



Australian Government
Department of the Environment

Ref: 14/005910

The Hon Willem Rudolf Westra van Holthe MLA
Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries
GPO Box 3146
DARWIN NT 0801

Dear Minister

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

In May 2014, the Northern Territory Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries provided an application to the Department of the Environment seeking continued export approval for the Northern Territory Trepang Fishery.

The application has been assessed for the wildlife trade provisions of Part 13A of the EPBC Act. The assessment took into account measures that have been developed by the Northern Territory Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries in response to the conditions and recommendations made in the 2011 assessment of the fishery.

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/marine/fisheries/nt/trepang>

I consider that the Northern Territory Trepang Fishery operates in line with the Australian Government *Guidelines for the Ecologically Sustainable Management of Fisheries – 2nd Edition*. Given the management arrangements and precautionary measures for the fishery including limited entry, area closures, gear and vessel restrictions, maximum number of divers and skippers, minimum size limits, catch per unit of effort triggers and recreational possession limits, I have decided to amend the list of exempt native specimens to allow export of product from the Northern Territory Trepang Fishery for a period of five years, until 26 July 2019.

While there are some environmental risks associated with the Northern Territory Trepang Fishery, I believe that the Northern Territory Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries has in place measures to address these issues. Officers from the Northern Territory Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries and this Department have discussed and agreed to six recommendations focussing on ensuring the continuation of good management practices. These recommendations can be found at **Attachment 1**.

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

Yours sincerely



Paul Murphy

Delegate of the Minister for the Environment

29 July 2014

Recommendations to the Northern Territory Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries on the ecologically sustainable management of the Northern Territory Trepang Fishery, July 2014

Recommendation 1: Operation of the fishery will be carried out in accordance with the management regime under the Northern Territory *Fisheries Act 1988* and the Northern Territory Fisheries Regulations 1995.

Recommendation 2: The Northern Territory Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries to inform the Department of the Environment of any intended material changes to the Northern Territory Trepang Fishery management arrangements that may affect the assessment against which *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* decisions are made.

Recommendation 3: The Northern Territory Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries 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*.

Recommendation 4: The Northern Territory Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries to undertake an assessment of stock size and distribution of sandfish and other sea cucumber species taken in the Northern Territory Trepang Fishery, to determine the sustainable level of take.

Recommendation 5: The Northern Territory Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries to take into account the results of the recent collaborative research project and if necessary, adjust the zonal management arrangements to better reflect the genetic structure of sandfish in the fishery.

Recommendation 6: The Northern Territory Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries to continue to facilitate and pursue collaborative research and complementary management arrangements for sea cucumber resources with all relevant jurisdictions across northern Australia.

