



Commercial fishing in Queensland

From 3 January 2017 until further notice, all six scallop replenishment areas (SRAs) located off Yeppoon, Bustard Head and Hervey Bay are closed to all scallop fishing. A winter closure also applies each year – fishers cannot take or be in possession of scallops in the Queensland East Coast Otter Trawl Fishery between 1 May and 31 October each year. These measures have been put in place to prevent further decline to the stock. Find out more [<https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/fisheries/consultations-and-legislation/reviews-surveys-and-consultations/intended-scallop-fishing-closures>].

Queensland's commercial fisheries are a significant contributor to the national and state economy and a vital primary industry for many coastal towns, especially in remote areas.

About 1500 licensed commercial fishing boats operate in Queensland fisheries, which are among the most sustainable in the world.

Fisheries Queensland is the lead government agency developing policies to protect and conserve our state's fisheries resources while maintaining profitable commercial fisheries.

This guide provides an overview of Queensland's commercial fisheries, Fisheries Queensland services and how you can get involved in commercial fishing.

Getting started in commercial fishing

If you want to become a commercial fisher, you must first obtain a commercial fishing boat licence [<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/licences/boat-licence>].

Fisheries Queensland does not issue commercial fishing boat licences, so you will need to lease or buy a licence from an existing operator. These licences are advertised in newspapers or industry magazines, or are available through a shipping broker.

Your licence will let you operate in one or more fisheries. The fisheries in which you are authorised to operate are identified on your licence by fishery symbols. Fishery symbols can be moved between licences.

Queensland's commercial fisheries are regulated by Fisheries Queensland to ensure they remain sustainable. Regulations include controls on:

- the number and types of boats that can operate in a fishery
- the time and place of fishing
- what you can catch
- how much you can catch
- the type of fishing gear you can use.

Before you become a commercial fisher, you need to consider the following:

- what type of fishing you intend doing, in which location and when
- any recent changes, known as investment warnings [<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/warnings>], for the fishery you are interested in
- whether your boat meets the size and power limits

- the fees [<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/fees-for-ms>] involved in permanently or temporarily transferring licences and amending them for your intended fishing operations
- the ongoing annual fees for holding authorities
- whether you qualify for a commercial fisher licence [<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/licences/fisher-licence>] (if you intend to operate your own boat). If you do not qualify, you will need to employ a licence holder to operate your boat until you qualify for a licence.

Details of licences, permits, and quota holdings for commercial fishing, and developmental approvals are held in the fisheries register of authorities [<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/licences/fisheries-register>].

For more information about getting started in Queensland's commercial fisheries, phone Fisheries Queensland on 13 25 23.

Queensland's commercial fisheries

A commercial fishery is an aquatic region where licensed commercial fishers operate, catching fish species for profit.

In Queensland, commercial fisheries extend throughout tidal waters, from river estuaries to the Queensland East Coast Offshore Constitutional Settlement Boundary near the edge of the continental shelf. They operate from the New South Wales border in South East Queensland to the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Commercial fisheries are categorised according to the species they target and the fishing gear they use.

Fisheries Queensland's role

Fisheries Queensland regulates commercial fisheries through catch and effort limits to ensure they remain sustainable. They are responsible for allocating and managing authorities (licences, permits and quotas), which allow fishing activities in Queensland waters.

Queensland Fisheries Joint Authority (QFJA)

Fisheries Queensland also provides licensing for QFJA, which is responsible for managing certain fish stocks in the Gulf of Carpentaria under the *Fisheries Act 1994* [<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1994-037>]. These include mackerels, shark and demersal fin fish. The activities of QFJA are limited to commercial fisheries. QFJA comprises the Commonwealth Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Queensland Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

Trawl fisheries

The trawl fishery [<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/fisheries-profiles/trawl-fisheries/overview>] is Queensland's largest commercial fishery, with about 600 vessels catching up to 10,000 tonnes of product each year. There are 2 basic types of trawling: otter trawling and beam trawling. The otter trawl fishery is by far the larger, accounting for about 95% of the total harvest taken each year.

Line fisheries

Queensland line fisheries [<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/fisheries-profiles/commercial-line-fisheries>] use fishing lines, with a restriction on the number of lines and hooks that can be used. Boats used range from fleets with sophisticated equipment to small dinghies.

Net fisheries

Queensland net fisheries [<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/fisheries-profiles/commercial-net-fisheries>] use a variety of nets and netting methods. Controls have been introduced so that certain species may not be fished all year round. Open and closed seasons vary among species.

Crab fisheries

Queensland crab fisheries [<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/fisheries-profiles/crab-fisheries>] operate in intertidal, coastal and offshore waters using baited dillies, wire-mesh crab pots, trawl-mesh (nylon) crab pots and collapsible traps. Blue swimmer crabs are also caught by prawn and scallop trawlers.

