



NSW Lobster Fishery Code of Practice

The NSW Lobster Fishery is subject to rules as specified in the *Fisheries Management Act 1994*, the *Fisheries Management (General) Regulation 2010*, the *Fisheries Management (Supporting Plan) Regulation 2006* and the *Fisheries Management (Lobster Share Management Plan) Regulation 2000 (the Plan)*, as well as fishing closures and licence conditions under the Act, which allow enforcement of the operating standards in the fishery. Fishers are also required to comply with a range of other Local, State and Commonwealth statutory requirements. The *NSW Lobster Fishery Management Strategy (Lobster FMS)* provides stated objectives and management responses against which performance of the fishery is monitored.

In addition to the mandatory requirements, many commercial fishers have expressed their commitment to take on greater responsibility and accountabilities for sustainable fisheries management.

This *Lobster Code of Practice* (the Code) summarises the broad principles under which fishers operate in the NSW Lobster Fishery. The Code was established in February 2008, and is reviewed every two years in consultation with the Lobster Industry Working Group.

As a person participating in the NSW Lobster Fishery I will:

General

1. Familiarise myself and comply with relevant legislation and fishing closures.
2. Be aware of any changes to the Code or regulations applicable to the fishery, and keep a current copy and any applicable regional supplements in my vehicle or boat.
3. In the event of capture of females lobsters carrying ova, ensure their immediate release minimising predation after release and reducing fishing mortalities.
4. Not use or discourage the use of prohibited size 'callers' (rock lobsters left in or placed in trap when set to attract other rock lobsters) when undertaking lobster fishing operations.
5. Responsibly dispose of any litter or derelict fishing gear, either generated by or collected in lobster fishing operations.
6. Minimise noise associated with fishing operations.
7. Ensure my actions do not bring the industry into disrepute.
8. Ensure fishing operations are conducted with an acceptable level of safety for fishers and the public.
9. Conduct fishing operations, and maintain fishing boats and vehicles, in a manner that minimises emissions and water pollution.
10. Use the shortest rope possible for the head gear to avoid entanglement by marine life or craft.
11. Record and report loss and recovery of any fishing gear.
12. Use any implement necessary to ensure crew safety when sorting catch (such as large tongs), but not implements (such as a spike or club) that could pierce or otherwise injure any fish or animal taken in the catch.
13. Ensure that all fish landed for sale are marketed in an authorised manner.
14. Comply with the instructions of the NSW Food Authority regarding the handling of fish and effective icing and storage to maximise the quality of product and minimise food safety hazards.
15. Respect the public amenity of boat ramps by avoiding cleaning fish and gear in their vicinity and ensuring that access for other users is not unduly restricted.



16. Be aware of Indigenous culture in my area of operations, and respect the customs of the local Indigenous people.
17. Be pro-active, cooperate and assist with investigations relating to:
 - Identification and mapping of significant habitat and areas of environmental sensitivity
 - Gear modification for bycatch reduction
 - Sustaining fish stocks
 - Minimising interactions with threatened and protected species
 - Efficiency of fishing gear and operations
 - Reduction in 'ghost fishing' by use of appropriate material and;
 - Any other relevant research programs
18. Inform the relevant authority of any pollution incident or significant environmental impact.
19. Comply with the by-laws and regulations of relevant local Councils, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, NSW Food Authority and Waterways Authority, and any codes for fishers prepared by these organisations that are supported by the Lobster Industry Working Group.
20. Be courteous and cooperative with any public official or member of the community.

Bycatch from Lobster Operations

21. Minimise the growth of marine plants on buoys (by cleaning) to prevent the inadvertent capture of sea turtles that may be entangled in ropes whilst trying to feed on organisms settled on buoys.
22. Adopt slow lifting rates for traps to reduce pressure trauma and therefore maximise the likelihood of survival of bycatch.
23. Conduct fishing operations in areas, at times, and in a manner, that minimises levels of bycatch.
24. Use equipment or methods (such as giving immediate priority to the return of bycatch to the water) that minimise bycatch levels, juvenile and oversized rock lobster mortality and stress, and minimise the opportunity for predation of juveniles and unwanted animals after release.

Threatened and Protected Species

25. Be familiar with the list of, and methods of identifying, threatened and protected species, populations and ecological communities that might be encountered during fishing operations.
26. Conduct fishing operations in areas, at times, and in a manner that minimises the potential for any interaction with threatened and protected species, populations and ecological communities.
27. Report the location, time and date, in the comment section of the daily Lobster catch return, or other appropriate logbook, of any interaction with, or sighting of, individuals of marine threatened and protected species, populations and ecological communities or any interactions with threatened or protected sea birds.
28. Return any captured individual of a threatened or protected species, population or ecological community to the water with the least possible harm.

Inshore Lobster Operations

29. Conduct fishing operations in a way that minimises disturbance to nesting and feeding sites of migratory and resident shorebirds.

Marine Pest and Disease

30. Adhere to management programs and operating practices designed to prevent the introduction and translocation of marine pests and diseases.