

Requirements for releasing fish into NSW waterways

Why do people release fish into NSW waterways?

Fish are released into waterways for a variety of reasons by individuals, community groups and government. Releasing fish can provide many economic, social and cultural benefits for the community. Recreational fishers carry out fish releases to help boost existing stocks for recreational fishers to enjoy. The Buddhist community releases fish in the belief that a good action such as giving freedom to or saving the life of a fish, will lengthen the life of the person performing the release, or provide good health to that person. Conservation groups release fish to maintain natural populations and for the preservation of endangered species. Some fish species that are released into our waterways for recreational and conservation purposes are shown in this brochure.



Who is responsible for fish releases?

NSW Department of Primary Industries is responsible for the conservation and management of fish and marine vegetation of NSW, including the management of fish releases, pest species and fish diseases.

Can I release fish in public waters of NSW?

Not without a permit from NSW Department of Primary Industries. This includes releasing fish within public impoundments, natural waterways, rivers, billabongs, lakes, wetlands, streams and public dams. The capture and immediate release of fish whilst recreationally fishing does not require a fish release permit. Penalties of up to \$11,000 for a corporation and \$5,500 for individuals apply for releasing fish in NSW public waters without a NSW Department of Primary Industries permit.

How do I apply for a permit to release fish?

Simply complete an application form on our website www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/recreational or phone (02) 4916 1232 for the application form.

How much does a permit cost?

A permit to release fish is issued free of charge by NSW Department of Primary Industries once an application to release fish is received, assessed and approved.



What does the assessment involve?

NSW Department of Primary Industries will check to see that fish to be released are suitable for the waterway and that fish will be supplied by an accredited fish supplier.

How long does it take to issue a permit?

Allow at least six weeks for the processing of your application to release fish. A permit to release fish will be issued if the application is approved.

What must I do when I receive my permit?

You must comply with the conditions in the permit to release fish. Any breach of the permit conditions is an offence and heavy penalties may apply.

Where do I buy fish to release?

From fish hatcheries accredited under the Hatchery Quality Assurance Scheme (HQAS). The HQAS ensures that all fish supplied for public release are healthy and of the highest quality and standard. For a list of HQAS accredited hatcheries phone (02) 4916 1232 or visit the website: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/recreational.

What happens if I release unsuitable fish?

Releasing fish that are not suitable for the particular waterway may result in the fish dying from starvation, disease or from a lack of suitable habitat. Otherwise the fish may become pests, could spread diseases or parasites or could have other impacts on native fish and aquatic life.

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