

# Marine Aquarium Fish Fishery 2011

Progress against SEWPaC conditions and recommendations



Photograph courtesy of Helen Taylor



Queensland Government

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## Progress in implementing Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPaC) conditions and recommendations for the Queensland Marine Aquarium Fish Fishery.

SEWPaC made a range of conditions and recommendations to Fisheries Queensland, part of the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation during its second assessment of the Queensland Marine Aquarium Fish Fishery (MAFF) in 2008, in order to address perceived risks or uncertainties. The 2008 assessment report for the MAFF can be found at <http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/fisheries/qld/marine-aquarium-fish/pubs/assessment-report-2008.pdf>

The fishery is due to be reassessed in November 2011. Details of the progress Fisheries Queensland has made in relation to the current conditions and recommendations (as of August 2011) are outlined in this document.

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### Condition 1:

Operation of the fishery will be carried out in accordance with the MAFF management arrangements in force under the Queensland *Fisheries Act 1994* and the Queensland Fisheries Regulations 2008.

**Progress: Ongoing**

All operations in 2010 were carried out in accordance with the MAFF management arrangements in force under the Queensland *Fisheries Act 1994* and the Queensland Fisheries Regulations 2008.

### Condition 2:

Fisheries Queensland to inform SEWPaC of any intended amendments to the management arrangements that may affect the assessment of the MAFF against the criteria on which *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) decisions are based.

**Progress: Ongoing**

No changes to management arrangements in the MAFF were made in 2010.

### Condition 3:

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

**Progress: Completed and Ongoing**

Fisheries Queensland status reports on an annual basis. The latest Annual Status Report for the Queensland Marine Aquarium Fish Fishery can be found at [http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/28\\_10916.htm](http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/28_10916.htm)

**Condition 4:**

Fisheries Queensland to consult with SEWPaC prior to a change to the management arrangements for a species listed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora or EPBC Act listed species being implemented.

**Progress:** Ongoing

No changes to management arrangements in the MAFF were made in 2010.

**Recommendation 1:**

By 1 July 2009 Fisheries Queensland to finalise and implement the draft Performance Measurement System (PMS) for the MAFF. Fisheries Queensland to continually monitor and update the PMS annually to ensure it remains current and capable of monitoring the performance of the fishery.

**Progress:** Completed and ongoing

The PMS for the MAFF was finalised and implemented in April 2009. The set of operational objectives, performance indicators and measures, and management responses contained in the PMS were developed by Fisheries Queensland in consultation with stakeholders in May 2008. The PMS builds on the outputs of a MAFF Ecological Risk Assessment workshop conducted in August 2007. The PMS has been reviewed on an annual basis and Fisheries Queensland is of the view that it is sufficient to monitor performance in the fishery.

Performance measures developed for the MAFF are reported on in the Annual Status Report for the fishery. Fisheries Queensland have adopted a standard approach to harvest fisheries should an indicator be shown to have been triggered during the review. Within three months of becoming aware of an indicator being triggered, Fisheries Queensland will undertake a review of likely causes, and implications for sustainable management of the fishery. Pending the outcome of that review Fisheries Queensland will finalise a timetable for the implementation of appropriate management responses.

## Recommendation 2:

Fisheries Queensland to:

- (a) Ensure reporting in the logbook, including species and spatial reporting, is sufficient to monitor and update the PMS and inform the management of the fishery. Particular consideration should be given to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and species listed under Part 13 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).
- (b) continue to actively monitor catch and effort data and respond to new information to manage species and areas at risk from localised depletion.
- (c) ensure that management tools, including the Ecological Risk Assessment, are subject to periodic reviews and adapt to improved understanding of species harvested in the MAFF.

### Progress: Completed and ongoing

Species catch, effort and location information (at the latitude/longitude, reef and six nautical mile logbook site level) continues to be reported through the MAFF logbook and provides sufficient data to monitor, update and review the MAFF PMS. The current MAFF logbook was revised to include species specific columns for both anemone fish and syngnathids with a view to providing finer resolution in collected data. The new AQ05 Logbook was implemented on 1 July 2010. The PMS for the MAFF was finalised in April 2009. A review of the PMS is planned for 2012.

All management tools pertaining to the MAFF fishery are constantly considered in light of new information and changing management ideals; during the review, documents are improved and updated to ensure the fishery is managed using the most sustainable and effective techniques.

The Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA) for the MAFF was finalised in October 2008. Fisheries Queensland plans to review the ERA following the completion of the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment project that is expected to be completed in 2011. The key draft findings indicate that the MAFF does not focus collection on species likely to be vulnerable under climate change scenarios. It also found that the fishery is unlikely to significantly impact on species performing critical functional roles in the event of predicted negative changes to the coral reef habitat that supports much of the fishery (e.g., herbivorous fishes). This joint GBRMPA/industry/Fisheries Queensland project provides a basis for developing new climate change related criteria as part of the ERA review for the MAFF and the Coral collection fishery.

**Recommendation 3:**

Fisheries Queensland to finalise the research and development plan for hand harvest fisheries and support research as appropriate in the MAFF. Particular consideration should be given to CITES and species listed under Part 13 of the EPBC Act.

**Progress:** Completed

Fisheries Queensland developed the Harvest Fishery Research and Development Priorities (2008–2013) document in 2008 which aims to:

- Focus the development of research and development projects for the Queensland harvest fishery sectors.
- Provide a publicly available document to disseminate research priorities as identified by the Harvest Fisheries Scientific Advisory Group to research providers and funding organisations.
- Provide a register of past and ongoing relevant research.

Investigating the life history parameters of species of particular importance/demand in the MAFF and developing methods for monitoring the fishery for signs of local population depletion were identified as the highest priorities for research in the MAFF.

**Recommendation 4:**

Fisheries Queensland to investigate and implement appropriately precautionary in-possession limits to manage recreational take in the MAFF.

**Progress:** In progress

Fisheries Queensland proposes to introduce restrictions on recreational take in accordance with the limits provided for under A2 endorsed commercial licences. The changes are planned for consideration in 2012.

