

Recreational Marine Fishing Tasmanian Code of Practice

TARFish

Tasmanian Association for Recreational Fishing Inc.



CEO's Message

Recreational fishing in Tasmania is enjoyed by more people per head of population than any other state/territory in Australia. I was bought up fishing at our families shack at Murdunna on the Tasman Peninsula during the 1970's.

Fishing in those days was exciting with excellent fish stocks to keep me, and my brothers and sisters, enthusiastically chasing the bread and butter species of flathead, perch and cod on almost a daily basis in the school holidays.

Today fish stocks are very different to those of the 70's and 80's and to help protect recreational fishing for future generations we need to ensure that our fishing activities are based on practices that provide sustainable fishing for the future. Today through research that is providing better knowledge and insight we have a far greater understanding of the impacts that the marine environment is facing.

TARFish have produced this marine Code of Practice as an important initiative to ensure recreational marine fishers are aware of what it takes to support sustainable fishing in Tasmania now and for future generations.

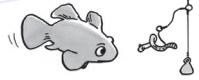


Mark Nikolai
Chief Executive Officer



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Tasmanians just love fishing. More than 100,000 Tasmanians regularly fish for recreation and sport. This means about one in every five Tasmanians enjoy fishing. Fishing is one of the most popular recreational and sporting activities in Australia. People of all ages and from all walks of life enjoy fishing.

The enormous popularity that recreational fishing enjoys can contribute to the decline of fish stocks and can contribute to the destruction of vital fish habitat. TARFish was formed in 2004 to represent the interests of recreational and sport fishing at a Tasmanian level. Recognition of the need for more sustainable fishing practices and an agreed national standard for recreational fishing led to the development of a national code of practice in 1996. The National Code of Practice is voluntary and addresses four main areas of fishing responsibility. These include:

- 1. Looking after our fisheries*
- 2. Protecting the environment*
- 3. Treating fish humanely and*
- 4. Respecting the rights of others.*



The four areas of fishing responsibility are a framework for the following principles.

1. Look after our fisheries by;

- Taking no more than our immediate needs.
- Understanding and observing all fishing regulations and reporting illegal fishing activities.
- Supporting and encouraging activities that restore and enhance fisheries and fish habitat.

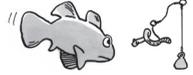
2. Protect the environment by;

- Preventing pollution and protecting wildlife by removing rubbish.
- Using established roads and tracks.
- Taking care when boating and anchoring to avoid damaging sensitive areas.
- Reporting environmental damage and pollution to the relevant authorities.
- Avoiding interactions with threatened species and their critical habitats.
- Knowing marine park locations and observing any regulations.



3. Treat fish humanely by:

- Using only legal tackle, attending our gear and valuing our catch.
- Quickly and correctly returning unwanted or illegal catch to the water.



4. Respect the rights of others by:

- Practising courtesy towards all those who use inland and coastal waters.
- Obtaining permission from landholders and traditional owners before entering land.
- Caring for our own safety and the safety of others when fishing.

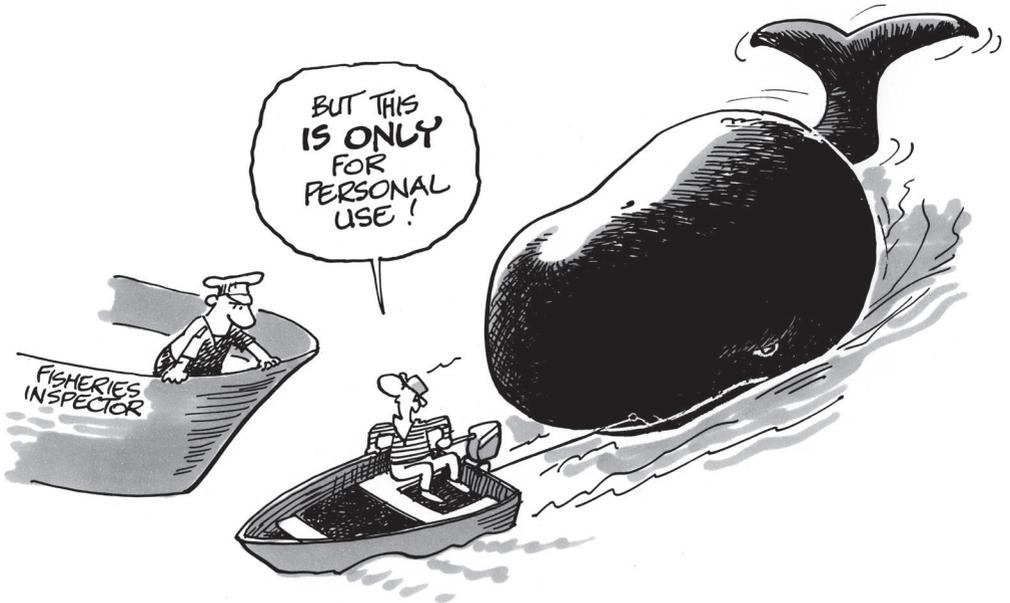
LOOK AFTER OUR FISHERIES BY;

Taking no more than your immediate needs.

