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Minor changes to recreational fishing rules in NSW: Fisheries Management (General) Regulation 2010

The *Fisheries Management (General) Regulation 2002* has been reviewed as it was due for repeal on 1 September 2010 pursuant to the provisions of the *Subordinate Legislation Act 1989*. The new *Fisheries Management (General) Regulation 2010* is now in place under the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* to replace the 2002 Regulation.

As a result there are some changes to recreational fishing rules in NSW from 1 September 2010, which are detailed below:

1. Changes to gear marking requirements and setting of recreational traps and nets:

Lobster traps, crab traps, hoop or lift nets and spanner crab nets

- All floats/ buoys must be labelled with name and address of the person who either sets, uses or lifts the fishing gear,
- floats/ buoys must measure not less than 100mm in all dimensions,
- the minimum height of the float/ buoy must be at least 50mm above the water,
- all letters to be a minimum of 15mm and in a colour contrasting to the buoy,
- the name of the gear (or an abbreviation) to be marked on float/ buoy. 'CT' = crab trap, 'LT' = lobster trap, 'HN' = hoop or lift net, 'SN' = spanner crab net.
- All lobster traps and crab traps must have a 50gm weight attached to the buoy at least 1m below the surface so that no rope is floating on the surface of the water.
- Hoop nets or lift nets and spanner crab nets must not have any rope floating on the surface of the water.

Bait traps, yabby traps and shrimp traps

- a tag must be attached to a part of the trap which is at or above water level with dimensions not less than 80mm x 45mm, with the
- name and address of the person who either sets, uses or lifts the trap,
- all letters to be a minimum of 15mm and in a colour contrasting to the tag, and
- the name of the gear (or an abbreviation) e.g. 'ST' = shrimp trap, 'BT' = bait trap.

Note: If a stake is used to mark the position of a yabby trap, the stake must be identified with a tag, in the manner described above. If a buoy is used to mark the position of the trap, the buoy must be marked in the manner described above (no weight on rope required).

2. Change to bag limit for Cobia

The bag limit for Cobia (*Rachycentron canadum*) has been reduced from 20 to 5.

3. Removal of minimum legal length for Sole

The minimum length for sole has been removed. Note: the minimum legal length for flounders remains at 25cm and a combined bag limit for flounder and sole remains at 20.

4. Removal of maximum size of landing net

Recognising the common use and the importance of large, fine mesh landing nets for catch and release fishing, the maximum size of the frame of a landing net has been removed from the regulations.

5. Reduction of the infringement notice amount from \$200 to \$75 for the offence of fishers not having their recreational fishing licence receipt in their possession when fishing

Recreational fishers are required to pay the recreational fishing fee (or licence as it is commonly known) before they go fishing (unless otherwise exempt). Fishers required to pay the fee must have the official receipt for the payment of the fishing fee in his or her immediate possession when fishing from any waters other wise they are guilty of an offence under section 34J(2) of the *Fisheries Management Act 1994*.

The infringement notice amount for this offence has been reduced from \$200 to \$75. However, fishers must have their licence receipt in their possession for immediate production when fishing. If approached by a fisheries officer, only in exceptional circumstances will provision be provided for fishers to produce their licence receipt at a later date.

The above changes will come into effect on 1 September 2010. All current NSW recreational fishing rules are available at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries.

Expression of Interest for representatives for recreational fishing council and committees

Expressions of Interest are invited from persons with expertise in various aspects of recreational fishing to be appointed to fill vacancies on the Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing (ACoRF), Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee (RFFTEC) and the Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust Expenditure Committee (RFSTEC). Applicants should have knowledge of recreational fishing issues, and a willingness to assist in consultation on these issues.

Vacancies for positions on ACoRF include:

- Estuary Fishing – Applicants must have expertise in estuary fishing.
- Offshore Fishing – Applicants must have expertise in offshore fishing.
- Freshwater Fishing – Applicants must have expertise in freshwater fishing.
- Charter Boat Fishing – Applicants must have expertise in charter boat fishing.

