



Department of
Primary Industries

Status of fisheries resources in NSW 2013–14

Summary



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Background

Scientists from DPI Fisheries assess the stock status of most exploited marine species annually. The Resource Assessment Workshop (RAW) for 2015 assessed the available data from 2013/14 for all 115 species that are currently listed in the Department's Resource Assessment System. The outcomes from the workshop included the formal assignment of an exploitation status for each species as well as a Resource Assessment Class (RAC) that indicates the level of assessment performed¹. Note that each species has a designated Target RAC that indicates the level of assessment ideally required based on that species relative importance to fisheries.

The Exploitation Status and RAC categories used by DPI Fisheries to assess exploited marine species are described below.

Stock exploitation categories

Category	Characteristic
Overfished	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment is being significantly suppressed as a result of a small spawning biomass (as determined by a population model or measured stock-recruitment relationship) Fishing mortality rates are significantly greater than natural mortality rates Estimates of spawning biomass are less than 20-30% of the estimated unfished spawning stock The 'Spawning Potential Ratio' is less than 20-40% (depending on life history characteristics) Catch rates are less than 30% of the initial catch rates Length and age distributions unstable (excessively affected by recruitment, too few age or size classes in the exploitable population given a species' life history) Trends in length/age compositions are evident which indicate increasing (and/or excessive) fishing mortality
Growth Overfished	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yield per recruit would increase if length at first capture was increased or fishing mortality decreased A population model has determined that sustainable yield would increase if fishing mortality was decreased or size at first capture were increased
Fully Fished	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fishing mortality is approximately the same as Natural mortality Estimates of the spawning biomass are greater than 30% of the estimated unfished spawning biomass Catch rates have been steady for 5-10 years and/or catch rates are greater than 30% of initial catch rates Length and age distributions are stable Species are fished throughout their entire geographic range
Moderately Fished	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fishing mortality is less than half of natural mortality Estimates of the biomass are greater than 70% of the estimated unfished biomass Catch rates are greater than 70% of initial catch rates Species are fished in most of their geographic range but non-fishing areas are known to exist Markets may limit catch and effort
Uncertain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A significant amount of evidence has been collected and considered, but there are inconsistent or contradictory signals in the data that preclude determination of exploitation status
Undefined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial catch data are available but no reasonable attempt has been made to determine exploitation status Recreational species - some data are available but no reasonable attempt has been made to determine exploitation status

¹ Further details on the NSW resource assessment framework can be found in [Scandol 2004](#)

Resource assessment class definitions

Attribute	Class of assessment				
	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Current population dynamic models producing estimates of relative biomass	yes				
Estimates of biological reference points (e.g. SPR, YPR, F0.1)		yes			
Current estimates of total, natural and fishing mortality		yes			
Time series of age composition data (finfish only)		yes			
Current local (NSW) information for growth, mortality, selectivity and maturity		yes			
Current qualitative risk analysis of future harvesting		yes			
Current indicator of abundance			yes		
Representative time-series of commercial catch			yes		
Current estimate of recreational catch			yes		
Time series of length-composition data			yes		
Current non-local (not NSW) information for growth, mortality, selectivity and maturity				yes	
Known biological stock structure				yes	
Complex of related species					yes

Key outputs from the 2015 workshop

Substantial advances were made during the 2015 RAW with 7 species transitioning to defined stock statuses from statuses of either Undefined or Uncertain. In addition, after 11 years of being assessed as Overfished, the stock of Eastern Sea Garfish was considered to have recovered to a Fully Fished state.

Species changes

The Broad squid were renamed Loligo squid to better reflect the species composition and align with the CAAB standard fish names. Ocean trawl squid were renamed Gould's squid as they are the majority of the catch. It was decided that the Cuttlefish species complex will be split into Giant Cuttlefish and Cuttlefish Other from next year. The Sea Urchin species complex was split into the three readily identifiable and reported species, being the green (*Heliocidaris erythrogramma*), red (*Heliocidaris tuberculata*) and purple (*Centrostephanus rodgersii*) sea Urchins. Splitting the Sea Urchin complex means there are now 117 species/species complexes assessed by DPI Fisheries.

Exploitation Status

Eleven species/species complexes had their exploitation status changed for the 2013/14 year (Table 1). In a positive step, seven of these 11 were promoted to have defined stock statuses rather than Undefined or Uncertain.

