



Photo: Australian Marine Conservation Society

A LIFESTYLE WORTH PROTECTING

The great outdoors is the heart of our Top End lifestyle. Nothing down south comes close to the national parks, incredible coastline and tropical seas we call home.

In fact, we have some of the last healthy tropical waters on the planet – with mangroves, coral reefs and seagrasses, home to turtles, dugongs, snubfin dolphins and huge schools of fish.

Healthy coasts are central to our treasured Top End way of life and our fishing lifestyle. They are a tourism magnet – core to our economy and local livelihoods.



Photo: Hapniah Steward

SALTWATER COUNTRY

The Northern Territory coastline, which has provided a continuous home to Aboriginal people for thousands of years, is often known as 'saltwater country'.

For saltwater people all aspects of social, cultural and economic life are intimately connected to the health of their coastal lands and seas, and must be managed carefully so future generations can continue that connection.



Photo: Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation

Keep our Top End coasts healthy



Photo: Australian Marine Conservation Society

The Gunner Government's commitment to develop a Coastal and Marine Management Strategy is a good first step to tackle the threats to our coast and lifestyle.

Now the community is looking for the Government to deliver a plan it can rely on – one that secures the unique cultural, conservation and fishing values of the Top End's coast. This would bring significant benefits to the NT's people and economy, particularly in tourism. Iconic places such as Ningaloo and the Great Barrier Reef are thriving as a result of plans like this.

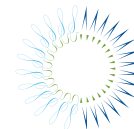
There are proven solutions on offer, which must be at the heart of a plan for the Top End's coast and can be tailored to the needs of the Territory – including Sea Country Indigenous Protected Areas, national parks in the sea and recreational fishing areas.

Take action now to help protect our Top End way of life and secure the health of our coasts for the future.

www.topendcoasts.org.au

 www.facebook.com/topendsealife

Keep Top End Coasts Healthy is an alliance of environment groups including the Australian Marine Conservation Society, the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Environment Centre of the Northern Territory.



THE PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS



Environment Centre NT
protecting nature | living sustainably | creating a climate for change



KEEP
OUR TOP END
COASTS HEALTHY



OUR TOP END COASTS AT RISK



Photo: Glenn Walker

Loss of Mangroves

In the Territory we have over a third of Australia's mangroves – protecting our coastline, filtering our waters and providing vital nurseries for our fish stocks.

The Territory recently suffered one of the worst mangrove dieback events in the world, affecting 1000 kilometres of coastline – an area that supports thousands of marine turtles and dugongs, as well as commercial and recreational fisheries.

While banned in some states, unbelievably clearing of mangroves is still permitted here in the NT. This is taking its toll – clearing vast areas of mangroves, reducing protection against storm surges and cyclones, and impacting local fishing and tourism.



Destructive Mining Practices

Our rich, tropical waters are full of life, but also rich with minerals, leaving them at risk from destructive mining practices.

More than 90% of the Territory's coastline is covered by petroleum exploration. Our tropical seas face seismic testing, mining, shipping, port expansion and the risk of oil spills.

The threat of seabed mining is still looming in the Top End. It has never been allowed before in Australia, but the Territory's temporary ban runs out in July 2018.

Seabed mining is like taking a bulldozer to the ocean floor – decimating our marine life, polluting our seas,

threatening our fishing, and destroying sites of cultural significance.

Mines such as the McArthur River Mine can cause downstream impacts on our coasts and fisheries, due to toxic tailing dams bursting and breaches of environmental regulation.

Port expansion such as Port Melville on the Tiwi Islands has been progressed without the adequate checks and balances. This offshore oil and gas hub's tanks will store up to 30 million litres of petrochemicals. Located right on the shore's edge in a highly cyclone prone area, the port threatens subsistence fisheries and important feeding and breeding grounds for turtles and dugongs.



Photo: Monica Napper



Photo: Gary Bell / Oceanwideimages.com

Our fishing future at a crossroads

Fishing in the Territory is amazing, but places like Darwin Harbour are not as good as they used to be.

Popular reef fish have seriously declined due to overfishing in key areas. Scientists have identified golden snapper and black jewfish as being at risk of collapse – a reminder that the Territory is not immune from the problems experienced elsewhere and that pressure is increasing. Fishers are having to travel further and further to get the same quality of catch.

The impact of destructive commercial fishing practices, such as gillnetting and demersal trawl, is an ongoing concern for the future of the Territory's seas and fisheries.

Our lifestyle and livelihoods are connected to the health of our coasts and rivers. Poor river management has downstream effects on our marine life and can be devastating for recreational and commercial fishers.

The health of our Top End coasts is at risk. We must take action to safeguard our coasts, our fishing, and our enviable way of life into the future.

