What does this mean for net fishermen?
Commercial net fishermen need to make sure they are familiar with the rules, and ensure they aren’t illegally fishing within Bowling Green Bay. It is important you know where you are, and what the rules are for that area, otherwise you could risk getting a fine for illegal fishing.

Netting rules for other areas within Bowling Green Bay remain unchanged. The rules for other activities, including recreational fishing and other forms of commercial fishing, also remain unchanged.

For more information

Details of the new netting arrangements

No Netting Area within Bowling Green Bay

The area bounded by a line commencing at 19° 23.282' S, 147° 15.684' E then running progressively:

1. east along the parallel to its intersection with longitude 147° 23.581' E
2. south along the meridian to its intersection with latitude 19° 25.673' S, 147° 23.581' E
3. along the mainland coastline at mean low water (at or about 19° 25.119' S, 147° 23.581' E)
4. north along the meridian to the point of commencement.

The following rules apply to net fishing (other than bait netting) in the No Netting Area.

(1) Commercial net fishing is prohibited in the No Netting Area within Bowling Green Bay.

Restricted Netting Area within Bowling Green Bay

The area bounded by a line commencing at 19° 23.985' S, 147° 15.684' E then running progressively:

1. east along the parallel to its intersection with longitude 147° 23.581' E
2. south along the meridian to its intersection with the mainland coastline at mean low water (at or about 19° 25.119' S, 147° 23.581' E)
3. along the mainland coastline at mean low water (at or about 19° 25.673' S, 147° 15.684' E)
4. north along the meridian to the point of commencement.

The following rules apply to commercial net fishing (other than bait netting) in the Restricted Netting Area:

(1) The only nets that may be used in the Restricted Netting Area are:

(a) up to three set mesh nets with each net:
   a. up to 120 metres long
   b. with mesh size of at least 100 mm but no more than 215 mm
   c. weighed down only with continuous lead core rope (6-8mm diameter) along the full length of the bottom of the mesh net, and
   d. for nets with mesh size of 150 mm to 215 mm, the drop must be no more than 16 meshes.

(b) a mesh net up to 120 metres long with:
   a. mesh size of at least 50mm but no more than 115 mm, and
   b. weighed down only with continuous lead core rope (6-8mm diameter) along the full length of the bottom of the mesh net.

(2) For a net used under (1)(i):

(a) the entire net must be in nearshore waters while it is being used

(b) the distance between the first and last net must be no more than 1km

(c) the nets must not be more than 800m apart, and

(d) any person using the nets must be between the first and the last net, and no more than 800m from any of the nets.

(3) For a net used under (1)(ii) a person using the net must remain on a boat floating on the water within 100m of the net unless the person is setting or retrieving the net.

(4) A net that is neither fixed nor hauled must not be used.

The information above is provided as a summary. It is not a precise statement of law and should not be relied on as a complete or accurate representation of the legislative requirements that apply to netting operations in the area. Users should refer to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 1983 for the precise boundary descriptions and provisions for netting in the area, and familiarise themselves with all legal requirements relevant to their particular activities before entering or using the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

Overview to Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 1983 were introduced in December 2011 to provide increased protection to dugong in a defined area of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. The amendments are one step to address concerns about the level of dugong mortalities in the Bowling Green Bay area.

The rule changes further restrict commercial net fishing within the existing Species Conservation (Dugong Protection) Special Management Area, known as a Dugong Protection Area.

The changes were largely developed through the initiative of local fishers as part of the Burdekin Regional Management Project, to reduce the risk of incidental catch of dugong in commercial mesh nets. The Burdekin Regional Management Project seeks outcomes that work for the local community and the marine resources they depend on. It is a strong stewardship initiative that is about local people being involved in and influencing important decisions that impact on a range of marine resource management concerns.

What are the new netting arrangements?

The amendments change the rules for net fishing within part of Bowling Green Bay to reduce the risk of dugong mortalities. The map shows the two defined areas where the rule changes apply. The restrictions on net fishing are:

- In the ‘No Netting Area’, no netting activities (other than bait netting) are allowed.
- In the ‘Restricted Netting Area’, larger dimension nets are prohibited, but limited lower-risk netting activities are allowed. A summary of the rules are outlined over the page.

Fishers need to be aware of the specific rules that apply to netting in the area.

The precise boundary descriptions and provisions for netting in the area are described in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Regulations 1983 and maps have been provided to all relevant licence holders. Existing Great Barrier Reef Marine Park zoning and other fishing rules still apply.

Why have there been changes?

These changes have been initiated and developed in consultation with local fishers who recognised the need to increase protection to dugong following recent unsustainable levels of dugong mortalities in the area:

- Since July 2010 at least seven dugong mortalities have been reported in Bowling Green Bay (three confirmed, four unconfirmed). These mortalities are understood to be associated with incidental capture in fishing nets.
- These incidents raise concerns as the mortality of dugong from all human-related causes for the whole urban coast of the Great Barrier Reef (from Cooktown south) should be reduced to as close to zero as possible. This is so dugong populations can recover and where possible allow for future sustainable traditional use.
- The Queensland dugong population is currently under additional pressures due to extreme weather impacts on their critical seagrass habitats and food resources.

The Queensland Seafood Industry Association and fishing representatives in the Burdekin region support these measures. They are designed to address the
AREAS WHERE RULE CHANGES APPLY WITHIN THE BOWLING GREEN BAY SPECIES CONSERVATION (Dugong Protection) SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA (providing various levels of protection)

Legend
- Restricted Area coordinate
- No netting (other than bait netting) area within Bowling Green Bay Species Conservation (Dugong Protection) SMA
- Restricted netting area within Bowling Green Bay Species Conservation (Dugong Protection) SMA
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park boundary
- Bommie / Rock
- Indicative Reef boundary
- Population centre (tuberculated)
- Population centre (to scale)
- Road
- Reef
- Mangrove
- Backshore
- National Park / Conservation Tenure
- Mainland and Islands

Special Management Areas
- Restricted Access Area boundary
- Species Conservation (Dugong Protection) boundary

Zoning
- General Use
- Habitat Protection
- Conservation Park
- Buffer
- Scientific Research
- Scientific Research (closed to public access)
- Marine National Park
- Preservation

Areas where new provisions apply: Species Conservation (Dugong Protection) Restricted Areas coincident with boundary of GBRMP HP-19-5171 zone

No netting (other than bait netting) area within Bowling Green Bay Species Conservation (Dugong Protection) SMA
The area bounded by a line commencing at 19° 23.282’ S, 147° 15.684’ E then running progressively:
1. east along the parallel to its intersection with longitude 147° 23.581’ E
2. south along the meridian to its intersection with latitude: 19° 23.985’ S
3. west along the parallel to its intersection with longitude: 147° 15.684’ E
4. north along the meridian to the point of commencement

Restricted netting area within Bowling Green Bay Species Conservation (Dugong Protection) SMA
The area bounded by a line commencing at 19° 23.985’ S, 147° 15.684’ E then running progressively:
1. east along the parallel to its intersection with longitude 147° 23.581’ E
2. south along the meridian to its intersection with the mainland coastline at mean low water (at or above 19° 25.519’ S, 147° 23.581’ E)
3. along the mainland coastline at mean low water to its intersection with the meridian 147° 15.684’ E (at or above 19° 25.679’ S, 147° 15.684’ E)
4. north along the meridian to the point of commencement