



Tomorrow's fishing starts **TODAY**



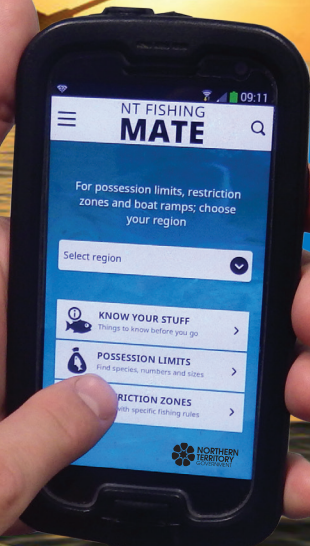
KNOW YOUR LIMITS

A handy reference to the regulations for recreational fishing
in the Northern Territory

NORTHERN TERRITORY
Recreational Fishing Controls



TERRITORY ANGLERS USE NT FISHING MATE



The NT Fishing Mate is an official NT Government app to make life simpler for anglers by offering a quick guide to fishing rules and related information.



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Recreational fishing in the Northern Territory



Recreational fishing is an important part of the Northern Territory (NT) lifestyle. Ongoing enjoyment of the NT's first-class fishing experience depends on careful management of our valuable aquatic resources and habitats.

NT Fisheries monitors and manages the health and sustainability of our fisheries. However, we all have a role to play in maintaining the NT's world class fishing lifestyle and ensuring current and future generations can enjoy the pleasures of recreational fishing and catching a feed of fresh seafood.

Play your part by using common sense and observing the following key points:

- Take no more than your immediate needs.
- Understand and comply with the Fisheries Regulations of the NT.
- It is illegal to sell or barter your catch.
- Report illegal fishing activities and environmental damage.
- Prevent pollution by taking your rubbish home with you.
- Respect other water users.

Why have possession limits for recreational fishing?

Possession limits are a key management tool used to:

- help keep recreational catches at sustainable levels
- share catches equitably among the fishery sectors
- reduce the potential for localised overfishing
- help eliminate the illegal sale of fish.



Fisheries compliance



The NT Police force (water police section, WPS) is responsible for enforcing fisheries and marine regulations.

Everyone can help to protect our fisheries. Compliance is not only about what the WPS do to protect our fisheries but also about voluntary compliance and stewardship of the resources that are undertaken by everyone.

For general WPS enquiries phone (08) 8947 0391.

Phone the **Fishwatch Hotline on 1800 891 136** or use the reporting section in the NT Fishing Mate app to report suspected illegal fishing activity.

It is important to provide as much detail as you can. You should include as much as possible of the following:

- what happened
- where it happened
- when it happened
- who is responsible
- description of vehicle or boat (colour, make, model)
- vehicle registration number.



Appointed fisheries inspectors

Additional to NT Police, fisheries inspectors are appointed by the Minister to assist in the conservation or management of a fishery or for the enforcement of the *Fisheries Act 1988*, Regulations or a management plan.

If a fisheries inspector believes on reasonable grounds that a person is engaged in taking fish or aquatic life, they may request:

- **the person's name and address**
- **the number of the licence or permit (if any) that authorises the taking of the fish or aquatic life**
- **to examine any fishing gear the fisheries inspector believes on reasonable grounds is being used for taking fish or aquatic life.**

If requested, a fisheries inspector must produce evidence that they are a fisheries inspector authorised to exercise the power.

Some Aboriginal marine rangers are appointed as fisheries inspectors under the *Fisheries Act 1988* and work closely with Department of Primary Industry and Resources (DPIR) and the NT Police. Marine rangers actively patrol their sea country and are authorised to monitor and investigate fishing activities, equipment and any suspected illegal activity. They are able to prepare evidence for police to act on the matter if enforcement is needed.

All persons must respect and abide by marine rangers as they are acting on behalf of the DPIR and NT Police.



Aboriginal land and waters

You do not require a recreational fishing licence in the NT. However, a large portion of the NT's intertidal waters lie over Aboriginal land and recreational fishers should respect and recognise the cultural importance of these waters to traditional owners.

- Respect Aboriginal cultural ceremonies. This may mean that a particular area is temporarily closed to access.
- Be courteous to other water users and those who belong to the local Aboriginal community.
- Do not clean or dispose of fish within the vicinity of a local Aboriginal community.

Respect sacred sites

- Do not enter any part of waters containing identified sacred sites unless specifically permitted to do so by the relevant authorities.
- Take care when boating to avoid damaging sensitive areas.

Permits are required to enter Aboriginal land and may also be required for access to tidal waters overlying Aboriginal land for fishing purposes. Information on permit requirements is available from the Northern Land Council on 08 8920 5100 or by visiting the website www.nlc.org.au

For camping permits and information about fishing the Tiwi Islands contact the Tiwi Land Council via their website at www.tiwilandcouncil.com. For updated information regarding fishing permits visit www.nt.gov.au



Possession limits and at-risk species



A General Personal Possession Limit (GPL) of 15 fish applies. This is the maximum number of fish a person may have in their possession at any time (other than in their permanent residence).

A permanent residence does not include temporary occupancy, caravanning or camping but rather a fixed address which can be substantiated by photographic identification or similar.

Included within the 15 fish GPL you may only have a maximum number of the following specified fish as shown below.

Species	Personal possession limit	Special controls and key information
Golden snapper★	3	Not suitable for catch and release in water 10m+ in depth, susceptible to barotrauma. Vessel limit applies, see page 8.
Black jewfish★	2	Not suitable for catch and release in water 10m+ in depth, susceptible to barotrauma. Vessel limit applies, see page 8.
Barramundi	5/3*	55cm minimum overall length NT-wide, minimum fillet length 27cm.* Special controls apply in Kakadu National Park, Mary and Daly River Fish Management Zones. See pages 20-23.
King threadfin	3	Kakadu National Park, Mary and Daly River Fish Management Zones: 90cm maximum size (fork length). Vessel limit of one fish over 90cm (fork length).
Mangrove Jack★	3	35cm minimum length. Vessel limit applies, see page 8.
Spanish mackerel	2	Sensitive to handling. The use of barbless hooks for catch and release fishing is recommended.



