



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

**DECLARATION OF AN APPROVED WILDLIFE TRADE OPERATION –
QUEENSLAND SEA CUCUMBER FISHERY (EAST COAST), NOVEMBER 2024**

I, BELINDA JAGO, Branch Head, Ocean and Wildlife Branch, as Delegate of the Minister for the Environment and Water, have considered in accordance with section 303FN of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) the application from the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, public comments on the proposal as required under section 303FR and advice on the ecological sustainability of the operation. I am satisfied on those matters specified in section 303FN of the EPBC Act. I hereby declare the operations for the harvesting of specimens that are or are derived from fish or invertebrates, taken in the Queensland Sea Cucumber Fishery (East Coast) as defined in the management regime in force under the:

- *Fisheries Act 1994* (Qld)
- *Marine Parks Act 2004* (Qld)
- *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* (Cth)
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth)
- Fisheries (General) Regulation 2019 (Qld)
- Fisheries (Commercial Fisheries) Regulation 2019 (Qld)
- Fisheries Declaration 2019 (Qld)
- Fisheries Quota Declaration 2019 (Qld)
- Marine Parks Regulations 2019 (Qld)
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 2019 (Cth).

but not including:

- (a) specimens that belong to taxa listed under section 209 of the EPBC Act (Australia's List of Migratory Species), or
- (b) specimens that belong to taxa listed under section 248 of the EPBC Act (Australia's List of Marine Species), or
- (c) specimens that belong to eligible listed threatened species, as defined under section 303BC of the EPBC Act, or
- (d) specimens that belong to taxa listed under section 303CA of the EPBC Act (Australia's CITES List), except for white teatfish (*Holothuria fuscogilva*), black teatish (*Holothuria whitmaei*), prickly redfish (*Thelenota ananas*) and amberfish (*Thelenota anax*),

to be an approved wildlife trade operation, in accordance with subsection 303FN(2) and paragraph 303FN(10)(d), for the purposes of the EPBC Act.

Unless amended or revoked, this declaration:

- a) is valid until 30 November 2027, and
- b) is subject to the conditions applied under section 303FT specified in Schedule 1.

Dated this 27th day of November 2024

BELINDA JAGO

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Delegate of the Minister for the Environment and Water

Notes:

1. Under the *Administrative Review Tribunal Act 2024*, a person whose interests are affected by this decision may apply for a statement of reasons and for independent review of the decision. An application for a statement of reasons may be made in writing to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water within 28 days of the date of the declaration. An application for independent review may be made to the Administrative Review Tribunal on payment of the relevant fee within 28 days of the date of the declaration, or if reasons are sought, within 28 days of receipt of reasons. Further information may be obtained from the Director, Sustainable Fisheries Section, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, Email: sustainablefisheries@dcceew.gov.au.
2. Australia's obligations under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) are met through Part 13A of the EPBC Act. Specimens of species listed in Appendix II of Australia's CITES list under section 303CA of the EPBC Act may only be exported, under a CITES export permit issued under the EPBC Act, if Australia's CITES Scientific Authority has issued a non-detriment finding for that species. Further information is available from <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/wildlife-trade/cites>.

Declaration of the harvest operations of the Queensland Sea Cucumber Fishery (East Coast) as an approved wildlife trade operation, November 2024

Condition 1:

The Queensland Department of Primary Industries must ensure that operation of the Queensland Sea Cucumber Fishery (East Coast) is carried out in accordance with management regime specified in Queensland Department of Primary Industries, and Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority issued permits, as well as in the following:

- *Fisheries Act 1994* (Qld),
- Fisheries (General) Regulation 2019 (Qld),
- Fisheries (Commercial Fisheries) Regulation 2019 (Qld),
- Fisheries Declaration 2019 (Qld),
- Fisheries Quota Declaration 2019 (Qld),
- *Marine Parks Act 2004* (Qld),
- Marine Parks Regulations 2019 (Qld),
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth),
- *The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975* (Cth), and
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 2019 (Cth).

Condition 2:

The Queensland Department of Primary Industries must inform the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water of any intended material changes to the Queensland Sea Cucumber (East Coast) management arrangements that may affect the assessment against which *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* decisions are made.

Condition 3:

The Queensland Department of Primary Industries must inform the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water of any intended changes to fisheries legislation that may affect the legislative instruments relevant to this approval.

Condition 4:

The Queensland Department of Primary Industries must produce and present reports on the Queensland Sea Cucumber Fishery to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water by 30 September annually, as per Appendix B of the Guidelines for the Ecologically Sustainable Management of Fisheries – 2nd Edition.

