

# TIDE TO TABLE

## RESTORING AQUATIC HABITAT

Burdekin Dry Tropics



HEALTHY CATCHMENTS  
HEALTHY OCEANS

## Restoring fish habitat in the Burdekin Dry Tropics region

OceanWatch Australia and Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM have commenced a program called Tide to Table that focuses on repairing the environment that fish rely on for food, shelter, breeding and nursery grounds.

Funded under the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust, the "Tide to Table" program strives to combine the needs of the fishing industry with management actions occurring on the land. As such, commercial and recreational fishers, land-based primary producers, landowners, Traditional Owners, government agencies and the community work together to support projects that involve on-ground works to improve fish habitat. These works aim to improve the fish habitat which in turn helps support and build sustainable fish stocks for the future.



*Aquatic weeds, such as *Hymenachne* in the lower Burdekin, can cause poor water quality and affect fish passage.*



*Rubbish dumping on saltmarsh in Townsville is degrading the important fish habitat values of the area.*



*An old road crossing is a barrier to fish passage in Stuart Creek.*

## Program for 2007-2008

The Tide to Table program was developed by OceanWatch Australia and there are currently 5 Tide to Table projects operating in various regions throughout Queensland and New South Wales.

Tide to Table – Burdekin Dry Tropics commenced in October 2007 and will run until June 2008. If successful the project may be extended. A minimum of 5 on-ground works projects will be undertaken within the coastal zone of the Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM region, which extends from Crystal Creek to Bowen. Projects will include works with a demonstrable benefit to fish habitat and the types of works that will be funded as part of the project include:

- Restoring fish passage and connectivity through removing fish barriers or installing fish passage devices
- Estuarine habitat rehabilitation through rubbish cleanup or fencing off areas to stop vehicle damage
- Water quality improvement, such as stormwater treatment, litter traps or aquatic weed removal
- On-farm projects, involving cane farmers or graziers to improve water quality or fish habitat
- Riparian rehabilitation through revegetation, sediment and erosion control or weed removal.

## Fisheries of the Burdekin Dry Tropics region

The coastal waters of the Burdekin Dry Tropics region support productive fisheries. The commercial fishery in the Burdekin Dry Tropics region is worth around \$20 million annually\* and consists of crab, trawl, net (i.e. barramundi, grey mackerel) and line (i.e. spanish mackerel and reef fish) fisheries. The estuarine habitats in the region are inhabited by iconic species such as barramundi, mangrove jack and mud crabs that are highly sought after by commercial, recreational and indigenous fishers.

Liaison with local fishers has identified that some of the main issues affecting fish habitat and subsequently fisheries production in the Burdekin Dry Tropics region include fish passage barriers such as dams and weirs, aquatic and riparian weeds and poor water quality. The Tide to Table program aims to tackle these issues through on-ground restoration works and education.

\*Based on the average gross value of production between 2001 and 2005 – (source: [www.chrisweb.dpi.qld.gov.au](http://www.chrisweb.dpi.qld.gov.au))



Local fishing vessels



Riparian vegetation is important for healthy waterways  
- Leichardt Creek



Productive fish stocks require healthy fish habitats

*“This program allows commercial fishermen to work with community groups that they would normally have no contact with and fosters a relationship between industry and general community allowing invaluable work to be carried out on improving fisheries habitat areas that may have otherwise been neglected. Overall a very worthwhile program opening avenues of communication between industry and the broader community.”* Greg Radley, Commercial fisher and steering committee member

## Education and action

To support the on-ground works there is a strong education component to the program that includes community events, connectivity tours and educational material. The program strives to highlight the importance of land management activities in the catchment and the flow on effects to estuarine wetlands and fisheries productivity. If you or your community group are interested in being involved or for updates on the program, check out [www.oceanwatch.org.au](http://www.oceanwatch.org.au) or [www.bdnrm.org.au](http://www.bdnrm.org.au) or contact the Project Manager on (07) 4722 2528.

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