Red snappers (crimson, saddletail, Indonesian)	10	Any combination to a limit of 10 total.
Tricky snapper★ (Grass emperor)	5	Susceptible to barotrauma. Vessel limit applies, see page 8.
Stripey snapper★ (Spanish flag)	5	Susceptible to barotrauma. Vessel limit applies, see page 8.
Russell's snapper★	5	Susceptible to barotrauma. Vessel limit applies, see page 8.
Tuskfish★	5	Susceptible to barotrauma. Vessel limit applies, see page 8.
Coral trout★	5	Susceptible to barotrauma. Vessel limit applies, see page 8.
Red emperor★	5	Susceptible to barotrauma. Vessel limit applies, see page 8.
Cod and groper★	5	Susceptible to barotrauma. 120cm maximum length. Vessel limit applies, see page 8.
Sharks (excluding protected species)	3	Any combination up to a limit of three. Sawfish, northern river and spartooth sharks are protected and must not be taken.
Marlin and sailfish	1	
Bream (Acanthopagrus spp.)	15	
All other fish species not subject to specific individual limits	5	

★'At-risk' species are those fish species with vulnerable biological characteristics that place them at a greater risk of becoming overfished. These include slow growth, late maturity and a preference for aggregating either for shelter, food or to spawn. Most at-risk species are also prone to barotrauma (see page 35). Many of the common reef fish found in NT waters (snappers, emperors, cods and groupers) meet the criteria for being considered as 'at-risk'.



Vessel limits apply to 'at-risk' species listed in the table on pages 6 and 7

- Vessels with four or less people on board – each person can take their personal possession limit.
- Vessels with five to seven people on board can take a maximum of four times the personal possession limit of designated 'at-risk' species. The balance of the GPL can be made up of other fish.
- Vessels with eight or more people on board can take a maximum of eight times the personal possession limit of designated 'at-risk' species. The balance of the GPL can be made up of other fish.

Processing your catch, the following rules apply

- The entire skin must be left on fillets and trunks of all fish.
- Frozen fillets from different species must be kept in separate packaging.
- Two fillets together are deemed to comprise one fish.
- A piece of fish, other than a fillet, is to be counted as one fish, unless you can prove that two or more pieces of fish were obtained from the one fish.

Swim bladders

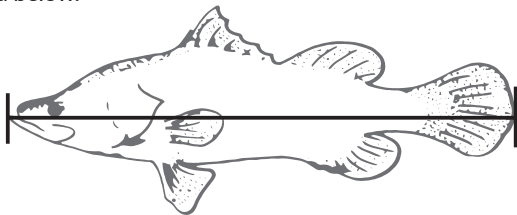
- If you intend to retain a swim bladder for personal consumption you must keep the swim bladder inside the fish until you get home to your permanent residence.
- If you process fish away from your permanent residence you must immediately discard any swim bladders.
- A personal possession limit of two detached swim bladders (any species) applies at a person's permanent residence.
- A person must not be in possession of a detached swim bladder anywhere outside of their permanent residence.



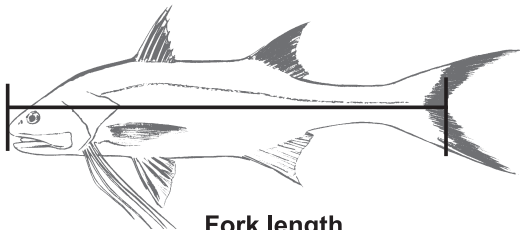
Measuring fish

- For fish whose lower jaw is longer than the upper jaw (like barra or cod), measure from the tip of the lower jaw to the middle ray of the tail fin (overall length).
- For those fish whose upper jaw is longer than the lower jaw and the rays of the tail fins can appear uniform in length or concave (like red emperor and mangrove jack), measure from the tip of the snout to the longest part or segment of the tail fin (total length).
- For those fish with a forked tail (like blue or king threadfin), measure from the longest part of the head (in this case the snout) to the fork of the tail (fork length).
- All fish should be measured when fish is lying flat on a measuring tape or measuring device and with the mouth closed.

Diagrams to assist measuring of overall and fork length are provided below.



Overall length



Fork length



In addition to the 15 fish GPL, a maximum personal limit also applies for the following species.

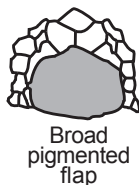
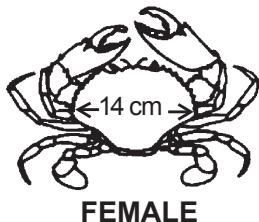
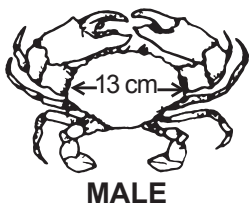
Species exempt from the 15 fish GPL	Personal possession limit	Special controls and key information
Mud crabs	10	Vessel limit of 30 when three or more people are on board. Minimum size limit 13cm for males and 14cm for females. Five marine pots or dillies per person. Ten marine pots or dillies per vessel when two or more people are on board. Females with eggs must be released unharmed.
Crabs (other than mud crab)	30	
Freshwater crustaceans – cherabin and/or redclaw	30	Daly River Fish Management Zone: A combined vessel limit of 90 when 3 or more people are on board with a maximum limit of 30 cherabin. A combined personal possession limit of 30, which includes a maximum limit of 10 cherabin. Three freshwater pots or dillies per person. Six freshwater pots or dillies per vessel when two or more people are on board. Females with eggs must be released unharmed.
Tropical rock lobster	5	Vessel limit of 15 when three or more people are on board. Tropical rock lobsters must not be taken using underwater breathing apparatus.
Whiting and/or mullet and/or garfish (combined)	50	
Pilchards and/or sardines and/or herring (combined)	100	
Molluscs	10 litres (in shell)	Giant clams are protected and must not be taken.
Saltwater prawns (all species combined)	10 litres (intact in shell)	
Octopus, cuttlefish and squid (combined)	30	



Mud crabs

- Mud crabs are measured between the widest part of the carapace (the distance between the tips of the rearmost spines).
- Male mud crabs are identified by a narrow unpigmented abdominal flap.
- Female mud crabs are identified by a broad pigmented abdominal flap.
- A berried female will have a cluster of eggs attached to the abdominal flap and must be released unharmed.
- The carapace and abdomen of mud crabs must be kept intact unless the crab is being processed for immediate consumption or stored at your permanent place of residence.

Diagrams to assist measuring and identifying crabs are provided below.



Protected species



Sawfishes and river sharks are protected species. If they are caught by recreational anglers they must be released unharmed back into the water.

In the NT there are four sawfish species (Narrow, Largetooth, Dwarf and Green) and two river shark species (Northern River shark and Speartooth shark). These species inhabit a wide variety of habitats, but most important are the NT's relatively pristine estuaries, rivers and coastal regions that provide important nursery and feeding areas.

For more information visit the fisheries website at www.nt.gov.au or use the NT Fishing Mate app. For more information on identification of sawfish and river shark species visit the NESP website at www.nespmarine.edu.au



Protected species

You must not be in possession of protected species that include:

- all species of cod or groper longer than 1.2m
- sawfishes, Northern River and Speartooth sharks
- Giant clams.

Protected species must be released unharmed.



