

NEATFISH ACCREDITATION

WHAT IS NEATFISH ?

NEATFish is a Standard for the National Environmental Assessment of Tournament Fishing and is endorsed by ANSA. The Neatfish standard was developed by Recfish Australia to encourage fishing tournament organisers to develop tournaments which:

- minimise detrimental impacts on fish stocks,
- are environmentally sustainable,
- encourage support from local communities,
- provide safe fishing experiences for competitors and spectators, and
- provide significant positive social and economic benefits to those communities in which they are held.

The NEATFish scoring system is based on a 1 to 5 star model which classifies fishing tournaments on their environmental, social and economic impacts. High ranking tournaments can expect increased recognition from government and environmental groups and significant benefits from sponsors and insurers.

Who can apply for NEATFish certification?

NEATFish was designed to be used by organisers of large commercial fishing tournaments, but it can be used by organisers of all forms of competitive recreational fishing events. Participation in NEATFish is voluntary. However, the Standard and its requirements for supporting documentation must be adhered to by organisers of any tournament which claims official certification under NEATFish.

Getting started

The NEATFish standard has been designed to be completed via the NEATFish website www.neatfish.com. You can undertake a free self assessment via the website just to see how your tournament rates and if warranted modify the tournament criteria to achieve a higher rating.

If you want to formalise the rating you will need to follow the instructions on the website. A fee of approximately \$100 will need to be paid.

Tournament organisers are required to maintain their own supporting documentation to substantiate their Declaration of Conformity with the Standard. In order to register a new fishing event, click on the register new fishing tournament tab.

The future

There are clear signs that marine park managers (state and commonwealth) are contemplating the introduction of an acceptable accreditation rating as a condition precedent for the granting of a permit to conduct a fishing competition in a marine park location. It might be prudent for branches and clubs to keep ahead of the game by taking advantage of the free self assessment to see what can be done to make the event more environmentally friendly and higher scoring by focusing on capture and release and protocols for safe handling of released fish