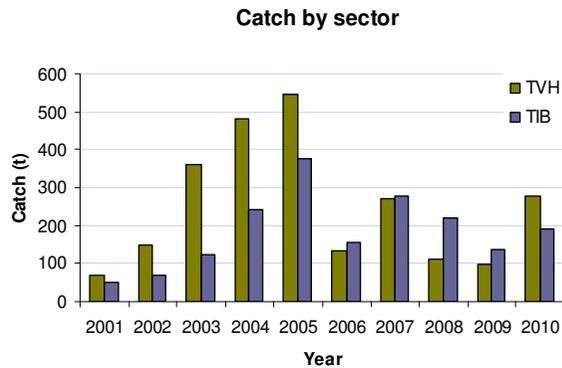


Total Catch

This graph shows the TIB and TVH sector catch since 2001.



- 2010 was a good year for Torres Strait lobster fishers. About twice as much lobster was harvested compared to 2009.
- Lobster catch is highly variable due to differences in lobster's natural breeding patterns.
- A buyout in 2007 removed half of the TVH licences, explaining reduced TVH catch (and effort) after this time.
- Catch for both sectors peaked in 2005, but 2001, 2002, 2006, and 2009 were poor years.
- Up to 2005, the TVH sector took more lobster than the TIB sector but this trend has now changed.

Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE)

Catch per unit effort (CPUE) is an important factor with respect to the economic viability of a fishery and as an indicator of abundance.

- 2010 CPUE was higher than previous years for both TVH and TIB fishers. This result supports industry views that 2010 was a good fishing year.
- CPUE is highly variable year to year due to natural fluctuations in the lobster stock.

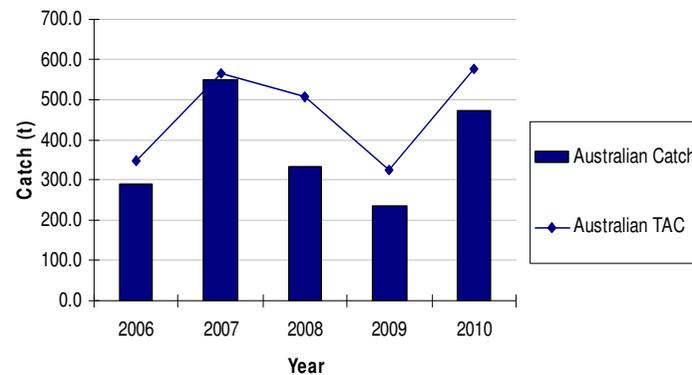
CATCH & EFFORT

Catch vs Total Allowable Catch (TAC)

A TAC is not implemented for the lobster fishery but is used as an indicator of the status of the fishery. The table and graph below shows the Australian catch against the recommended TAC since 2006.

| Year | Catch TIB (t) | Catch TVH (t) | Australian TAC (t) |
|------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 2006 | 154 | 135 | 348 |
| 2007 | 279 | 271 | 564 |
| 2008 | 222 | 111 | 506 |
| 2009 | 137 | 99 | 327 |
| 2010 | 191 | 279 | 576 |

Total Australian catch vs nominal Australian TAC



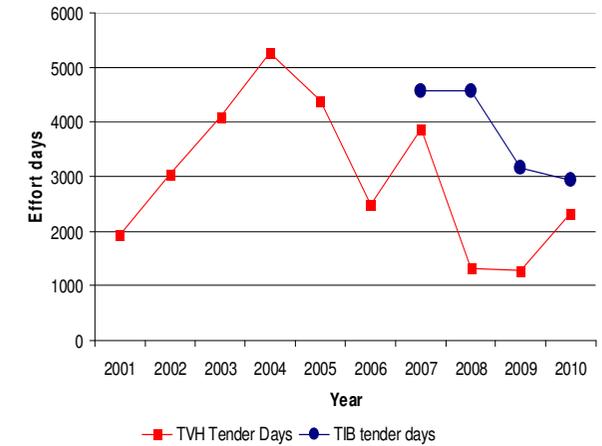
- The TAC is recommended at a level that allows a minimum number of spawning adults to spawn and thus provide enough recruits to the fishery in two years time for a viable fishery.
- The Australian catch has not been over the recommended TAC since 2006.

