Fishing for the Future Report 2023

A detailed analysis of the positive environmental impacts made by Australian fisheries that have chosen to be assessed against the MSC Fisheries Standard since 2000.

Overview

- The Fishing for the Future Report 2023 is the first of its kind in Australia to outline the sustainable strides of fisheries that volunteer to be assessed against the MSC Fisheries Standards by a third-party, Conformity Assessment Body (CAB).

- Since the MSC was founded back in 1997, fisheries, governments, environmental NGOs, and consumers have been part of a collective effort to ensure our ocean is fished sustainably.

- Stakeholder participation in MSC fishery assessments contributes to stronger fishery performance at a time when fishing impacts on the ocean are compounded by pollution and climate change.

- Together with active participation from the stakeholders, the MSC program sets a precedent for responsible fishing practices worldwide.

The UN SDGs

- MSC stakeholders help deliver < 34 targets across 5 SDGs of key United Nations targets to: 2023 MSC SDG Analysis.
- The MSC program is used as an indicator in the UN's framework to safeguard ocean biodiversity.
- This aims to protect and conserve, by 2030, at least 30% of the planet, including a reduction to near-zero of the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance.
- Globally, the MSC aim for 30% of fisheries to be MSC-certified by 2030.
- In Australia, over 52% of fisheries are already certified.

Australian MSC-certified fisheries

MSC-certified fisheries in Australia exceeds MSC's Global goal by 2030

1/3 globally engaged by 2030

More than one-third of global marine catch to be certified or engaged by 2030, supporting productivity and resilience in the world's oceans.

52% of all Australian fisheries are certified as of Nov 2023

Australian fisheries MSC Certified in 2023

Progress in sustainable fishing

Australia is out-performing the global average with a healthy number of fisheries engaged in the MSC program.

As of 2021

28
Fisheries
engaged in the MSC program in Australia

38
species
diversity of species in Australia

0
MSC fisheries suspended in Australia

0
MSC fisheries transition in Australia

Fisheries assessment process

Background

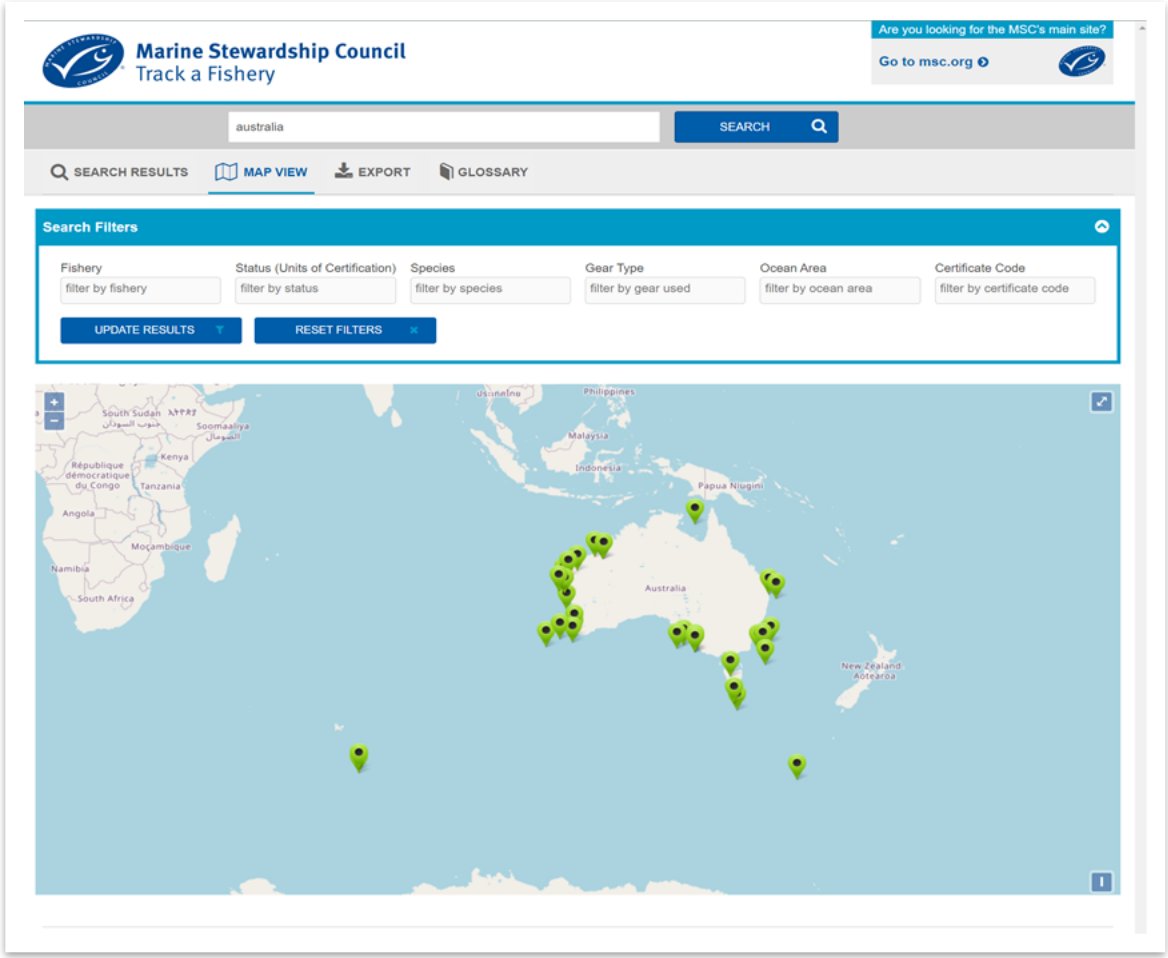
- MSC-certified fisheries are audited annually following their initial assessment.
- By the end of the five-year certificate, if the fishery wishes to remain in the program for another five-year cycle, it must undergo the reassessment process.
- All assessments and reports are available for public viewing and comment at fisheries.msc.org.

