

# Intended scallop closures in the Queensland East Coast Otter Trawl Fishery

Over the past year the commercial fishing industry has expressed concern about declining scallop catches in Queensland.

Logbook records show commercial catch rates of scallops are the lowest in the 39 year recorded history of the fishery.

A stock assessment completed in October 2016 suggests the scallop biomass is potentially as low as 5-6% when compared to 1977 levels. This is a significant cause for concern.

As a result of recent declines in scallop abundance, the value of the scallop fishery has dropped over the past 10 years from \$16 million per year to around \$4 million per year in value.

To protect the sustainability of scallops in Queensland, urgent management changes are intended to commence from 3 January 2017.

The new management arrangements are expected to reduce the total scallop catch by up to 40% and will allow the stock to start rebuilding.

Saucer scallops are short lived species (2-3 years) and have crashed before in Queensland (in 1989 and 1996) and in other jurisdictions. They have a history of recovery if appropriate measures are put in place.

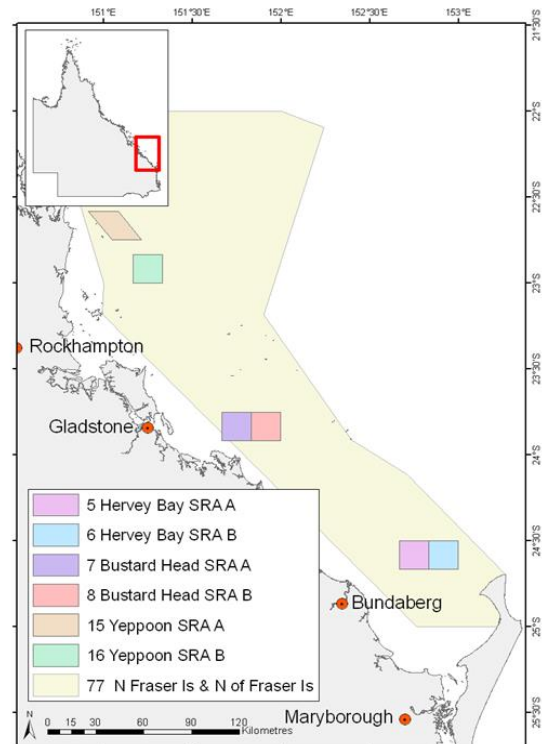
## Scallop replenishment area closures

From 3 January 2017, it is intended that all six scallop replenishment areas (SRAs) located off Bundaberg, Gladstone and Rockhampton will be closed to all scallop fishing.

This includes the three SRAs that were due to open on 3 January 2017.

The SRAs will remain closed until further notice.

**Image 1 – Scallop replenishment area locations**



## Winter spawning closure

It is also intended to implement a winter closure where fishers cannot take or be in possession of scallops in the regulated waters between 1 May and 31 October each year.

This closure will apply to the total area of the East Coast Otter Trawl Fishery.

Scallop nets can still be used in this period, however any scallops caught must be released and square mesh codend bycatch reduction devices must be used.

The rest of the fishery apart from the scallop replenishment areas will remain open to scallop fishing outside of the winter closure.

## More information

For more information contact our Customer Service Centre on 13 25 23 or visit

[www.daf.qld.gov.au](http://www.daf.qld.gov.au)