Amateur fishing gear regulations

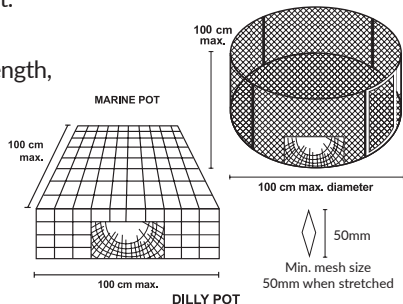


Marine pots

- Maximum of five pots or dillies (or combination of) per person with maximum of 10 pots or dillies (or combination of) per vessel when two or more people are on board.
- All pots or dillies must have a specific marker buoy that is no less than 100mm in diameter and attached by line of no less than 6mm in diameter.
- The specific marker buoy must be visible at all times when in use and must have the user's first and last name and active phone number clearly marked on it.

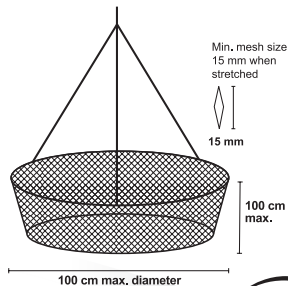
Complying marine pot

- Maximum size: 100cm in length, width, height or diameter.
- Maximum volume: 0.5m³.
- Maximum number of entrances: four
- Material placed in the pot that is likely to entangle fish or aquatic life is not permitted.



Complying dilly pot

- Maximum size: 100cm in length, height or diameter.
- A dilly pot must be constructed so that, when set, the sides collapse and the net lies flat on the ground and does not contain material that is capable of entangling fish or aquatic life.



Freshwater pots

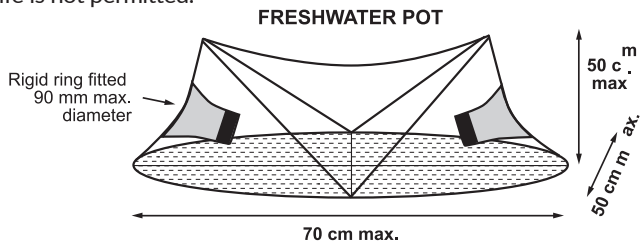
- Maximum of five freshwater pots or dillies (or a combination of) per person with a maximum of 10 freshwater pots or dillies (or a combination of per vessel) when two or more people are on board.
- A freshwater pot or dilly must have a float attached that is no less than 80mm in diameter or length.
- The float must be visible at all times when in use and must have the user's first and last name clearly marked on it.

Daly River Fish Management Zone specific controls

- Maximum of three freshwater pots or dillies (or a combination of) per person with a maximum of six freshwater pots or dillies (or a combination of) per vessel when two or more people are on board.

Complying freshwater pots

- Maximum size: 70cm in length and 50cm in width and height.
- Maximum number of entrances: two, with rigid turtle excluder rings fitted with a maximum diameter of 90mm.
- Must be constructed of flexible net material that has a minimum mesh size of not less than 15mm when stretched.
- Material placed in the pot that is likely to entangle fish or aquatic life is not permitted.



Max. number of openings: 2

Min. mesh size 15 mm when stretched



Amateur drag net

- Maximum length: 16m excluding the length of any attached lines.
- Maximum drop: 2m.
- A drag net must not be staked or fixed and may only be hauled by hand. It must have a float attached with the user's first and last name clearly marked on it.
- Maximum mesh size: 28mm and must not have pockets.
- A drag net must not be used in creeks and rivers and must be used seaward of the coast line. Any catch must be cleared in water to prevent the death of released or unwanted fish.

Cast net

- Maximum diameter: 6m.
- Maximum drop: 3m when suspended from the centre.
- Maximum mesh size: 25mm.
- A cast net must be attended at all times when in use and may only be used by casting, throwing or dropping it.

Speargun

A person using any kind of underwater breathing apparatus must not have possession of a speargun.

A person must not have possession of a loaded speargun:

- other than in the open sea
- within 150m of another person who is not part of his or her group.



Fish aggregating devices



Fish aggregating devices (FADs) like buoys or floats are used on or below the ocean's surface and anchored to the bottom. They provide an easy alternative for anglers to target species less susceptible to barotrauma and more suited to catch and release such as tuna, trevally, queenfish, mackerel and billfish.

FADs are not designed as mooring devices. Mooring can result in anchors dragging or FADs breaking free and becoming lost. FADs work most effectively when they are left in place for long periods of time.

If you are fishing around a FAD, there is a code of conduct you should follow.

- Respect other users at all times.
- Be courteous to fishers who are already there.
- Try and accommodate new arrivals.
- Take only what you need for a feed.
- Always slow your approach when nearing and sound the area away from the structure for target fish.
- Keep boats, lines and lures a safe distance from:
 - a FAD
 - spearfishers
 - other boats.



- Spearfishers should:
 - be aware of other users
 - avoid entering the water if other boats are around
 - not have a loaded speargun within 150 metres of another person who is not part of their fishing group.

FAD locations

North Gutter

Approximate position: 12 05.459S | 130 34.057E

Fenton Patches

Approximate position: 12 10.290S | 130 38.544E

Dundee

Approximate position: 12 40.000S | 130 10.000E

Common target fish found at FADs include queenfish, mackerel, tuna, trevally and billfish.

Report damaged or missing FADs

If you see a damaged or misused FAD or notice one that appears to be missing from its marked position, contact the Fisheries Department by emailing fisheries@nt.gov.au.



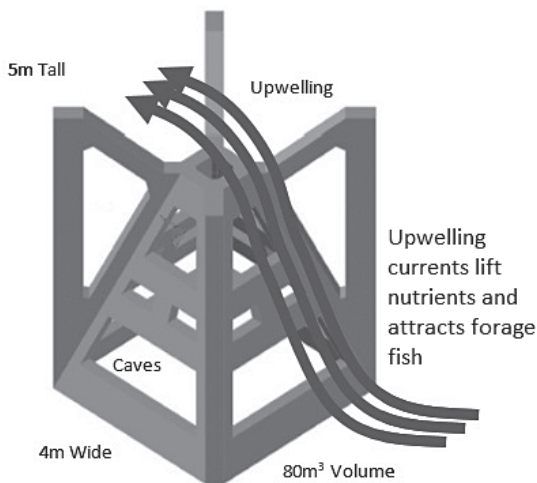
Artificial reefs



In 2019, four purpose built artificial reefs (ARs) were deployed. Built to last 100 years, the ARs were specifically designed to combine the best features of a natural reef while enhancing their qualities for maximum effect.

Internal caves, cryptic habitat, vertical relief and upwelling of water flow will create new habitats, providing new fishing areas and reducing pressure on existing natural reef and fish stocks. A variety of reef associated species will benefit from these new reefs.

Each AR consists of 29 modules, covering an area of approximately 2.5 hectares.



AR 1 – Lee Point wide	12 10.083S 130 47.033E
AR 2 – Gutters Central	12 09.459S 130 34.665E
AR 3 – Dundee wide	12 44.445S 130 10.387E
AR 4 – Adelaide River mouth	12 07.587S 131 11.545E

Code of conduct for fishing on ARs

- RESPECT other users at all times.
- Courtesy should be given to fishers who are already fishing on or near an AR.
- To reduce disturbance of other boats always motor slowly when approaching an AR or changing locations.
- Keep your boats, lines and lures a safe distance from other boats.
- Take only what you need for a feed.

