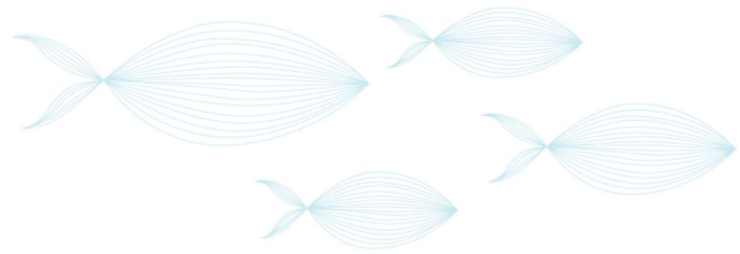


Changes to fishing rules in Queensland

September 2020



Fish for the future

A second round of regulatory changes was announced on 30 September 2020 to ensure we have fish for the future.

Following extensive consultation over the last two years on proposed reforms, a number of changes have been made to commercial fishing rules.

These reforms do not affect the Gulf of Carpentaria net and line fisheries (N3, N12, N13 and L4)—existing rules still apply. However, some changes to form requirements for barramundi, king threadfin and scaly jewfish have been made, which will affect fishers in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

No major changes to recreational and charter sector regulations have been made in this round of changes.

Changes to fishing rules—all fishers

Minor administrative amendments have been made to provide consistency across all sectors:

- Dalrymple Bay and Hay Point are closed to all fishing.
- The east coast barramundi closure is from 1 November to 31 January.
- The northern waters tropical rocklobster closure is from 1 October to 31 December.
- Rays with a round body shape are excluded from the interdorsal length definition for sharks and rays.

Changes to commercial fishing rules

Please note: For fishers affected by allocation, **trading of authorities and symbols must be completed before 22 April 2021**, to ensure allocations are correct.

New commercial fishing rules start on:

- **30 September 2020**—administrative changes to reduce red tape and improve commercial operations
- **1 January 2021**—changes to commercial fisheries licensing framework
- **1 September 2021**—quota and regional effort units commence along with associated changes to vessel size etc.

Detailed fact sheets are available for each affected fishery at fisheries.qld.gov.au.

Crab fisheries (mud crab and blue swimmer crab)

New rule	Why?
<p>Existing commercial crab fishery (C1) divided into three management regions with species-specific catch limits established for each region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East coast mud crab • Gulf of Carpentaria mud crab • Blue swimmer crab—all Queensland waters. 	<p>Allows better, more tailored management of the target species. Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) will be adjusted over time through the harvest strategy.</p>
<p>Individual transferable quota allocated to eligible commercial fishers with a C1 licence on 22 April 2021 (based on reported crab harvest from 2010–11 to 2016–17 inclusive).</p>	<p>Quota management modernises fisheries management, improves commercial viability and ensures long-term sustainability of the resource. Allocation is based on catch history to ensure that each fisher's relative economic position is recognised.</p>
<p>To be eligible to commercially crab, a fisher must hold a minimum amount of quota, initially set at 1.2 tonnes of mud crab in the relevant fishery management region.</p>	<p>Reduces competition, improves commercial viability, facilitates fishery adjustment and improves efficiency of compliance and enforcement activities.</p>
<p>Up to 150 pots can be used in the offshore blue swimmer crab fishery for Primary Commercial Fishing Boat Authority holders with three C1 symbols.</p>	<p>Improves efficiency of fishers that are limited by quota and ensures 150 pots are used in offshore regions only.</p>
<p>Using net apparatus to take crabs is prohibited.</p>	<p>Ensures that crabs can only be taken in pots by holders of quota and C1 symbols.</p>
<p>All commercial mud crab apparatus must have escape vents.</p>	<p>Improves selectivity of mud crab pots and reduces bycatch and the impact of fishing on the broader ecosystem.</p>
<p>Commercial crabbing apparatus must be attended within a seven-day period.</p>	<p>Removes pots from waterways when they are not actively being worked by fishers—reduces ecological impacts and can alleviate competition for crabbing grounds.</p>
<p>Commercial fishers with a C1, C2 or C3 symbol can process and possess crab meat on land if certain requirements are met.</p>	<p>Provides flexibility to fishers who process crab meat on land, while continuing to ensure the sustainable management of crab stocks.</p>
<p>Commercial fishers allowed to fish in multiple quota-managed crab fisheries on the same fishing trip—mud, blue swimmer and spanner crab.</p>	<p>Enhances business efficiencies and opportunities.</p>

East coast trawl fisheries

New rule	Why?
<p>Existing east coast and Moreton Bay otter trawl fisheries divided into five management regions, with effort limits established for each region—includes adjustment of the M1/M2 fishery area to include the restricted T1 waters in the Comboyuro Point to Caloundra Head area.</p>	<p>The five regions have different primary target species, allowing for better, more tailored management of the target species:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Region—tiger prawns • Central Region—tiger prawns • Southern Offshore Region—eastern king prawns • Southern Inshore Region—scallops • Moreton Bay—multiple species.

