

*A sustainable future for*  
**FISHING**  
*on*  
**Christmas Island**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ POST CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate your response by  
marking one box with a tick (✓)

Any additional comments you may care to make  
can be made in the space provided.

Please feel free to add additional pages of comments  
if insufficient space is available.

**To be read in conjunction with  
Fisheries Management Paper No: 223**

*'A sustainable future for  
FISHING ON CHRISTMAS ISLAND'*



## HAVE YOUR SAY

This questionnaire provides an opportunity for you to express your opinion on how commercial and recreational fisheries should be managed around Christmas Island. This questionnaire must be read in conjunction with the discussion paper ‘*A sustainable future for Fishing on Christmas Island*’. You may use this proforma response or complete a written submission when considering the proposals contained in the discussion paper. It is equally important to respond whether you agree or disagree with the various management proposals. Within the proforma space is provided for written comments on the proposals.

### Proposal 1 – Fisheries management principles and objectives

The overall objective of the Christmas Island fisheries management strategy is to ensure the sustainable harvest of fish stocks by all sectors of the community while maximizing the environmental, economic and social benefits that can be derived from these resources. Within this overarching objective, a number of specific fisheries management principles and objectives have been proposed:

#### Proposal 1a – Fisheries management principles

|   | Strongly Agree | Agree | Don't Know | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|------------|----------|-------------------|
| Fish resources of Christmas Island should be managed primarily as a food source for the Christmas Island community.   |                |       |            |          |                   |
| The Island community should be engaged in any associated decision-making processes with respect to managing the fish resources around the island.                             |                |       |            |          |                   |
| Members of the community should have the opportunity to fish for a commercial purpose.  |                |       |            |          |                   |
| All fish sold for a commercial purpose on Christmas Island should meet minimum seafood quality requirements.  |                |       |            |          |                   |
| Clear guidelines for recreational fishers should be developed, taking into account the values and expectations of the Christmas Island community and ensuring sustainability. |                |       |            |          |                   |

|   |
|---|
| <p><b>Comments:</b></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |
|---|

*Comments on proposals*

**Proposal 1b – Fisheries management objectives**

|  | <b>Strongly Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Don't Know</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly Disagree</b> |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| To gain an understanding of the status of fish stocks around Christmas Island.   |                       |              |                   |                 |                          |
| To manage the total take of fish resources around Christmas Island at a sustainable level, and ensure adequate breeding stock levels of residential and semi-residential species are maintained. |                       |              |                   |                 |                          |

**Comments:**

---



---



---

**Proposal 2 – Review of existing literature**

|  | <b>Strongly Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Don't Know</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly Disagree</b> |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| A detailed desk study of existing fisheries literature on Christmas Island fish stocks to incorporate all available information into a single source including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of fish species present;</li> <li>• Levels of abundance; and</li> <li>• Identification of target species.</li> </ul> |                       |              |                   |                 |                          |

**Comments:**

---



---



---

**Proposal 3 – Recreational catch survey**

Periodic catch surveys provide detailed information about the spatial and temporal distribution of fishing activity and catch, on which to base management decisions.

Information should be collected on indicator species and habitat zones to monitor recreational fishing activity and catch. These indicators should cover at a minimum the number and length of fish taken. This information could be collected on a voluntary basis through a logbook program or could be run as part of a school-based project. The indicator species should encompass those targeted by both shore and boat fishing.

It is proposed that the following species be used as key indicator species:

|                          |   |                                  |
|--------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| <b>Indicator species</b> | <b>Environment where species is most often found</b>                                      |                                  |
|                          | <b>Boat based</b>   | <b>Shore based</b>               |
|                          | Deep-sea demersal species<br>Wahoo<br>Dogtooth tuna<br>Yellowfin tuna<br>Coronation trout | Rainbow runner<br>Giant trevally |

|   | <b>Strongly Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Don't Know</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly Disagree</b> |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| A catch survey be undertaken to provide information about the level of catch.                                 |                       |              |                   |                 |                          |
| The species listed above be used as indicator species to monitor levels of abundance and size of key species. |                       |              |                   |                 |                          |

|                  |
|------------------|
| <b>Comments:</b> |
|                  |
|                  |
|                  |

**Proposal 4 – Priority species for research**

Research be undertaken on the following key species in the order of priority to provide information on species biology and the status of the stock.