Species-specific harvest data for each species listed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora must be included in the annual reports, spanning the preceding 12 months.

Condition 5

The Queensland Department of Primary Industries must:

- a) by 1 July 2025, implement an annual 10-tonne total allowable commercial catch limit (TACC) for CITES-listed amberfish (*Thelenota anax*) in the Queensland Sea Cucumber Fishery (East Coast).

- b) By 1 July 2025, implement an annual 40-tonne total allowable commercial catch limit (TACC) for CITES-listed prickly redfish (*Thekenota ananas*) in the Queensland Sea Cucumber Fishery (East Coast).
- c) by 1 July 2026, implement an annual 40-tonne total allowable commercial catch limit (TACC) for CITES-listed white teatfish (*Holothuria fuscogilva*) in the Queensland Sea Cucumber Fishery (East Coast).
- d) maintain the existing annual 30-tonne total allowable commercial catch limit (TACC) for CITES-listed black teatfish (*Holothuria whitmaei*) in the Queensland Sea Cucumber Fishery (East Coast).

These TACCs must be maintained at these levels until scientific evidence can be provided to substantiate a deviation from these limits.

Condition 6

By 1 July 2026, the Queensland Department of Primary Industries must implement a precautionary 33cm minimum size limit for CITES-listed black teatfish (*Holothuria whitmaei*) in the Queensland Sea Cucumber Fishery (East Coast). This must be maintained until scientific evidence can be provided to substantiate a deviation from this limit.

Condition 7

By 1 July 2026, the Queensland Department of Primary Industries must:

- a) establish accurate ratios for converting between all processed and unprocessed forms of CITES-listed prickly redfish (*Thekenota ananas*), CITES-listed amberfish (*Thekenota anax*), CITES-listed black teatfish (*Holothuria whitmaei*) and CITES-listed white teatfish (*Holothuria fuscogilva*) used in the Queensland Sea Cucumber Fishery (East Coast). Conversion ratios should be consistent across Commonwealth and Queensland managed fisheries where appropriate. Precautionary proxy conversion ratios can be adopted from other fisheries or jurisdictions until more accurate conversion ratios can be established.
- b) publish information to clarify what specific product form and associated conversion ratios the catch limits and catch-based harvest strategy triggers are based on.

Condition 8

The Queensland Department of Primary Industries must ensure CITES-listed prickly redfish (*Thekenota ananas*) is managed as a 'Tier 1' species under the updated harvest strategy for the Queensland Sea Cucumber Fishery (East Coast). The updated harvest strategy is expected to be finalised in 2026.

Condition 9

The Queensland Department of Primary Industries must maintain the harvest restrictions applied to Ashmore and Boot Reefs, Marion Reef and Saumarez Reef for white teatfish (*Holothuria fuscogilva*) until an assessment demonstrates fishing for white teatfish on these reefs would be sustainable.

Condition 10

The Queensland Department of Primary Industries must:

- a) not permit fishing for burrowing blackfish in the Lizard Island Reef Burrowing Blackfish Zone until evidence is provided to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, that burrowing blackfish stocks have recovered to an extent that can support sustainable fishing.
- b) continue monitoring to detect any significant stock declines of burrowing blackfish in Bunker and Gould zones and respond to the outcomes of the monitoring as necessary.
- c) by 1 July 2026, implement a precautionary enforceable minimum size limit for burrowing blackfish, until scientific evidence can be provided to substantiate a deviation from this limit.

Condition 11

By 1 July 2026, the Queensland Department of Primary Industries must provide outcomes of a review of the multi-species basket total allowable commercial catch limit for all “other species” of sea cucumbers in the Queensland Sea Cucumber Fishery (East Coast) to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

Condition 12

By 1 July 2025, the Queensland Department of Primary Industries (QDPI) and the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) must continue efforts to support coordination of monitoring and management of straddling or otherwise linked sea cucumber stocks in the Commonwealth Coral Sea Fishery, Torres Strait Bêche-de-mer Fishery, and Queensland Sea Cucumber Fishery (East Coast). This may include review and further development of harvest strategy frameworks and fishery reference points; temporal and spatial closures; minimum size limits; rotational zone size, timing and move-on provisions; research into life history parameters; Management Strategy Evaluation; and conversion ratios across all three fisheries to reduce risk to species in the region.

Condition 13

By 1 July 2027, the Queensland Department of Primary Industries must review existing spatial management arrangements to evaluate whether these arrangements are sufficient to manage the risk of localised depletion of sea cucumbers in the Queensland Sea Cucumber Fishery (East Coast).