July – Sept 2026

NT FISHERIES Quarterly Report

Updates on our major projects:



ARTIFICIAL REEFS

A 1.5 million dollar artificial reef tender was assessed and awarded to HSC Constructions and In-Depth Innovations, which will see up to 55 reef modules built and deployed over the coming wet season. Underwater survey work commenced in September to inform a refined reef design and module placements.



GOLDEN SNAPPER RECOVERY PLAN

The Golden Snapper Recovery Plan is progressing to Cabinet for decision. A Research and Monitoring Plan has commenced to improve confidence in future management decisions. In partnership with the NT Guided Fishing Industry Association, Fisheries is collecting biological samples and trialling a mobile electronic logbook to improve catch reporting and data accuracy and reliability.



BARRAMUNDI FISHERY REFORM – PHASING OUT OF GILLNETS

The Structural Adjustment Committee met 4 times during the July-September quarter, developing a draft buy-back formula and implementation process. The committee sought feedback from barramundi licence holders on the proposed formula and process, prior to providing it to the NT Government for consideration.

Updates from the Senior Executive Director of Fisheries

This quarter Fisheries focused on strengthening regulatory capability and progressing key reforms.

HIGHLIGHTS THIS QUARTER (JULY–SEPTEMBER 2026) INCLUDED:

- Welcoming Phillipa Hunter as the Acting Senior Executive Director, bringing extensive experience in aquatic resource management, policy development and stakeholder engagement. Under Phillipa's leadership, the division will continue to focus on sustainable fisheries management to deliver positive outcomes for Territorians, industry and the community.
- The release of the NT Fisheries Compliance Principles and Priorities *https://nt.gov.au/marine/fisheries-compliance*, reinforcing our commitment to transparent, consistent and risk-based regulation.
- The launch of the Sea Country Partnerships Program, aimed at strengthening partnerships between NT Fisheries and Aboriginal organisations to support the sustainable management of Sea Country and aquatic resources. The inaugural funding round attracted a diverse range of project proposals focused around three priority themes: fisheries science, compliance and engagement/education.
- The Trepang Fishery became the first fishery in the Northern Territory to achieve Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification. This milestone highlights the strong partnership between Fisheries and industry in supporting the Territory's reputation for high-quality, sustainably harvested seafood.
- Continuing to work with Department of Logistics and Infrastructure to progress recreational fishing infrastructure projects across the Greater Darwin region, improving accessibility for recreational fishers. Key projects currently underway include:
  - Dinah Beach and Shady Camp all-abilities access platforms.
  - A new floating pontoon for Corroboree Billabong is under construction, with civil works to support installation commencing in early October.
  - The tender for the Point Stuart boat ramp toilet block project opened in late September, with the project anticipated to be awarded and completed within the 2026 calendar year.

Latest science:

Monitoring Reef Fish Protection Areas (RFPAs):

NT Fisheries continued monitoring Reef Fish Protection Areas (RFPAs) using baited underwater video systems to compare fish populations inside and outside protected areas. Surveys were completed at Lorna Shoals and Charles Point during the quarter:

- Lorna Shoals: 9 deployments inside the RFPA and 9 deployments outside the RFPA.
- Charles Point: 6 deployments inside the RFPA and 6 deployments outside the RFPA.

The 2025 Reef Fish Protection Area monitoring report was finalised in September 2026 and is available here, *Baited remote underwater video stations*, with analysis of 2026 survey data now underway.

Black jewfish genome project:

NT Fisheries received funding from the Australian Fish Genomics Initiative to map the genome of the Black jewfish. This work will improve understanding of the species and support future genetic research. During July-September biological samples were collected and submitted for genomic sequencing and analysis.

Recreational fishing surveys:

Fisheries completed recreational fishing surveys at primary and secondary boat ramps during the run-off and dry seasons. Build-up season surveys are now underway and expected to conclude in November.

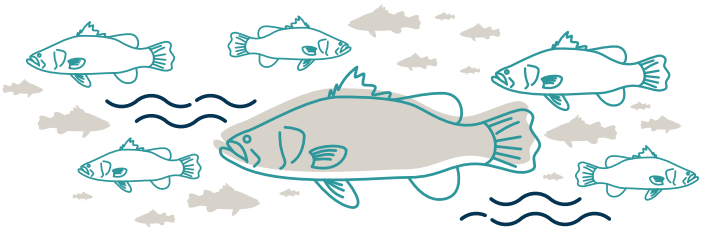
Analysis of the 2025 survey results has been completed and is being prepared for publication later this year. The surveys provide important information on recreational fishing activity, helping to support sustainable fisheries management across the Northern Territory.

