

Application for an Exceptional Circumstance Permit for the Queensland Marine Specimen Shell Fishery

The Queensland Marine Specimen Shell Fishery is based on the hand collection and use of shell dredges to collect a broad range of animals from the phylum Mollusca for the purpose of display, collection, classification, increasing scientific knowledge and sale. Collection in the fishery can occur along the entire coast of Queensland, however the majority of commercial collection occurs in northern coastal and reef waters.

Australia has approximately 20 000 species of marine, land and freshwater molluscs. Many of the molluscs found in Australia are not collected or traded or are very common. Queensland management effort focuses on monitoring collection of those species that warrant particular attention, such as the endemic, rare or most commonly traded species.

The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries Queensland (DPI&F) administers the collection of marine molluscs, for commercial, recreational and scientific purposes, under the *Fisheries Act 1994* (the Act) and associated *Fisheries Regulations 1995* (the Regulations). Authorities are issued under Section 40 of the Act to take shells for trade or commerce. Separately, specific endorsements may be added to a Boat Licence under Section 31 of the Regulations to authorise the commercial collection of marine shells. Shells may also be collected for scientific purposes under section 35(2) and 37(b) of the Regulations. Further advice on fisheries management arrangements and plans and administration of aspects of the Act are provided to DPI&F by the Harvest Management Advisory Committee (Harvest MAC). Harvest MAC includes representatives from conservation groups and agencies, fisheries managers and scientists and commercial and recreational fishers.

There are currently five commercial marine specimen shell fishery authority holders and two vessel licences with a similar authorisation in Queensland. Three research permits are also current. There is currently no quantitative information on recreational shell collection in Queensland. Recreational collectors are not required to obtain permits to collect specimens, however they are not permitted to have more than 50 shelled molluscs in their possession.

Under commercial authorities/permits, specimen shell molluscs may be alive or dead at the time of collection and include beach-washed shells. The collection of fossilised shells is not included nor is the retention of specimen shells taken in other fisheries. The commercial collection of broken remnants of molluscs can be by hand or hand held non-mechanical implements; or if stated in the authority, mechanical equipment. For other molluscs commercial collection can be undertaken by hand, without using digging or sieving implements; or if stated on the authority, shell dredges. Collectors are limited to taking no more than 10 of any taxon live in any year.

As a condition of their commercial marine specimen shell fishery authorities, boat licence or permit, fishers are required to complete and return monthly logs of collection operations. The logbooks must be completed for each day that collecting takes place and

includes: catch (numbers, species and alive or dead), effort (fishing time), and fishing locations (beach or reef name). During 2002/2003, three collectors reported the harvest of 240 live shells and 818 dead shells from eight reefs/locations. More than ten specimens of 29 species were harvested, from a total of 98 taxa. The list of specimen shells harvested in 2002/2003 from Queensland waters are shown in Table 1.

DPI&F have recently submitted a document, *Ecological Assessment of the Queensland Specimen Shell Collection Fishery* for assessment against the Commonwealth *Guidelines for the Ecologically Sustainable Management of Fisheries*. Due to the interest of specimen shell collectors in exporting product from the fishery, DEH is considering an exceptional circumstance permit to be issued for a twelve-month period, pending the finalisation of the assessment of the fishery.

For further information on aspects of the Queensland Specimen Shell Fishery management, please contact Mr Phil Gaffney on (07) 3247 5009 or email: Phillip.Gaffney@dpi.qld.gov.au.

Table One: Specimen shells harvested in 2002/03 from Queensland waters.

