Coral Fishery 2010

Progress against SEWPaC conditions and recommendations
Progress in implementing the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPaC) Conditions and Recommendations for the Queensland Coral Fishery.

The Queensland Coral Fishery (QCF) was first assessed by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPaC) in June 2006 under Parts 13 and 13A of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act). It was declared an approved Wildlife Trade Operation (WTO) under Part 13A of the EPBC Act. This declaration allowed the export of product from the fishery for a period of two years. In May 2008, the QCF was granted a one year extension of the WTO declaration until 1 July 2009 to allow additional time for the completion of the Policy for the Management of the Coral Fishery. In the extension of the declaration all of the previous assessment conditions and recommendations remained in place.

In April 2009, Fisheries Queensland submitted the 2007 and 2008 Annual Status Reports and the Policy for the Management of the Coral Fishery, along with additional reference material for the QCF, seeking ongoing export approval for the fishery. The submission has been assessed for the purposes of the protected species provisions of Part 13 and the wildlife trade provisions of Part 13A of the EPBC Act.

The management regime for the QCF was first accredited under Part 13 of the EPBC Act in June 2006, and was reaccredited following the replacement of the Queensland Fisheries Regulation 1995 with the Fisheries Regulation 2008 in April 2008. The management arrangements for the QCF have changed significantly since this accreditation was granted. Fisheries Queensland has developed a new policy for the management of the QCF which will come into effect on 1 July 2009, as well as a Performance Measurement System and Coral Stress Response Plan.

Four conditions and two recommendations are attached to the WTO approval under Part 13A of the EPBC Act. Details of the progress Fisheries Queensland has made in relation to these conditions and recommendations are outlined in this document. The fishery is due to be reassessed in July 2012.

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**Condition 1**
Operation of the fishery will be carried out in accordance with the Queensland Coral Fishery (QCF) management arrangements in force under the Queensland *Fisheries Act 1994* and the Queensland Fisheries Regulation 2008.

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<th>Progress:</th>
<th>Ongoing</th>
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<td>In 2009–10, the operation of the Queensland Coral Fishery was carried out in accordance with the Queensland Coral Fishery management regime in force under the Queensland <em>Fisheries Act 1994</em> and the Queensland Fisheries Regulation 2008.</td>
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**Condition 2**
Fisheries Queensland to inform SEWPaC of any intended amendments to the management arrangements that may affect the assessment of the QCF against the criteria on which Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) decisions are based.

**Progress:** Ongoing

The management arrangements for the QCF have not changed significantly in the reporting period 2009–10.

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**Condition 3**
Fisheries Queensland to produce and present reports to SEWPaC annually as per Appendix B to the *Guidelines for the Ecologically Sustainable Management of Fisheries 2nd Edition*.

**Progress:** Ongoing

Fisheries Queensland publishes Annual Status Reports for this fishery. The reports can be found at [http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/28_19497.htm](http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/28_19497.htm) As outlined in the recommendations, these reports include information regarding: a description of the fishery; management arrangements in place; research and monitoring outcomes; recent catch data for all sectors of the fishery; status of target stock; interactions with protected species; impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem in which it operates; and information outlining progress in implementing recommendations resulting from the previous accreditation of the fishery.

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**Condition 4**
Fisheries Queensland to consult with SEWPaC prior to implementing any changes to the management arrangements for a species listed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora or EPBC Act listed species.

**Progress:** Ongoing

There have been no changes to management arrangements in the reporting period 2009–10, for a species listed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora or EPBC Act listed species.
**Recommendation 1:**
Fisheries Queensland to:
   a) continue to investigate finer spatial scale analysis of data if PMS indicators are triggered
   b) investigate methods to improve estimates of recreational take and
   c) factor estimates of recreational take, as well as permitted take under research and other relevant permits, into fishery assessments and management controls to ensure overall catch levels are sustainable.

**Progress:** Ongoing
Fisheries Queensland has:
   a) continued to investigate spatial scale analysis of data where PMS indicators have triggered. No spatial scale analysis was required.
   b) continued to improve estimates of recreational take. At present there are no data available on the level of recreational harvest of coral species. Fisheries Queensland commenced the next state-wide recreational fishing survey in 2010, using an improved methodology to provide an updated and improved estimate of recreational fishing participation and catch estimates. Previous estimates have been derived using telephone surveys and the fishing diary program, whereas the new approach, a diary-prompter survey, combines the best of both methods. The method is internationally recognised for its high fisher retention levels and accuracy of fishing information collated. Although the survey is not designed with a separate reporting category for coral, the survey methodology does allow for the reporting of a wider range of species including coral.
   c) taken into account the overall take from both recreational and research sectors and considers it so minimal that it presents no risk to sustainability. Currently there are six general fisheries permits that allow the take of corals for research within the Great Barrier Reef. The harvest is very limited in terms of quantity and is typically concentrated in the vicinity of the research stations.

**Recommendation 2:**
Fisheries Queensland to formalise a data sharing agreement with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.

**Progress:** Ongoing
Fisheries Queensland has yet to formalise a data sharing agreement with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, however, the revised Emerald Agreement will contain a data sharing agreement. There is ongoing close collaboration and sharing of data and information between Fisheries Queensland, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and the industry peak representative body ProVision Reef as required. For example, this occurred when the Coral Stress Response Plan was triggered in the Keppel region as a result of significant coral bleaching January to February 2011.