

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF RECREATIONAL FISHING

Recreational fishing in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is big business. While not directly comparable, the relative capital outlays indicate that the Great Barrier Reef Region recreational fishery (at least in 1979-80) had significant investment dimensions compared with the non-otter trawl commercial fishery:

	\$1979-80
Speedboat fleet (purchase price)	85 million
Charter boat fleet (market value)	33 million
Commercial fleet (market value) (non-otter trawl)	11 million

The recreational fishery is largely made up of line fishermen fishing for bottom and pelagic stocks. Other minor recreational fisheries include netting for bait and crabbing. The principal commercial fishery in the Great Barrier Reef is otter trawling for prawns and other crustaceans. The non-otter trawl commercial fisheries include line fishing for bottom and pelagic stocks, gill netting, crabbing, some netting and several more minor fisheries. Although there are management plans drawn up for the major commercial fisheries into which entry is limited and there is a limit on the number of Queensland commercial fishermen, all commercial fishermen can undertake line fishing.

Table 1: Great Barrier Reef Marine Park : Line Fishing

ZONE	HANDLINE FISHING	TROLLING
General Use A	/	/
General Use B	/	/
Marine National Park A	Gear Limitations	/
Marine National Park Buffer	X	For Pelagics
Marine National Park B	X	X
Scientific Research	X	X
Preservation	X	X
/ Permitted;	X	Not Permitted under Zoning Plans

Annual expenditure by recreational fishermen is also not insignificant (speedboats - \$19 million, charter boats \$10 million, non-otter trawl commercial vessels - \$5 million in 1979). For speedboats, this averaged out to about \$96 per trip: this is, of course discretionary expenditure.

The recreational reef fishery is growing significantly for both demersal fish and pelagic fish. New locations for small game fishing are being found on the Great Barrier Reef and this appears to offer considerable potential for expansion.