



Newscast



An information bulletin for recreational fishers

Edition 55, August 2007

New fishing bag and size limits announced

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) has announced changes to saltwater and freshwater fishing rules after extensive consultation with NSW recreational and commercial fishers. Bag and size limits for recreational fishing are reviewed periodically to ensure a sustainable future for high quality recreational fishing in NSW. The size limits also apply to commercial fishing. These changes reflected the findings of scientific assessments, the National Recreational and Indigenous Fishing Survey, the Palmer inquiry into illegal fishing, advice from expert committees of fishers and more than 3300 public submissions. These changes are about working with the community to progressively improve fishing rules to ensure the future sustainability and viability of our valuable fisheries resources. **The changes will start from September 3, 2007.** NSW DPI will undertake an extensive public advisory campaign over the coming months to promote the changes. New fishing brochures and sticky rulers will be distributed prior to 3 September 2007 and signage will be updated progressively around NSW waterways.

The major changes to saltwater fishing include:

- Introducing a new minimum legal length of 30cm for pearl perch.
- Increasing the minimum legal length for yellowtail kingfish from 60cm to 65cm.
- Increasing the minimum legal length for luderick (blackfish) from 25cm to 27cm.
- Introducing a minimum legal length of 60cm for dolphin fish (mahi-mahi). Additionally, only one fish may measure over 110cm.
- Introducing new combined bag limit of 20 for bream and tarwhine.
- A bag limit reduction from 20 to 10 will now apply to bonito, dolphin fish, octopus, rubberlip and jackass morwong.
- A bag limit reduction from 2 to 1 will now apply to highly prized billfish species, including sailfish and swordfish. A bag limit of 1 will also apply to each species of marlin. Reducing the bag limit will still allow for a trophy fish to be taken.
- A minimum legal length of 30cm will be introduced for blue groper. These fish mature as females between 24 and 34cm and change sex to males at about 60cm. The new size limit will protect females prior to maturity.
- The legal length for rubberlip morwong has been increased by 2cm to 30cm and the bag limit reduced to 10.
- The minimum legal length for red morwong will be increased from 25cm to 30cm. This aims to improve protection of small fish in shallow water.
- A combined bag limit of 5 will now apply to all shark and ray species, including only 1 tiger, mako, blue shark, hammerhead and whaler species. A zero bag limit will now apply to wobbegong sharks.

The major changes to freshwater fishing include:

- Leaving a line unattended will now be prohibited; this aims to reduce the injury, stress and death of fish and invertebrates that result from being caught on unattended lines. However the distance a person can be from each line will increase from 10 metres to 50 metres.
- Increasing the minimum legal length for Murray cod, to provide better protection for immature fish. The current legal length will increase to 55cm after 1 December 2007 and to 60cm after 1 December 2008.

General information 1300 550 474

Agent enquiries or for changing contact details: 02 9527 8589, Fax 02 9527 8409

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/recreational

- A new closed season for Australian bass and estuary perch from June 1 to August 31 each year to allow the fish to spawn.
- Simplifying the trout water classifications to two categories; artificial fly and lure only waters and general trout waters.
- The bag limit for unlisted native fish, which previously had no limit, will now be set at 10.

Fishcare Volunteers needed for Sydney

Keen fishers are invited to join the NSW Government's successful Fishcare Volunteer Program, which has 300 volunteers State-wide. Fishcare volunteers play a vital role in promoting awareness and do a terrific job in advising anglers about the rules and values of sustainable recreational fishing in NSW. Anyone with a passion for recreational fishing and is able to donate eight hours a month can join the this important community program, which is helping to promote good fishing practice in NSW. Volunteers take part in kids fishing workshops and collect fishing information by conducting surveys but do not have any enforcement powers.

The two-day training session is planned for the weekend of the 15th -16th September at the Cronulla Fisheries Centre. For more information contact Kerrie Deguara on 9527 8526 or 0438 162 610. Training will include presentations by DPI staff about recreational fishing, rules and regulations, conservation, research and communicating the rules of sustainable fishing to anglers. There is also a TAFE training component in fish biology and identifying fish species and participants will receive a Statement of Attainment in Fishcare. After reaching volunteer milestones and completing sea safety training, volunteers will then have opportunities to assist in dedicated Fishcare boats.

Catch and Release Measuring Mats are now available to recreational fishers

A catch and release measuring mat has been designed to help anglers accurately record their catch. The mats include full colour illustrations of the most popular saltwater & freshwater species of fish and conversion tables so the approximate weight of a fish can be estimated from its length measurement and are available for purchase through NSW DPI. They also include tips on the best methods to use to ensure the fish is given a maximum chance of survival after release. Large graduations on the ruler can help in the many "Catch, Photograph and Release" fishing competitions that have emerged in recent years. For further information on NSW DPI - Catch and Release Mats call NSW DPI on 1300 550 474 or go to: <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/mat>.

Bag your bait bags

Discarded bait bags far outnumber all other types of bags found floating in the estuaries and littered along the beaches and sea walls. Plastic bags can prove fatal when sea turtles mistake them for natural jellyfish prey. Please dispose of bait bags in a responsible manner. For rescue advice or if you see injured wildlife please contact Australian Seabird Rescue on the following numbers: North Coast 02 6686 2852, Central Coast 0438 862 676 and South Coast 0431 282 238.

Reminder to all Agents

To order additional licence books, monthly return books and recreational fishing advisory information, contact the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) recreational licensing team on (02) 9527 8589 or fax your order to (02) 9527 0034.

To be added to the **Newscast** electronic mailing list, please send your email address to fisheries.newscast@dpi.nsw.gov.au