GULF OF CARPENTARIA COMMERCIAL FISHERMAN INC.
MANAGING THE GULF FISHERY FOR THE FUTURE

Carpentaria Catch

Gulf of Carpentaria Commercial Fishers Association

Issue 1 | 2025 | Q3

President's Welcome Note

Dear Fishers, Welcome to the first edition of the Gulf of Carpentaria Commercial Fishers Association quarterly newsletter!

As we navigate another season in the Gulf, I'm encouraged that despite 2024 being a challenging year, we've started 2025 with positive messaging from the new Crisafulli government and strong engagement between Minister Perrett's office and our association.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work of the previous executive, led by David Wren. 2024 was a difficult period to advocate for the commercial fishing industry in the Gulf, and we recognize there's still much to do.

The net restructure has dominated fishery discussions, but we know that we represent four fisheries: N3, N12, GC1, and L4. For members in the GC1 and L4 fisheries, rest assured the association is committed to doing more to represent your interests.

Since the AGM in Karumba in late 2023, we've made significant progress. We've engaged a part-time bookkeeper to upgrade our systems, approved budget to build a new website, and created a Facebook page as a hub for fishers and the public to learn about our fisheries.

Additionally, we've signed a memorandum of understanding with the QSIA. This MOU ensures we maintain a strong communication pathway with Brisbane, as well as access through our QSIA membership to the services of our peak federal association SIA (Seafood Industry Australia).

I want assure members that this agreement strengthens, rather than undermine our long history as a robust fishers' association. It enables us to be represented in key forums and access critical information. To further ensure our voice is heard, we've re-appointed Shawn McAtamney as the association's spokesperson.

Thank you for your continued commitment. Let's keep working together to protect our livelihoods. I encourage you to follow the association's Facebook page and look out for our quarterly newsletter for industry updates, opportunities to get involved, and stories from our members.

Good fishing, Michael Gater
President, Gulf of Carpentaria Commercial Fishers Association

STAY INFORMED

The Gulf of Carpentaria Commercial Fishers Association is committed to keeping you informed and engaged.

All correspondence prepared or received on your behalf, including letters, emails, and submissions, can be accessed through website here. We value transparency and encourage you to review these documents to stay updated on our advocacy efforts. Your suggestions and input are vital to shaping our work, so please feel free to share your thoughts via the portal, email, or at our regular member meetings. Together, we can strengthen our voice and support our industry.

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King Threadfin research update

DPI and CSIRO scientists have been in the Gulf of Carpentaria conducting research as part of the FRDC co-funded project (www.frdc.com.au/project/2023-199). Progress includes:

Acoustic tracking – longshore movement

- Successful acoustic tracking, where an initial 11 King Threadfin all survived implant of acoustic tags (Dec 2024). Ongoing detections at acoustic receivers in April 2025.
- A further 25 King Threadfin have been tagged mid Gulf region. Tagging ongoing up to 150 fish.
- Acoustic receivers in 32 locations northern and mid Gulf. Receiver deployment ongoing and will eventually cover the southeast and western Qld Gulf.

Genetics – stock structure. Do fish in northern areas contribute larvae/fish to southern areas?

- Enough samples from most Queensland regions, still chasing samples from the NT and Torres Strait/PNG.

Fish – otoliths and maturity. Do fish in all regions mature at the same length/age? Does spawning occur at the same time? Where do kings spawn?

- Sampling kings smaller than 600mm (under permit).
  - > Young-of-the-year otolith chemistry
  - > Compare to otoliths of harvested fish to assess movement
- Sampling kings larger than 600mm
  - > Regional variation in length or age at maturity
  - > Many samples from fishers via Fishery Monitoring Program. Thank you
  - > More would be good. Fishes can donate heads or frames
  - > Frames with guts and gonads intact especially useful when fish developing towards spawning condition
  - > Research samples from areas without fishery samples (under permit)

If you are interested in assisting or have questions, contact Julie Robins (DPI research 0488093648) or Richard Pillans (CSIRO, 0477704119).





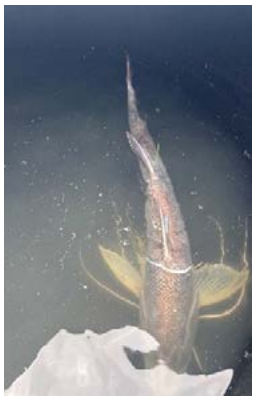
Sampling fish for gonad development and otolith collection - (1) female with developing ovary, November 2024. (2) males, mix of immature and mature (limited development), April 2025.





