



Australian Government

Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority

Recreational fishing

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The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is a beautiful and special environment enjoyed by many people. Fishing is one of the most popular recreational activities in Queensland, with about 800,000 Queenslanders going fishing every year. They go fishing for all sorts of reasons—relaxation, fun or to spend time with friends or family. Catching a fish is sometimes not even important!

People fish in different ways to catch different kinds of fish. Line fishing accounts for most of the fish caught in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Fish such as coral trout, emperors, snappers and mackerels are taken by hook and line. People who spearfish also prize these

fish, using snorkel gear (using SCUBA is prohibited when spear fishing). People who fish for recreation in bays and inshore waters target species like barramundi, mangrove jack, bream and flathead. Game fishing is an exciting challenge for some people, targeting fish such as marlin, sailfish and tuna. Crabbing, using traps including pots and dillies, is popular in coastal waters.

Fishing for the future

We all need to be aware that how we fish today affects the future of fishing and the Marine Park. As people who enjoy fishing, it is important that we take only what we need. We need to comply with the

Queensland possession and size limits. We need to quickly and carefully return to the water unwanted or undersized fish to give them a good chance of survival.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) is the Australian Government authority that cares for and protects the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. The GBRMPA considers recreational fishing to be an important and reasonable use of the Marine Park. However, fishing must be properly managed to maintain healthy fish populations and the environment they depend upon.

The Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (QDPI&F) manages recreational fishing in the Marine Park. Management arrangements for recreational fishing include:

- Seasonal closures
- Restrictions on the minimum and maximum size of fish retained



our great barrier reef
let's keep it great





- Possession limits
- Restrictions on the take of some species
- Restrictions on netting
- Restrictions on the number of traps
- Limits on the number of hooks.

The GBRMPA works closely with the QDPI&F fisheries managers to reduce recreational fishing impacts. The GBRMPA uses a Zoning Plan to determine what fishing activities may occur in specific areas. Some areas are closed to **particular fishing methods**, some are closed to **all fishing** (called Marine National Park Zones or 'Green Zones') and some areas are closed to **all uses** (Preservation Zones or 'Pink zones'). Zones also separate activities that could conflict with each other.

Both recreational and commercial fishing affects target species (the fish you want to catch), bycatch (non-target species) and their habitats. To reduce the negative impacts, the GBRMPA works to ensure that all fishing activities in the Marine Park are ecologically sustainable, through:

- Working cooperatively with Queensland and Australian government agencies
- The Zoning Plan, which determines what activities may be undertaken in certain parts of the Marine Park
- Monitoring and assessing (in conjunction with research agencies) the effects of fishing activities on fish stocks, non-target species (bycatch) and ecosystems
- Informing and educating the public about sustainable fishing and the Zoning Plans.

Rubbish and careless anchoring

All sorts of rubbish has been found on the seabed and washed up on the shore in the Marine Park. Volunteers have collected discarded fishing line, plastic bags, drink cans, bottles, towels and clothing. Sometimes, we find fishing line in areas of the Marine Park that are closed to fishing.

Rubbish does not just look bad; it is extremely harmful to marine animals. Plastic items can kill animals like turtles, which suffocate or starve after swallowing the plastic. Corals die from being smothered by clothing. Rubbish can also harm reef users. Items such as fishing line and plastic bags can

damage outboard motors by blocking water intakes. Broken glass can hurt swimmers and beach walkers.

Careless anchoring can damage the seabed. Chains and anchors dragged along the bottom can cause extensive damage to corals, which may take years to recover.

Next time you go fishing...

- Check the relevant Great Barrier Reef Marine Park zoning map for the area that you want to visit and make sure you take your map out onto the water with you. If you are unsure about anything, check with the GBRMPA or the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
- Check the fishing regulations outlined in the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries 'Guide to recreational boating and fishing in Queensland', or at www.dpi.qld.gov.au/fishweb or call 13 25 23 (within Queensland)
- Leave the reef the way you found it, or cleaner! Take rubbish back with you, carefully and quickly return to the water all undersized or unwanted fish, and anchor your boat with care.

For Further Information

Visit the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's website:
www.gbrmpa.gov.au

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