Tomorrow’s fishing starts TODAY

KNOW YOUR LIMITS

NORTHERN TERRITORY
RECREATIONAL FISHING CONTROLS

A handy reference to the regulations for recreational fishing in the Northern Territory
The **NT Fishing Mate** is an official NT Government app to make life simpler for anglers by offering a quick guide to the fishing rules and related information.
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Recreational fishing is an important part of the Northern Territory (NT) lifestyle. The ongoing enjoyment of the Territory’s first class fishing experience depends on the 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 Territory’s world class fishing lifestyle and ensuring current and future generations can enjoy the pleasures of recreational fishing and catching a fresh feed of 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 the 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 or stewardship of the resources that is 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 and
- who.
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*, 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; and
- the number of the licence or permit (if any) that authorises the taking of the fish or aquatic life; and
- 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* and work closely with 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 Northern Territory Police.
Aboriginal land and waters

You do not require a recreational fishing licence in the NT, however a large portion of the Territory’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 the 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 (TLC) via their website at www.tiwilandcouncil.com. For updated information regarding fishing permits visit www.nt.gov.au
Possession Limits

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Personal possession limit</th>
<th>Special controls and key information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Golden snapper★</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Not suitable for catch and release in water 10 m+ in depth, susceptible to barotrauma. Vessel limit applies, see page 8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black jewfish★</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Not suitable for catch and release in water 10 m+ in depth, susceptible to barotrauma. Vessel limit applies, see page 8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barramundi</td>
<td>5/3*</td>
<td>55cm minimum overall length NT-wide, minimum fillet length 27 cm. * special controls apply in Kakadu National Park, Mary and Daly River Fish Management Zones. See page 16-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King threadfin</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kakadu National Park, Mary and Daly River Fish Management Zones: 90 cm maximum size (fork length). Vessel limit of 1 fish over 90 cm (fork length).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangrove Jack★</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>35 cm minimum length. Vessel limit applies, see page 8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish mackerel</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sensitive to handling. The use of barbless hooks for catch and release fishing is recommended.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish Species</td>
<td>Limit</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red snappers (saddletail, crimson, Indonesian)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Any combination to a limit of 10 total.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tricky snapper★ (Grass emperor)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Susceptible to barotrauma. Vessel limit applies, see page 8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stripey snapper★ (Spanish flag)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Susceptible to barotrauma. Vessel limit applies, see page 8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russell’s snapper★</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Susceptible to barotrauma. Vessel limit applies, see page 8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuskfish★</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Susceptible to barotrauma. Vessel limit applies, see page 8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coral trout★</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Susceptible to barotrauma. Vessel limit applies, see page 8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red emperor★</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Susceptible to barotrauma. Vessel limit applies, see page 8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cod and groper★</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Susceptible to barotrauma. 120 cm maximum length. Vessel limit applies, see page 8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharks (excluding protected species)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Any combination up to a limit of 3. Sawfish, northern river and speartooth sharks are protected and must not be taken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marlin and sailfish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bream (Acanthopagrus spp.)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other fish species not subject to specific individual limits</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

★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 31. 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 4 or less people on board - each person can take their personal possession limit.
- Vessels with 5 to 7 people on board can take a maximum of 4 times the personal possession limit of designated ‘at-risk’ species. The balance of the GPL can be made up of other fish.
- Vessels with 8 or more people on board can take a maximum of 8 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 1 fish.
- A piece of fish, other than a fillet, is to be counted as 1 fish, unless you can prove that 2 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 2 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.
In addition to the 15 fish GPL, a maximum personal limit also applies for the following species:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species exempt from the 15 fish GPL</th>
<th>Personal possession limit</th>
<th>Special controls and key information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mud crabs</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Vessel limit of 30 when 3 or more people are on board. Minimum size limit 13 cm for males and 14 cm for females. 5 marine pots / dillies per person. 10 marine pots / dillies per vessel when 2 or more people are on board. Females with eggs must be released unharmed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crabs (other than mud crab)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshwater crustaceans – cherabin and/or redclaw</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>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. 3 freshwater pots / dillies per person. 6 freshwater pots / dillies per vessel when 2 or more people are on board. Females with eggs must be released unharmed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tropical rock lobster</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Vessel limit of 15 when 3 or more people are on board. Tropical rock lobsters must not be taken using underwater breathing apparatus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiting and/or mullet and/or garfish (combined)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilchards and/or sardines and/or herring (combined)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molluscs</td>
<td>10 litres (in shell)</td>
<td>Giant clams are protected and must not be taken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saltwater prawns (all species combined)</td>
<td>10 litres (intact in shell)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Octopus, cuttlefish and squid (combined)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.
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 which include:
- all species of cod or groper longer than 1.2 m
- sawfish, northern river and speartooth sharks
- giant clams.