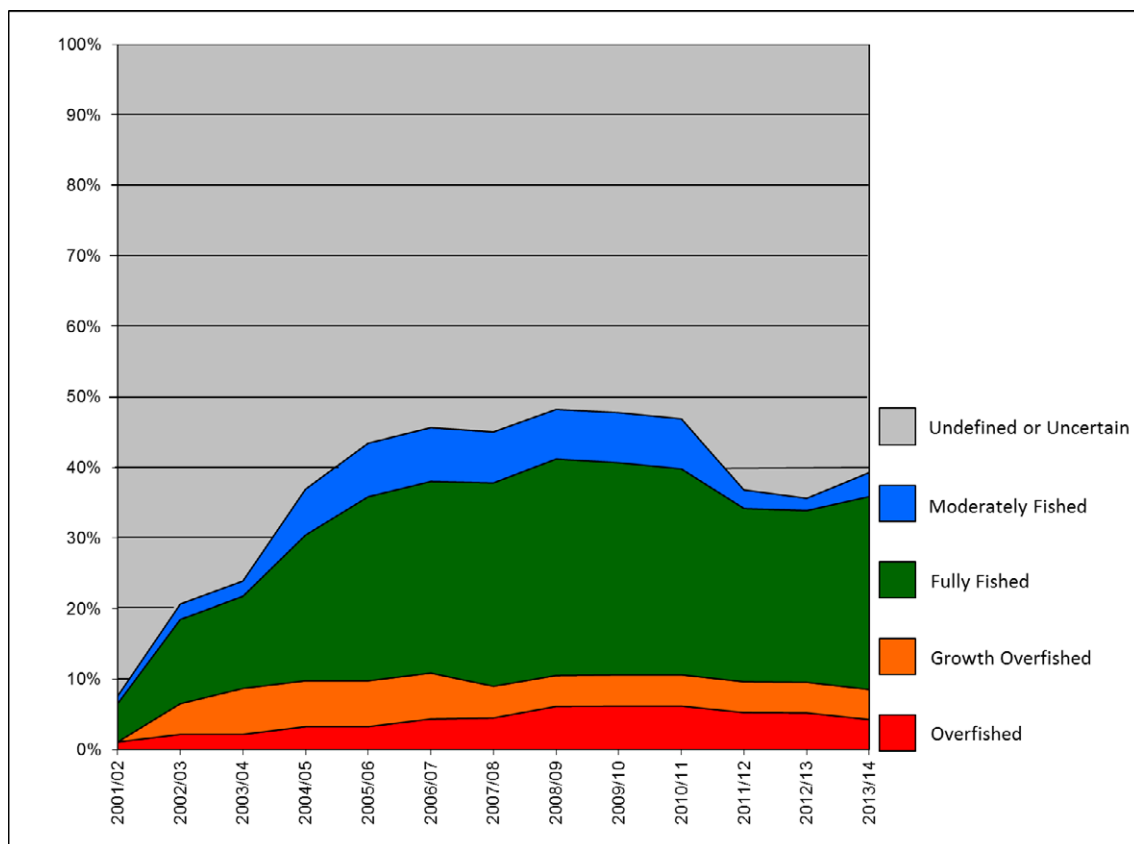
- Eastern Red Scorpionfish was moved from Fully Fished to Undefined because the biological data is now more than 10 years old and the commercial fishery too small to be an indicator of stock status.
- Blue shark was moved from an Uncertain to an Undefined status because there is insufficient data to assess.
- Trumpeter Whiting was moved from an Undefined to an Uncertain status because while some data exist they provide contrasting signals.
- Gould's Squid and Southern Calamari were both advanced from Undefined to Fully Fished statuses based on their short life-histories and additional biological information from other jurisdictions, relatively small commercial fisheries in NSW and stable catch rates.
- Common Jack Mackerel was advanced from Uncertain to Moderately Fished as a result of a 2014 biomass estimate of approximately 158,000 tonnes with landings currently less than 10 tonnes per year.
- Eastern Sea Garfish was moved from being Overfished to Fully Fished following five consecutive years of improved age compositions in landings and substantial increases in catch rates since the mid-2000s.
- Angel Sharks was progressed from being Undefined to Fully Fished as a result of findings from recent research which assessed biological characteristics and demonstrated long-term stability in catch rates and sizes landed.
- Rock Blackfish was progressed from Undefined to Fully Fished as a result of research which assessed biological characteristics and demonstrated that current levels of fishing mortality were likely equal or less than natural mortality.
- Striped Marlin was moved from Uncertain to Fully Fished based on an updated Commonwealth assessment that concluded the stock was not overfished and not subject to overfishing.
- Sea Urchins was changed from being Undefined as a species complex. The complex was split into three species. Purple Sea Urchin exploitation status was categorised as Moderately Fished, as a result of a low exploitation rate, whereas Green and Red Sea Urchins were moved to Uncertain statuses due to a lack of understanding of population sizes, general biology and, in the case of Red Sea Urchins, anecdotal evidence of serial depletion and no data to assess the likelihood of this.

