
2. The Northern Territory Department of Resources to continue to incorporate stock information into the management arrangements of the fishery.
3. The Northern Territory Department of Resources to facilitate and pursue collaborative research and complementary management arrangements for sea cucumber resources with all relevant jurisdictions across northern Australia.