



## Marine parks deliver bigger coral trout for fishers

### The challenge

Coral trout are one of the most valuable species of fish targeted by recreational anglers in the Great Barrier Reef. The larger the coral trout, the more highly they are prized.

But by the early 2000s, the export market for live coral trout had grown rapidly - potentially too rapidly.

### The approach

AIMS contributed to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's development of "green" zones or marine protected areas for the reef. The Institute provided data, expertise and research effort to enable the Authority to design the new zones.

The zones came into effect in 2004, increasing the area of protected reef from less than 5% to more than 30%.

### The impact

Coral trout populations continue to increase in no-take marine reserves in which fishing is prohibited. There are nearly twice as many of the fish than in areas open to fishing and biomass – the total weight of all fish – was 122% higher on reefs inside protected areas compared to reefs open to fishing.

Coral trout in protected areas also provided larval subsidies to and re-seeding populations in areas open to fishing.

This result confirms that the science behind the Marine Park's rezoning continues to benefit Queenslanders because it means more fish available for anglers. Today, approximately 1000 tonnes of coral trout are caught annually along the Great Barrier Reef, with no evidence this is putting the stock at risk.

The re-zoning supports up to \$311 million from fishing activity in the Reef region injected into the Queensland economy each year. It also has a social benefit for the state's one million recreational fishers, the average age of which is getting younger as more children go fishing with their parents.

AIMS continues to monitor the impact of the protected areas to confirm they are having the intended effect.



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UP TO  
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RECREATIONAL FISHING  
VALUE TO THE  
QLD ECONOMY



**33 PERCENT**  
GREAT BARRIER  
REEF AREA PROTECTED  
BY THE 2004 RE-ZONING



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OF CORAL TROUT CAUGHT  
EACH YEAR IN QLD