



## Commonwealth Fisheries Association

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# MEDIA RELEASE

## Industry propose World's largest marine reserve coverage

The Commonwealth Fisheries Association, in partnership with Western Australia, Northern Territory and Queensland fishing industry peak bodies, today submitted to Government refined proposals for the North-west and North Marine Reserve Networks. The proposals, including those already submitted for the South-west region, combine to form the largest marine reserve coverage in the world, designed to achieve conservation and protection of Australia's marine environment, whilst minimising the impacts on industry.

"The fishing industry's proposed marine reserve network for these three bioregions alone cover more ocean (616,056 km<sup>2</sup> or 61.6 million hectares) than any other marine reserve system in the world." said Trixi Madon, CEO.

"Within the reserve network, industry has also proposed significant closures, with 190,000km<sup>2</sup> (19 million hectares) of Australia's oceans to exclude all commercial fishing. This is in addition to the 426,000 km<sup>2</sup> (4.26 million hectares) of marine protected areas which also restrict fishing, and is in addition to closed areas which are a normal part of Australian fisheries resources management."

"To put these plans for marine networks into perspective, our proposals would equate to an area nine times the size of Tasmania being set aside for marine biodiversity conservation." Ms Madon went on to say.

Demonstrating its commitment to the conservation of Australia's marine biodiversity, the fishing industry proposal addresses conservation matters highlighted in the Government's draft plans. Importantly, the proposal minimises the impact on regional communities, the fishing industry and Australians, while securing the supply of sustainable seafood and marine products that Australian consumers enjoy.

We encourage the public to read the fishing industry submissions ([www.comfish.com.au](http://www.comfish.com.au)) to find out more about our marine reserve network proposals.

Trixi Madon, Chief Executive Officer  
T: 0450 190066  
E: [ceo@comfish.com.au](mailto:ceo@comfish.com.au)  
W: [www.comfish.com.au](http://www.comfish.com.au)

### Background

### **About the CFA**

- The Commonwealth Fisheries Association (CFA) is the peak industry body representing the interests of fishers in Commonwealth managed fisheries; a significant part of Australia's \$2.2 billion seafood industry.
- Commonwealth fisheries are a recognized valuable natural asset for the Australian community and make an important contribution to both the national and local economies. The fishing industry supports valuable jobs and infrastructure, particularly in regional areas. The fishing industry supports good health in the community by supplying fresh healthy seafood to Australian and overseas consumers.
- Commonwealth wild harvest fisheries are among the best managed and most sustainable in the world. Commonwealth fishers are committed to managing for a sustainable environment. Commonwealth fisheries are regulated under two ecologically sustainable development (ESD) legislative frameworks as well as subject to the *Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy*.
- The CFA supports marine biodiversity conservation initiatives that recognise not only the need to meet biodiversity conservation objectives but also to ensure the sustainable future for the ecosystem services that the marine environment provides, including fisheries.
- The CFA is committed to promoting an informed awareness and greater understanding of the commercial fishing industry, its value and contribution to the Australian community.

### **About Marine Bioregional Planning**

- The seafood industry is Australia's sixth most valuable food based primary industry. Australia's seafood production is not sufficient to meet growing domestic consumer demand.
- Commonwealth fisheries are diverse and include numerous species of fin-fish, crustacean and molluscs. Species also range from largely sedentary to those that migrate over large distances.
- It is important that in developing a network of marine reserves industry and government find alternatives to closing access to areas which include important harvesting and migration areas.
- Fishing industry are currently developing reserve network proposals for the temperate East and Coral Sea – both draft plans have been released by Government for public consultation. This will further increase Australia's total areas included in marine protected areas.
- The seafood industry's submissions to the Government on the proposed marine reserve networks are available at [www.comfish.com.au](http://www.comfish.com.au)