There are currently five Overfished and five Growth Overfished species in NSW. Thirty two species are Fully Fished, four species are Moderately Fished and 71 species are either Undefined or Uncertain (Figure 1).

Table 1. Summary of changes to Exploitation Status for species assessed at the 2015 Resource Assessment Workshop.

Species	2012–13 Exploitation status	2013–14 Exploitation status
Eastern Red Scorpionfish	Fully Fished	Undefined
Blue Shark	Uncertain	Undefined
Trumpeter Whiting	Undefined	Uncertain
Gould’s squid	Undefined	Fully Fished
Southern Calamari	Undefined	Fully Fished
Common Jack Mackerel	Uncertain	Moderately Fished
Eastern Sea Garfish	Overfished	Fully Fished
Angel Sharks	Undefined	Fully Fished
Rock Blackfish	Undefined	Fully Fished
Striped Marlin	Uncertain	Fully Fished
Purple Sea Urchin	Undefined	Moderately Fished
Green Sea Urchin	Undefined	Uncertain
Red Sea Urchin	Undefined	Uncertain

Figure 1. Summary of Exploitation Status for species assessed by DPI Fisheries since 2001–02.



Resource Assessment Class

Nine species/species complexes had their Resource Assessment Classes (RACs) changed for the 2013/14 year (Table 2). In another positive step, 8 of these 9 species had their RAC increased.

- Eastern Red Scorpionfish was the only species to have its RAC downgraded this year from a 2 to a 3 reflecting the outdated age composition data and associated mortality estimates.
- Gould's squid, Southern Calamari, Common Jack Mackerel, Angel Sharks, Purple Sea Urchin, Green Sea Urchin and Red Sea Urchin all had their RACs increased to 3 reflecting increased understanding of species biology, compositions within complexes and/or time series of commercial catch and catch rates.
- Rock Blackfish had their RAC promoted from a 5 to a 2 in response to current estimates of mortality being derived.
- Striped Marlin had their RAC increased to a 1 as a result of an updated Commonwealth population model.
- Mulloway had their RAC increased from a 3 to a 2 because of updated mortality estimates and biological reference points.

Currently 48 species of the 117 assessed have RACs at their target levels or above.

Table 2. Summary of changes to Resource Assessment Class (RAC) for species assessed at the 2015 Resource Assessment Workshop.

Species	2012-13 RAC	2013-14 RAC
Eastern Red Scorpionfish	2	3
Gould's squid	5	3
Southern Calamari squid	4	3
Common Jack Mackerel	4	3
Angel Sharks	5	3
Rock Blackfish	5	2
Striped Marlin	2	1
Purple Sea Urchin	5	3
Green Sea Urchin	5	3
Red Sea Urchin	5	3
Mulloway	3	2

Table 3. Exploitation status and Resource Assessment Class (RAC) for all species listed in the DPI Fisheries Resource Assessment System since 2011/12. A RAC shaded green denotes that the level of understanding about this species is at or above the target level. Assessment Classes shaded red are below the target level. N/A denotes that the species was not assessed in that year.