Standards are based on three principles and must reach a minimum score of 80 (with the highest 100).

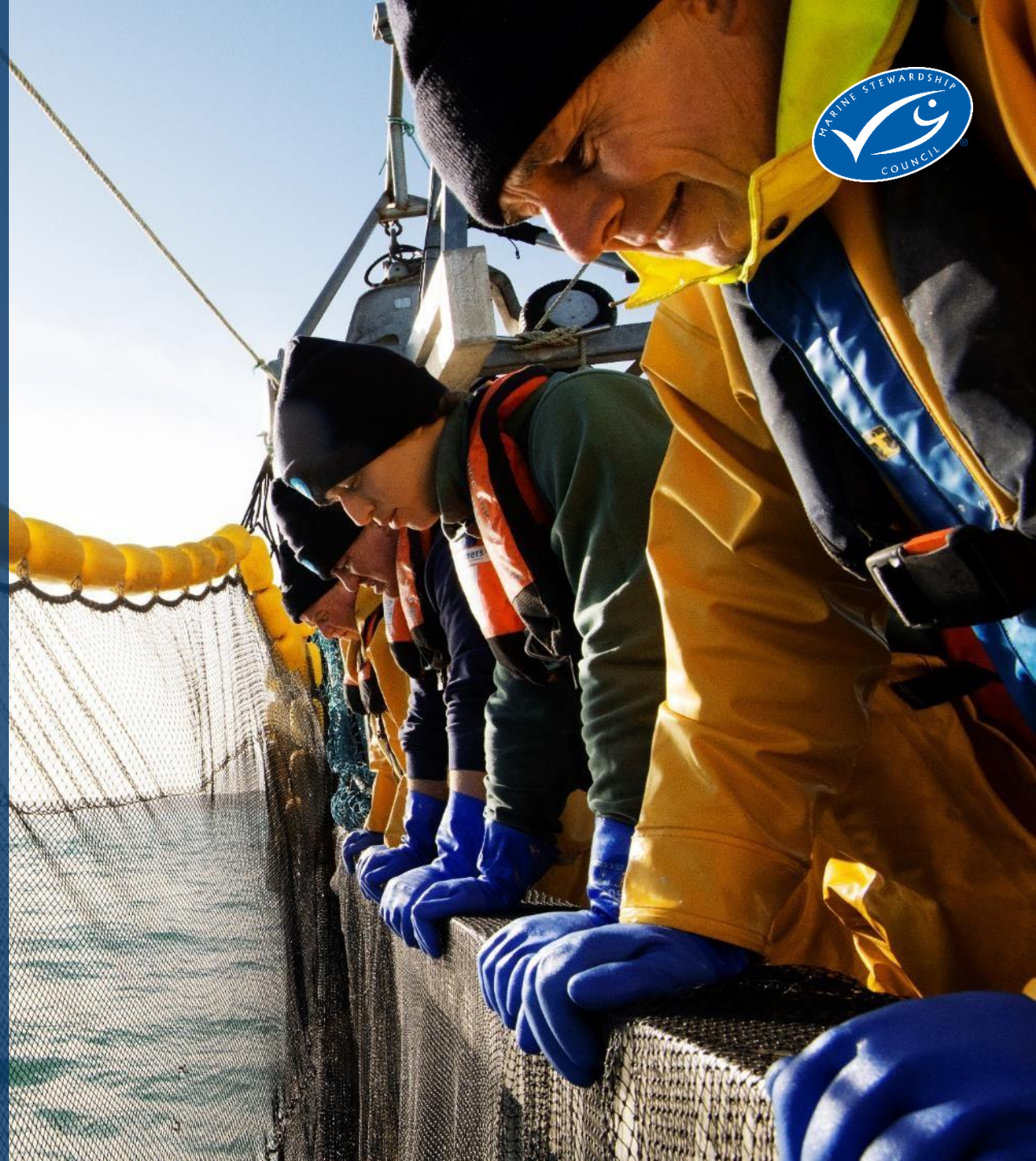
1. Stock health
2. Ecosystem impact
3. Sustainable Management

Track a fishery

- The MSC provides a searchable database of all the fisheries involved in the MSC program.
- All certificates and assessment documents can be downloaded from Track a fishery.
- Find a Fishery and view the map here.



Continuous improvements



Continuous improvements

MSC Certified fisheries make continuous improvements towards reducing bycatch, reducing ecosystem impact, and focusing on effective management

