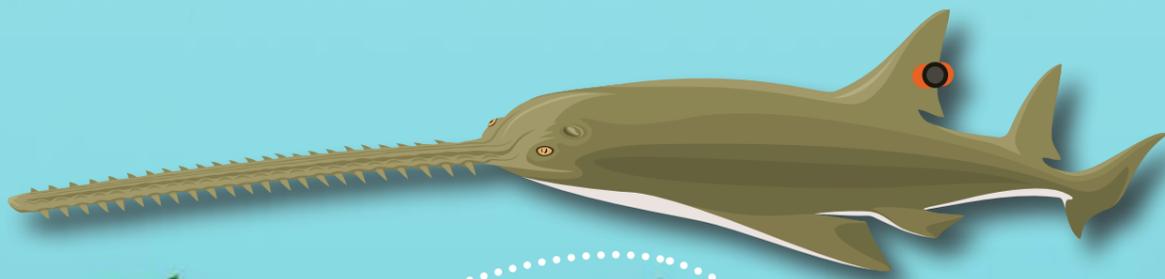


# Tracking sawfish in northern Australia



Scan the QR code and visit the NESP Marine and Coastal Hub website for more information.

1,000 kms  
over  
2 months!



## New insights into an endangered species

Sawfish species are endangered or extinct in many places worldwide. Although they still survive in northern Australia, low population numbers are worrying to conservation managers.

Unfortunately, our scientific data on sawfish populations in Australian waters is limited, so it is impossible to know how critical the situation is, or how to best protect them.

Fishers sometimes catch sawfish accidentally as 'bycatch' in their nets. The sawfish's extended snout, or rostrum, has teeth along its edge, so when they come into contact with a net, they can get very entangled.

Given they can grow up to 7 metres (with around 2 metres of that being rostrum), releasing them can be hazardous!

Commercial fishers in the Gulf of Carpentaria and Northern Territory, together with researchers from CSIRO and Charles Darwin University, have joined forces to learn more. This project is funded through the National Environmental Science Program.

Now, fishers are recording the sawfish they catch, collecting tissue samples, and tagging them with satellite transmitters to find out post release survival rates and the distance they travel.

Forty have been tagged so far – the biggest being 5.7 metres long. Amazingly, this giant sawfish swam 1,000 km over a two month period from the west side of Cape York, to near Croker Island.

Working together as a team  
Fishing industry  
Traditional Owners  
Scientists

"I was completely astonished by the distance and speed that this adult sawfish travelled! By recovering the tag we also got data on swimming depth and temperature throughout the track."

Sawfish scientist  
Dr Richard Pillans



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