Effort

The following graph shows the days fishing in the lobster fishery for the TVH and TIB sectors. Effort is shown in the number of days fishing in tenders/dinghies for both the TVH and TIB sectors.

Effort Days for Both Sectors

- In 2010 TVH effort increased from previous years, most likely as the strength of the fishery encouraged dual endorsed fishers to concentrate their efforts in Torres Strait rather than in the Queensland east coast fishery.



- Due to the voluntary nature of TIB catch recording, effort information for this sector is estimated only and has only been presented back to 2007.
- The significant drop in effort in the TVH sector in 2007 was partly due to half the licences being surrendered in 2007/2008, and partly due to poor fishing in 2008 and 2009 in Torres Strait.
- The TIB effort appears to be declining since 2008, but has remained higher than TVH effort.

NB: Catch levels shown here may change as records received after February 2011 have not been included in these analyses.

RESEARCH

Why do we conduct research?

Research is essential to effective fisheries management by providing information on which management decisions can be made. Research aims to answer management questions, fill knowledge gaps and reduce uncertainty in fisheries management decisions.

How are research projects chosen?

Proposals for research projects are assessed by the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee (TSSAC) on a number of criteria including:

- Will the research answer management questions or fill knowledge gaps?
- Will the research benefit the stock and/or the people that rely on it as a source of income?
- Will the research be conducted in an appropriate manner?
- Will the research project work with, and engage, Traditional Inhabitants?
- Will the research results be communicated to all relevant people involved with the fishery, especially Traditional Inhabitants?
- Do the research outcomes represent value for money invested?

The TSSAC then recommends supported projects to the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) or other funding providers for funding.

Current research projects underway in the Torres Strait TRL fishery

The following research projects are currently underway in the Torres Strait Lobster fishery:

- 1: An Integrated management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for the Torres Strait tropical rock lobster population.
 - The project will predict the likelihood of success of various management arrangements to meet the needs of the differing stakeholders in the fishery.
- 2: 2012 Stock Assessment and TAC estimation.
 - The assessment provides a preliminary TAC for the 2012 season and assesses the health of the lobster stock from year to year.

TORRES STRAIT TROPICAL ROCK LOBSTER FISHERY



CATCH DATA & RESEARCH SUMMARY 2010

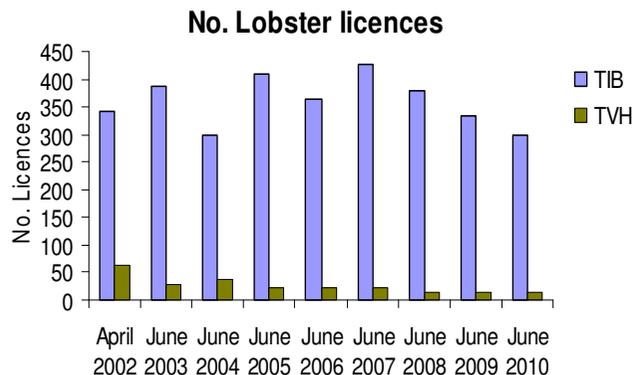
PNG Catch in Australia

Under the Torres Strait Treaty, PNG licensed lobster boats can fish in Australian waters under cross endorsements.

- 7 cross endorsements were issued to PNG licensed boats to fish in the lobster fishery in Australian waters in 2010. Not all of these vessels fished in Australian waters.
- PNG vessels harvested 15t and 11t of lobster in 2009 and 2010 respectively.
- Previous to 2009, the last time PNG vessels had utilised cross endorsements had been in 2003.

Licencing

The number of licences issued in the lobster fishery are presented in the figure below.



- The number of fishing licences with lobster entries have stayed relatively stable since 2002 for the TIB sector.
- The number of TVH licences has declined due to latent effort removal processes and buyouts.

For more information on the TRL fishery please contact the AFMA Thursday Island Office on (07) 4069 1990.



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