Before you leave shore

FADs and ARs are sometimes situated long distances from shore. Before you leave the shore you should:

- ensure your boat is suitable for offshore fishing
- check you have all the correct safety equipment required by law
- check the current marine weather forecast to assess if conditions are suitable for boating.



Fish Management Zones



Daly River Fish Management Zone

If you are in the Daly River Fish Management Zone as outlined on the map on page 21 the following specific rules apply.

- Maximum size limit of 90cm for barramundi (overall length) and 90cm for king threadfin (fork length).
- Personal possession limit of three barramundi and vessel limit of one barramundi over 90cm (overall length).
- Personal possession limit of three king threadfin and vessel limit of one king threadfin over 90cm (fork length).
- Combined personal possession limit of 30 freshwater crustaceans which includes a maximum limit of 10 cherabin. Females with eggs must be released unharmed.
- Combined vessel limit of 90 freshwater crustaceans when three or more people are on board with a maximum limit of 30 cherabin. Females with eggs must be released unharmed.
- Maximum of three freshwater pots or dillies per person. Maximum of six freshwater pots or dillies per vessel when two or more people are on board.

Daly River seasonally closed area

Between 1 October and 31 January, a section of the Daly River, including all coastal creeks and tributaries, is closed to fishing. The closed area is defined by the following GPS coordinates (GDA94):

- the area from the defined western bank of the old outlet channel of Moon Billabong at coordinates 130 26.323 E, 13 28.292 S due south to the opposite bank
- to the west by an imaginary straight line drawn between the most northerly point of Cliff Head at coordinates 130 11.995 E,

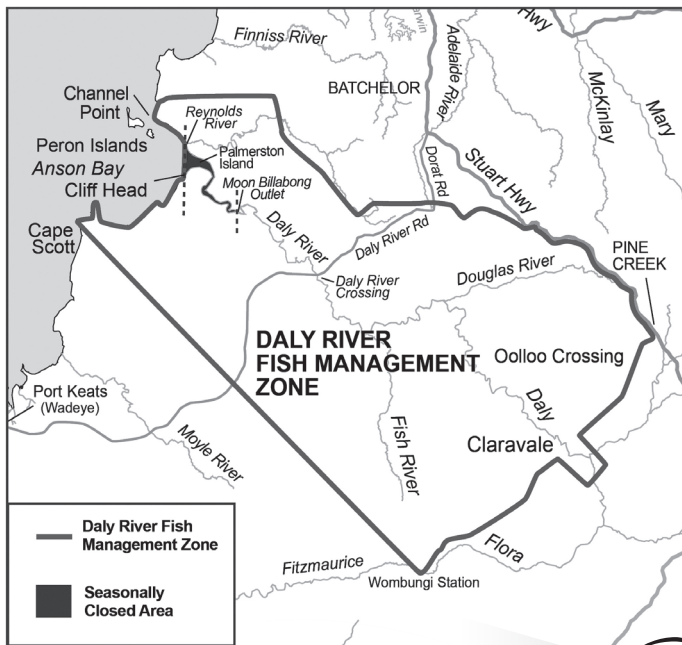


13 22.400 S and the most westerly point of the north bank of the outlet regarded as part of the Reynolds River at coordinates 130 13.509 E, 13 15.016 S

- includes all tributaries of the Daly River that are downstream from the previously mentioned imaginary line.

If you are in this area between 1 October and 31 January you must not fish, or have in your possession a barramundi or a fishing line to which a hook, lure or bait is attached.

It is during this period that barramundi spawn and this area contains significant spawning habitat.

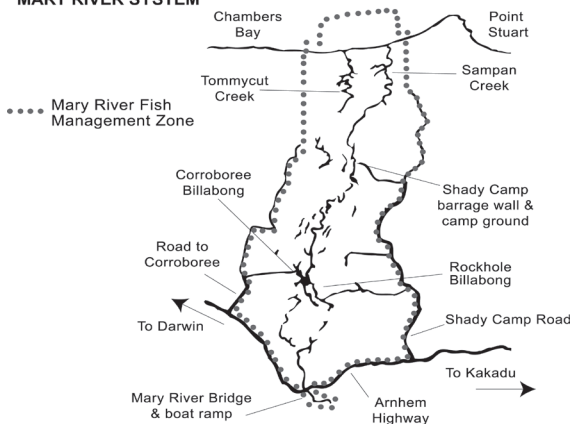


Mary River Fish Management Zone

If you are in the area within the dotted line on the Mary River map below, the following rules apply:

- Maximum size limit of 90cm for barramundi (overall length) and 90cm for king threadfin (fork length).
- Personal possession limit of three barramundi and vessel limit of one barramundi over 90cm (overall length).
- Personal possession limit of three king threadfin and vessel limit of one king threadfin over 90cm (fork length).
- Use or possession of a cast net or drag net is prohibited.

MARY RIVER SYSTEM



Shady Camp barrage

You must only use a lure or fly with a single point hook when fishing from, or within, a 100 metres radius of the main barrage wall at Shady Camp billabong. Bait fishing and the use of double or treble hooks in this area is prohibited.



Kakadu National Park specific controls



Fishing gear

You may not possess nets, firearms, spears, traps or any other device designed for taking an animal or fish other than:

- a rod and reel or handline with a single hook or lure attached.
- landing nets are only permitted for landing fish.

Other rules

- Barramundi possession limit three, maximum size 90cm, vessel limit of one fish over 90cm.
- No live baiting. A live animal (including fish) cannot be used as bait.
- Set lines are prohibited.
- Do not clean fish within 50m of a water body.
- All crabs are protected and must not be taken or be in possession.
- Recreational nets, traps and pots for use outside the park may be transported along the Oenpelli Road, Old Jim Jim Road, Arnhem and Kakadu highways, and the South and East Alligator rivers downstream of boat access. These items must be stowed, covered and not ready for use. Kakadu National Park possession limits apply in the park at all times.

Fishing and boating are prohibited in the following areas

- Waterways upstream of the Kakadu Highway are closed with the exception of Sandy and Jim Jim billabongs.
- The West Alligator River.
- Between the part of the South Alligator River known as 'the forks' or 'the rapids' (about 24km upstream of the bridge on the Arnhem Highway) and 2km north of Fisherman's Gully on Yellow Water.

