

PORT NOTICE

Vessel Speed Limits in Port of Darwin

PN/013

OPS-LEG-13

General Manager, Operations

Partnering in growth, connecting people and supporting potential

PREFACE

This Port Notice is issued pursuant to Section 57 of the *Ports Management Act 2015 (NT)*.

The *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act (Cth) (EPBC Act)* approval for East Arm Wharf expansion works stipulates measures to manage the risk of vessel strike to marine fauna. These include:

- Prescribed maximum commercial vessel speed limits;
- Enforcement of speed limits;
- Monitoring and reporting of vessel strike; and
- Adaptive management measures.

SCOPE

This Port Notice applies within the gazetted port limits of the Port of Darwin as detailed in figure 1.



Figure 1 – Darwin Port Limits

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This Port Notice applies to any vessel greater than 35m overall length, the use of which is made, allowed or authorised in the course of any business or in connection with any commercial transaction and, subject to any law in force in the Northern Territory, this includes a Government vessel, but does not include a vessel which is used solely for pleasure or recreation.

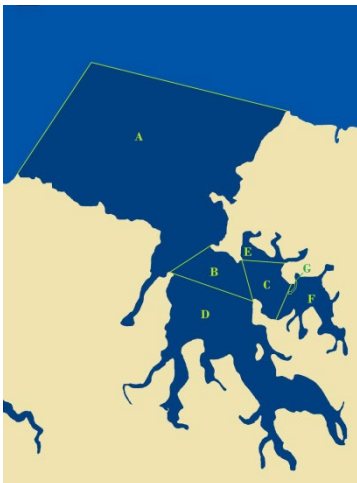
DIRECTION

SPEED LIMITS

The Port of Darwin is a compulsory pilotage area divided into several pilotage zones. These zones are described in the Technical and Safety Standards for Pilotage and the Provision of Pilotage Services for the Port of Darwin.

Vessel speed limits are as follows:

- Zone A – 16 knots;
- Zones B & C – 12 knots;
- Zone D – 10 knots; and
- Zones E, F & G – 8 knots.



Vessels may only exceed the prescribed speed limits by the minimum amount required if:

- The vessel may be unreasonably compromised (e.g. due to tidal windows increasing the risk of grounding);
- The vessel has fixed speed settings that are unreasonable if operating below the nominal maximum speed limit;
- A specific exemption has been granted by a Port Management Officer in situations where there is a high probability of unacceptable constraints to economic, social and environmental aspects if the speed limit were applied;
- When rendering assistance to a vessel or persons in distress; or
- When directed by the Port Management Officer or Harbour Control.

Applications for exemption must be submitted, in writing, to the Port Management Officer.

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ENFORCEMENT OF SPEED LIMITS

Darwin Harbour Control is fitted with a range of sensors that enable it to monitor vessel speeds. Vessels exceeding the prescribed speed limit will be requested to reduce speed by the Harbour Control Officer.

Harbour Control Officers will log occasions where vessels exceed the prescribed speeds limits and report these to the Port Management Officer.

The Port Management Officer will evaluate each occasion and the explanation offered by the vessel master and take such action as deemed necessary. Such action may include prosecution.

The Port Management Officer will conduct annual reviews of these logs to inform adaptive management measures. Such adaptive management measures will include initiatives aimed at reducing risk of vessel strike such as the revision of speed limits in areas identified as having elevated risk.

REPORTING VESSEL STRIKES OR NEAR MISSES

Any vessel that strikes or otherwise injures wildlife, or has a near miss with wildlife, and becomes aware of that fact must complete the [Animal Near Miss/Strike Form](#) and send it to the Darwin Port Environmental Manager at darwinport@darwinport.com.au.

REVIEW STATEMENT

This Port Notice will be reviewed biennially by the Port Management Officer.

REFERENCES

- *Ports Management Act 2015 (NT)*
- *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999 (Cth)*
- Technical and Safety Standard for Pilotage and Provision of Pilotage Services for the Port of Darwin

PETER DUMMETT
Port Operator
Darwin Port
30 September 2023