

Policy Statement

Zone of free translocation for barramundi.

Purpose

To facilitate the translocation of barramundi for stocking of commercial and non commercial aquaculture ventures and, whilst at the same time minimising the risk of introducing exotic pathogens, parasites and pests, or unwanted genetic material which has the potential to mix with endemic gene pools.

Scope

This statement is to:

- provide terms of reference for delegates of the Director of Fisheries issuing permits for stocking and stock movement under the Fisheries Act, and
- inform stakeholders in translocation of barramundi of rules implementing, and rationale for, current arrangements.

Definitions

Barramundi

Barramundi means *Lates calcarifer*.

Translocation

Translocation means movement of barramundi live-stock or genetic material from one area to another.

References

National Policy for the Translocation of Live Aquatic Organisms – Issues, Principles and Guidelines for Implementation, Ministerial Council on Forestry, Fisheries and Aquaculture 1999

http://www.affa.gov.au/corporate_docs/publications/pdf/fisheries/translocation.pdf

Background

Movement of aquaculture stock carries with it the risk of introduction of exotic pathogens, parasites and genetic materials, or transmission of novel genetic materials,

not indigenous to a given area. At the same time, provisions to address these risks should not be unduly onerous.

A National Policy for the Translocation of Live Aquatic Organisms has been ratified. It states that aquaculture stock should not be moved to areas of higher disease status, and areas of differing genetic make up (unless the farm is totally isolated). The NT has signed off on the national policy and will implement it.

The legal instrument used to implement the policy will be the requirement for any person liberating fish into waters to first obtain permission (permit) from the Director of Fisheries. Inappropriate translocation will be limited by a refusal to issue a permit.

A total prohibition of translocation is inappropriate as commercial farming of barramundi necessitates translocation of stocks of fish between farms, hatcheries and the acquisition of broodstock from natural waters. Stocking of dams and other waters bodies may also require translocation of stocks of fish from farms and hatcheries.

Prior to the ratification of this policy, the matter was addressed in an ad hoc manner with each movement being individually assessed. Permission has not been issued for fish moved from one area to another within the Northern Territory unless the fish have been subject to examination and certification issued that they are free from significant disease.

In the case of movement from areas of unknown disease status, or areas known to have less than equivalent disease status, continued examination and certification is essential. Assessment and appropriate response will protect the importer from diseases and protect fisheries resources and the natural environment from new disease incursions.

In some areas, disease and genetic status is better understood. For barramundi, it is current practice to translocate stocks within the Northern Territory within and between the waters and catchments of Darwin Harbour, the Adelaide River and Port Hurd, Bathurst Island. Over the past four years, a number of farmed and wild-harvested barramundi from these areas have been examined for pathogens and parasites and a common suite of agents found.

The *National Policy for the Translocation of Live Aquatic Organisms* allows for zones of equivalent disease status to be established, within which fish can be moved without recourse to health certification and testing. Similar provisions apply to genetic isolation.

There is evidence that barramundi from Shoal Bay and Darwin Harbour and their respective catchments are part of the same genetic population. As such, they are considered to share a common suite of pathogens, parasites and diseases.

To maintain accordance with the national policy, but to limit undue restriction on aquaculture practices, it is proposed to determine areas of equivalent disease status and boundaries of gene pools and to use these to draw lines on maps. Within a zone, processing an application for a liberation permit will be therefore shortened.

It is proposed to nominate regions including Darwin Harbour and its catchment, Shoal Bay and its catchment including the Adelaide River and its tributaries and Port Hurd and its catchment as zones of equivalent health status for barramundi. Within and between

the nominated zones, live barramundi will be able to be moved without a requirement for health examination and certification.

Procedures

A single disease control zones for barramundi is declared to include

- Darwin Harbour and its catchment
- Shoal Bay and its catchment including the Adelaide River and its tributaries' and
- Port Hurd and its catchment,

This zones denotes equivalent status with respect to diseases of barramundi and health examination and certification is unnecessary for movement so for barramundi within and between these zones, with the exception of fish leaving Darwin Aquaculture Centre.

This pathological/parasitical and genetic examination is not necessary in a situation where fish are being moved within a zone or region of equivalent disease status.

This examination is an unnecessary impost when moving fish between regions of equivalent status.

The above provisions notwithstanding, barramundi proposed for importation into the nominated zones from interstate or from elsewhere in the Northern Territory will be subject to health certification and quarantine procedures

Note that:

- the specified zoning does not apply to any other species other than barramundi
- all spawning groups of fish leaving DAC will continue to be subject to health certification procedures as part of its internal quality assurance program

This procedure is subject to review should events, or new information impact on the bases for decision-making

Procedures Heading

The definition of a zone within which it is regarded, for the purposes of issuing stocking permits under the Fisheries Act that barramundi have equivalent pathogen, parasite and genetic status, as described in the National Policy on Translocation of Aquatic organisms.

Cross Divisional Implications

Whilst control of movement of fish and aquatic life is vested in the Fisheries Act, other agencies with an interest in the maintenance of environmental values for fish, aquatic life and aquatic habitat, such as the Office of Environment and Heritage, and National Parks and Wildlife, should be aware that a decision making infrastructure has been specified.

Distribution

Internet, and internal distribution within Fisheries Group.

Implementation/Marketing

Delegated staff assessing stocking permit applications are to have regard to the policy when determining when and if a stocking permit is needed. The existence of the policy may be referred to in Environmental Management Plans.

<hr/> Executive Director of Fisheries	<hr/> Date July 2000
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