



Department of
Agriculture and Fisheries

Our ref: CTS 11528/19
Your ref:

Mr Shane Ward
fv.jodava@bigpond.com

Dear Mr Ward

Thank you for your email of 26 April 2019 to Ms Bernadette Ditchfield regarding the recent management changes to protect black jewfish. Ms Ditchfield has recently taken up a new role as Deputy Director General, Agriculture and asked that I respond to your enquiry.

I note your concern about the impact that landing black jewfish whole may have on commercial fishing operations. These urgent management changes were consulted on in late 2018 and have been expedited given the vulnerability of the species to overfishing. There are documented stock collapses in Australia and overseas and there are significant concerns about the sustainability of black jewfish in Queensland given the increase in catch over the last 18 months due to the high value of swim bladders.

The Queensland Government has legislated that black jewfish must be landed whole in order to prevent processing of the fish at sea to remove the valuable swim bladders. If processing at sea is permitted it is not possible to identify which species the swim bladder came from. Without this requirement, it would not be possible to enforce the new rules to protect black jewfish.

I appreciate your views on the need to process at sea, however management must balance this with the need to appropriately protect a vulnerable and valuable fisheries resource. For the reasons outlined above, black jewfish must not be gutted, gilled, filleted, trunked or anything else; it must be landed whole. The catch in the Gulf of Carpentaria is still low compared to the East Coast and the annual catch limit has been set at 6 tonnes. This is not a significant volume that would have large scale impacts as a result of keeping the fish whole.

Given the risk to this species, recreational fishers will also be subject to a number of management changes, including a reduction to their in-possession limit from 2 to 1 and a requirement to land black jewfish whole.

If you require any further information, please contact Mal Keag, Fisheries Manager on 07 3087 8033 or by email at Mal.Keag@daf.qld.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Claire Andersen', written in a cursive style.

Claire Andersen
Acting Deputy Director-General
Fisheries and Forestry