Species	Stock Status					
	2011-12		2012-13		2013-14	
	RAC	Exploitation Status	RAC	Exploitation Status	RAC	Exploitation Status
Angel Sharks (<i>Squatina</i> spp.)	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined	Three	Fully Fished
Australian Anchovy (<i>Engraulis australis</i>)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Australian Bonito (<i>Sarda australis</i>)	Two	Fully Fished	Two	Fully Fished	Two	Fully Fished
Australian Sardine (<i>Sardinops sagax</i>)	Three	Uncertain	Three	Uncertain	Three	Uncertain
Banded Morwong (<i>Cheilodactylus spectabilis</i>)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Banded Rockcod (<i>Epinephelus ergastularius</i>)	Three	Undefined	Three	Undefined	Three	Undefined
Bass Groper (<i>Polyprion americanus</i>)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Beachworms (Onuphidae)	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined
Bigeyes (Priacanthidae)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Blacklip Abalone (<i>Haliotis rubra</i>)	Three	Uncertain	Three	Uncertain	Three	Uncertain
Blue Mackerel (<i>Scomber australasicus</i>)	Three	Moderately Fished	Three	Moderately Fished	Three	Moderately Fished
Blue Shark (<i>Prionace glauca</i>)	Four	Uncertain	Four	Uncertain	Four	Undefined
Blue Swimmer Crab (<i>Portunus armatus</i>)	Four	Uncertain	Four	Uncertain	Four	Uncertain
Blue-eye Trevalla (Centrolophidae)	Three	Fully Fished	Three	Fully Fished	Three	Fully Fished
Bluespotted Flathead (<i>Platycephalus caeruleopunctatus</i>)	Three	Fully Fished	Three	Fully Fished	Three	Fully Fished
Boarfish (Pentacerotidae)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Brown Tiger Prawn (<i>Penaeus esculentus</i>)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Bugs (<i>Ibacus</i> spp.)	Three	Fully Fished	Three	Fully Fished	Three	Fully Fished
Catfish (Siluriformes)	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined
Cobia (<i>Rachycentron canadum</i>)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Cockles (Arcoidea and Veneroidea)	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined
Common Jack Mackerel (<i>Trachurus declivis</i>)	Four	Uncertain	Four	Uncertain	Three	Moderately Fished
Common Silverbidddy (<i>Gerres subfasciatus</i>)	Four	Uncertain	Four	Uncertain	Four	Uncertain

Species	Stock Status					
	2011-12		2012-13		2013-14	
	RAC	Exploitation Status	RAC	Exploitation Status	RAC	Exploitation Status
Crimsonband Wrasse (<i>Notolabrus gymnogenis</i>)	Three	Uncertain	Three	Uncertain	Three	Uncertain
Cunjevoi (<i>Pyura stolonifera</i>)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Cuttlefish (<i>Sepia</i> spp.)	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined
Dart (<i>Trachinotus</i> spp.)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Diamondfish (<i>Monodactylus argenteus</i>)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Dogfish (Squaliformes)	Five	Overfished	Five	Overfished	Five	Overfished
Dusky Flathead (<i>Platycephalus fuscus</i>)	Three	Fully Fished	Three	Uncertain	Three	Uncertain
Eastern Australian Salmon (<i>Arripis trutta</i>)	Three	Fully Fished	Three	Fully Fished	Three	Fully Fished
Eastern Blue Groper (<i>Achoerodus viridis</i>)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Eastern King Prawn (<i>Melicertus plebejus</i>)	One	Growth Overfished	One	Growth Overfished	One	Growth Overfished
Eastern Pigfish (<i>Bodianus unimaculatus</i>)	Three	Fully Fished	Three	Fully Fished	Three	Fully Fished
Eastern Red Scorpionfish (<i>Scorpaena cardinalis</i>)	Two	Fully Fished	Two	Fully Fished	Three	Undefined
Eastern Rock Lobster (<i>Jasus verreauxi</i>)	One	Fully Fished	One	Fully Fished	One	Fully Fished
Eastern School Whiting (<i>Sillago flindersi</i>)	One	Fully Fished	One	Fully Fished	One	Fully Fished
Eastern Sea Garfish (<i>Hyporhamphus australis</i>)	Two	Overfished	Two	Overfished	Two	Fully Fished
Estuary Perch (<i>Macquaria colonorum</i>)	Three	Undefined	Three	Undefined	Three	Undefined
Flounders (Paralichthyidae and Pleuronectidae)	Four	Undefined	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined
Frigate Mackerel (<i>Auxis thazard</i>)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Gemfish (<i>Rexea solandri</i>)	One	Overfished	One	Overfished	One	Overfished
Ghost Nipper (<i>Trypaea australiensis</i>)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Ghostsharks (Chimaeriformes)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Giant Mud Crab (<i>Scylla serrata</i>)	Three	Uncertain	Three	Uncertain	Three	Uncertain
Goatfish (Mullidae)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Goldspot Mullet (<i>Liza argentea</i>)	Three	Uncertain	Three	Uncertain	Three	Uncertain