A vital way we can participate in conserving fish stocks is to limit our catch by taking only our immediate personal needs. Overfishing has a detrimental effect on fish stocks and in extreme cases, entire fish species. Looking after our fisheries means:

- Using common sense and constraint when fishing, for example, return unwanted, endangered or threatened species to the water.
- Practising correct catch and release techniques.
- Carefully returning unwanted live bait to the waters they were taken from. Live bait is an important part of the food chain so it is important to leave some to support the fish we wish to catch in the future.

6



Understanding and observing all fishing regulations and reporting illegal fishing activities.



The Government makes regulations to manage the fisheries for now and the future. To protect fish stocks and fish habitat, report illegal fishing activities to the relevant authorities. It is important that the fishing community does not ignore activities that threaten the fisheries and damage the reputation of responsible fishers. Following fishing regulations means:

- Keeping up to date with regulations and observing them.
- Acquainting yourself with bag, size and possession limits.
- Becoming familiar with existing tackle restrictions and checking the dates of local seasonal closures.
- Helping to explain fishery regulations and the reasons for them to others, especially children.
- Reporting illegal fishing activities to fishwatch on 0427 655 557.
- Not presuming to act as officers of the law.

Supporting and encouraging activities that restore and enhance fisheries and fish habitat.

We are all dependent on healthy ecosystems. Habitat destruction and modification, resulting largely from human activities, presents a huge threat to the maintenance of fish stocks and the availability of other species such as shell fish, rock lobsters and crabs. Restoring and enhancing fisheries and fish habitat means:

- Recognising the fragility and environmental diversity of stream-side vegetation, estuaries, seagrass and reefs.
- Educating others, especially children, in sustainable fishing practices.
- Becoming familiar with the life cycles and breeding seasons of aquatic species and other fauna.
- Becoming involved in programs that restore coastal and stream-side vegetation.
- Keeping a safe distance from aquatic wildlife and avoiding undue noise when birds are roosting or nesting.
- Participating in research, rehabilitation, monitoring and tagging programs.

Successful citizen science programs such as REDMAP allow recreational fishers to provide real time fishing data that tracks changes in fish species ranges.

PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT BY:

Preventing pollution and protecting wildlife by removing rubbish.

Pollution affects the health of the environment and spoils our experience of the outdoors. Natural areas continue to suffer major problems due to the side effects of human activities. We can help! Preventing pollution means:



- Taking fishing line, polystyrene foam packaging, bottles, six pack holders, bait bags, cups and packaging, etc. away from fishing sites. All items must be disposed of correctly to avoid potentially entrapping birds and other creatures.
- Not leaving bait to foul rocks, river banks or beaches.
- Not washing rubbish, chemicals or other waste into storm-water systems. Most stormwater drains run directly into waterways.
- Participating in programs such as “Clean up Australia Day” and programs run by the Coastcare Association.



Using established roads and tracks.

Off-road driving or “bush-bashing” can be a major cause of erosion and vegetation loss; likewise trampling across dune systems, reef beds and other fragile areas. Using established roads and tracks means:

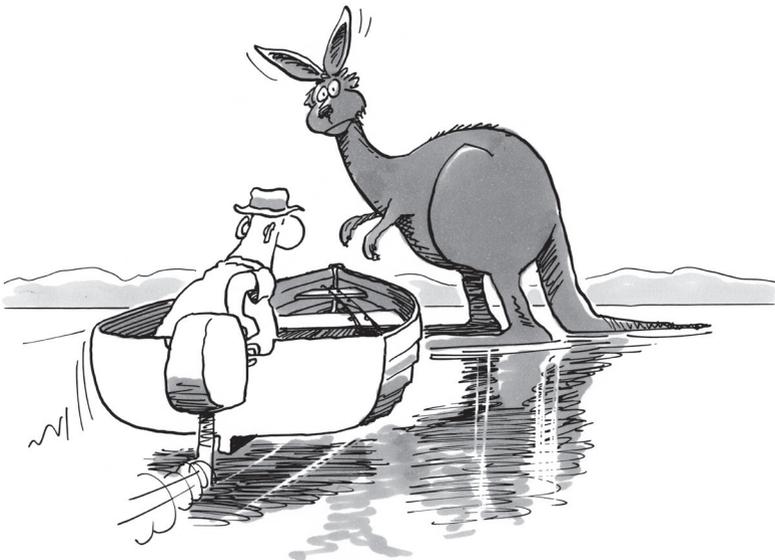
- Using walking tracks and avoiding driving on beaches. The protection of sand dunes, coastal, and streamside vegetation will help minimise beach and streamside erosion.
- Treating all natural areas with care.
- Avoiding straying from established roads and tracks.