**Species**

1. Deep-slope demersal species
2. Dogtooth tuna
3. Wahoo
4. Coronation trout
5. Yellowfin tuna
6. N/A – Not Available

|   | <b>Strongly Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Don't Know</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly Disagree</b> |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Research be undertaken on the listed key species. |                       |              |                   |                 |                          |

|                  |
|------------------|
| <b>Comments:</b> |
|                  |
|                  |
|                  |

*Comments on proposals*

**Proposal 5: Models for commercial fishing on Christmas Island**

Comment is being sought on the following three options for a commercial fishing model for Christmas Island (refer to Section 6.1 of Fisheries Management Paper No. 223 for details)

|  | <b>Strongly Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Don't Know</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly Disagree</b> |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| <p><b>5a - Continuation of existing commercial fishing licensing framework</b><br/>                     The existing commercial fishing licensing framework be continued with conditions on licences to ensure they remain operational (fish a certain number of days or catch minimum quantities of fish). Current inactive licences could be redistributed within the local community.</p> |                       |              |                   |                 |                          |
| <b>OR</b>  |                       |              |                   |                 |                          |
| <p><b>5b – Community based commercial fishing licence (restricted operators)</b><br/>                     A community based commercial fishing licence be created which would provide the opportunity for a limited number of individual people (selected via a community co-operative) to fish on any given day for a specified number of fish.</p>   |                       |              |                   |                 |                          |

**Comments:**

---



---



---



---



---



---



---

**Proposal 6 – Guidelines for recreational fishing**

|  | <b>Strongly Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Don't Know</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly Disagree</b> |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| <p>Recreational fishing guidelines be developed to outline sustainability principles and the benefits of only taking what you need or can consume within a reasonable time. In the first instance, compliance to the guidelines will be voluntary.</p> |                       |              |                   |                 |                          |

|                  |
|------------------|
| <b>Comments:</b> |
|                  |
|                  |
|                  |

**Proposal 7 – ‘Catch Guidelines’ for recreational fishing**

Fish stocks in Western Australia are managed on the basis of the level of risk of overexploitation. Many fish species do not breed at the same time each year. A successful breeding season which results in large numbers of small fish may be followed by several poor breeding years where very few small fish enter the fishery.

While being proposed as voluntary guidelines only at this stage, management tools such as bag and size limits can help ensure Christmas Islanders can continue to catch fish over a number of years until the next big recruitment occurs. In the absence of these guidelines, a large number of fish may be caught immediately following a good year of recruitment, but catches may be poor for the following few years.

**7(a) Category 1 Fish**

| <b>Category 1 Fish – combined species bag limits</b>  |                                      |                  |
|---|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Category 1 fish are generally long-lived, slow growing, mature at four-plus years, form semi-resident populations, are vulnerable to localised depletion due to their life history, or are of low abundance or highly targeted. |                                      |                  |
| <b>Species</b>  | <b>Scientific Name</b>               | <b>Bag Limit</b> |
| Billfish - sailfish, swordfish, marlins (combined)  | Families Istiophoridae and Xiphiidae | 1                |
| Cods – including coral trout, coronation trout and coral cod (combined)   | Family Serranidae                    | 4                |
| Snappers – including jobfish, ruby snapper and rosy snapper (combined)  | Family Lutjanidae                    | 4                |
| Trevally – Giant, bluefin (combined)  | Family Carangidae                    | 4                |
| Wahoo, Mackerel, Mahi mahi and Tuna (combined)  | Family Scombridae                    | 4                |

|   | <b>Strongly Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Don’t Know</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly Disagree</b> |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Do you agree with the list of species included in Category 1? |                       |              |                   |                 |                          |
| Do you agree with the daily bag limits for Category 1 Fish?   |                       |              |                   |                 |                          |

|                  |
|------------------|
| <b>Comments:</b> |
|                  |
|                  |
|                  |