For more information contact Kakadu National Park Bowali Visitor Centre on 08 8938 1120 or email KakaduNP@environment.gov.au



Reef fish protection areas

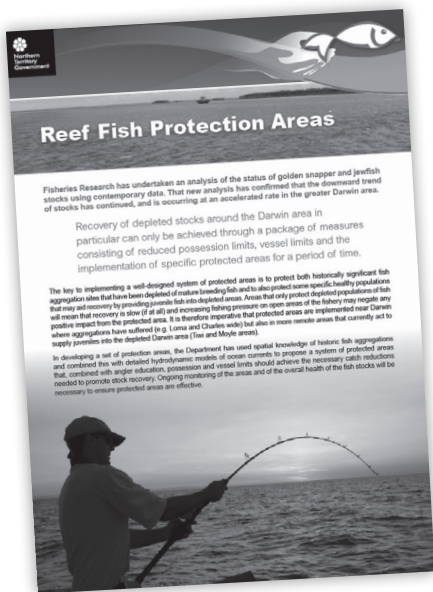


A network of 'fit-for-purpose' temporary reef fish protection areas has been implemented in the NT to aid in the protection and recovery of 'at-risk' reef fish species.

Some of these protection areas protect known healthy stocks of reef fish, while others will allow reefs that have been depleted by overfishing to recover.

No recreational fishing of any form is allowed within these areas. However, fishers may traverse through a protected area, provided that they are making way at all times.

Coordinates for reef fish protection areas in this booklet are shown in Geocentric Datum of Australia 1994 (GDA94) degrees decimal minutes (DD MM.MMM)



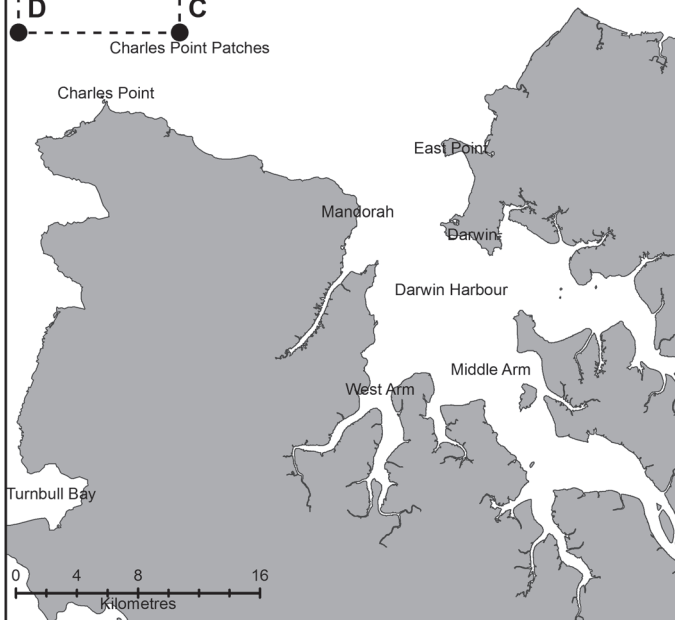
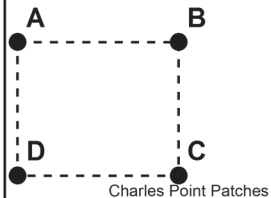
REEF FISH PROTECTION AREA

Charles Point Wide



Fenton Patches

	Latitude	Longitude
A	12° 16.000'S	130° 34.000'E
B	12° 16.000'S	130° 39.689'E
C	12° 20.612'S	130° 39.689'E
D	12° 20.612'S	130° 34.000'E

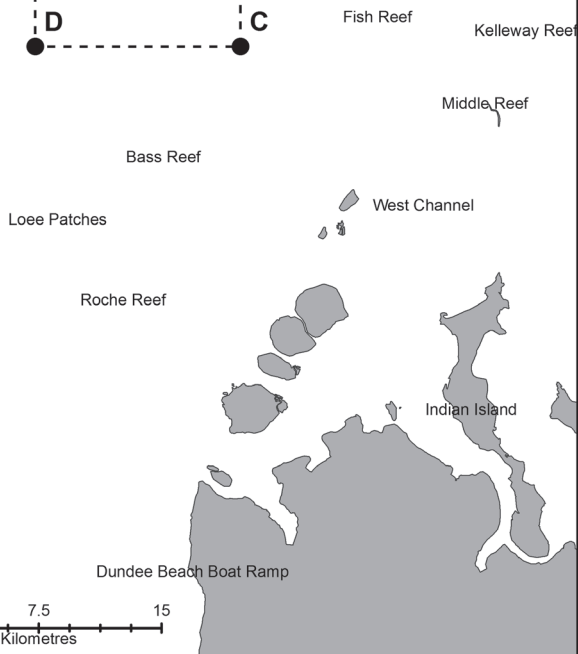
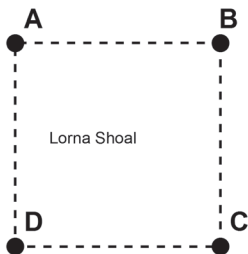


REEF FISH PROTECTION AREA

Lorna Shoal



	Latitude	Longitude
A	12° 19.655'S	130° 15.767'E
B	12° 19.655'S	130° 22.537'E
C	12° 26.193'S	130° 22.537'E
D	12° 26.193'S	130° 15.767'E

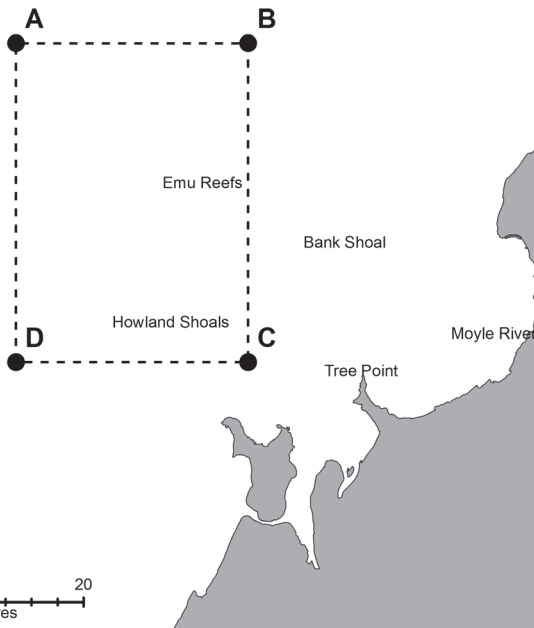


REEF FISH PROTECTION AREA

Moyle/Port Keats



	Latitude	Longitude
A	13° 44.000'S	129° 18.000'E
B	13° 44.000'S	129° 30.000'E
C	14° 00.000'S	129° 30.000'E
D	14° 00.000'S	129° 18.000'E

