

Code Words

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR A RESPONSIBLE GAMEFISH FISHERY

Codes of Practice are important to set standards for organisations and have been developed for a wide range of activities and industries, including the seafood industry. Many of the principles incorporated into Codes of Practice might seem obvious or general, but they clearly demonstrate to those inside and outside the organisation that high standards do exist and are strongly encouraged.

It is important that a Code of Practice for gamefishing in Australia be promoted, especially since some sectors of the public and the media are not well informed about this form of angling.

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE GFAA

To a large extent, the GFAA has operated under a form of 'Code of Practice' for many years. The constitution of the GFAA contains a set of objects (or aims) which are a very useful starting point in this regard. Taking the relevant points from the Objects of GFAA (the ones which relate to fishing ethics, conservation and so on), it is clear that the Association has set itself high standards. That is:

- To formulate and support fair, uniform and ethical angling rules.
- To conserve gamefish and food fish resources for the recreational and economic use of present and future generations.
- To affiliate with the International Game Fish Association (IGFA) and work closely with that Association as well as scientific institutions and Government bodies interested in fisheries conservation and management.
- To encourage and further the study of recreational angling, the related fish species and the habitat requirements of such species.
- To develop and support fish tagging programs and other scientific data collection.
- To act as a data accumulation centre for fishing results and to make such information available to governments and others for furthering education in the wise use and conservation of the species.
- To analyse the pressure of recreational and commercial fishing upon the respective gamefish species.
- To disseminate information and knowledge of scientific studies of commercial fishing and gamefishing to GFAA member clubs and to the general public.
- To assist and participate in domestic

and international gamefish seminars and symposiums where the expertise, data and purposes of the Association may be helpful in assisting other organisations with similar objectives.

- To make grants to gamefish-oriented organisations or institutions for the support of research and education in the sciences related to gamefish and the sport of angling.

These objects are largely pursued through the rules and regulations of the Association. The GFAA Research & Development Foundation has also been formed to assist in funding the pursuit of many of these specific goals.

THE CODE

Principles of a Code of Practice for gamefishing in Australia (not only for members of clubs, it should be noted) include:

Gamefish anglers will strive to:

- Fish to the ethical standards espoused by the GFAA. Follow the rules and regulations set by the GFAA. Always conduct gamefishing activities in an ethical manner.
- Show due care and responsibility for the habitat of gamefish and other marine life. Don't discard anything overboard, including plastic, metal and fishing line. Report pollution. Pick up floating rubbish. Take care in anchoring over sensitive reef areas. Only use biodegradable chemicals onboard.
- Minimise direct effects on wildlife, including seabirds, marine mammals and reptiles.
- Minimise taking onboard material which will produce pollution or rubbish. Observe proper provisioning processes. Minimise packaging.
- Follow all relevant regulations by governing institutions. Adhere to bag and size limits. Respect and adhere to

protected species legislation. Be aware of zoning within marine parks and marine protected areas.

- Be informed about the biology of gamefish. For example, be aware of how to identify various gamefish species for more accurate recording of tagging and capture data.
- Tag and release fish with care. Learn the correct procedures for tag and release and catch and release to ensure maximum likelihood of survival of tagged and released fish. Record and forward accurate post-release information in a timely manner.
- Take only what is needed. Exercise restraint when taking any species of fish even if no bag limits exist. Be realistic about the amount of baitfish taken for fishing. Try to return unused live baitfish to the area in which they were caught.
- Dispatch fish quickly and humanely. All fish which are taken should be killed as quickly and humanely as possible.
- Convey the benefits of gamefishing to the public. Take opportunities to educate the non-fishing public about the benefits of gamefishing, of tag and release and support of research. Encourage others to join affiliated gamefishing clubs.
- Cooperate and participate in research and development activities which will enhance the sustainability of the resource. Offer free access to fish for recognised research programs. Participate in biological sampling programs.
- Participate and assist in the collection of catch and effort statistics.
- Consider and respect the rights of others when engaged in any aspect of gamefishing. This includes other anglers, and commercial fishers' rights to harvest common property resources.