**Comments on proposals**

**7(b) Category 2 Fish**

**Category 2 Fish – total mixed bag limit of 16**

Category 2 fish are primarily deepwater demersal ‘bottom dwelling’ species. These species form resident populations around Christmas Island and are likely to rely heavily on local breeding stock levels as a source of recruitment. Many fish in this category are highly valued for their eating qualities.

| Species                | Scientific Name                                | Mixed bag limit |
|------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Barracuda              | Family Sphyraenidae                            | 16              |
| Cave sweeper           | <i>Pempheris oualensis</i>                     |                 |
| Emperors and Sweetlips | Family Lethrinidae                             |                 |
| Bigeyes                | Family Priacanthidae                           |                 |
| Soldier fish           | <i>Myripristis</i> and <i>Plectrypops</i> spp. |                 |
| Squirrel fish          | <i>Sargocentron</i> spp                        |                 |
| Wrasses                | Family Labridae                                |                 |

|  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Don't Know | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|------------|----------|-------------------|
| Do you agree with a mixed daily bag limit of 16 for Category 2 Fish? |                |       |            |          |                   |
| Do you agree with the list of species included in Category 2?        |                |       |            |          |                   |

**Comments:**

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |

**7(c) Category 3 Fish**

**Category 3 Fish – no bag limit**

Category 3 fish are primarily common ‘baitfish’ species. These species generally in high abundance often forming large schooling aggregations.

| Species                    | Scientific Name              |              |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| Flying fish                | <i>Cypselurus</i> spp.       | No bag limit |
| Mackerel scad              | <i>Decapterus macarellus</i> |              |
| All other unlisted species |                              |              |
|                            |                              |              |

|   | Strongly Agree | Agree | Don't Know | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|------------|----------|-------------------|
| Do you agree with no bag limit for Category 3 Fish?           |                |       |            |          |                   |
| Do you agree with the list of species included in Category 3? |                |       |            |          |                   |

**Comments:**

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |

**(7d) Crustaceans and Shellfish**

**Crustaceans and Shellfish**

Species are often sedentary or resident in nature, but may have pelagic or migratory phases in their life cycle, with larvae or eggs widely distributed by ocean currents. Catch Guidelines apply to each species due to the high risk of localised depletion.

| Species                       | Scientific Name               | Bag limit |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|
| Rock Lobster                  | <i>Panulirus spp.</i>         | 2         |
| Bugs                          | <i>Parribacus antarcticus</i> | 2         |
| Squid, cuttlefish and octopus | Class Cephalopoda             | 15        |

|  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Don't Know | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|------------|----------|-------------------|
| Do you agree with the individual species bag limits for crustaceans and shellfish? |                |       |            |          |                   |
| Do you agree with the list of species included in crustaceans and shellfish?       |                |       |            |          |                   |

**Comments:**

---



---



---

**7e – Protected species**

**Protected species**

Consideration should be given to protecting species that are low in abundance or highly valued as iconic species for tourism.

| Species                 | Scientific Name            |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Humpheaded maori wrasse | <i>Cheilinus undulatus</i> |
| Whale Shark             | <i>Rhincodon typus</i>     |

Community comment sought on other species that may be appropriate: eg Sharks are abundant and currently not targeted, however, they could provide a major tourism drawcard for the diving industry.

|  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Don't Know | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|------------|----------|-------------------|
| Do you agree with the list of protected species? |                |       |            |          |                   |