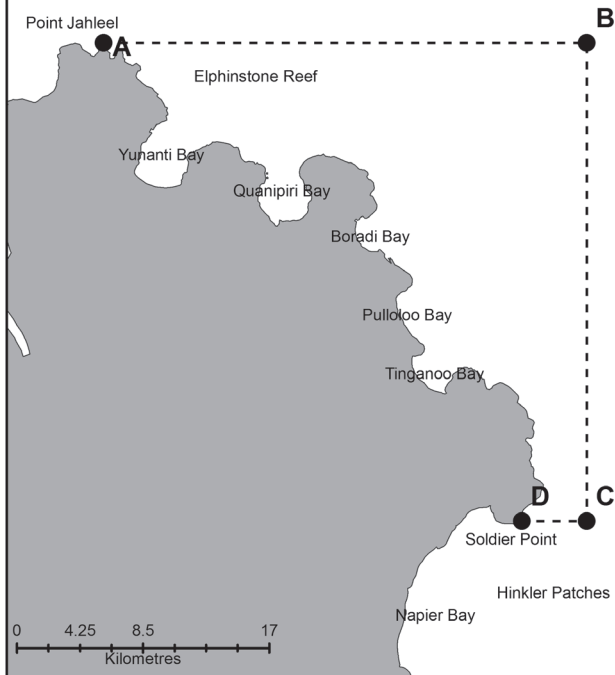


REEF FISH PROTECTION AREA

Melville Island



	Latitude	Longitude
A	11° 11.404'S	131° 16.635'E
B	11° 11.404'S	131° 34.200'E
C	11° 28.440'S	131° 34.200'E
D	11° 28.440'S	131° 31.831'E

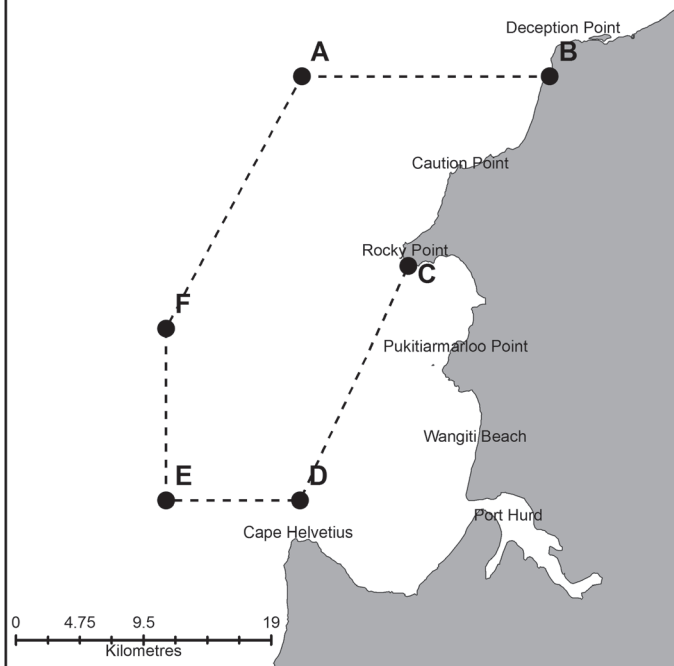


REEF FISH PROTECTION AREA

Bathurst Island



	Latitude	Longitude
A	11° 21.935'S	130° 04.863'E
B	11° 21.935'S	130° 14.819'E
C	11° 29.404'S	130° 09.135'E
D	11° 38.623'S	130° 04.788'E
E	11° 38.623'S	129° 59.400'E
F	11° 31.854'S	129° 59.400'E



Aquatic life reserves



Doctors Gully

Doctors Gully is a popular tourist destination. Fish gather in this area to be hand-fed in large aggregations in the shallows of the reserve during high tide. The reserves management plan aims to protect these fish from fishing.

In the reserve a person shall not:

- take fish or aquatic life
- injure or destroy fish or aquatic life
- have possession or control of fish or aquatic life.

East Point

East Point is a popular spot with land-based anglers and easily accessible. To help with the preservation of this area, an aquatic life reserve management plan was established to protect against overfishing.

Amateur fishing is permitted within the reserve but a person is only allowed to use a rod and line and attachments, or handline and attachments to fish for or take fish in the reserve.

In the reserve a person shall not:

- take any fish less than 30cm long
- take a sedentary organism
- injure or destroy a sedentary organism, other than a sedentary organism brought into the reserve by the person.

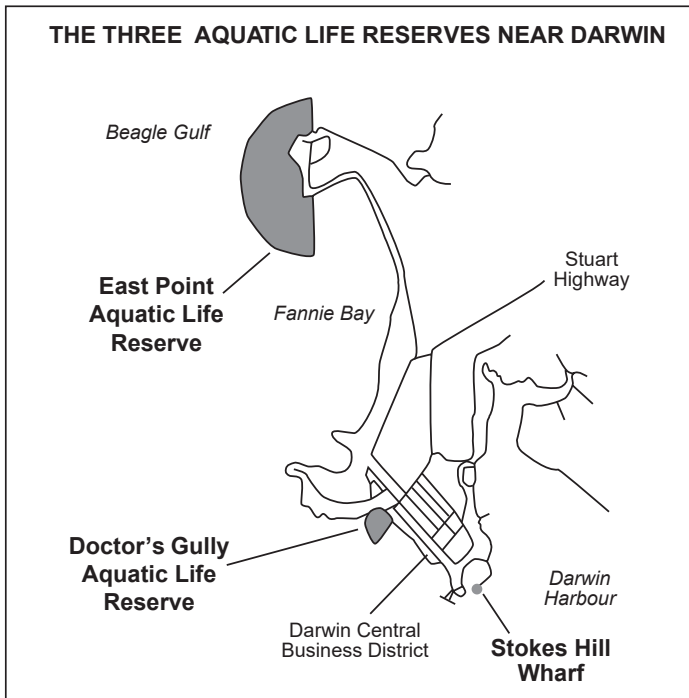


A fish (other than a sedentary organism) shall be deemed not to have been taken if, as soon as possible after it has been taken, it is returned, with as little damage to the fish as possible, to the water from which it was taken.

Stokes Hill Wharf

Fishing activity is restricted in specified areas at Stokes Hill Wharf.

Signs located at Stokes Hill Wharf specify areas where fishing is prohibited, or permitted only from the shore, wharf or a structure provided by the NT Government for the purposes of fishing.



Aquatic biosecurity



Aquatic pests are harmful plants and animals that can be introduced to our waters from other countries or parts of Australia. They include a wide range of salt and freshwater organisms from microscopic algae to species of seaweed, fish, barnacles, sea squirts, mussels and crabs that can significantly harm the NT's aquatic environment.

Aquatic pests may threaten biodiversity and affect commercial and recreational industries such as fishing, tourism, aquaculture and port operations.

Types of aquatic pests

- Noxious fish
- Freshwater pests
- Marine (sea) pests

Rules about aquatic pests

- Marine pests can arrive on boats of all types and sizes.
- All boats coming in from overseas must be assessed for marine pests before they can enter any Darwin marina.
- Imported aquarium species can become pests if released, accidentally or deliberately, into natural waterways.
- It is illegal to move any aquatic life from a water catchment or storage unit to another without authority.