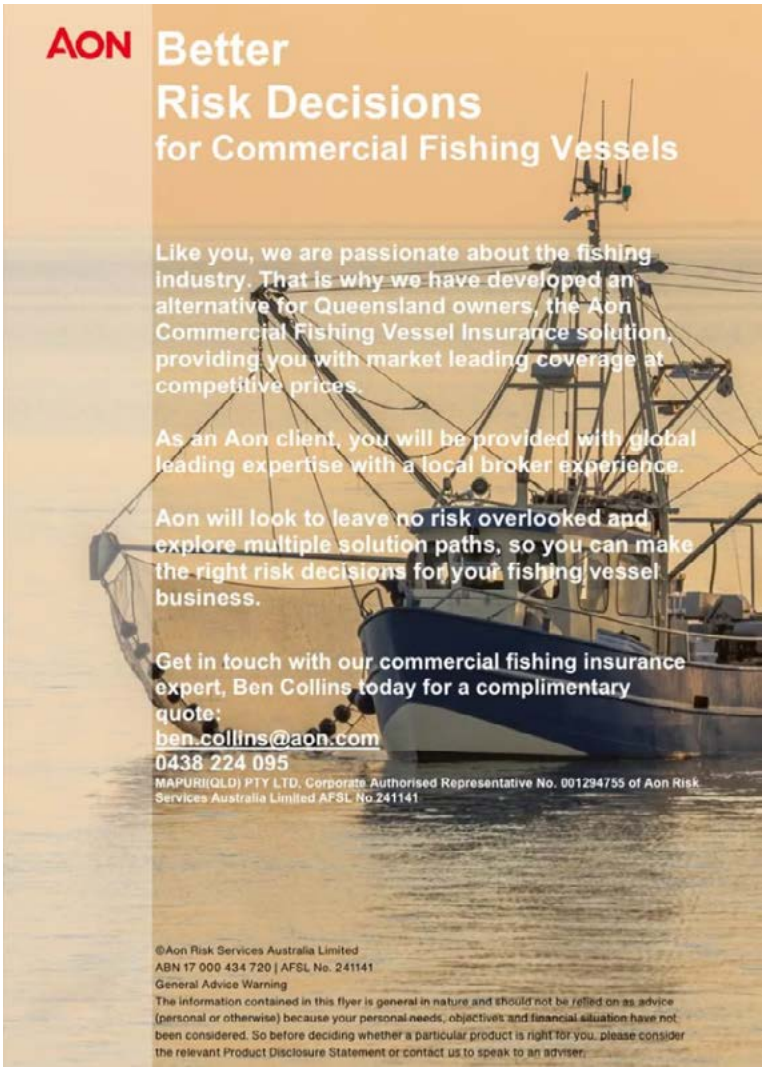








Acoustic Tagging Steps: (1) catch, (2) anesthetise, (3) operate, insert acoustic tag, suture incision wound, (4) external tag, (5) recovery, (6) release.



25-year Blueprint

All Gulf fishers are strongly encouraged to provide feedback on the draft 25-year blueprint for a thriving future for Queensland's primary industries.

It's critical that everyone with a stake in agriculture, fisheries, forestry and biosecurity have the opportunity to shape the future of the sector as the backbone of our economy and communities.

The association has prepared and submitted a response of behalf of the fishing community in the Gulf which can found on our website > News and Links. Public consultation is open until **5.00pm on 9 June 2025** visit website.



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FISH TALES

Dear Fishers,

I'm calling on you to share your stories from the heart of our industry. As protein producers, we play a vital role in feeding communities, yet our work often goes unseen. By sharing your everyday experiences — recent or historical — you can help consumers understand the dedication, skill, and passion behind their seafood.

Whether it's a tale of a tough day at sea, a memorable catch, or a slice of industry history, your stories connect us to a wider audience.

We need to tell our own narrative to showcase the value of what we do. Submit your stories, and include photos to bring them to life. The best entries will be featured in our newsletter and entered into a draw at the Annual General Meeting for gift vouchers to spend in your local community. Let's celebrate our industry and show Queensland and beyond where their seafood comes from.

Send your stories and photos to **admin@goccfa.com.au**

Good Fishing - Shawn McAtamney

Fisheries Queensland Update June 2025

Thank you to the Association for the opportunity to provide an update in your industry newsletter. Fisheries Queensland appreciates this offer, and we look forward to working with the commercial sector in the Gulf. The industry has been through significant change with the net free zones and the structural adjustment process in the N3 fishery.

It is a good time to take stock and reset our focus for the coming years. On 9 June consultation will close on the Primary Industries Prosper 2050 consultation draft, a 25-year blueprint for the future of Queensland's primary industries.

This draft represents the first step in the Crisafulli Government's Fresh Start for primary industries in our State and supports our ambitious target to boost Queensland's primary industries output to $30 billion by 2030. Fishing in the Gulf will be vital to achieving this goal. Last Friday an information session was held in Weipa and more consultation is set to occur in the coming months. I would like to acknowledge the submission that the association made into this process last month.

A long-term, strategic plan for Queensland's primary industries is needed to ensure this sector, which is a critical part of all Queenslanders' lives, strengthens as the backbone of the Queensland economy. This will be supported by an Action Plan for fisheries and there will be opportunity for the Association to be key part of this work going forward.

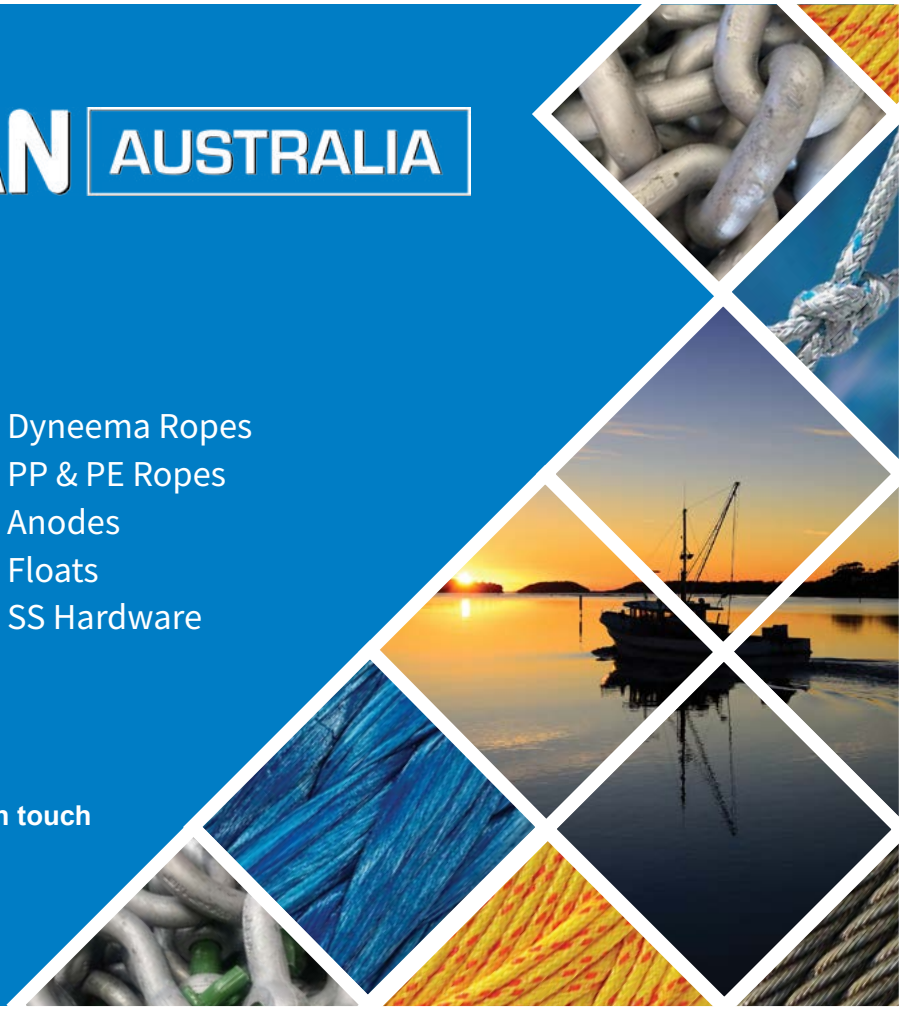
Finally, I wanted to add that we are working to restore export approval for the mud crab fishery in the Gulf and on the east coast. This has been flagged with us as an important initiative by the industry and I look forward to providing more information on this in future newsletters.

Regards
Dallas D'Silva
Executive Director
Fisheries Queensland
DPI

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MANAGING THE GULF FISHERY FOR THE FUTURE

Together, we'll navigate these challenges and ensure the Gulf of Carpentaria remains a thriving fishery for generations to come.