New rule	Why?
Existing east coast individual trawl effort units allocated to the four management regions (excluding Moreton Bay).	Provides better, more tailored management of the new management regions, controls effort through the harvest strategy and minimises the risk of increased competition.
New individual trawl effort units allocated to the Moreton Bay management region.	Aligns this management region with other trawl areas. Similar to the east coast, setting total allowable effort through the harvest strategy will allow more effective and responsive management and will give Moreton Bay fishers greater flexibility to trade symbols and upgrade vessels.
Increasing maximum vessel size to 120 hull units (20 m maximum length)	Allows for improved vessel safety and efficiency when replacing existing vessels.
Removing engine horsepower restriction	
Two-for-one boat replacement rule for Moreton Bay M1/M2 licences removed.	The requirement to surrender an M2 fishery symbol to replace a boat is no longer necessary as sustainable levels of effort can be controlled through the harvest strategy.
T4 stout whiting fishery area clarified—from a depth contour boundary to specific coordinates.	Reduces confusion and supports compliance.
T9 beam trawl fishery area northern regional regulated water closure clarified—permits T9 beam trawlers to operate in Llewellyn Bay and Sinclair Bay.	Reduces confusion by clarifying the original intent of the requirement, which was to only close the waters of Repulse Bay and Cleveland Bay.
T5 beam trawl area expanded to include the river channel area out to the entrance beacons (in line with permits that have been in place for some time).	Offsets the impacts of the cruise ship terminal expansion on the fishery (i.e. reduced fishing area).
T7 beam trawl area amended to include the area north of Burnett River.	Implements an adjustment to the fishery area that was previously part of a trial (no issues arose during the trial).
Weighting requirements for the bigeye bycatch reduction device clarified—minimum weighting of 300 g required.	Makes it clear how these devices should be weighted to work effectively.
Take period for blue swimmer crab caught in the east coast trawl fishery (M1, M2 and T5 symbols) clarified—100 crab limit for each continuous 24-hour period of fishing.	Clarifies catch limits for blue swimmer crab in Moreton Bay, helps cap the overall trawl harvest of blue swimmer crabs to approximately 10% of the TACC, and supports quota management.
Trawlers (T1 and T2) allowed to transit through scallop ranching areas, provided vessels maintain a constant speed of at least five knots and gear is stowed and secured during transit.	Allows fishers to transit through these areas to reach destinations (fishing ground and port) faster and more efficiently (improved vessel tracking makes it easier to detect non-compliant fishing).

East coast inshore fishery

New rule	Why?
Existing east inshore fishery (N1, N2, N4, N10, N11, K1-8, L1 and L2 or L3) divided into five management regions with species-specific catch limits established for each region.	Allows for better, more tailored management of the target species. TACC will be adjusted over time through the harvest strategy.
Individual transferable quota for barramundi, king threadfin, grey mackerel, school mackerel and whiting allocated to eligible commercial fishers with an eligible licence on 22 April 2021 (based on reported fish harvest from 2013 to 2017 inclusive).	Modernises fisheries management, improves commercial viability and ensures long-term sustainability of the resource. Allocation is based on catch history to ensure that each fisher's relative economic position is recognised.
On the east coast, shark can only be landed either whole or trunked and gutted with fins naturally attached. Filleting shark is no longer permitted (except in the Gulf of Carpentaria).	Helps identify harvested shark species and meets the Wildlife Trade Operation accreditation condition (which allows the continued export of shark products from the fishery).
Lift nets can be used under the N11 symbol.	Allows fishers to target certain species more effectively (e.g. yellowtail scad).
Maximum mesh size for N1 and N2 symbols reduced from 215 mm (8.5 inches) to 178 mm (7 inches).	Reduces the risk to protected species that may interact with the nets.
New maximum net ply rating of 0.5 mm in offshore net fisheries (N1, N2 and N4).	Reduces the risk to protected species that may interact with the nets.
Net length for Keppel Bay offshore waters increased from 200 m to 600 m for consistency.	Fixes an inconsistency in the legislation, aligns with the net length restriction of the N1 fishery, provides consistent management and improves compliance.