Taking care when boating and anchoring to avoid damaging sensitive areas.

Boating increases the range of fishing possibilities but unskilled and thoughtless use of boats can lead to environmental damage. Taking care when boating means:

- Showing care when anchoring, particularly around reef or seagrass areas.
- Avoiding disturbance to wildlife by excessive noise or harassment.
- Refuelling on land wherever possible and not discharging wastes, oil or sewage into the water.
- Being aware of your boating speed to minimise erosion of riverbanks from excessive wave action.
- Avoiding modification of or disturbance to fish habitat while diving.
- Keeping a constant vigil when boating to avoid hitting wildlife.



Reporting environmental damage and pollution to the relevant authorities.

The protection of the environment is everyone's responsibility. By reporting pollution problems to the relevant authorities, we help ensure that our waters become pollutant free and discourage practices that destroy fish habitat. Reporting environmental damage means:

- Reporting stranded or dead aquatic animals and protected species.
- Reporting any signs of discharge of polluted waste waters and runoff containing fertilisers and pesticides.
- Reporting any vegetation or stream damage, e.g. sedimentation, declining water quality, algae, etc.
- Reporting sightings of suspected introduced marine pests.
- Reporting any fuel and oil spills.



Avoiding interactions with threatened species and their critical habitat.

While fishing and accessing fishing grounds it is easy to inadvertently disturb the habitats of protected species or disturb the species themselves. Habitat destruction and modification are the major threat to the continued survival of threatened species. Avoiding threatened species means:

- Being aware of and avoiding disturbance to threatened species that inhabit areas you intend to fish.
- Observing and obeying signage or guidelines in areas where threatened species live.
- Obeying guidelines for activity in the vicinity of marine mammals.
- Reporting any inappropriate behaviour you witness which may affect threatened species.
- Reporting sightings of threatened species in distress.
- Quickly and correctly returning to the water any inadvertently caught threatened species.
- Report sightings of Whales in Tasmanian waters to the Whale Hotline on (0427WHALES that's 0427942537).



Knowing marine park locations and observing any regulations.

There are both State and Commonwealth marine parks in the waters around Tasmania. They have been established to protect our unique marine environment for all. Knowing marine park locations and observing any regulations means:

- Being familiar with the locations of the marine parks. State marine parks are in State coastal waters while Commonwealth waters lie offshore from State waters, generally three nautical miles or more from the shore. (Search for 'marine' at www.parks.tas.gov.au for State waters and see www.environment.gov.au/marinereserves for Commonwealth waters).
- Making sure you are clear about what you can and cannot do in the marine parks so you and others enjoy your fishing and other marine park experiences.
- Helping to conserve marine park values by reporting any illegal activities to the relevant authorities.



TREAT FISH HUMANELY BY;

Quickly and correctly returning unwanted or illegal catch to the water.

Incorrect handling damages fish and reduces their chances of survival after release. A fish out of water cannot live for more than three or four minutes because of brain damage caused by lack of oxygen. An exhausted fish played too long, may not recover. Correctly returning fish means:

- Using 'fish friendly' gear at every opportunity. Includes circle hooks, knotless landing nets and barbless hooks on lures.
- Retrieving fish as quickly as possible.
- Cutting the line when fish are deeply hooked.
- Using wet hands and a minimum of handling to ensure that released fish have a good chance of survival.
- Reviving tired or semi-conscious fish. Hold the fish gently and move it forward to force water through its gills. When it has revived, and is able to swim normally, set it free.



Using only legal tackle, attending our gear and valuing our catch.

Good treatment and handling of fish is not just about maintaining table fish quality. It is also a mark of respect that fishers have for fish. Treating fish humanely and avoiding waste means:

- Attending gear to ensure that fish are retrieved as soon as they are caught.
- Dispatching fish immediately with a firm tap on the head with a suitable blunt object or by pithing.
- Icing fish down and storing them away from sunlight, preferably in a moist bag or cooler.
- Using only tackle that is appropriate for the size and type of fish.

