

# CODE RED



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Tasmania's Red Handfish and Spotted Handfish are Critically Endangered and human activities are intensifying in much of their remaining coastal habitat.

In support of the Handfish Conservation Project, we're taking action to help monitor, protect and rebuild their populations.



National Environmental Science Programme

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# PROJECT HANDFISH

Tasmania's Red Handfish and Spotted Handfish are Critically Endangered and human activities are intensifying in much of their remaining coastal habitat. Only swift, coordinated action backed by research, government, industry and the community can save them from extinction. The Marine Biodiversity Hub is helping to facilitate these activities, which are part of the Handfish Conservation Project.

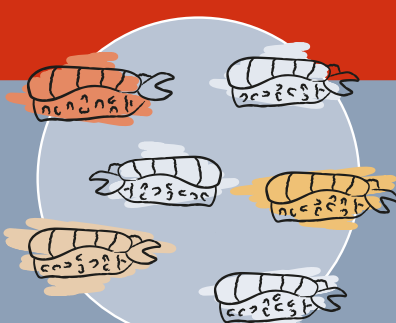
## INSURANCE POPULATIONS are starting to boost handfish numbers and bring them into public view



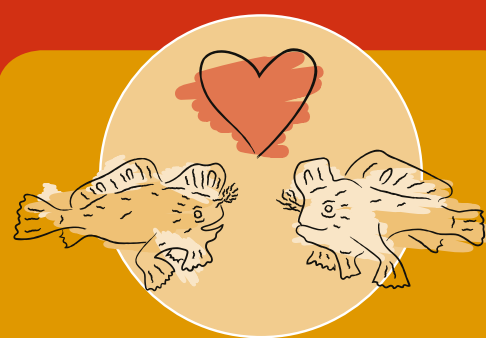
Handfish are collected and transported with utmost caution and care, according to strict permits and guidelines.



Captive raising facilities for handfish have been developed at CSIRO and public aquariums.



Tailor-made handfish food factories, fuelled by specific strains of microalgae, grow a diet of nutritious artemia (tiny shrimp).

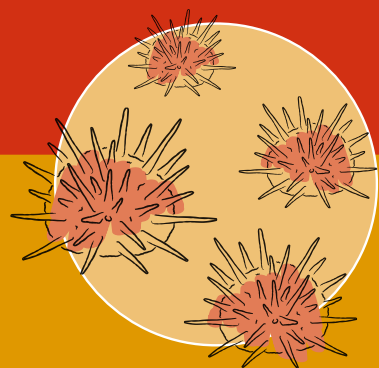


Further ecological studies are needed to learn how handfish might be encouraged to breed in captivity.

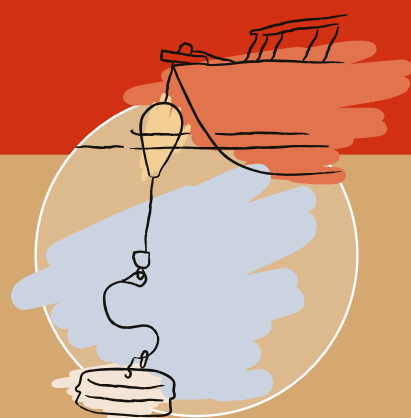


Restocking wild populations may be possible, but only if this presents no danger to natural populations and ecosystems.

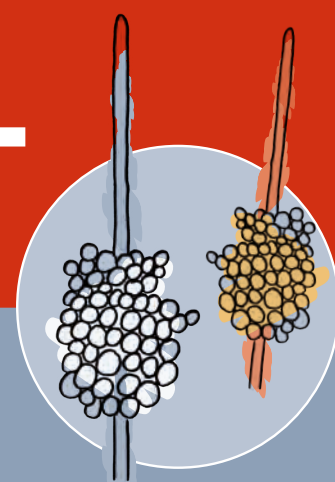
## Finding ways to RESTORE AND PROTECT HANDFISH HABITAT



An increase in native urchins has destroyed Red Handfish kelp habitat. Scientists and marine managers have overseen the removal of urchins from one of two key sites, and kelp is returning.

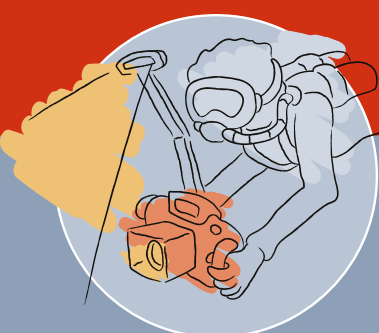


Environmentally sensitive moorings are replacing older models that scrape across the seafloor, destroying Spotted Handfish habitat.



Thousands of tiny ceramic poles made by a Hobart artist are 'planted' on the seafloor to mimic the lost sea squirts that Spotted Handfish like to nest on. Handfish have been spotted laying eggs around them.

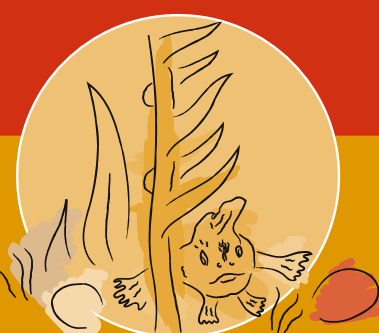
## MONITORING how handfishes are faring



Scientists and Reef Life Survey citizen scientist divers monitor Red Handfish and Spotted Handfish populations by tracking the location, size and habitat use of individuals.



A technique to identify handfish DNA in water samples is being developed to assist the search for new populations.



Please report potential new sightings of handfish, including the Ziebell's Handfish, via the 'Red Alert' page on the Handfish Conservation Project website [www.handfish.org.au](http://www.handfish.org.au)



Handfish  
Conservation  
Project

Key partners in the Handfish Conservation Project  
CSIRO • Derwent Estuary Program  
National Environmental Science Program Marine Biodiversity Hub  
Reef Life Survey • Seahorse World • SEA LIFE Melbourne  
University of Tasmania Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies  
Zoo and Aquarium Association

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