Harvest fisheries

Queensland's harvest fisheries [<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/fisheries-profiles/commercial-harvest-fisheries>] collect target species from several individually managed fisheries. These species are primarily collected by hand or by using handheld implements. Commercial harvesting methods often involve the use of underwater breathing apparatus, such as scuba equipment or hookah.

Eel fisheries

The Queensland commercial eel fishery [<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/fisheries-profiles/eel-fishery>] is unusual in that the resource is harvested at 2 stages in its life cycle: the adult stage and the glass eel/elver stage (juvenile). As such, the fishery is managed in two components:

- an adult fishery (eels more than 30cm long)
- a juvenile fishery (eels less than 30cm long)

Although eel fishers harvest eels at different life stages and use different gear, both target the same eel populations.

Developmental fisheries

Developmental fishing [<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/fisheries-profiles/developmental-fisheries>] determines whether or not a potential new fishery is commercially viable, socially acceptable and ecologically sustainable.

Torres Strait fisheries

The Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) manages commercial fisheries in the Torres Strait Protected Zone (TSPZ). The Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) provides management advice and carries out domestic compliance in the TSPZ.

Since 1 July 2015 Fisheries Queensland no longer manages commercial fishing licences for the Torres Strait area. The Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA), on behalf of the PZJA, now issues these licences.

Find out more about commercial fishing licences in the Torres Strait Protected Zone [<http://pzja.gov.au/licences/#.VZM3EhuqpBd>].

More information

For more information about Queensland's commercial fisheries [<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/fisheries-profiles>] - including management areas, target species, gear used, licensing, regulations and monitoring - phone Fisheries Queensland on 13 25 23.

Commercial fishing management

Fisheries legislation

Fisheries Queensland manages the state's commercial fisheries under specific fisheries legislation, including the *Fisheries Act 1994* [<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1994-037>], Fisheries Regulation 2008 [<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2008-0083>] and fishery management plans.

Fisheries management methods

Individual fisheries in Queensland are controlled by a range of basic management methods, including the use of fishery symbols. These management methods protect our fish species, enabling Queensland to have sustainable and commercially viable fish stocks that can be used by the state's commercial fishing industry and recreational fishing sector.

Management methods are developed in consultation with a range of stakeholders, including the fishing industry, fisheries management agencies, research scientists and the general public.

Learn more about basic management methods for Queensland fisheries [<http://www.daf.qld.gov.au/fisheries/commercial-fisheries/queenslands-commercial-fisheries/basic-fisheries-management-methods>].

Watch videos [<http://www.youtube.com/user/fisheriesqld/feed>] on reporting interactions with species of conservation interest (sharks, rays, turtles, sea snakes) and the best ways for handling bycatch.

Fisheries information management

Queensland's commercial fishers are required by law to fill in logbooks with information about their catch and fishing effort. This information includes the species caught, locations fished and

the time spent fishing. This data is the primary source of information Fisheries Queensland uses to assess and monitor individual species and fisheries [<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/monitoring-reporting/monitoring>].

Learn more about commercial fishing logbooks [<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/monitoring-reporting/requirements/logbooks>].

Vessel monitoring system

Fisheries Queensland uses a vessel monitoring system (VMS) primarily to monitor and assess the position of trawl vessels. This benefits both commercial fishers and Fisheries Queensland.

The benefits to commercial fishing companies range from making more accurate assessments of their business's activity to simplifying catch reporting. Fisheries Queensland benefits by receiving up-to-date effort data and other data sets (such as catch reports), which are used to assess trends in fishing activity.

Learn more about VMS requirements for commercial fishers [<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/monitoring-reporting/vms>].

Fisheries management areas

Fishery symbols are crucial to managing commercial fisheries. They represent specific fisheries, which are marked on fishery licences, indicating the fishery (or fisheries) the licence-holder is authorised to operate in.

The symbols represent the target species, the fishing method used and the particular geographical area. The Fisheries Regulation 2008 or management plans outline the exact coordinates and boundary of each fishery.

Learn more about fishery licences and symbols [<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/licences>].

Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol

Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol (QBFP) [<http://www.daf.qld.gov.au/fisheries/services/queensland-boating-and-fisheries-patrol>] enforces fisheries and boating safety laws through surveillance and inspection. Compliance with laws is necessary to ensure both the safe use of waterways and the sustainability of our fisheries resources.

Also consider...

- See Queensland's fish stock status assessment [<http://www.daf.qld.gov.au/fisheries/monitoring-our-fisheries/data-reports/sustainability-reporting/stock-status-assessments>].
- Learn more about recreational fishing in Queensland [<http://www.daf.qld.gov.au/fisheries/recreational>].
- See Queensland fishing industry contacts [<http://www.daf.qld.gov.au/fisheries/services/industry-contacts>].
- Read more about bycatch reduction devices (BRDs) [<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/fisheries-profiles/rawl-fisheries/reducing-bycatch>] and turtle excluder devices (TEDs) [<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/fisheries-profiles/rawl-fisheries/turtle-excluder-devices>].