**Comments:**

---



---



---

**Comments on proposals**

**Proposal 8 – Size limit guidelines**

Minimum size limits are usually based on the breeding biology of a species, and are set to protect fish until they reach maturity and have been able to spawn at least once. They can also be set to help increase the average size of fish available.

| <b>Size limit guidelines</b>  |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| Consideration should be given to adopting minimum size limit guidelines for Christmas Islands size limits based on those which have been developed for similar species at the Cocos (Keeling) Islands as follows; |                            |
| <b>Species</b>  | <b>Minimum size limits</b> |
| Rock Lobsters   | 76mm                       |
| Coral and Coronation trout  | 45cm                       |
| Wahoo   | 90cm                       |

|   | <b>Strongly Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Don't Know</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly Disagree</b> |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Do you agree with a minimum size limit of 76mm for rock lobsters?                     |                       |              |                   |                 |                          |
| Do you agree with a minimum size limit of 45cm for coral trout and coronation trout?? |                       |              |                   |                 |                          |
| Do you agree with a minimum size limit of 90cm for wahoo?                             |                       |              |                   |                 |                          |

**Comments:**

---



---



---

**Proposal 9 – Fishing gear controls**

In Western Australia restrictions apply to the gear that can be used by recreational fishers. Restrictions, which could have some application in the context of Christmas Island, include:

- No more than three hooks or gangs of hooks per line.
- No unattended set lines.
- No spearing rock lobster or other crustaceans.
- No spearfishing on compressed air.

Do you believe there is a need to consider any fish gear restrictions for Christmas Island?

**Comments:**

---



---



---

**Proposal 10 – Fish observation areas**

Comment is being sought from the local community on areas they believe should be managed primarily for the purpose of snorkelling and diving. Suggested locations include Flying Fish Cove.

|                  |
|------------------|
| <b>Comments:</b> |
|                  |
|                  |
|                  |

**Proposal 11: Education and voluntary compliance**

A fisheries community education and compliance plan should be developed for Christmas Island which focuses on the issues and species most important to the region. Such a plan should seek to help to keep the community informed of management decisions, give a clear lead on the values and attitudes which will assist in sustaining fish stocks, and identify strategies for voluntary compliance of the fishing guidelines.

The plan should, at a minimum, contain the following elements;

|   | <b>Strongly Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Don't Know</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly Disagree</b> |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| <p><b>11a: Fishing Guide</b><br/>                     A brochure on Recreational Fishing Guidelines on Christmas Island to inform and educate local and visiting fishers about recreational fishing management, and to promote stewardship for fish stocks and the environment. All guides and educational material could be available in Chinese, Malay and English.</p> |                       |              |                   |                 |                          |
| <p><b>11b: Educational resource materials</b><br/>                     Practical educational tools such as fish measuring rulers, measuring gauges for rock lobster and crabs, adhesive bag limit guides should be produced to support the Christmas Island fishing guidelines.</p>   |                       |              |                   |                 |                          |
| <p><b>11c: Schools program</b><br/>                     A school education program to promote awareness of fishing guidelines, the need to protect breeding stocks, and the best methods for handling fish.</p>   |                       |              |                   |                 |                          |

|                  |
|------------------|
| <b>Comments:</b> |
|                  |
|                  |
|                  |

***Comments on proposals***

**Proposal 12 - Fishing Competitions**

A code of conduct be established for fishing competitions which includes the following elements:

|  | <b>Strongly Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Don't Know</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly Disagree</b> |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| The competition should be limited to edible species only.                                      |                       |              |                   |                 |                          |
| Promote species based competitions rather than heaviest bag.                                   |                       |              |                   |                 |                          |
| Dumping of any fish should not be condoned.  |                       |              |                   |                 |                          |
| Fish should be stored in a way to ensure they are kept in the best possible quality for eating |                       |              |                   |                 |                          |

|                  |
|------------------|
| <b>Comments:</b> |
|                  |
|                  |
|                  |