Preventing aquatic pests

The Aquatic Biosecurity Unit works with industry and community groups to monitor and manage the risk of new pests arriving in the NT.

This includes hull pest inspections for visiting boats, marine and freshwater pest control programs and a public awareness campaign of the effects of releasing non-native fish into NT waterways.

To prevent the spread or establishment of aquatic pests you should do all of the following:

- when out fishing, diving or boating, report aquatic pests, including unusual aquatic growth or aquatic life in unnaturally high numbers
- remove any plant material from your boat trailer and gear before moving to a new waterway
- dispose of unwanted pond or aquarium fish humanely or check whether a local pet shop will take them – do not dump them in any waterway
- prevent your outdoor ponds from overflowing during wet season rains
- use attractive and colourful native fish and plants in your home aquarium and ponds.

Report any sightings to the Fishwatch Hotline 1800 891 136 or through the free NT Fishing Mate app.



Fish kills



Fish kills can be caused by:

- environmental factors, such as low dissolved oxygen, large algal blooms, salinity changes, increased temperature and acidity levels
- toxicants or pollutants
- aquatic diseases.

Most of the fish kills in the Top End are natural low oxygen events resulting in fish gasping on the surface struggling to breathe.

Early storms in the build-up wash large amounts of organic matter and other soil materials into the water. As it rots this material will use most of the available dissolved oxygen. With no oxygen left for the fish they may unfortunately die.

While most fish kills are natural occurrences, please report any as soon as they are witnessed so they can be investigated to determine the cause.

Take pictures if possible, record when and where you saw it, note GPS coordinates and if possible collect dying fish by placing into in a plastic bag and ice slurry.

Report any suspected aquatic pests or fish kills to the Fishwatch Hotline 1800 891 136 or through the free NT Fishing Mate app.



Barotrauma



The term barotrauma applies to injuries caused by the expansion of gases in a fish's body due to a decrease in pressure as the fish is brought up from deep water.

The most obvious symptoms include the fish's stomach pushed out through the mouth, distended intestines and an inability to swim down from the surface. Most fish with these symptoms have sustained severe internal injuries. Even fish that are returned to the water in apparently good condition may have suffered fatal injuries.

Recreational fishing survey data shows that recreational anglers in the NT are releasing around 60 per cent of their reef fish catch. Research indicates that many of these fish caught from water deeper than 10 metres are unlikely to survive release due to the effects of barotrauma.

It is the responsibility of all anglers, as stewards of the resource, to assist in the sustainable management of our precious reef fish stocks by observing the following key points when reef fishing in water deeper than 10 metres:

- utilise the reef fish you catch (released fish are unlikely to survive due to internal injuries caused by barotrauma)
- stop reef fishing once you have caught enough for your immediate needs or reached your possession limit (whichever comes first)
- once you have caught enough for your immediate needs you should change locations and target species not susceptible to barotrauma
- use large non-offset circle hooks to prevent the capture of smaller fish
- if you are continually catching juvenile fish, change locations.



Handling fish



Catch and release

The following advice is provided to help ensure that captured fish intended for release are given the best possible chance of survival.

- Fish should be released as soon as possible after capture.
- Use appropriate tackle and gear that is capable of handling fish of a size that can be expected.
- Use barbless hooks when using lures.
- Use non-offset circle hooks when using bait.
- Use purpose-built fish-friendly knotless landing nets .
- Do not suspend fish vertically by their jaw or gills. Support the fish's weight horizontally using both hands.
- Do not lay a fish intended for release on a hot surface.
- When a fish is deeply hooked cut the line close to the mouth and leave the hook in place.
- It is illegal to tether fish, dead or alive.



For the table

All fish to be kept for eating should be dispatched humanely immediately after capture to eliminate unnecessary stress to the fish and maximise the eating quality and storage life of the flesh.

The fish needs to be stunned (rendered instantaneously insensible) before being bled out. The best stunning technique is known as 'iki jimi' – spiking the fish in the brain with a sharp instrument just behind the eye. Alternatively, percussion stunning, an accurate blow to the head of the fish with a blunt instrument will have the same effect.

Once a fish has been stunned, it should be bled and placed in an ice slurry to reduce its core temperature. When handled in this way, the table qualities of your catch will be significantly enhanced whether cooked fresh or after freezing.

Mud crabs can be tied and kept alive in a moist hessian bag in a cool place. All mud crabs should be dispatched humanely before they are cooked or processed.

The most acceptable method of dispatching mud crabs and other crustaceans is to chill the animal to render it insensible, followed by killing through splitting or spiking to destroy the animal's nerve centres.



Tagging programs



NT Fisheries, in collaboration with the Amateur Fishermen's Association of the Northern Territory (AFANT) coordinates barramundi and golden snapper tagging programs to monitor the health of these important fish stocks.

Barramundi are tagged in the Mary, Daly, Roper, Victoria and McArthur rivers and in Darwin and Bynoe harbours.

Golden snapper are tagged in Darwin and Bynoe harbours and in surrounding areas.

The tags are green or yellow in colour and are located just under the dorsal fin of tagged fish. Each tag carries an individual number and a contact phone number.

If you catch a tagged fish please report it to AFANT on 1800 456 410 or email research@afant.com.au. Record the tag number, fish length, date, capture location, water depth and whether it was kept or released.

NT Fisheries have previously conducted shark tagging programs and many tagged sharks still remain in NT waters. Captures of tagged sharks provide valuable information that assists in their management.

If you catch a tagged shark please report the tag number, date, capture location, length (if possible) and your personal details to NT Fisheries by mail to GPO Box 3000 Darwin NT 0801 or by email fisheries@nt.gov.au or phone 08 8999 2144.

NT Fisheries encourages anglers who catch any tagged species that are fit to release to do so with the tag intact as they will continue to provide valuable information if recaptured.



Boating safety



Pleasure craft in the NT do not require registration and operators are not required to hold a licence. However, for your safety:

- check the weather and sea reports before you leave home, especially during the cyclone season
- let a responsible person know where you are going and when you will return
- ensure your boat, motor and equipment are in reliable working order
- observe and understand all boating regulations and ensure your vessel has the correct safety gear as listed on page 41 and 42
- always carry adequate amounts of drinking water (two litres per person), vinegar and a first aid kit
- familiarise yourself with the area you will be fishing, that is, tides, charts and maps of the area.

Categories of water

- Inland waters – means non tidal rivers, lakes, dams and billabongs.
- Intermediate waters – means tidal rivers, sheltered waters areas and all other coastal waters up to two nautical miles from the coastline.
- Open waters – means beyond intermediate waters.

Lifejackets and personal flotation devices (PFDs)

- Inland waters – one level 50 PFD (Type 2) or higher per person.
- Intermediate waters – one level 100 PFD (Type 1) or higher per person.
- Open waters – one level 100 PFD (Type 1) or higher per person.

*Alternatively, coastal lifejackets or SOLAS lifejackets may be acceptable substitutions in all waters.