Protected species must be released unharmed.
Amateur fishing gear regulations

Marine pots

• Maximum of 5 pots or dillies (or combination of) per person with a maximum of 10 pots or dillies (or combination of) per vessel when two or more people are on board.

• All pots / dillies must have a specific marker buoy that is no less than 100 mm 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: 100 cm in length, width, height or diameter.

• Maximum volume: 0.5 m$^3$.

• Maximum number of entrances: 4

• Material placed in the pot which is likely to entangle fish or aquatic life is not permitted.

Complying dilly pot:

• Maximum size: 100 cm 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 5 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 / dilly must have a float attached that is no less than 80 mm 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 3 freshwater pots or dillies (or a combination of) per person with a maximum of 6 freshwater pots or dillies (or a combination of) per vessel when 2 or more people are on board.

Complying freshwater pots:

- Maximum size: 70 cm in length and 50 cm in width and height.

- Maximum number of entrances: 2, with rigid turtle excluder rings fitted with a maximum diameter of 90 mm.

- 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 which is likely to entangle fish or aquatic life is not permitted.

![Diagram of Freshwater Pot]
Amateur drag net

- Maximum length: 16 m excluding the length of any attached lines.
- Maximum drop: 2 m.
- 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: 28 mm 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 and any catch must be cleared in water to prevent the death of released or unwanted fish.

Cast net

- Maximum diameter: 6 m.
- Maximum drop: 3 m when suspended from the centre.
- Maximum mesh size: 25 mm.
- 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 spear-gun.

A person must not have possession of a loaded spear-gun:
(a) other than in the open sea;
(b) within 150 m of another person who is not part of his or her group.
Daly River Fish Management Zone

If you are in the Daly River Fish Management Zone as outlined on the map on page 17 the following specific rules apply.

- A maximum size limit of 90 cm for barramundi (overall length) and 90cm for king threadfin (fork length).
- A personal possession limit of 3 barramundi and a vessel limit of 1 barramundi over 90 cm (overall length).
- A personal possession limit of 3 king threadfin and a vessel limit of 1 king threadfin over 90 cm (fork length).
- A combined personal possession limit of 30 freshwater crustaceans which includes a maximum limit of 10 cherabin. Females with eggs must be released unharmed.
- A combined vessel limit of 90 freshwater crustaceans when 3 or more people are on board with a maximum limit of 30 cherabin. Females with eggs must be released unharmed.
- A maximum of 3 freshwater pots / dillies per person. A maximum of 6 freshwater pots / dillies per vessel when 2 or more people are on board.

Daly River seasonally closed area

Shown as the shaded area on the map opposite and described on the following page.

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.
GPS coordinates (GDA94) for seasonally closed area:
The area from the defined western bank of the old outlet channel of Moon Billabong at co-ordinates 130 26.323 E, 13 28.292 S due south to the opposite bank;

and to the west by a straight imaginary line drawn between the most northerly point of Cliff Head at co-ordinates 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 co-ordinates 130 13.509 E, 13 15.016 S;

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

- A maximum size limit of 90 cm for barramundi (overall length) and 90cm for king threadfin (fork length).
- A personal possession limit of 3 barramundi and a vessel limit of 1 barramundi over 90 cm (overall length).
- A personal possession limit of 3 king threadfin and a vessel limit of 1 king threadfin over 90 cm (fork length).
- The use or possession of a cast net or drag net is prohibited.

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.
Some of the key regulations are listed below.