28
Fisheries
engaged in the MSC program in Australia

38
species
Diversity of species certified in Australia

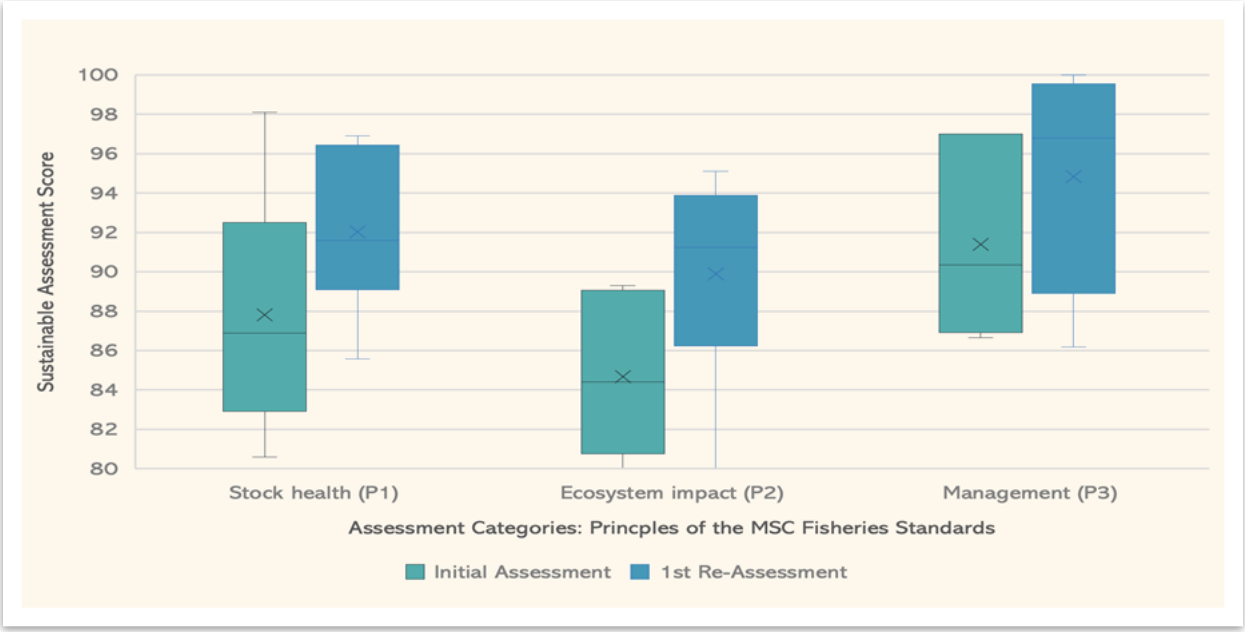
116
improvements by MSC-certified fisheries in Australia

Based on data collected between March 2000 and March 2022

Certification progress

- The graph showcases the average improvements in scores made across the three principles for six Australian fisheries that completed two full assessment cycles in 2022.
- The comparison of scores between the two assessment cycles shows positive improvements in all principles.

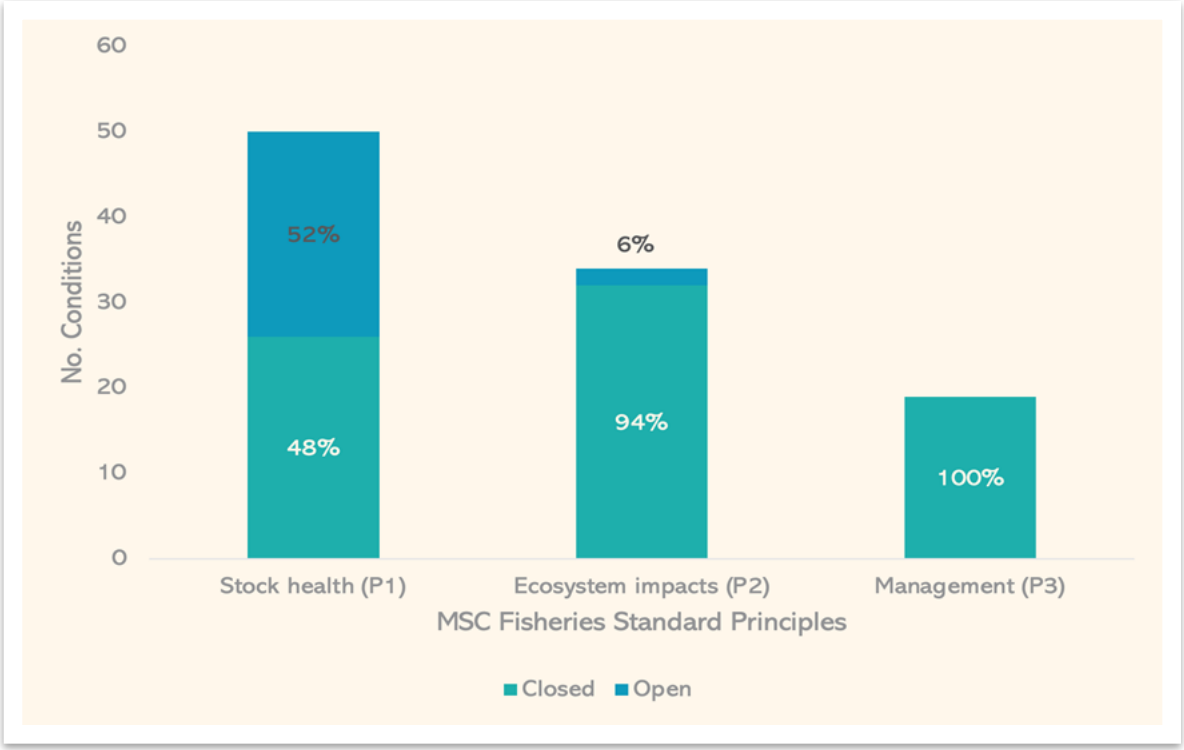
Comparison of assessment scores for each of the three standard principles. Initial assessment vs. first re-assessment



Conditional improvements

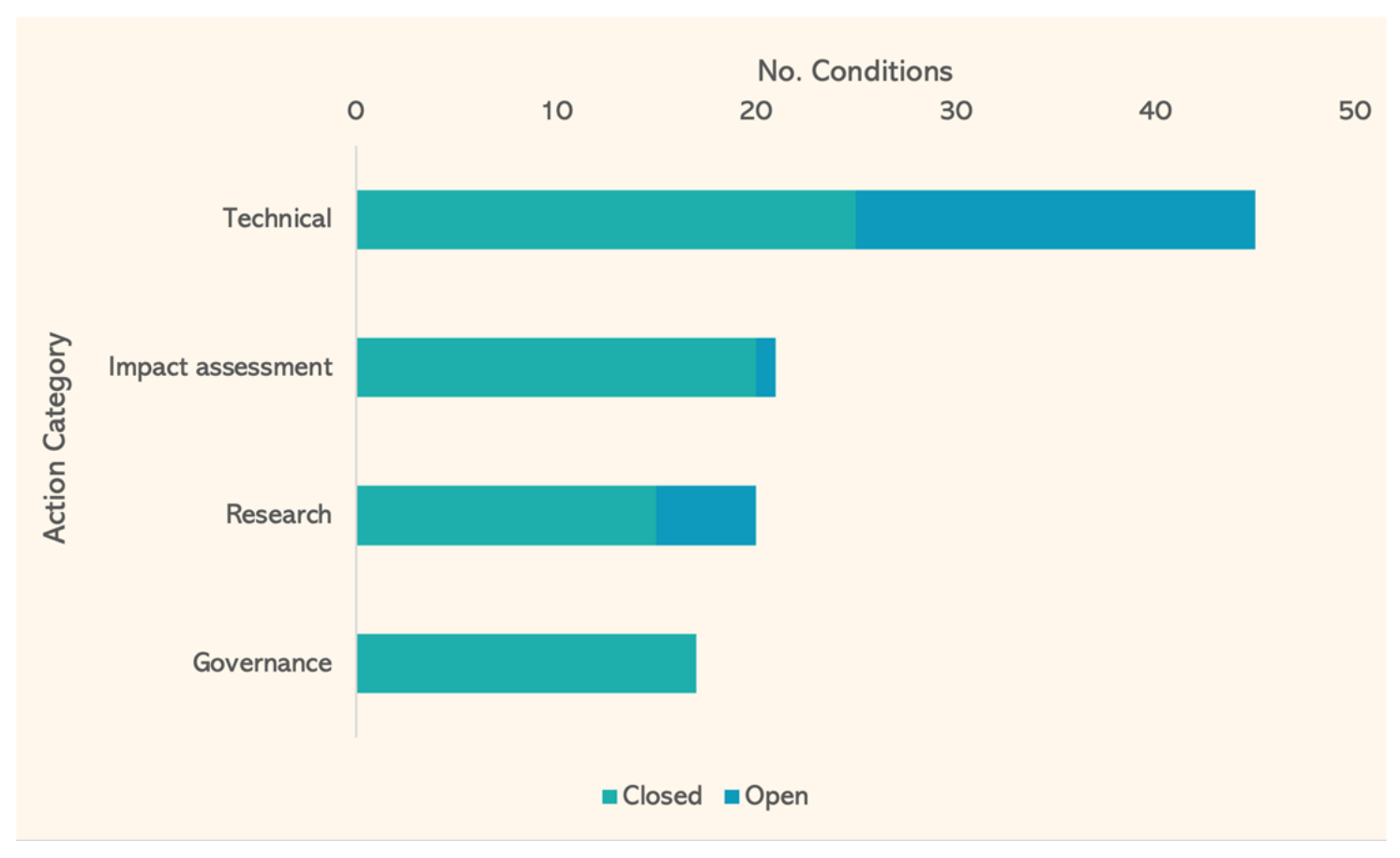
- Fisheries must pass a high level of sustainable working practices while meeting the MSC's minimum requirements for each of the three principles to receive certification.
- Australian fisheries have closed many conditions throughout their involvement in the MSC program.
- Up to 2022, 103 unique certification conditions were set on Australian MSC fisheries, driving fishery improvements across all elements of the MSC Fisheries Standard.
- Stakeholders are welcome to input into fishery condition performance through MSC's annual surveillance audit process.

Status of conditional warrants issued for each of the three Principles (March 2022)



Actions taken

Category of action required to close conditions

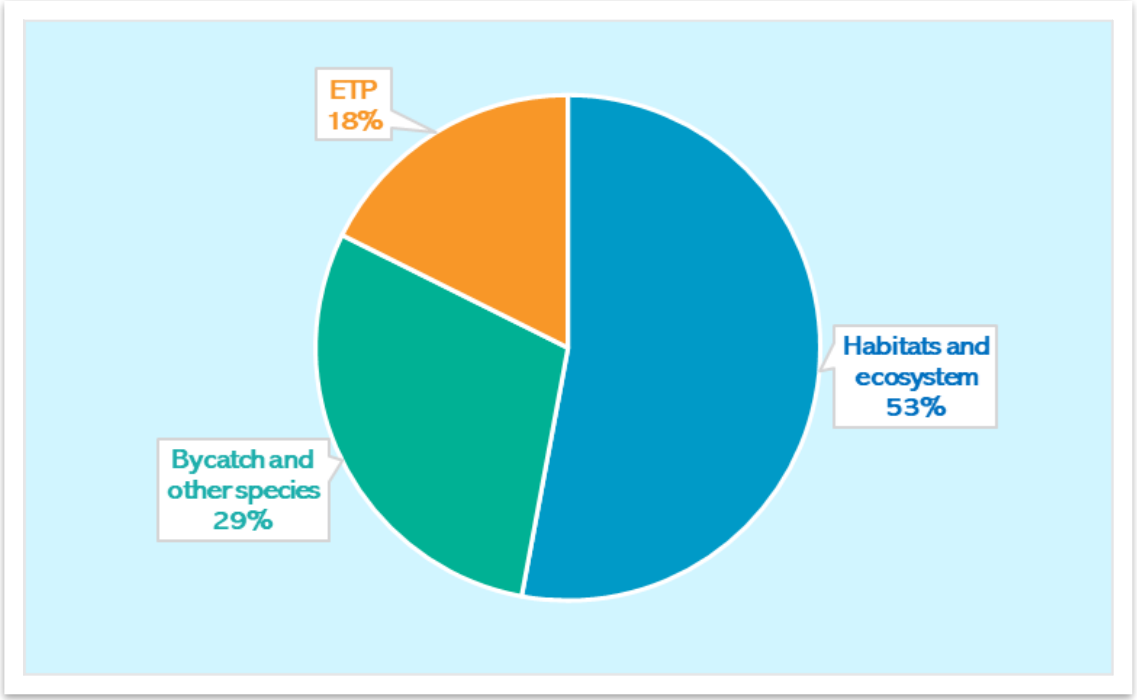


Conditions within ecosystem impact

- The graph examines the distribution of P2 conditions across three categories: Habitats and ecosystems; Bycatch; and Endangered, Threatened or Protected (ETP) species.

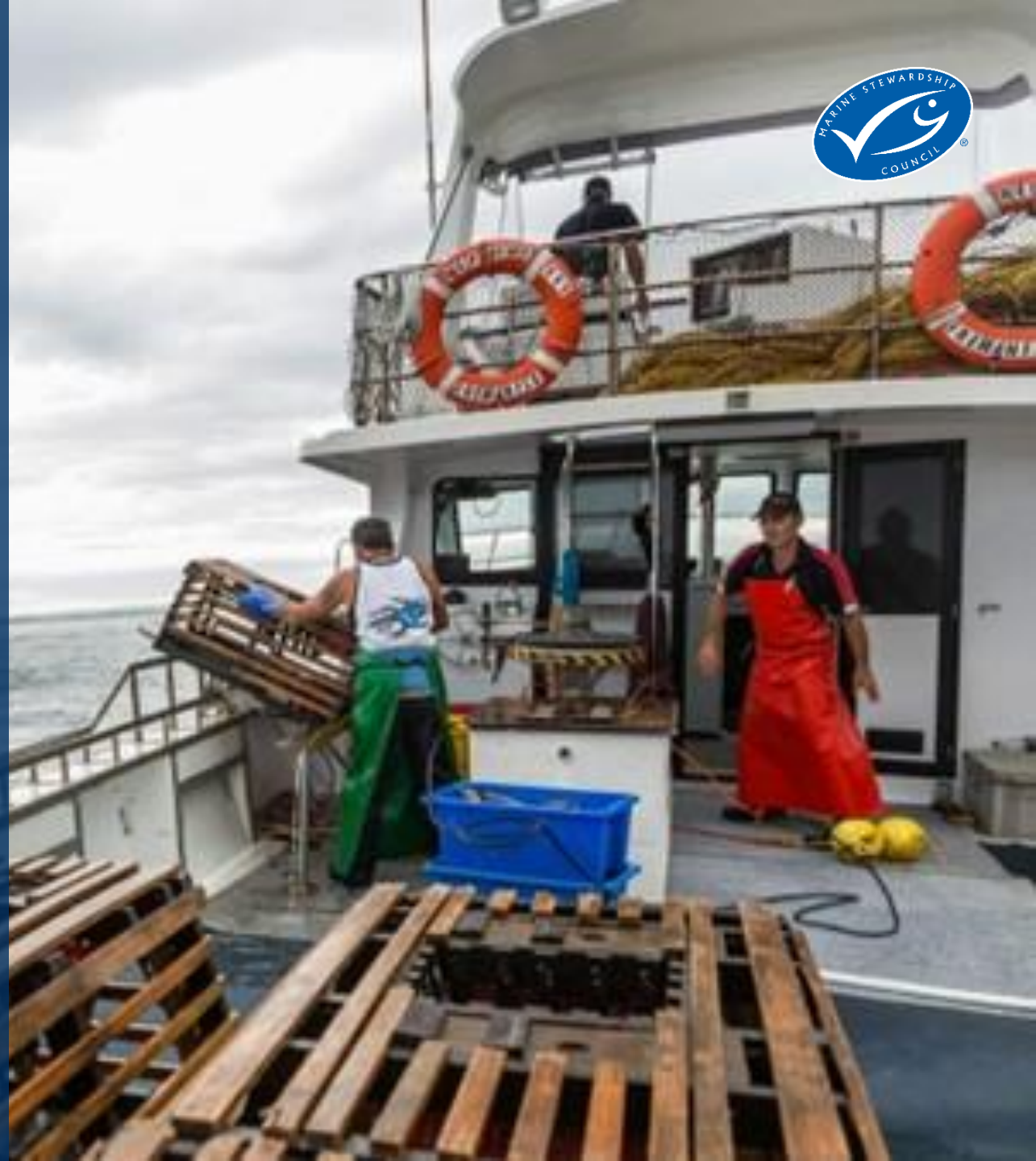
- Over half (53%) of the conditions were classified as habitat conditions designed to either better understand or mitigate impacts to marine habitats and ecosystems.

Conditions under Principle 2 (ecosystem Impact)



Improvement case studies

Amongst the improvements made by fisheries, the following cases are examples of outstanding advancements in sustainability standards and practices.



1. Modified Pot Design

- The Australia Western Rock Lobster Fishery had conditions related to information and impacts on Endangered, Threatened and Protected (ETP) species, so it implemented a simple, industry-led response to prevent sea lions from getting stuck in lobster pots: a blunt metal rod attached to the bottom of the pot that prevents sea lions from getting stuck in the narrow neck of the pot.

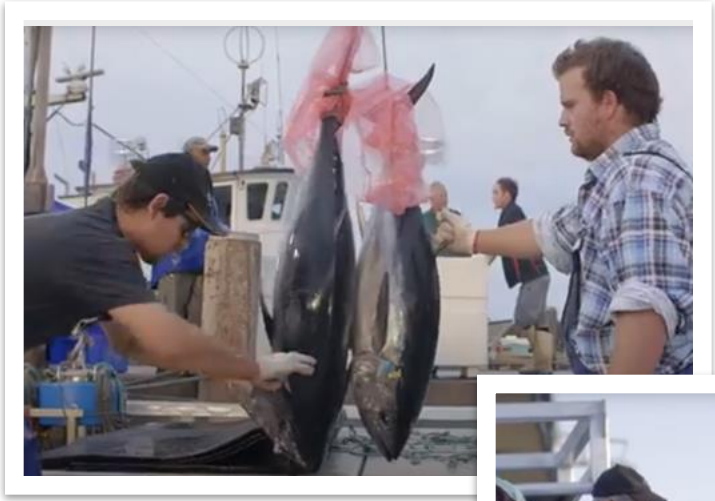
- Since their implementation in 2009, the fishery has not had a single sea lion mortality.

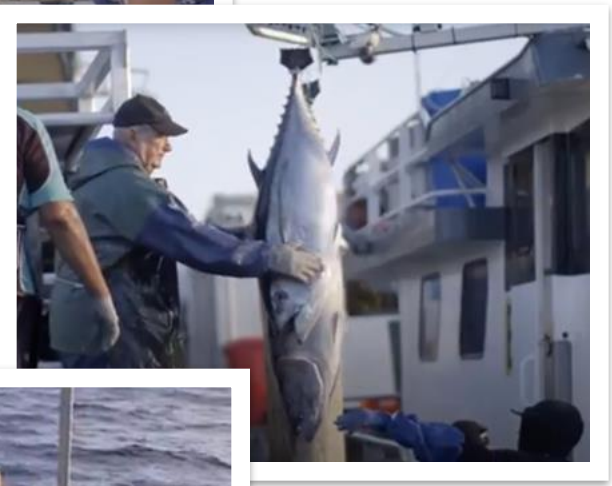
- Learn More:
  The Western Australia rock lobster fishery story | MSC

The Australia Western Rock Lobster Fishery

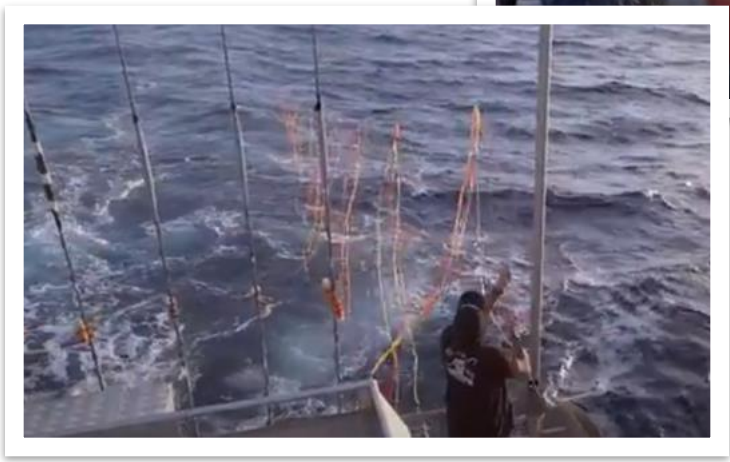
2. Modified longlines

- The Australia Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery was certified in 2015 with a condition related to ETP species outcome.
- Fishery stakeholders had to demonstrate the fishery could reduce interactions with turtles as well as with mako sharks to a level where their recovery was not hindered by the assessed fishing operations.
- The fishery implemented an electronic monitoring system, and introduced circle hooks, line cutters, and de-hookers to lower the level of interaction and impact on these endangered species.
- Learn more:
  Tuna Australia earns the MSC blue fish tick for the Australian Eastern Tuna & Billfish Fishery | Marine Stewardship Council





The Australia Eastern Tuna & Billfish Fishery



3. Crew Observer Plan

- Both the Exmouth Gulf and Shark Bay prawn fisheries implemented crew-member observer programs which deemed impact on sea snake and sawfish populations highly likely to be within environmental tolerances.
- The crew members were trained to safely handle snakes, and the observer program was a huge success: through the Crew Member Observer Program, it was estimated that 10% of the sea snake interactions were identified at the species level, providing a strong reference position to understand sea snake interactions across the two fisheries.
- In the case of the Shark Bay prawn fishery, 88% of sea snakes were being released alive.
- Learn more: Fishery innovations that drive ocean biodiversity research | Marine Stewardship Council

The Queen Star, part of the MSC certified Exmouth Gulf prawn fleet © Matt Watson

Stakeholder participation

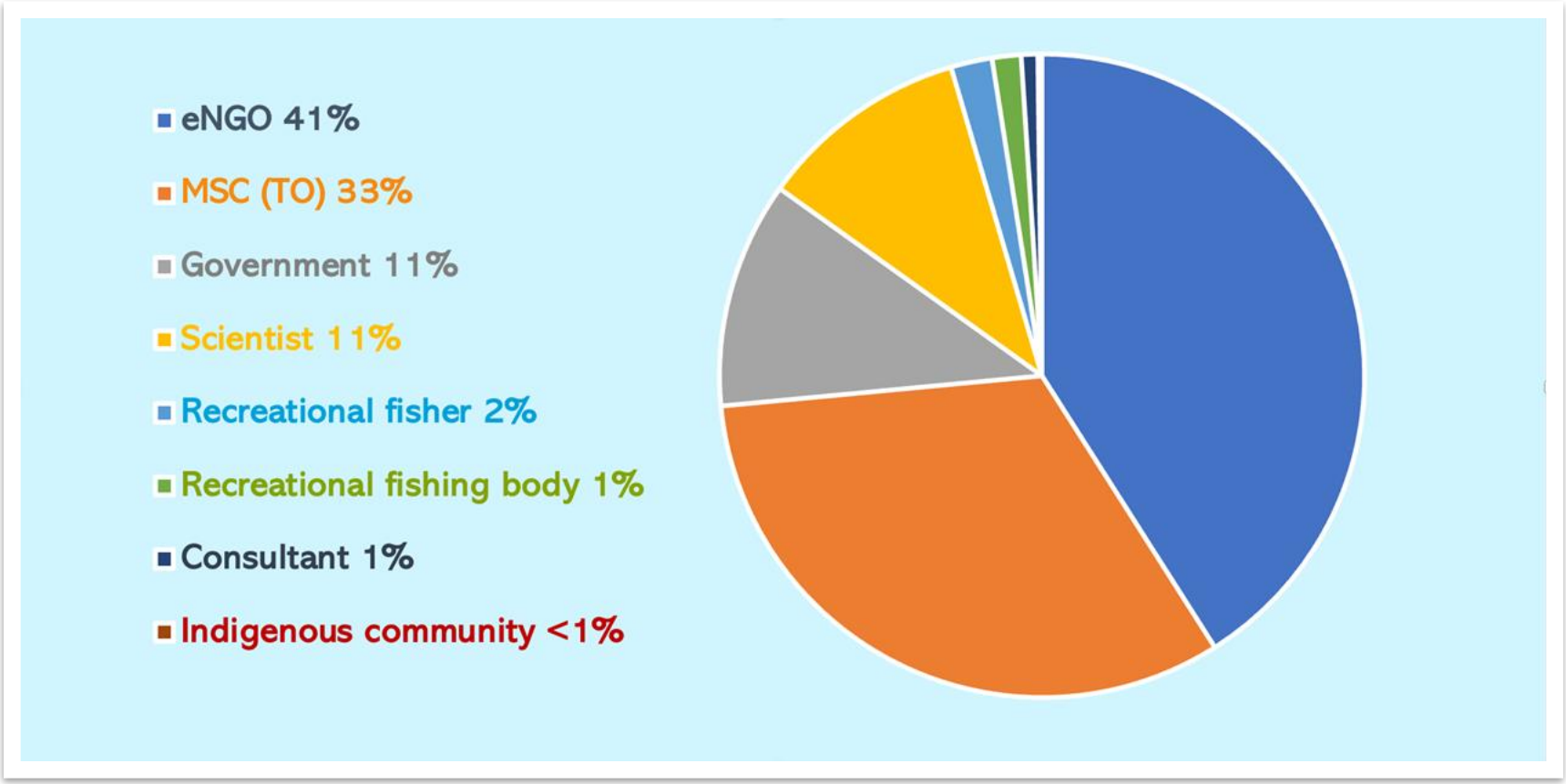
Multi Stakeholder Values

An integral and valuable component of the certification process is the transparency and opportunity for stakeholders to participate in discussion at critical stages of a fishery's assessment. Stakeholder input strengthens credibility, transparency, and fair outcome.

- External stakeholders may challenge the scoring of a fishery or any other structural part of the report.
- If a credible case is brought forward, the Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) is obligated to consider, address, and respond and this may lead to amendments and/or change the fishery's scoring.
- If a stakeholder remains unsatisfied that their input has not been reflected in the finding of the fishery performance against MSC requirements, the objection can be taken to an independent adjudication process.

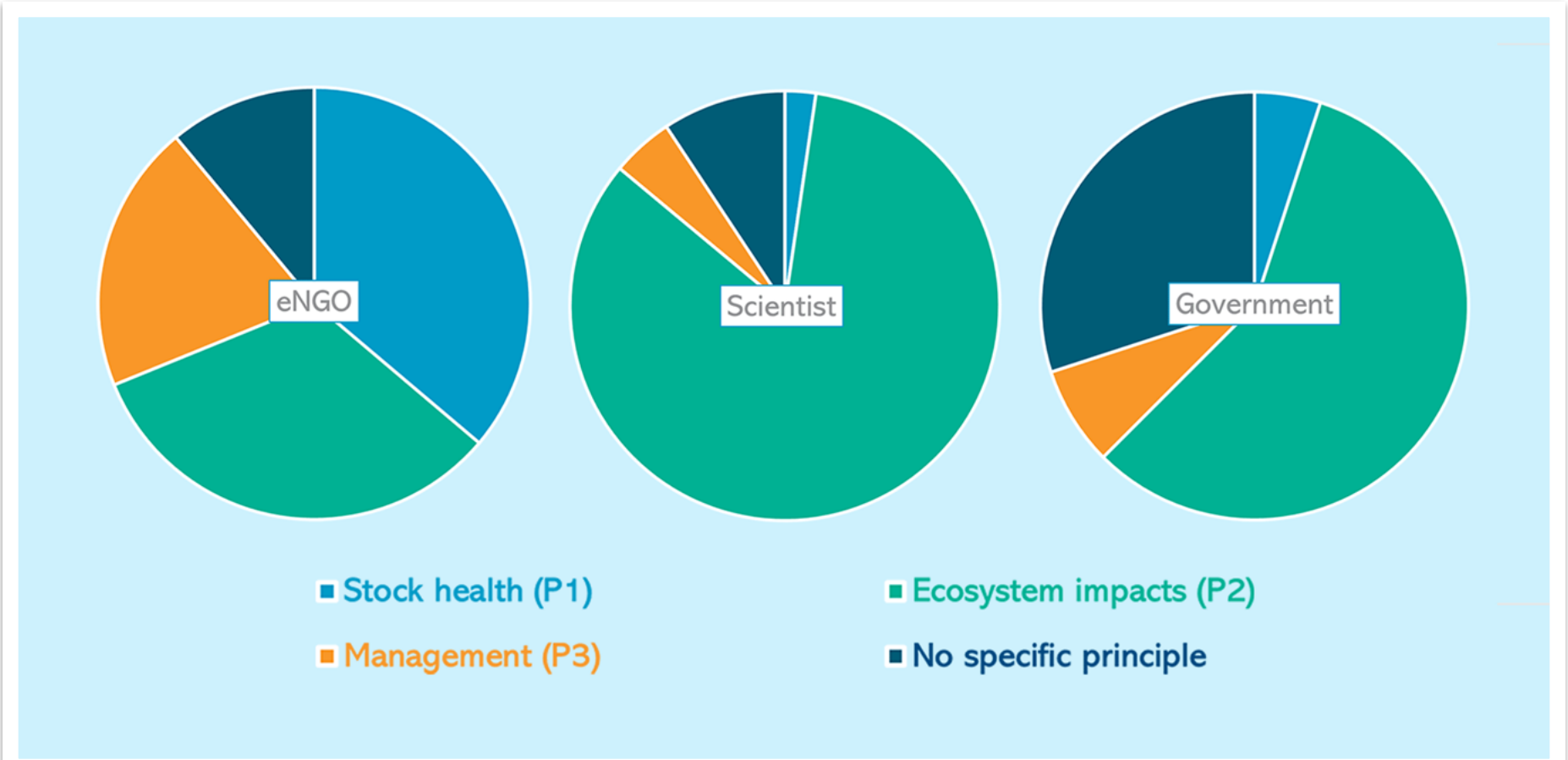
Stakeholder participation

In Australian Fisheries assessments up to March 2022



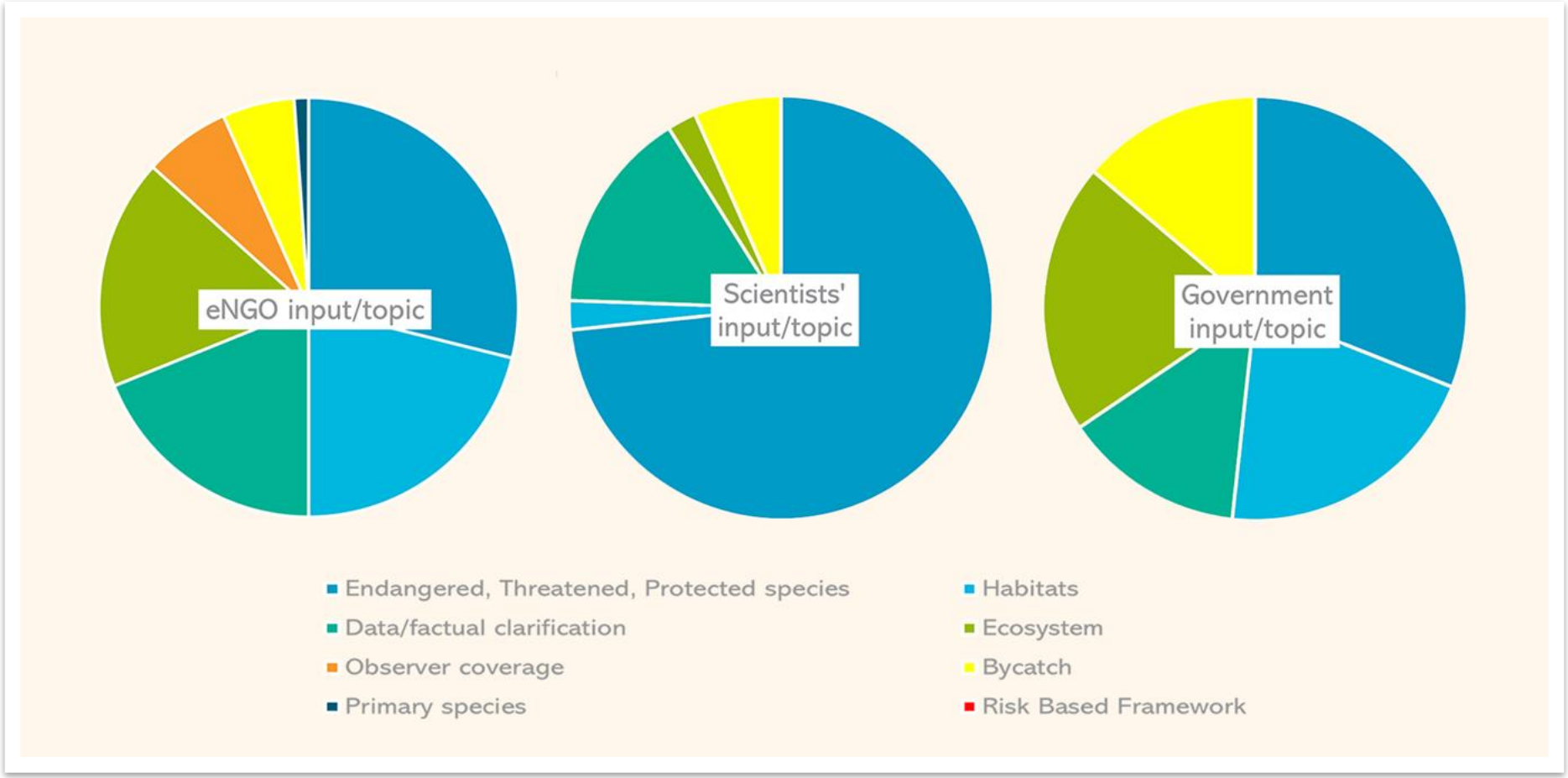
Areas of stakeholder focus

For top three stakeholder groups:
eNGOs, Governments, and Scientists



Principle 2: detailed input

Principle 2 input from eNGOs, Governments, and Scientists



Conclusion

- Australia's fisheries have made significant strides in meeting MSC requirements.
- As of November 2023, over 52% of Australian fisheries have achieved MSC certification.
- 4 new Australian fisheries attained MSC certification in 2023.
- Given Australia's abundant biodiversity, it is imperative to sustain the momentum in supporting fisheries that adhere to sustainability standards.

Read more → Fishing for the Future Report 2023

For further Information, contact:
Matt Watson
Senior Fisheries Program Manager, Asia Pacific
matt.watson@msc.org

msc.org