Flares

- Flares are required to be carried in vessels operating in intermediate and open waters.
- Expiry dates must be adhered to for the flares to be considered serviceable.

EPIRB

- One (1) 406MHz Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) must be carried onboard if the vessel is operating outside sheltered waters and more than two nautical miles from the coast.
- Expiry dates must be adhered to for the EPIRB to be considered serviceable.

Shipping channels

All vessels, including small sailing craft, are required by law to clear a shipping channel well in advance of large vessels using the channels. Within a shipping channel the legal exclusion zone in front of very large vessels, such as natural gas tankers, can be up to one kilometre, and half that distance behind it.

If you realise you are in the path of a large vessel, make positive changes to your course so other boat users can easily determine your intentions.

It is also the responsibility of recreational boaties in Darwin Harbour not to anchor or permit the vessel to be anchored:

- in a shipping channel, except in an emergency
- in a manner that is likely to obstruct or impede the safe passage or navigation of another vessel, or create a hazard to the safe passage, navigation or operation of another vessel.

Recreational fishers, sailors and other boaties are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the Darwin Port Notice identifying commercial shipping channels in the harbour.

For more information visit the Port of Darwin website, email RHM@nt.gov.au or visit the NT Fishing Mate app.



Recreational vessel safety equipment

Equipment	Inland waters	Intermediate waters	Open waters
One PFD per person	Yes	Yes	Yes
Anchor (fitted with minimum 3 metres of chain shackled between 50 metres of rope.)	Yes	Yes, two required if over 10 metres in length	Yes, two required if over 10 metres in length
Two paddles/oars	Yes, for all vessels under five metres in length unless fitted with an auxiliary means of propulsion	Yes, for all vessels under five metres in length unless fitted with an auxiliary means of propulsion	Yes, for all vessels under five metres in length unless fitted with an auxiliary means of propulsion
Bailer/Bilge pump	One bailer fitted with lanyard or bilge pump. Bilge pump is required for all vessels with covered bilges	One bailer fitted with lanyard or bilge pump. Bilge pump is required for all vessels with covered bilges	One bailer fitted with lanyard or bilge pump. Bilge pump is required for all vessels with covered bilges
Drinking water	Two litres for each person on board in a leak-proof container	Two litres for each person on board in a leak-proof container	Two litres for each person on board in a leak-proof container
One waterproof torch	Yes	Yes	Yes
Two red flares	No	Yes	Yes
Two orange smoke signals	No	Yes	Yes
One V sheet	No	Yes	Yes

Equipment	Inland waters	Intermediate waters	Open waters
EPIRB	No	No	Yes – one registered
Portable fire extinguisher	No	No, if vessel under five metres in length. One, if five metres to 10 metres in length. Two, if over 10 metres in length.	No, if vessel under 5 metres in length. One, if 5 metres to 10 metres in length. Two, if over 10 metres in length.
Fire bucket	No	Two 9-litre buckets with lanyards for vessels over 10 metres in length	Two 9-litre buckets with lanyards for vessels over 10 metres in length
Compass	No	No	One compass or operational GPS
Charts of the area of operation	No	No	Yes, paper or electronic
Lifebuoy	No	No	One for vessels over 10 metres in length

For more information visit www.marinesafety.nt.gov.au or call 08 8924 7100





Our Top End waters are home to crocodiles. How you behave around crocodile habitats is your responsibility.

- Crocodiles are common in the Top End, you must always assume that saltwater crocodiles are present in any waterway.
- Saltwater crocodiles will move from place to place and may pop up somewhere you may not have seen them before.
- Don't become complacent – saltwater crocodile and human interactions can be risky. BE CROCWISE.
- Crocodile danger is real and attacks can be fatal.
- Crocodiles are expert hunters and well camouflaged – they will see you before you see them.
- Saltwater crocodiles can attack people in boats – the smaller the boat, the greater the risk.
- Saltwater crocodile populations have returned to pre-hunting levels and there are more people living in the NT than ever before. This leads to more frequent interactions between people and saltwater crocodiles.
- Never swim in areas that are not designated swimming areas.

When to report a crocodile

While crocodiles are a natural part of the NT ecosystem, you should report crocodiles that are:

- close to or in a designated swimming area
- in a residential area, such as at Darwin Harbour, Katherine River, Nhulunbuy or Borroloola
- behaving aggressively towards people.

Report problem crocodiles

Phone Darwin 0419 822 859, Katherine 0407 958 405, Bowali Visitor Centre Kakadu 08 8938 1120 or use the reporting section in the NT Fishing Mate app.

www.becrocwise.nt.gov.au





Turtles, dugongs, dolphins and whales

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources manages the Marine WildWatch program that has been set up to report and respond to marine megafauna incidents including strandings, injuries, net entanglements and any sightings of our spectacular marine megafauna, that is, turtles, dolphins, dugongs and whales.

In the NT we are really lucky to have healthy coastal and marine environments where a range of dolphins, dugongs and marine turtle species live.

There are approximately 23 species of marine megafauna recorded in the NT, including 16 whales and dolphins, six marine turtles and the dugong. A major component to the conservation management of marine megafauna is reporting stranding events, net entanglements and observations.

As the NT has a sparsely inhabited coastline, we need everyone's help in reporting marine megafauna sightings, strandings and entanglements.

You can report strandings by calling the hotline (1800 453 941) or using the Marine WildWatch online reporting system where all marine megafauna observations and stranding information can be submitted online at www.wildwatch.nt.gov.au





DON'T DUMP YOUR FISH!

HELP PROTECT OUR WATERWAYS

Releasing ornamental fish and plants into local waterways can seriously damage our delicate aquatic environment. Keep an eye out for unusual fish and aquatic plants.

Report any sightings to the **Fishwatch Hotline 1800 891 136** or through the free **NT Fishing Mate app.**



Download on the
 **App Store**



GET IT ON
 **Google play**



Fishwatch Hotline

1800 891 136

(report suspicious fishing activity)

Customs Hotline

1800 061 800

(report suspicious border activity)

Fisheries Division

08 8999 2144

General fisheries enquiries

Marine Safety

08 8924 7100

**Amateur Fishermen's
Association of the
Northern Territory
(AFANT)**

08 8945 6455

Parks Australia

Kakadu Bowali Visitors Centre

08 8938 1120

www.nt.gov.au

The information in this booklet does not replace the controls in the NT fisheries legislation, but provides a summary of the general intent of the legislation. Fishing rules do change so for the most-up-to date information on recreational fishing, check the NT Fisheries website at www.nt.gov.au or contact NT Fisheries on 08 8999 2144. The complete NT Fisheries regulations can be accessed from the NT Fisheries home page.

Reprinted January 2020

Report a problem crocodile

Darwin 0419 822 859, Katherine 0407 958 405

BE CROCWISE



www.nt.gov.au/becrocwise