

## Fisheries Sustainability – Australia leads the way



In the late 1990s the focus of fisheries management shifted to the Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) of natural resources.

Today, it is legislative requirement that fisheries management not only focus on the sustainability of target species, but also on the effects on the broader ecosystem.

This means that a great deal more effort is being employed in developing ways to reduce by-catch and the impacts of fishing on rare or endangered species, etc. (for more information on the implementation of new technologies, industry codes and environment management systems see [the SeaNet Brochure](#)).

Over the last 10 Years OceanWatch Australia through its SeaNet extensions service and tide to table program has contributed greatly to sustainability of Australia's fisheries, working with industry, researchers and government to help minimise interactions with threatened, endangered and protected species (including a Marine Species Identification Guide), minimise bycatch through improved techniques and behaviours, and importantly the preservation, restoration and rehabilitation of important habitats.

The OWA SeaNet program has assisted the fishing industry to improve its environmental performance through the development of innovative fishing technologies, introduction of by-catch reduction devices, the design and adoption of Codes of Practice and Codes of Conduct in specific fisheries and environmental management systems on-ground implementation of Threat Abatement Plans and Recovery Plans.

### *Some key examples are:*

- **Marine turtles** – The introduction and uptake of turtle excluder devices (TED) in the new 'turtle smart crab pot' for fisheries in Qld, the introduction of Northern Prawn Fishery (prior to them being regulated), deep setting techniques to reduce interactions, use of circle hooks and dehookers and line cutters for quick release, as well as handling training;
- **Whales and dolphins** – introduction of underwater acoustic alarms in net fisheries to reduce interactions/entanglement with dolphins, codes of practice to reduce whale entanglement and associated training for fishers in lobster and pearl fisheries in WA and the NT;
- **Seals and Sea Lions** – the introduction of seal excluders in lobster fisheries in Vic, SA and WA;

- **Sea snakes** – 85% reduction of sea snake by-catch in Northern Prawn Fishery and 62% for east coast Qld trawl fishery through innovative BRDs;
- **Sea birds** – dramatic reductions in sea bird capture in the eastern and western tuna and billfish longline fisheries through the introduction of innovative devices (eg Tori lines and bait shutes) and changes to fishing practices;
- **Dugong** – development and uptake of Code of Practice;
- **Sharks** – introduction of dehookers and the use of shark deterrents, the use of circle hooks in tuna longline fisheries and the use of excluder devices in trawl fisheries;
- **Preserving native habitats** – working with fishers nation wide to protect habitat through the rollout of the national marine pest system and through adoption of Codes of Practice to improve water quality and reduce plastic and other waste, and environmental clean-ups;
- **Meeting by-catch targets** – assisting AFMA in the delivery of by-catch reduction targets and actions to address EPBC export permit conditions in Commonwealth fisheries; e.g. [OceanWatch beach seine research](#)
- **Reducing Tilapia** – Use of new technology for removal of tilapia.
- Under the Federal Government’s Caring For Our Country program there has been renewed effort being put into sustainability programs.