Publications released this quarter:

- *Stock assessment of northwest grey mackerel in the Northern Territory*
- *Baited remote underwater video stations*
- *Hatchery Manual for Black Jewfish (Protonibea diacanthus)*
- *Trepang MSC certification*
- *Stock assessment of Sandfish (Holothuria scabra) in the Northern Territory 2024/2025*

For access to departmental publications see: *https://daf.nt.gov.au/publications/publications-search*

Number of Barramundi stocked



THIS QUARTER (JULY – SEPT)

5,212

LOCATIONS: RUM JUNGLE LAKE, MANTON DAM, MCMINNS LAGOON AND PALMERSTON LAKES

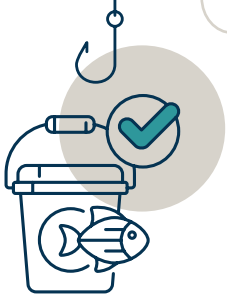
ANNUAL TARGET: **100,000**

Aquatic Biosecurity

Black Scar Oyster Inspection (Cullen Bay Marina) occurred on 10 July; 21 August and 17 September 2026. Marine Pest Monitoring (Marinas and Harbour) completed 13 and 14 July and 28 & 29 September 2026.

Vessel Inspection Program: Total number of marine pest vessel risk assessments for July-September

JULY 2026	47
AUGUST 2026	62
SEPTEMBER 2026	34



Fisheries Compliance Unit

39 fisheries patrols were conducted, of which:



3 WERE CONDUCTED JOINTLY WITH ABORIGINAL MARINE RANGERS ON-COUNTRY

OFFICERS INTERACTED WITH

300+

INDIVIDUALS ENGAGED IN COMMERCIAL OR RECREATIONAL FISHING ACTIVITIES

120+ VESSELS & VEHICLES INSPECTED/SEARCHED

WITH **20+** ITEMS SEIZED

over 15

OFFENCES DETECTED

A SEPTEMBER FISH KILL INVESTIGATION AT BUFFALO CREEK IDENTIFIED DEOXYGENATION AS THE LIKELY CAUSE, CONSISTENT WITH SEASONAL TIDAL AND WEATHER CONDITIONS.

Commercial fisheries:

The table below summarises the current commercial fisheries in the NT including number of licences, the latest activities, their sustainability and their Gross Value Productivity (GVP) for 2025–26.

Fishery	No. of licences	Activities within the fishery (July – September 2026)	Sustainability performance	GVP (million)
Aboriginal Coastal	17	An internal review of the Aboriginal Coastal Licence policy and application process has commenced.		0.02
Aquarium	11	The 2025-26 Harvest Strategy assessment is underway and will evaluate fishery performance to support the sustainable management of aquarium species harvested in the NT. The previous assessment is available here: *2024/25 Harvest Strategy assessment for the NT Aquarium Fishery*.		0.38
Barramundi	14	Electronic Monitoring installed on 5 of the 6 active vessels fishing during the 2026 season.		3.34
Coastal Line	49	The quarterly CPUE assessment for the period 1 April to 30 June 2026 was completed, with all results remaining above the trigger limit. As a result, no management action was required. Updated licence conditions were issued to all licence holders to improve clarity and support more effective compliance and enforcement outcomes.		1.76
Demersal	19	The Offshore Snapper Strategic Advisory Group met in August to consider the proposed merging of the Demersal and Timor Reef fisheries. A Saddeltail Snapper stock assessment was completed and provided to industry for comment.		16.96
FTO	179	Fisheries provided its draft licence renewal process to the NT Guided Fishing Industry Association for comment. Two late licence renewal applications were processed under the new licensing process.		NA
Mud Crab	49	The fishery received 10-year Commonwealth export accreditation, until August 2036. The 2026 Harvest Strategy assessment was completed. No management action was required for the 2026 season. A stakeholder workshop was held on 24 September 2026 to discuss the assessment outcomes.		7.93
Offshore Net and Line	9	Fisheries met with industry to provided feedback on the Grey Mackerel Stock Assessment, prioritise next steps and develop a workplan for the next 6-12 months.		5.47
Spanish Mackerel	17	The fishery received Commonwealth export accreditation for a further ten years, until August 2036. Fisheries met with the NT Seafood Council Licensee Committee and the Chair of the Committee to receive feedback regarding the draft Spanish Mackerel Management Framework, aiming for implementation in early 2027.		4.12
Timor Reef	17	Refer to the activity under the Demersal Fishery.		4.27
Trepang	6	The fishery received 10-year Commonwealth export accreditation, until August 2036. Achieved MSC (Marine Stewardship Council) Certification.		0.83
Total	**385**			**172**

 Sustainable

 Some sustainability concerns

 Unsustainable

Out and about: July – Sept 2026

Image: Baited remote underwater video stations were deployed in Lorna Shoals and Charles Point



For suggestions or to provide feedback about this quarterly report please email fisheries@nt.gov.au

Find us on:

FisheriesNT DAF

nt.gov.au/marine