**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 permitted only for landing fish.

**Other rules**
- Barramundi possession limit 3, maximum size 90 cm, vessel limit of 1 fish over 90 cm.
- No live baiting. A live animal (including fish) cannot be used as bait.
- Set lines are prohibited.
- Do not clean fish within 50 m 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 is 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 24 km upstream of the bridge on the Arnhem Highway) and 2 km 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 Northern Territory 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
Moyle/Port Keats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Latitude</th>
<th>Longitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>13° 44.000'S</td>
<td>129° 18.000'E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>13° 44.000'S</td>
<td>129° 30.000'E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>14° 00.000'S</td>
<td>129° 30.000'E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>14° 00.000'S</td>
<td>129° 18.000'E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A — B — C — D

Emu Reefs
Howland Shoals
Bank Shoal
Moyle River
Tree Point
REEF FISH PROTECTION AREA

Bathurst Island

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latitude</th>
<th>Longitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A 11° 21.935'S</td>
<td>130° 04.863'E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B 11° 21.935'S</td>
<td>130° 14.819'E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 11° 29.404'S</td>
<td>130° 09.135'E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 11° 38.623'S</td>
<td>130° 04.788'E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E 11° 38.623'S</td>
<td>129° 59.400'E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F 11° 31.854'S</td>
<td>129° 59.400'E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aquatic Life Reserves

**Doctor's Gully**
Fish gather in this area to be hand-fed in large aggregations in the shallows of the reserve during high tide and is a popular tourist destination. 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 popular spot 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 Territory 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.
Fish Kill can be caused by:

- Environmental factors (low dissolved oxygen, large algal blooms, salinity changes, increased temperature and acidity levels),
- Toxicants/pollutants, and
- 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 and 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% 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 which 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; you should 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 before they are cooked or processed should be dispatched humanely. 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

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.

Fisheries have previously conducted shark tagging programs and many tagged sharks still remain in NT waters. Captures of tagged sharks provide valuable information which 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 Fisheries by mail to GPO Box 3000 Darwin NT 0801 or by email fisheries@nt.gov.au or phone (08) 8999 2144.

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 30 and 31
• always carry adequate amounts of drinking water (2 litres per person), vinegar and a first aid kit
• familiarise yourself with the area you will be fishing i.e. 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 2 nautical miles from the coastline.
• Open Waters - means beyond intermediate waters.

Lifejackets and personal flotation devices (PFDs)

• Inland Waters - 1 level 50 PFD (Type 2) or higher per person.
• Intermediate Waters - 1 level 100 PFD (Type 1) or higher per person.
• Open Waters - 1 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 2 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 (e.g. a natural gas tanker) can be up to one kilometre, and half that distance behind it.

If you realise you are in the path of a large vessel, you need to make positive changes to your course so that 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:
- a. In a shipping channel except in an emergency; or
- b. 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipment</th>
<th>Inland Waters</th>
<th>Intermediate Waters</th>
<th>Open Waters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>One PFD per person</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anchor</strong> (fitted with minimum 3 meters of chain shackled between 50 meters of rope.)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes; two required if over 10 metres in length</td>
<td>Yes; two required if over 10 metres in length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Two paddles/oars</strong></td>
<td>Yes for all vessels under 5 metres in length unless fitted with an auxiliary means of propulsion</td>
<td>Yes for all vessels under 5 metres in length unless fitted with an auxiliary means of propulsion</td>
<td>Yes for all vessels under 5 metres in length unless fitted with an auxiliary means of propulsion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bailer/Bilge pump</strong></td>
<td>One bailer fitted with lanyard or bilge pump. Bilge pump is required for all vessels with covered bilges</td>
<td>One bailer fitted with lanyard or bilge pump. Bilge pump is required for all vessels with covered bilges</td>
<td>One bailer fitted with lanyard or bilge pump. Bilge pump is required for all vessels with covered bilges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drinking water</strong></td>
<td>2 litres for each person on board in a leak proof container</td>
<td>2 litres for each person on board in a leak proof container</td>
<td>2 litres for each person on board in a leak proof container</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>One waterproof torch</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>Inland Waters</td>
<td>Intermediate Waters</td>
<td>Open Waters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two red flares</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two orange smoke signals</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One V sheet</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPIRB</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes; one registered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portable fire extinguisher</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No if vessel under 5 metres in length. One if 5 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire bucket</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Two 9 litre buckets with lanyards for vessels over 10 metres in length</td>
<td>Two 9 litre buckets with lanyards for vessels over 10 metres in length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compass</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>One compass or operational GPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charts of the area of operation</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, paper or electronic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifebuoy</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>One for vessels over 10 metres in length</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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
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 (turtles, dolphins, dugongs and whales are what we mean by marine megafauna).

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.
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, for the most-up-to-date information on recreational fishing, check the Fisheries website at www.nt.gov.au or contact Fisheries on 08 8999 2144. The complete Fisheries regulations can be accessed from the Fisheries home page.

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Report a problem crocodile
Darwin  0419 822 859       Katherine  0407 958 405

www.nt.gov.au/becrocwise