Species	Stock Status					
	2011-12		2012-13		2013-14	
	RAC	Exploitation Status	RAC	Exploitation Status	RAC	Exploitation Status
Gould's (Arrow) squid (<i>Nototodarus gouldi</i>)	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined	Three	Fully Fished
Greentail Prawn (<i>Metapenaeus bennettiae</i>)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Grey Morwong (<i>Nemadactylus douglasii</i>)	Two	Overfished	Two	Overfished	Two	Overfished
Gummy Shark (<i>Mustelus antarcticus</i>)	One	Fully Fished	One	Fully Fished	One	Fully Fished
Hairtail (<i>Trichiurus lepturus</i>)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Hammerhead Sharks (<i>Sphyrna</i> spp.)	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined
Hapuku (<i>Polyprion oxygeneios</i>)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Jackass Morwong (<i>Nemadactylus macropterus</i>)	One	Fully Fished	One	Fully Fished	One	Fully Fished
John Dory (<i>Zeus faber</i>)	Three	Fully Fished	Three	Fully Fished	Three	Fully Fished
Leatherjackets-other (Monacanthidae)	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined
Loligo Squid (<i>Uroteuthis</i> species)	Three	Undefined	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined
Longtail Tuna (<i>Thunnus tonggol</i>)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Luderick (<i>Girella tricuspidata</i>)	Three	Fully Fished	Three	Fully Fished	Three	Fully Fished
Mackerel Tuna (<i>Euthynnus affinis</i>)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Mahi Mahi (<i>Coryphaena hippurus</i>)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Mako Sharks (<i>Isurus</i> spp.)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Mangrove Jack (<i>Lutjanus argentimaculatus</i>)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Mantis Shrimps (Stomatopoda)	Four	Undefined	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined
Mirror Dory (<i>Zenopsis nebulosus</i>)	Three	Fully Fished	Three	Fully Fished	Three	Fully Fished
Mulloway (<i>Argyrosomus japonicus</i>)	Three	Overfished	Three	Overfished	Two	Overfished
Ocean Jackets (<i>Nelusetta ayraudi</i>)	Three	Fully Fished	Three	Fully Fished	Three	Fully Fished
Ocean Perch (Sebastidae)	Three	Uncertain	Three	Fully Fished	Three	Fully Fished
Octopus (<i>Octopus</i> spp.)	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined
Pearl Perch (<i>Glaucosoma scapulare</i>)	Two	Uncertain	Three	Uncertain	Three	Uncertain
Pink Ling (<i>Genypterus blacodes</i>)	N/A	N/A	One	Uncertain	One	Uncertain
Pipi (<i>Donax deltoides</i>)	Three	Uncertain	Three	Uncertain	Three	Uncertain

