



Department of  
**Agriculture and Fisheries**

Our ref: CTS22240/21

24 November 2021

Dear Fishery Stakeholder

## **PROPOSED URGENT MANAGEMENT ACTION FOR THE SCALLOPED HAMMERHEAD SHARK IN THE GULF OF CARPENTARIA**

Fisheries Queensland is seeking your feedback on proposed urgent changes to the management of the scalloped hammerhead shark in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

The scalloped hammerhead shark is currently listed as 'Conservation Dependent' under the Federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999*. Scalloped hammerhead shark is also listed on Appendix II to the *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora* and is subject to a non-detriment finding limiting harvest to 200 tonnes across Australia.

The Federal Threatened Species Scientific Committee is currently reassessing scalloped hammerhead shark against the threatened species criteria under the Act, with a decision on listing by the Honourable Sussan Ley MP, Federal Minister for the Environment due on 30 April 2022. The draft conservation advice provided by the Committee is that the species is eligible for listing as endangered. This is due to an inferred population reduction of greater than 50 per cent over the last three generations (72 years). The Committee's Draft Conservation Advice is provided at Attachment 1.

If the Committee finds the species to be eligible for listing as endangered, the Committee may then consider whether a National Management Strategy may enable a recommendation for listing the species as Conservation Dependent. Initial advice provided by the Committee is that current jurisdictional management arrangements, particularly in Queensland, are considered insufficient to maintain a Conservation Dependent listing

Since the listing of scalloped hammerhead in 2017, Queensland has implemented the majority of requirements including catch limits consistent with the non-detriment finding, fins naturally attached for sharks landed on the East Coast and an East Coast Inshore Harvest

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Strategy that incorporates management of hammerheads on the east coast. The outstanding management changes for Queensland are:

- implementing a harvest strategy for the Gulf of Carpentaria Inshore Fin Fish Fishery
- requiring sharks to be landed with head and/or fins naturally attached to enable species-specific reporting in Gulf of Carpentaria waters
- implementing species-specific data validation in Queensland waters.

If the species is listed as endangered, fishers in all Australian jurisdictions would be required to take all reasonable steps to avoid interacting with scalloped hammerhead shark and would no longer be able to retain the species. This would have significant implications for the Gulf of Carpentaria and East Coast Inshore Fin Fish Fisheries, and for Northern Territory fisheries.

In order to attempt to maintain a Conservation Dependent listing, Fisheries Queensland is seeking your feedback on the proposed urgent management action options.

***Option 1 – Implement a Gulf of Carpentaria hammerhead harvest strategy and regulate fins to be naturally attached for all hammerhead shark only in the Gulf of Carpentaria***

This option requires the following management changes:

- **Management change number 1:** Fisheries Queensland is seeking feedback on the draft risk-based harvest strategy for scalloped hammerhead in the Gulf of Carpentaria, provided at Attachment 2. It aims to manage the take of all hammerhead shark species in the Gulf of Carpentaria to levels that will not be detrimental to the survival of the species in the wild. The harvest strategy would remain in place until a broader harvest strategy is developed for the Gulf of Carpentaria fisheries
- **Management change number 2:** Fisheries Queensland would progress legislative changes to require fins to be naturally attached for all hammerhead shark species in the Gulf of Carpentaria. Currently the legislation requiring fins to be naturally attached only applies once 75 per cent of the Gulf of Carpentaria Total Allowable Commercial Catch has been caught. The new arrangements would require all hammerhead shark to be kept whole with fins naturally attached, or trunked or gutted with fins naturally attached at all times to assist with species level identification.

Any other changes would be progressed through the Gulf of Carpentaria Inshore Working Group and consulted on more broadly as part of the reform process under the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017-2027.

***Option 2 – Regulate hammerhead shark as a no-take species in the Gulf of Carpentaria***

Alternatively, Fisheries Queensland is seeking feedback on hammerhead shark becoming a no-take species in the Gulf of Carpentaria, either as an interim measure until fisheries reforms for Gulf of Carpentaria fisheries are finalised or permanently. This aims to address some of the risks from fishing activities identified by the Committee.

Given all commercial fishing vessels are required to have vessel tracking that enables us to validate fishing effort, it is not proposed to expedite further implementation of data validation measure at this time. As you would be aware data validation of catch and protected species interactions is a key action under the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017-2027 and requirement under a number of fisheries Wildlife Trade Operation accreditation. The Queensland Government remains committed to delivering on these commitments, including improved data validation across all our fisheries.

As a responsible fisheries management agency, doing nothing is not an option particularly given the potential ramifications for other fisheries. Fisheries Queensland is seeking your feedback on the proposed management options to reduce the risk of this species being listed as Endangered. To have your say, please provide feedback **no later than 8 December 2021** by completing the survey available online at: <https://daf.engagementhub.com.au/goc-scalloped-hammerhead> or by emailing [fisheriesmanagers@daf.qld.gov.au](mailto:fisheriesmanagers@daf.qld.gov.au).

Additionally, the Federal Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment is currently publicly consulting on the draft Conservation Advice until 10 December 2021. Industry is encouraged to provide feedback directly and can be provided in writing either by email to [species.consultation@awe.gov.au](mailto:species.consultation@awe.gov.au) or by mail to:

The Director  
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Fisheries Queensland is available for small group online meetings to discuss the proposed management options with affect commercial fishers on request. Alternatively, for further information, email [fisheriesmanagers@daf.qld.gov.au](mailto:fisheriesmanagers@daf.qld.gov.au) or contact the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries' Call Centre on 13 25 23 and ask to talk to a fishery manager.

Yours sincerely



**Graeme Bolton**  
**Deputy Director-General**  
**Fisheries and Forestry**

Attachment 1 – Commonwealth Threatened Species Scientific Committee Conservation Advice

Attachment 2 – Draft Queensland Gulf of Carpentaria Hammerhead Harvest Strategy