

Offshore net and line fishery

You must have a licence to fish commercially in the offshore waters of the Northern Territory (NT).

Licences

The fishery is restricted to 17 licences. All licences are already allocated, however they can be bought and sold.

Read more about [buying, selling or leasing a commercial licence](#).

Fishing area

You can operate in all NT waters from the high water mark to the boundary of the Australian fishing zone (AFZ) 200 nautical miles offshore - an area of more than 522,000km².

Most fishing is done in the coastal zone within 12 nautical miles of the coast, and immediately offshore in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Fishing methods

You may use demersal or pelagic long lines or pelagic nets.

Bottom-set gillnets are prohibited.

Fishing gear

There are restrictions on where certain gear can be used.

Demersal long lines

Demersal long lines may be used from the coastline to the AFZ.

Pelagic long lines

Pelagic long lines may be used three nautical miles seaward from the territorial sea baseline to the boundary of the AFZ.

Longlines

A boat may put out up to 15k nautical miles of long lines at once, with up to 1000 hooks in total.

Automated baiting gear must not be used.

Pelagic nets

Pelagic nets can be used from two nautical miles from the low water mark to the boundary of the AFZ.

Nets can be up to 2000m long.

Mesh size is between 160mm and 185mm.

Drop length is 50 to 100 meshes.

Nets are weighted and must have a buoyed headline.

Catch

Black-tip sharks and grey mackerel are the primary species taken in off-shore net and line fishing.

Other shark species caught are hammerhead, bull, tiger, pigeye, lemon and winghead sharks and dusky whalers.

Other byproduct catch includes Spanish mackerel, longtail tuna, black pomfret and other finfish.

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