Species	Stock Status					
	2011-12		2012-13		2013-14	
	RAC	Exploitation Status	RAC	Exploitation Status	RAC	Exploitation Status
Red Gurnard and Latchets (<i>Triglidae</i>)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Red Morwong (<i>Cheilodactylus fuscus</i>)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Redfish (<i>Centroberyx affinis</i>)	Three	Growth Overfished	Three	Growth Overfished	Three	Growth Overfished
River Eels (<i>Anguilla</i> spp.)	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined
River Garfish (<i>Hyporhamphus regularis ardelio</i>)	Three	Uncertain	Three	Uncertain	Three	Uncertain
Rock Blackfish (<i>Girella elevata</i>)	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined
Royal Red Prawn (<i>Haliporoides sibogae</i>)	Three	Moderately Fished	Three	Moderately Fished	Three	Moderately Fished
Sand Mullet (<i>Myxus elongatus</i>)	Three	Undefined	Three	Undefined	Three	Undefined
Sand Whiting (<i>Sillago ciliata</i>)	Three	Fully Fished	Three	Fully Fished	Three	Fully Fished
Sawsharks (<i>Pristiophorus</i> spp.)	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined
School Prawn (<i>Metapenaeus macleayi</i>)	One	Fully Fished	Three	Fully Fished	Three	Fully Fished
School Shark (<i>Galeorhinus galeus</i>)	One	Overfished	One	Overfished	One	Overfished
Sea Mullet (<i>Mugil cephalus</i>)	Two	Fully Fished	Two	Fully Fished	Two	Fully Fished
Green Sea Urchin (<i>Heliocidaris erythrogramma</i>)	Five	Undefined	Three	Undefined	Three	Uncertain
Purple Sea Urchin (<i>Centrostephanus rogersii</i>)	Five	Undefined	Three	Undefined	Three	Moderately Fished
Red Sea Urchin (<i>Heliocidaris tuberculata</i>)	Five	Undefined	Three	Undefined	Three	Uncertain
Shovelnose Rays (Rajiformes)	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined
Silver Sweep (<i>Scorpius lineolatus</i>)	Three	Uncertain	Three	Uncertain	Three	Uncertain
Silver Trevally (<i>Pseudocaranx georgianus</i>)	Three	Growth Overfished	Three	Growth Overfished	Three	Growth Overfished
Snapper (<i>Pagrus auratus</i>)	Two	Growth Overfished	Two	Growth Overfished	Two	Growth Overfished
Soles (Soleidae and Cynoglossidae)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Southern Calamari (<i>Sepioteuthis australis</i>)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Three	Fully Fished
Southern Maori Wrasse (<i>Ophthalmodon lineolatus</i>)	Two	Moderately Fished	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Spanish Mackerel (<i>Scomberomorus commerson</i>)	One	Fully Fished	One	Fully Fished	One	Fully Fished

Species	Stock Status					
	2011-12		2012-13		2013-14	
	RAC	Exploitation Status	RAC	Exploitation Status	RAC	Exploitation Status
Spanner Crab (<i>Ranina ranina</i>)	Two	Fully Fished	Two	Fully Fished	Two	Fully Fished
Spotted Mackerel (<i>Scomberomorus munroi</i>)	One	Fully Fished	One	Fully Fished	One	Fully Fished
Stout Whiting (<i>Sillago robusta</i>)	Two	Fully Fished	Two	Fully Fished	Two	Fully Fished
Striped Grunters (Terapontidae)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Striped Marlin (<i>Tetrapturus audax</i>)	Two	Uncertain	Two	Uncertain	One	Fully Fished
Tailor (<i>Pomatomus saltatrix</i>)	Three	Fully Fished	Three	Fully Fished	Three	Fully Fished
Tarwhine (<i>Rhabdosargus sarba</i>)	Three	Uncertain	Three	Uncertain	Three	Uncertain
Teraglin (<i>Atractoscion aequidens</i>)	Three	Uncertain	Three	Uncertain	Three	Uncertain
Tiger Flathead (<i>Neoplatycephalus richardsoni</i>)	One	Fully Fished	One	Fully Fished	One	Fully Fished
Tiger Shark (<i>Galeocerdo cuvier</i>)	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined	Four	Undefined
Tilefish (<i>Branchiostegus</i> spp.)	Three	Undefined	Three	Undefined	Three	Undefined
Trumpeter Whiting (<i>Sillago maculata</i>)	Three	Undefined	Three	Undefined	Three	Uncertain
Turban Shells (<i>Turbo torquatus</i> , <i>Turbo imperialis</i> , <i>Turbo undulatus</i>)	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined
Whaler Sharks (<i>Carcharhinus</i> spp.)	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined	Five	Undefined
Whitebait - Sandy Sprat (<i>Hyperlophus vittatus</i>)	Three	Undefined	Three	Undefined	Three	Undefined
Wobbegong Sharks (<i>Orectolobus</i> spp.)	Three	Undefined	Three	Undefined	Three	Undefined
Yellowfin Bream (<i>Acanthopagrus australis</i>)	Three	Fully Fished	Three	Fully Fished	Three	Fully Fished
Yellowfin Tuna (<i>Thunnus albacares</i>)	One	Fully Fished	One	Fully Fished	One	Fully Fished
Yellowtail Kingfish (<i>Seriola lalandi</i>)	Two	Growth Overfished	Three	Growth Overfished	Three	Growth Overfished
Yellowtail Scad (<i>Trachurus novaezelandiae</i>)	Two	Fully Fished	Two	Fully Fished	Two	Fully Fished