



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Cities and Regional Development

Christmas Island Fishing Rules

FACTSHEET



The approach

The Ordinance was drafted following more than 10 years of research and community consultation and seeks to balance the need to protect the fishery with community expectations.

Marine habitat and associated fish stocks at Christmas Island (CI) are limited, with relatively low species diversity and abundance. The isolated nature of the Island and limited opportunities for stock recruitment from neighbouring reef systems, means that the fish stocks in the IOT, particularly demersal reef fish, are highly vulnerable to over-exploitation.

Taking this into consideration, and that fish is a primary source of protein for the community, it is important that a conservative management approach is adopted to sustain the fish stocks that exist at present. If they are over-fished, there may not be sufficient residual stocks to reproduce and sustain a viable population.

Studies undertaken by WA Fisheries began in 2007 and have included underwater visual surveys, baited remote underwater video surveys, environmental surveys, biological sampling and catch composition, satellite receivers, and eDNA (environmental DNA obtained from samples). Studies have explored species composition, distribution and abundance and whether stocks rely on local recruitment or periodical recruitment from elsewhere. This information is used to make informed management decisions. As further information is collected, and if evidence demonstrates there is a change in fish stocks, the proposed new rules can be amended.

The supporting data

Further information including scientific data, and the Draft Ordinance and a Summary of Exemptions (which outline the proposed new rules) are available on the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development's website.

For further information, please contact WA Fisheries (part of the WA Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development) by emailing IndianOceanTerritories@dpiird.wa.gov.au or the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development by emailing IndianOceanTerritories@infrastructure.gov.au

