

Code of Practice for Charter Fishing in NSW

Introduction

The Charter fishing industry provides quality fishing opportunities for recreational fishing clients in NSW. It provides a unique service where clientele pay to access fishing grounds onboard a vessel mastered by an experience skipper with fishing expertise.

The industry is managed under the requirements of *Fisheries Management Act 1994* (the Act) and the *Fisheries Management (General) Regulation 2019*, which facilitates operating standards and sustainability measures in the fishery. Charter operators are also required to comply with a range of other Local, State and Commonwealth statutory requirements.

Many Charter operators have expressed their commitment to take on greater responsibility and accountabilities for sustainable harvest and bettering clientele experience. This Code of Practice (the Code) summarises the broad principles under which the licenced charter fishing sector operate, promoting best industry practice, professionalism and long-term fisheries sustainability. This Code was established in Dec 2020 and will be reviewed every two years in consultation with the Charter Fishing NSW Working Group.



Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners and Cultural Heritage

The Charter fishing industry acknowledges the traditional owners of NSW, the Koori people, the Traditional Custodians of the land and marine environment on which charter fishing vessels operate and pay respect to their Elders past, present and future.

Compliance

Charter fishing businesses in NSW are required to be licenced under the Act. Each charter fishing operator must adhere to the conditions set for their licence with regard to allotted fishing endorsements, seating allocations, professional qualifications and logbook reporting requirements. Operators should also:

- Report any illegal or improper activities to the relevant authority.
- Support the use of NSW exemption certificates to cover all client licence requirements whilst on board charter fishing vessels.
- Keep up to date with legislation changes that apply to their industry.

Respect in public areas

A charter fishing operator should be courteous to all other operators, landholders, government officials, and the general public when operating in public spaces.

Sustainability

Charter fishing operators should advise clients to comply with the recreational bag and size limits rules. Additionally, operators must comply with other sustainability requirements specific to the industry as set out in the Act, including fin clipping (Appendix A) and boat trip limits for deep sea species.

Operators should also:

- actively promote an ethos of “take only what you need” as well as catch and release (where appropriate) to clients to help ensure the sustainable use of marine resources.
- utilise release weights when releasing demersal fish species, including Mulloway and Snapper, to promote increased survival rates of these released fish.

Environmental Awareness

Charter fishing operators should abide by all relevant Sea Dumping regulations including the dumping of garbage, marine sewage and petroleum products, to keep the marine environment free from any pollution. Operators should also:

- Report any all incidents of pollution whether from fuels, oils or any form of rubbish.
- Report any large dead aquatic mammals.
- Wherever possible, retrieve small amounts of garbage and dispose of properly.



Safety

Charter operators must ensure that vessels are maintained and operated within the requirements of the vessel survey, including operating under an approved vessel Safety Management System. All marine safety equipment should also be serviced and maintained as per schedule requirements. The vessel should also hold current, valid and suitable insurances for the activities being undertaken.

The Master and qualified crew of charter fishing vessels should also hold current first aid qualifications and be suitably licenced under AMSA law.

Research

Research underpins the management of sustainable fisheries resources in NSW. Charter fishing businesses are required to submit accurate logbook data in a timely fashion, a pivotal component of the stock assessment process.

Participation in research projects such as the Charter Fishing Observer Program and Fish Tagging Studies is also strongly encouraged, which increase the robustness and effectiveness of these monitoring programs.

Key Contacts

Agency	Details
ASMA	1800 627 484
Environmental Protection Authority (Pollution/Oil spills)	131 555
Fisheries NSW:	
Fishers Watch hotline to report illegal fishing	1800 043 536
FADs Officer to report a lost or missing FAD	(02) 4424 7417
Charter fishing management	(02) 4424 7414
Fisheries Business Services (licence administration/transfers/fish online)	1300 702 662
Fisheries Research	(02) 9435 4671
National Parks and Wildlife Service (Marine Wildlife incidents)	131 555
NSW Maritime	13 12 26
Marine Rescue	Channel 16 – VHF (02) 8071 4848
Water Police and other emergency services	000

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Reference: PUB20/786

FIN CLIPPING

The below retained fish species are required to have their right side pectoral fin removed (just above the base) prior to being removed from the boat.

Species required to be Fin Clipped
Yellowfin tuna
Southern bluefin tuna
Yellowtail kingfish
Snapper
Black marlin
Blue marlin
Striped marlin