Vacancies for positions on RFFTEC include:

- Region 1 - North Coast.
- Region 4 - Inner North West.
- Region 5 - Inner Central West.
- Region 7 - North West.
- Region 8 - South West.

Vacancies for positions on RFSTEC include:

- Region 1 – Applicant must reside between Tweed Heads and Evans Head.
- Region 4 – Applicant must reside between Port Macquarie and Seal Rocks.
- Region 6a – Applicant must reside between The Entrance and Wollongong.
- Region 7 – Applicant must reside between Wollongong and Narooma.

Representatives on ACoRF, RFFTEC and RFSTEC meet up to three times each year, generally in Sydney. Members are paid a sitting fee, travel and accommodation expenses and are appointed for terms of up to three years. Applications are encouraged from women, persons from non-English speaking backgrounds and Indigenous Australians.

Expressions of Interest should clearly indicate the position(s) sought and include a resume detailing experience, knowledge and any affiliations relevant to the position(s), and be sent to: Recreational Fisheries – Confidential, Industry & Investment NSW, PO Box 21, Cronulla NSW 2230.

The closing date for applications for the ACoRF and RFSTEC positions is Thursday 7 October 2010. The closing date for applications for the RFFTEC positions is Friday 15 October 2010. For further information visit the I&I NSW website: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries or contact Eddie Douglas on (02) 9527 8439 or email edward.douglas@industry.nsw.gov.au.

Sightings of Barramundi in Sydney Harbour

I&I NSW is aware of recent reports of barramundi in Sydney Harbour and are investigating the source of these releases. I&I NSW would like to reiterate that it is illegal to introduce fish into public waterways in NSW. Releasing fish from your aquarium, pond or other sources can pose a serious threat to aquatic ecosystems. They can also spread diseases and parasites, and damage natural habitats. Unwanted plants from your aquarium or pond can choke waterways, displacing native plants and depleting oxygen and food for fish. Fish that are released will often die from starvation or disease if they are not native to Australia, or to the local areas. Barramundi is a tropical and semi-tropical species and cannot survive the colder water temperatures of Sydney Harbour and will ultimately die if released. Released fish that do survive and breed will compete with local native species for food and space. I&I NSW advises the community not to release fish, plants and snails into waterways – it is illegal! Please give unwanted fish to friends or take them back to your local aquarium or dispose of them in a humane manner. I&I NSW encourages anyone with an interest in fish stocking to contact the Department on (02) 4916 3835 or fax to (02) 4916 3979.

Fish Friendly Grants

The NSW Government is calling on individuals, groups, local councils and organisations interested in undertaking a fish friendly project to improve their local waterways to apply for a Habitat Action Grant. The grants program aims to restore fish habitat and increase native fish populations. Applications close on 15 October 2010 at 5.00pm. The Habitat Action Grants application form and contacts for technical advice can be found at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/habitat/rehabilitating/ahr-grants-program or by contacting a Conservation Manager on (02) 4916 3926 or (02) 6626 1107.

Limited abalone fishing now permitted in the Illawarra area

I&I NSW has opened part of the NSW coast from Botany Bay to Wreck Bay, to allow commercial and limited recreational, abalone fishing on weekends and NSW public holidays adjacent to weekends. This area has been closed to both recreational and commercial fishing for several years due to concerns about depleted stocks and the impact of an outbreak of a naturally occurring disease caused by *Perkinsus*. The independent Total Allowable Catch Committee, which sets the total commercial catch, believed there were some signs of recovery of stocks in the area and recommended that a limited commercial take would provide information on the status of stock. The area from Port Stephens to Botany Bay will remain closed to both commercial and recreational fishing for abalone until evidence of stock recovery in these areas is known.

Recreational fishers are reminded that the possession limit in waters open to the taking of abalone in NSW is two per person and the minimum prescribed legal length for abalone in NSW is 11.7 centimetres.

Abalone is now listed as a priority species under the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* and persons found guilty of trafficking abalone face up to 10 years imprisonment. I&I NSW is committed to protecting our marine resources for future generations and our fisheries officers will continue to target people involved in illegal abalone activity. A list of the recreational fishing rules is available at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries.