



Top End shark catch survey

A NEW study to investigate the number of sharks being taken out of northern Australia waters has been launched.

The \$220,000, three-year study will assess the effect of fishing on shark populations and devise management recommendations and monitoring protocols to ensure long-term sustainability of the industry.

Scientists also will try to estimate the size of the illegal shark catch.

The landed shark catch in the

Territory last year was worth more than \$8 million.

Similar fisheries operate in the Queensland section of the Gulf of Carpentaria and off the WA's Kimberley region.

The large illegal harvest by foreign fisheries can't be quantified but is believed to be significant.

It is estimated that up to 20 tonnes of sharks are taken out of Australian waters by illegal fishermen.

More than 1000 sharks will

be measured, sexed, individually labelled with cattle tags and released each year of the project.

Marked sharks – released into the population and caught again by fishermen – will help scientists to determine the appropriate level of the fishing effort.

The study will be carried out by Charles Darwin University, the NT Fisheries Department and the Australian Institute of Marine Science.