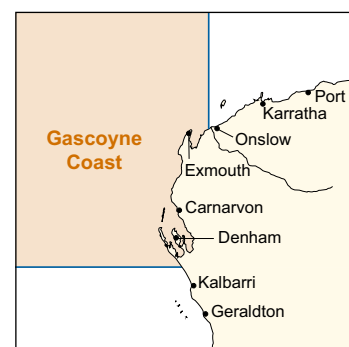




# Gascoyne Demersal Scalefish Resource Fisheries Science Update – September 2025



The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) monitors the status of Western Australia's demersal scalefish resources by undertaking periodic stock assessments on key indicator species.

This summary provides key outcomes of the 2024 Gascoyne Demersal Scalefish Resource Stock Assessment (*Resource Assessment Report No. 3*).

## Status of indicator species

### Oceanic Snapper

Medium risk



### Goldband Snapper

Low risk



## Key points

- The Gascoyne Demersal Scalefish Resource remains sustainable, except for oceanic snapper which has been in recovery since 2018.
- In 2018, significant management action was taken to reduce commercial snapper quota by ~80% and provide targeted spawning protection to recover oceanic snapper.
- Snapper is on track to meet recovery milestones, with the 2024 assessment showing spawning biomass had increased to the threshold level ahead of the 2027 milestone.
- In 2025, consistent with the science and recovery plan, a 45% increase (to 145 t) in the total removal recovery benchmark for oceanic snapper was implemented.
- A 2022 assessment of goldband snapper showed that biomass is above the target and expected to remain sustainable at current catch levels.

# Snapshot Gascoyne Oceanic Snapper

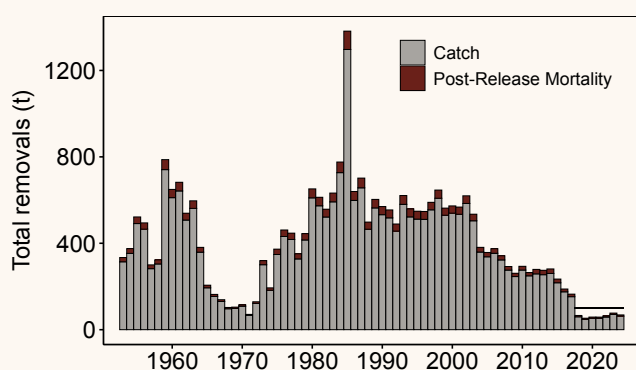
Medium risk



## Catch

Management changes have successfully kept total removals (retained catch + post-release mortality) of snapper below their recovery benchmark since 2018.

This is supporting snapper to recover ahead of agreed timeframes.



**Figure 1** Total removals of snapper by recreational, charter and commercial fishers in oceanic waters (excluding Shark Bay Inner Gulfs) of the Gascoyne coast bioregion up to 2024, relative to the recovery benchmark in place since 2018

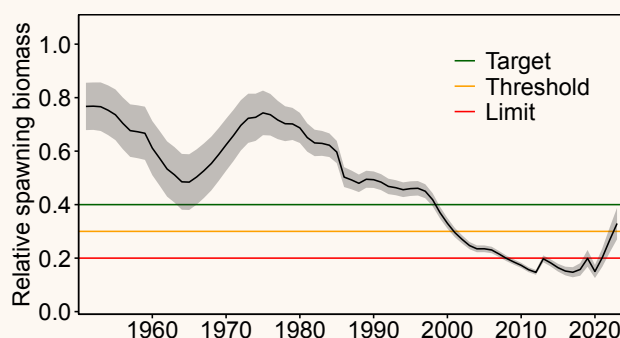
Gascoyne oceanic snapper stock is currently dominated by fish less than 15 years old.

Keeping catch below recovery benchmarks means more of these young fish will live to old age and spawn again, and again.

## Biomass

Snapper spawning biomass is continuing to increase and was at the threshold in 2024.

Under current management arrangements, snapper is projected to rebuild to the target ahead of the final recovery milestone in 2037.



**Figure 2** Spawning biomass of female snapper in oceanic waters of the Gascoyne coast bioregion compared to reference levels

Spawning of snapper is closely linked to temperature. In the Gascoyne, peak spawning occurs during winter when water temperatures are ~19-21°C.

Since 2018, we've been monitoring snapper recovery with independent surveys in addition to commercial, charter and recreational fishing data.





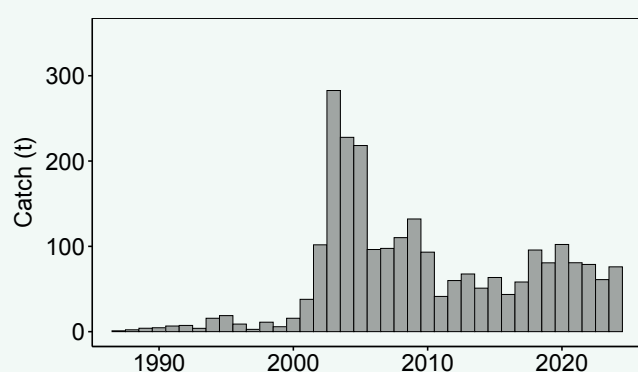
# Snapshot Gascoyne Goldband Snapper



## Catch

Goldband snapper catches have increased slightly since 2018 as fishers shift away from targeting snapper whilst they are in recovery.

The majority of the goldband snapper catch in the Gascoyne is taken by the commercial sector.



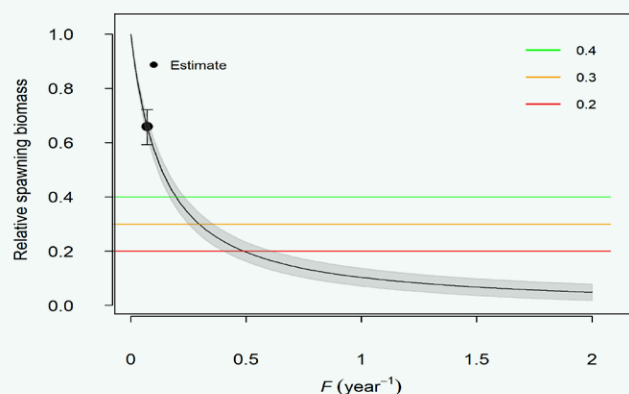
**Figure 3** Retained catch of goldband snapper by recreational, charter and commercial fishers in the Gascoyne coast bioregion up to 2024

Goldband snapper is managed across 3 separate regions in WA (Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne).

## Biomass

Goldband snapper spawning biomass is above the target.

Under current management arrangements, the stock is predicted to remain sustainable.



**Figure 4** Spawning biomass of female goldband snapper in the Gascoyne coast bioregion compared to reference levels.

Goldband snapper is a tropical species, and in the Gascoyne it has been assessed as having low sensitivity to the effects of climate change. This considers its abundance, distribution and life history characteristics.

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