Species/taxon	Live	Dead	Total
STROMBUS LUHUANUS		150	150
ACORN DOG WHELK	2	113	115
LAMBIS LAMBIS	1	52	53
PHILIPPIA RADIATA		50	50
TEREBRA MACULATA	5	34	39
CYPRAEA TIGRIS	1	35	36
CONUS PLANORBIS		35	35
SYRINX ARUANUS	1	32	33
MELO AMPHORA		30	30
VEXILLUM VELESIANA		28	28
CONUS SPECTRUM	2	21	23
STROMBUS VARIABILIS		19	19
CYPRAEA ERRONES	10	6	16
BANDED CREEPER		14	14
TEREBRA GUTTATA	4	10	14
CONUS STRIATUS	1	12	13
CONUS VEXILLUM		12	12
CYPRAEA ARABICA		12	12
MUREX BRUNNEUS		12	12
CONUS MILES	10		10
CONUS TESSULATUS	10		10
CONUS TEXTILE	4	6	10
CYPRAEA CAURICA	10		10
MALEA POMUM	10		10
STROMBUS DILATATUS	10		10
STROMBUS GIBBERULUS	10		10
TEREBELLUM TEREPELLUM	10		10
TEREBRA AREOLATA	10		10
TEREBRA – UNSPEC	10		10
OLIVA MINIACEA	6	3	9
STROMB – UNSPEC	9		9
VOLUTE RUTILA		9	9
CONUS GEOGRAPHUS		8	8
CONUS MARMOREUS		8	8
CONUS OMARIA	8		8
GIANT SPIDER SHELL		8	8
OLIVE SHELL – UNSPEC	8		8
POLINICES MAMMATUS	8		8
PUPA NITIDULA	8		8
TEREBRA CERITHINA	8		8
VOLUTE MACULATA		8	8
MITRA MITRA	2	5	7
CONUS EBRAEUS		6	6

CONUS LITTERATUS		6	6
STROMBUS VOMER	6		6
TEREBRA BERNARDI		6	6
TEREBRA CHLORATA	6		6
VEXILLUM POLYGONUM	6		6
VOLUTE PERISTICTA	6		6
FRAGUM FRAGUM		5	5
OVULA OVUM		5	5
CASSIS BANDATUM		4	4
CONUS EBURNEUS	4		4
CONUS TEREBRA		4	4
CYPRAEA HELVOLA	1	3	4
CYPRAEA LYNX	1	3	4
NATICA ONCA	4		4
CONUS FRIGIDUS	3		3
CONUS SUTURATUS	3		3
CYPRAEA MAURITIANA	3		3
NATICA SEYCHELLUM		3	3
VEXILLUM EXASPERATUM	3		3
ANCILLA VELESIANA		2	2
CODAKIA TIGRINA		2	2
CYLICHA ARACHIS		2	2
CYPRAEA CRIBRARIA	1	1	2
CYPRAEA EGLANTINA		2	2
DIODORA OCTOGONA	2		2
FOOLS COWRY	1	1	2
HARP SHELL – UNSPEC	2		2
LITTORARIA SCABRA		2	2
MITRA VARIABILIS		2	2
MUREX AKRITOS	2		2
NASSARIUS COMPTUS		2	2
PATELLOIDA SACCHARIN		2	2
PECTEN SINGAPORINA		2	2
PHOS SENTICOSUS	2		2
RHINOCLAVIS BRETTINHAMI	2		2
STROMBUS BULLA		2	2
STROMBUS CAMPBELLI	1	1	2
TEREBRA SUCCINCTA		2	2
THAIS ECHINATA		2	2
TUDICULA ARMIGERA		2	2
CARDIUM REEVEANUM		1	1
CARDIUM SP.		1	1
CYPRAEA ARGUS		1	1
CYPRAEA SUBVIRDIS		1	1
EPITONIUM – UNSPEC		1	1
HALIOTIS VARIA		1	1

LAMBIS SCORPIUS		1	1
MUREX TERRITUS		1	1
PECTEN CURTISIANA	1		1
SAGINAFUSUS PRICEI	1		1
STROMBUS VITTATUS		1	1
TELLINA PHARAONIS	1		1
TONNA CEPA		1	1
TONNA SULCOSA		1	1
VOLUTE ZEBRA		1	1
Grand Total	240	818	1058