Gulf of Carpentaria inshore fishery

New rule	Why?
Commercial fishers will be able to continue to fillet barramundi, king threadfin and scaly jewfish at sea and retain the bladders as long as they are separated by species and packaged in a way that allows for individual inspection.	Continuing a long-standing practice in the Gulf of Carpentaria (GoC) of filleting fish. Permits the retention of swim bladders from three major species whilst allowing more efficient compliance checks.

Harvest fisheries (tropical rocklobster, sea cucumber, coral and aquarium)

New rule	Why?
Existing rules aligned to other commercial fisheries and specified in the regulations.	Streamlines regulations, reduces confusion about the maximum number of people allowed to harvest at one time, and consolidates and clarifies the requirements for 'to take' in the fisheries (hand-collectable).
Quota administrative arrangements aligned with all quota-managed fisheries.	Ensures consistency across all quota-managed fisheries.
Commercial sea cucumber fishery area amended to include Ashmore and Boots reefs.	Streamlines management of the fishery by including locations historically harvested under a General Fisheries Permit.
Fishing in the coral and marine aquarium fisheries allowed during the same fishing trip.	Allows greater flexibility and efficiency.
Definition of aquaculture clarified—activities involving the cultivation of fisheries resources via propagation (other than by fragmentation for corals) and breeding are considered aquaculture.	Reduces confusion about whether holding live fisheries resources before they are sold is considered aquaculture (particularly in the coral and marine aquarium fish fisheries).

Reef line fisheries

New rule	Why?
Coral reef line fishers allowed to anchor within Marine Safety Queensland defined port limits while waiting to unload after the start of the spawning closure.	Reduces bottlenecks in port and allows fishers to maximise their fishing time. Fishers were previously required to be at their unloading place 6 hours after the start of the spawning closure. However, with the roll out of vessel tracking, they can fish up to the closure and steam to their unloading area, or be in defined port limit, 18 hours after the start of the closure.

General rules

New rule	Why?
Single licensing framework for all commercial fisheries—includes merging the existing Commercial Fishing Boat Authority and Commercial Harvest Fishing Authority into a single Primary Commercial Fishing Boat Authority.	Provides greater consistency across all commercial fisheries and supports multi-endorsed fishers.
All Primary Commercial Fishing Boat Authorities to have a nominated person in charge with a Commercial Fisher Licence.	Provides greater consistency across all commercial fisheries and supports improved compliance.
Filleting of quota species and TACC species at sea is prohibited—there are exceptions for some fisheries (reef line and east coast Spanish mackerel) for which a filleting permit can be issued.	Allows more accurate identification of quota-managed species and effective compliance with quota systems and fishing rules (i.e. size limits and no-take provisions).

New rule	Why?
Standardised reporting system for all commercial fisheries, including catch logbooks, real-time reporting of quota and TACC species, and catch disposal records.	Provides greater consistency across all commercial fisheries, improves understanding of reporting requirements, and improves data accuracy and management of fish stocks.
Sales docket requirements for all sales from commercial fishers expanded through to the final retail sale point, including businesses involved in the processing and storage of fisheries resources.	Supports compliance by improving the ability to differentiate between legitimate catch from an authorised commercial fisher and illegal or black-market products.
Carrier boat licence removed from the regulations and R, B1, D, T1 and RQ fisheries allowed to tranship product at sea if certain requirements are met.	Transshipment of quota-managed species between vessels at sea provides greater flexibility for fishers while maintaining accuracy of quota reporting and quota account deductions.
Online transactions (via FishNet Secure) introduced for a range of commercial fishing licensing matters (e.g. temporary and permanent transfers of authorities, symbol movements).	Reduces paperwork, allows changes to be completed 24/7 and improves service delivery for commercial fishers.
Requirements for 'primary' and 'tender' vessels used in commercial fisheries clarified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'primary' vessels to be up to 25 m long, except east coast trawl (20 m), Moreton Bay trawl (14 m) and Gulf of Carpentaria N3 fishery (14 m) 'tender' vessels to be up to 10 m long and the number of tenders that can operate in different fisheries clarified. 	Provides greater consistency across all commercial fisheries, removes unnecessary restrictions in most quota-managed fisheries, and better aligns with national marine safety requirements.
National marine safety requirements under the National System for Commercial Vessel standards applied to determine measurements of vessels used in commercial fisheries.	Allows a standard approach to measuring vessels, by using existing certificates administered by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.
Distance requirements for tenders and assistant fishers removed now that vessel tracking is required on all commercial fishing vessels.	These matters are regulated under national marine safety legislation.
Number of incidental shark catches (other than hammerhead) increased to 10 for commercial fishers without an 'S' fishery symbol.	To minimise discarding of sharks.

More information

For more information, visit fisheries.qld.gov.au or call **13 25 23**.