



Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Heritage

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

TRADE OF SYNGNATHIDS AND SOLENOSTOMIDS

(Seahorses, Seadragons, Pipehorses and Pipefish)

Listed Marine Species

In late 2001 syngnathids and solenostomids were included in the list of marine species under Part 13 of the EPBC Act. As a result of this listing, it is an offence to kill, injure, take or trade syngnathids and solenostomids in, or from, a Commonwealth area. The Act specifies that certain actions are not offences, including actions undertaken in accordance with an accredited management regime or in accordance with a permit under which the action is approved. Accidental capture may also provide a defence against prosecution.

Reporting Listed Species Interactions

If an interaction with a listed species does occur, and it does not constitute an offence under the Act and it was not authorised by a permit, then the EPBC Act requires that the interaction be reported. For more information on interactions, refer to the fact sheet “Interactions with Protected Species” or consult the Sustainable Fisheries Section.

Accrediting a management regime

To accredit a management regime in areas under Commonwealth jurisdiction, the Minister for the Environment and Heritage must be satisfied that:

- the regime requires persons engaged in fishing to take all reasonable steps to ensure that listed marine species are not killed or injured; and
- the fishery is not likely to adversely affect the conservation status of listed marine species.

International Trade

Part 13A of the EPBC Act controls international trade in all native wildlife, including syngnathids and solenostomids, sourced from State and Commonwealth waters.

Products from fisheries are either exempt from export controls (ie they are on the List of Exempt Native Specimens) or require an export permit or, for a limited number, may not be exported. The following website contains a list of the species currently exempt from export controls, <http://www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/lists/exempt/index.html>. Where it is proposed to commercially export native species not on the list of exempt native species, an export permit is required. An export approval may only be granted for specific circumstances, including personal goods, scientific exchange and other non-commercial purposes, and a series of defined commercial purposes.

A variety of syngnathid and solenostomid species are currently being exported from several states under different management arrangements. A list of approved operations can be found at <http://www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use/sources/operations/index.html>.

Export permits will only be granted where syngnathid and solenostomid species:

- have been obtained from an approved aquaculture operation;
- are a product of an approved captive breeding program; or
- have been taken from the wild under an approved harvesting regime under the EPBC Act.

** The Minister may also issue a permit, without approval under one of the above programs, if exceptional circumstances exist that justify the proposed export, and the export would not adversely affect biodiversity and is consistent with the objects of the Act.*

Aquaculture Operations

Approval for an aquaculture program can be granted under the Act if collection from the wild for breeding purposes will not have an adverse effect on the conservation status of a species or ecosystem.

Captive Breeding Programs

Approval of a captive breeding operation requires the development of F2 (ie. Second generation offspring) capability. Trade is not permitted in broodstock and continued wild capture for established operations is constrained to levels necessary to deal with inbreeding and other genetic concerns.

Wild Harvest Regimes

Wild harvest regimes undergo assessment for ecological sustainability by the Department of Environment and Heritage's Sustainable Fisheries Section (SFS) on behalf of the Australian Government before approval can be given. For information on fisheries assessments under the EPBC Act a separate information sheet is available from the Sustainable Fisheries Section.

International trade of Hippocampus species

In November 2002, the Conference of Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) decided that all *Hippocampus* species (a type of Syngnathid) were to be listed in Appendix II of the CITES. This listing comes into effect in May 2004 and at this time there will be some minor changes to permitting arrangements for the export and import of these species.

- Signatory countries to CITES will be obliged to regulate the trade of these species, and it is therefore important to find out whether import permits are required for the destination country before exporting *Hippocampus* species.
- Only single-use permits can be issued. Multiple use permits can no longer be granted.

If you are wishing to export *Hippocampus* species after May 2004, please contact the Sustainable Fisheries Section. For further information regarding the listing please refer to the CITES website <http://www.cites.org/>.

Domestic Trade in Syngnathids and Solenostomids

State fisheries legislation protecting syngnathid species includes the Victorian *Fisheries Act 1995* which lists all syngnathids as Protected Aquatic Biota and the *Tasmania Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995* which prohibits the take of all syngnathid species in Tasmanian waters without a permit. Please contact the relevant State fisheries authority for further information on State legislation.

Contact Details

For further information contact the Sustainable Fisheries Section

Further information

<http://www.deh.gov.au/coasts/fisheries/index.html>
<http://www.deh.gov.au/epbc/index.html>

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