Commercial fishing licences and symbols

Licences and particular types of permits allow fishers to catch certain marine species for trade or commerce, as long as they abide by conditions such as area restrictions, catch limits, catch reporting [<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/commercial-fishing-qld/fisheries-qld-hotlines>] and gear used.

To operate in a commercial fishery:

- the fisher (either yourself or another person you engage) must have a commercial fisher licence
- the fisher must be operating under a Queensland commercial fishing boat licence or commercial harvest fishery licence
- the boat licence must have the relevant fishery symbol to operate in a particular fishery or fisheries.

Commercial fishery licences

Commercial fisher licence

You will need a commercial fisher licence [<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/licences/fisher-licence>] to use authorised equipment for catching fish species identified on your commercial fishing boat licence. You will also need a licence to supervise crew members assisting in the fishing activities.

Commercial fishing boat licence

You will need a commercial fishing boat licence [<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/licences/boat-licence>] to use a nominated primary boat and tender boats to commercially take species allowed under fishery symbols appearing on the licence. No new (additional) commercial fishing boat licences are issued, but you can lease or buy one from an existing licence holder.

Commercial harvest fishery licence

A commercial harvest fishery licence [<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/licences/harvest-fishery-licence>] is required to take species that are primarily collected by hand or by using handheld implements. No new licences are issued for existing fisheries, but you can lease or buy a licence from an existing operator.

Carrier boat licence

You must have a carrier boat licence [<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/licences/carrier-boat-licence>] to use a nominated boat to transport catches taken by another commercial fishing boat. Some fish carriers are exempt and some restrictions apply to specific fisheries.

Commercial fishery symbols

Specific fisheries are represented by a system of fishery symbols [<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/licences/fisheries-symbols>], which are marked on boat and harvest licences. These symbols indicate the fisheries the commercial fisher is authorised to fish. Each symbol denotes the species of fish targeted, the fishing method used and a particular geographical area.

To view fishery symbol descriptions and details refer to the:

- Fisheries Regulation 2008 [<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2008-0083>]
- Fisheries (East Coast Trawl) Management Plan 2010 [<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2010-0357>].

Commercially printed copies of this legislation can be purchased from LITSupport [<https://legislation.litsupport.com.au/>].

For more information about commercial fisheries licences and permits, call Fisheries Queensland on 13 25 23.

Fisheries Queensland services and hotlines

Fisheries Queensland is the lead government agency developing policies for protecting and conserving the state's fisheries. It provides the following services to commercial fishers.

Licences and permits

- Commercial fishing licences [<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/commercial-fishing-qld/commercial-fishing-symbols>] - general information about licence types, availability and links to application forms.
- FishNet [<http://www.daf.qld.gov.au/fisheries/services/fishnet>] - information on commercial licences, permits, quota and some reports of interest. Licence holders can also perform temporary transfer of quota transactions.

Reporting and hotlines

To help protect our fisheries resources, the following reporting services are available:

- Report suspected illegal activities [<http://www.daf.qld.gov.au/fisheries/services/illegal-fishing-activities>] (e.g. taking more than the legal limit of fish or taking female crabs) by calling our 24-hour Fishwatch hotline on **1800 017 116**.
- Report sightings of marine animals trapped in shark net gear or drifting buoys on **1800 806 891**.
- Report catches of tagged fish to the Suntag Program on **1800 077 001**. Suntag uses tags to gather and analyse data on fish movement, growth rates and habitats.
- Report large numbers of dead fish to the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection on **1300 130 372**.

Consultations

- You can provide feedback on fisheries issues that may affect you or your community. Read about current fisheries consultations [<http://www.daf.qld.gov.au/fisheries/consultations-and-legislation/reviews-surveys-and-consultations>] taking place in Queensland.

Electronic media

- Fisheries Queensland has accounts on Twitter [<https://twitter.com/fisheriesqld>] and Facebook [<https://www.facebook.com/FisheriesQueensland>] to keep you informed about what's happening in Queensland's fisheries.
- Get the latest primary industries and fisheries news on topics that interest you by subscribing to our newsletters and alerts [<http://www.vision6.com.au/forms/s/3b5742c/10433/340734.html>] - delivered straight to your email inbox.

Latest news

- Find out the latest Fisheries Queensland news [http://www.daf.qld.gov.au/services/news-and-updates?announce_category=47112&news_category=47122] about commercial and recreational fishing.
- Read current Ministerial media releases [<http://statements.qld.gov.au/Search/Advanced>] from The Honourable Bill Byrne - Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries.

Contacts

- Fisheries contacts [<http://www.daf.qld.gov.au/fisheries/services/fisheries-contacts>] - contact details of organisations that deal with fisheries-related issues or services.
- Fishing industry contacts [<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/fisheries/industry-associations>] - contact details of fishing industry groups.

Contact: General enquiries 13 QGOV (13 74 68)

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