

There are some areas where fishers can access beche-de-mer by wading through the shallow water mangrove lagoons and estuaries. This is a minor component of the fishery. This method may be applied in areas of the Kimberley that are accessible and prone to extreme tidal movements. Wading usually occurs on soft sandy substrates with minimal impact on these habitats.

SOCIAL EFFECTS

Up to 36 fishers can be employed in the fishery, based on 6 endorsements each with a maximum of 6 crew, although in 2004 only two vessels were working. Additional individuals are employed for the processing of the product. These activities are mostly located in remote areas of the Kimberley and Pilbara regions.

ECONOMIC EFFECTS

Estimated annual value (to fishers) for year 2004:
\$1.2 million

The estimated annual value was \$1.2 million, based on an average product price of \$15/kg.

BECHE-DE-MER TABLE I

Catch, effort and CPUE of sandfish (*Holothuria scabra*) in the beche-de-mer fishery, 1995–2004.

YEAR	LIVE WT (t) (all methods)	BLOCK DAYS (all methods)	CREW DAYS (all methods)	KG/BLOCK DAY (diving only)	KG/CREW DAY (diving only)
1995	92.7	187	737	734.5	175.6
1996	257.3	228	945	1060.0	249.0
1997	382.1	452	1852	928.2	222.2
1998	309.7	569	2565	601.8	135.0
1999	175.7	378	1757	496.2	106.4
2000	82.9	132	607	630.3	134.7
2001	90.1	152	663	605.5	137.6
2002	87.1	152	535	681.0	124.8
2003	122.4	213	1019	694.7	146.2
2004	80.9	103	470	652.4	143.0

Wetline Fishing

This assessment, which utilised the CAES database, indicates that more than a quarter (29%) of the state's wetline catch during 2003/04 was reported from this bioregion, which includes waters off both the Kimberley and Pilbara coasts. The top 12 species comprised Spanish mackerel (*Scomberomorus commerson*) 435 t, ruby snapper (*Etelis carbunculus*) 58 t, giant threadfin (*Eleutheroyema tetradactylum*) 43 t, goldband snapper (*Pristipomoides multidens*) 26 t, grey mackerel (*Scomberomorus semifasciatus*) 12 t, grey-banded cod (*Epinephelus*

FISHERY GOVERNANCE

Target catch range: **50–150 tonnes**
 This target catch range is preliminary, noting that this is a developing fishery.

New management initiatives (2004/05)

Trials of a daily logbook are continuing, with the intention that ultimately this will replace the compulsory monthly return. Implementation of this is planned to coincide with the 2007 review of the fishery.

EXTERNAL FACTORS

The remoteness of the currently fished stock and the large tidal ranges are natural barriers to uncontrolled expansion of fishing of beche-de-mer. Marine park planning processes may also impact on the potential extent of the fishery in the Pilbara region.

septemfasciatus)11 t, blacktip shark (*Carcharhinus* spp.) 8 t, unspecified shark 7 t, spangled emperor (*Lethrinus nebulosa*) 6 t, cod (*Epinephelus* spp.) 6 t, red emperor (*Lutjanus sebea*) 6 t and pink snapper (*Pagrus auratus*) 5 t.

An interim management plan for the troll fishery for mackerel (details of which are reported on pp. 161-166) commenced in August 2004, which will preclude mackerel from the wetline catch after that date. The majority of threadfin were taken by net fishers south of the Kimberley Gillnet and Barramundi Managed Fishery. Most other species are taken by line fishing off the Pilbara coast.