



Recreational Fishing Policy

SFF Tasmania recognises that we have a vibrant and passionate angling community made up of both freshwater and saltwater fishers. Recreational fishing is an important cultural tradition for more than 100,000 Tasmanians, or around 20% of the total population. People from all walks of life and all demographics take part in fishing, and it is deeply entrenched in our way of life. Tasmanians have been fishing our coastal and inland waterways since our First Nations arrived here. Today, recreational fishing contributes over \$168m to the Tasmanian economy each year.

Recreational fishing is both a healthy activity and a sustainable way to put healthy, organic food on the table. As such, SFF Tasmania believes that recreational fishing should be enshrined as a fundamental right and have the full support of the Tasmanian government, and that all Tasmanians should be free to take part without undue impediment by government bureaucracy.

Tasmanian fisheries are an important natural resource that is primarily shared between the commercial sector and recreational fishers. However, we acknowledge that the sharing of this resource has not always been equitable and is often heavily weighted in favour of commercial fishing. This has inevitably led to unsustainable overfishing of marine fisheries that has seen many of our key marine species become depleted.

A 2018/19 assessment of Tasmanian scale fisheries by IMAS revealed that Tasmania's key recreational fish species fall into five sustainability categories: sustainable, recovering, depleting, depleted and undefined.

Sustainable species include Tiger Flathead, Australian Sardine, Australian Salmon, Gould's Squid, Jack Mackerel, Jackass Morwong, Yellow Eye Mullet, Snook, Eastern School Whiting, and Wrasse.

Recovering species include Striped Trumpeter.

Depleting species include Sand Flathead and Southern Calamari.

Depleted species include Bastard Trumpeter, Blue Warehou and Southern Garfish.

Undefined species include Barracouda, Flounder, Leather Jacket and Long-Snouted Boarfish.

While not included in the assessment, SFF Tasmania would like to add Southern Rock Lobster, Tasmanian Scallop and the tuna families to the list of fisheries that will need further attention and lobbying in order to rebuild, while still guaranteeing access for Tasmanian recreational sea fishers.

SFF Tasmania believes there must be better management of our various fisheries based on sound, scientific principles of sustainability that take into account issues



such as climate change, invasive species, commercial overfishing of key species, excessive fish farming practices and exploitation from foreign interests and ownership. We believe that a more scientific and equitable management of fisheries would result in full recovery of our struggling fisheries, and see many of our depleted species returned to a sustainable status.

If elected, SFF Tasmania will use their vote in parliament to:

- Lobby for a healthy marine environment with healthy recreational fish populations.
- Lobby for sensible change to our sea fisheries that considers climate change and the effect it may have on recreational sea fisheries.
- Recommend additional funding to improve policing of Tasmania's coastline and marine resources both on land and at sea. An increase of policing capacity would also alleviate the issues that exist when transiting from the West Coast Lobster Zone to the East Coast Lobster Zone by water when opening dates differ.
- Demand an immediate action plan that addresses depleting, depleted or undefined fish species, as outlined in the IMAS assessment.
- Resist planned closures of recreationally significant coastline and waterways in Tasmania for Marine Protection Areas (MPAs).
- Resist any further reclassification in status of existing MPAs that further seek to restrict recreational fishing.
- Protect all facets of recreational fishing that is proven, through proper science and management, to be sustainable or low impact.
- Lobby for a guaranteed statewide Total Allowable Recreational Catch (TARC) for Southern Rock Lobster of 170t with a minimum recreational share to increase as the resource rebuilds. Current arrangements are not guaranteed or indicative to the catch being made and is heavily criticised for setting regulations based on the full 100% of TARC rather than the 30% of TARC currently caught.
- Demand a fair and equitable resource share of Southern Rock Lobster that halts any further reductions in daily bag limits and guarantees that Southern Rock Lobster can continue to be taken in the future without further restrictions on the small percentage of the TARC currently allocated.
- Allow for a flexible daily bag limit from year to year that takes into consideration current stocks, and which builds as the rock lobster biomass rebuilds. Daily bag limits for rock lobster should not drop below the current guaranteed baseline of 2 fish per day.
- Demand an action plan that would see Southern Rock Lobster return to at least 50% of its original biomass.
- Lobby for acknowledgement by the government that the recreational rock lobster fishing sector only takes a fraction of their current allocation and that

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any increases in catch is simply a healthy sign of recovery and not a sign of an expanding recreational angling sector.

- Lobby for an increase in fishing opportunities, particularly the reintroduction of the recently closed traditional recreational Rock Lobster winter fishery.
- Examine current resource share arrangements for Sand Flathead to help reverse the trend of declining stock.
- Lobby for a cessation or immediate cap of foreign ownership of our Commonwealth and State fisheries resources, in particular, rock lobster, abalone and fish farm businesses. While this measure is precautionary, it does have the scope to prevent further pressure being placed on already heavily overfished areas by foreign influences.
- Ensure recreational fishing remains a right for those Tasmanians who choose to partake in this activity.
- Resist any banning of current legal fishing practices in Tasmania and to instead lobby for increased fishing opportunities.
- Always resist a move to remove the partially protected status of wild brown trout in Tasmania or any attempt to try and remove wild trout from Tasmanian , which bring in significant tourism dollars.
- Address the continual decline by successive governments in daily bag limits, as well as the loss of fish habitat and stock levels through poor management.
- Resist the introduction of a marine recreational scale fish licence and seek a guarantee that one will never come into existence.

END

For more information

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