

Aquaculture species

The species listed below are being farmed in the Northern Territory (NT) or researched as possible opportunities.

Barramundi

There are extensive barramundi fisheries in Australia and Papua New Guinea, with a growing aquaculture industry in Australasia.

A pond-based barramundi farm on the Adelaide River produces more than 1,000 tonnes of fish a year.

The Darwin Aquaculture Centre produces fingerlings to restock Manton Dam and some of the lakes around Palmerston.

The centre can grow more than a million advanced barramundi fingerlings a year but is not currently producing a large number of fish.

If you are interested in barramundi farming you should get the [NT barramundi farming handbook](#) .

Giant clams

The Darwin Aquaculture Centre is growing giant clams. Farmed clams can be used for export, conservation programs and traditional food and cultural purposes.

NT Fisheries is looking at getting Indigenous communities involved in farming clams.

Trials on Groote Eylandt and Goulburn Island are looking at growing clams in sea-based cages.

The centre is also researching the international market potential for farmed fluted giant clams.

Ornamental plants and fish

Ornamental aquaculture produces plants and animals for the aquarium market.

This includes freshwater and marine fish, shellfish, corals, and a wide variety of aquatic plants.

The NT has a small but developing ornamental aquaculture industry that is run by enthusiastic and skilled people.

Pearl oysters

The silver-lipped pearl oyster is farmed in four main areas of the NT:

- Bynoe Harbour

- Beagle Gulf
- Cobourg Peninsula and Croker Island
- around the islands north west of Nhulunbuy.

Most pearl oysters used for farming in the NT are hatchery-reared but some wild oysters from Western Australia are also used.

The NT pearling industry is managed under a unit quota system and uses two types of licences - a pearl oyster fishery licence (fishing licence) and a pearl oyster culture (hatchery) licence.

The fishery is made up of 120 fishery units and the culture industry has 300 hatchery units. Each unit is equal to to 1150 oysters. This means 483,000 new oysters can be seeded each year.

A pearl farmer must hold both types of licences and have at least five fishing units and 15 hatchery units to maintain their licences. Units may be traded - permanently or temporarily - between licence holders.

Sea cucumber

Sea cucumber, also known as trepang or bêche de mer, is a prized delicacy throughout the Asia-Pacific.

Sandfish is one of the most valuable species and is found across tropical northern Australia. It has been successfully farmed in many countries, including China, the Philippines and Fiji.

The Darwin Aquaculture Centre is working with businesses and other organisations, including Indigenous communities, to find and develop sandfish ranching sites in the NT and improve hatchery production techniques.

Black-lipped oysters

Tropical rock oysters have historically been harvested by remote indigenous communities for food and trade.

The benefits of oyster farming at remote Indigenous communities in the NT are being investigated.

The Darwin Aquaculture Centre is working on hatchery production of the black-lipped oyster and coming up with sea-based growing techniques that will suit these communities.

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