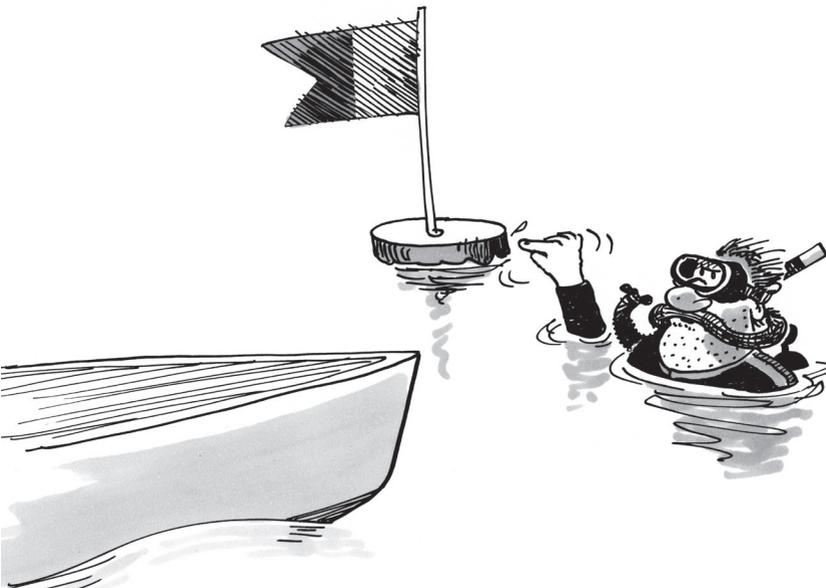


RESPECT THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS BY;

Practicing courtesy towards all those who use inland and coastal waters.

Lakes, creeks, rivers, and coasts are used for a variety of purposes. By recognising the rights of others to use the waters for their recreation and livelihood, recreational fishers help ensure that all are equally able to enjoy their activities. Respecting the rights of others means:

- Being courteous to those whose communities we enter when fishing. Remember this is their home.
- Realising that friendly rivalry can exist between recreational fishers without the need for anyone to dominate.
- Preparing your boat and trailer before launching at boat ramps to avoid annoying delays.

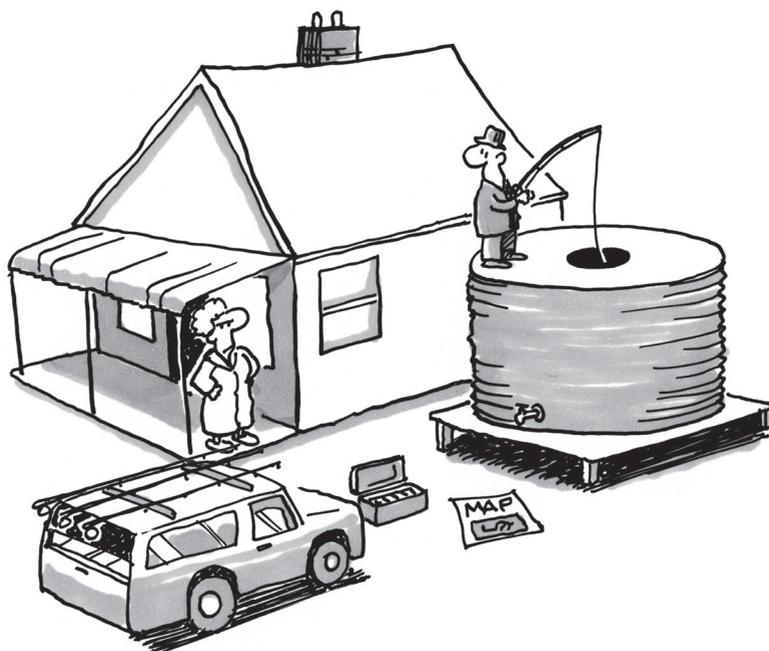


Obtaining permission from landowners and traditional owners before entering land.

Having access to land held in trust to landholders and traditional owners is a privilege, not a right. Respecting the rights of others means:

- Recognising the cultural and spiritual attachment indigenous people feel for their land and water.
- Obtaining permission before lighting fires.
- Avoiding interference with land, stock or crops in any way.
- Leaving all gates as they were found.
- Leaving the gun and dog at home to avoid harming or harassing livestock or wildlife.
- Gaining permission before entering land and clearly indicating where you are going.

18



Caring for our own safety and the safety of others when fishing.

Playing it safe while fishing is good common sense. Never risk a life while trying to catch a fish. Caring about safety means:

- Observing and understanding all boating regulations, including the carrying of the required safety equipment.
- Keeping a safe distance from shore-based fishers, jetties, swimmers and other boats.
- Being aware of the dangers of rock fishing and seeking local knowledge of tides and wave conditions.
- Gaining local knowledge of common beach dangers including rip currents, large waves, shore platforms, deep water, offshore reefs and tidal currents.
- Exercising caution and planning for contingencies when fishing. Submerged logs, sudden squalls, icy waters and extremely cold temperatures can create life-threatening difficulties.
- Always notifying someone of your fishing destination and estimated time of return.
- Always keeping an eye on the weather.



*To find out more about the Code on
sustainable fishing practices contact;*

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