



Barramundi | *Lates calcarifer*

A Snapshot of the Barramundi Fishery

Area

Generally from high water mark at the coast to 3 nautical miles seaward of the low water mark. In certain rivers and creeks professional fishing can take place within specified boundaries, however no professional fishing is permitted in Darwin Harbour and Shoal Bay.

Licences

There are 21 Barramundi licences and all are fully transferable on a temporary and permanent basis.

Gear

Fishing is by net only, with a full licence allowed 1,000 metres of net. A number of licences have net allowances ranging from 800 metres to 200 metres.

Catch

While barramundi is the main species harvested, King threadfin is one important secondary species in the fishery.

Product form

Frozen fillets, whole fish on ice (gilled and gutted).

Markets

The Northern Territory and a number of interstate markets. Export markets are also being investigated.

Season

The professional fishing season runs from 1 February to 30 September. The closed season from 1 October to 31 January was introduced at the insistence of the professional industry to protect breeding stock.

Management

The fishery is managed on behalf of the Northern Territory by the NT Fisheries Group under a formal management plan.

General

The fishery is predominantly boat based, normally with a mother boat and two dinghies operating on one licence. Vessels often operate in very remote areas around the Northern Territory coastline, sometimes ranging well over 1,000km from their home port. While there is a variety of vessel sizes the majority range from 8 to 16 metres in length. Dinghies are usually between 4.5 and 6 metres.

Boats are often at sea for several weeks and in some cases, months. Because of the remote areas being fished, most operations are based on frozen product. A small fresh fish market for barramundi also operates.

A fishing operation with a full 1,000 metre licence, mother boat and two dinghies can have an investment ranging from \$600,000 to nearly \$1 million.

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