

# New South Wales Game Fishing Association Inc.

Vice Regal Patrons

Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC, Governor of New South Wales

Sir Nicholas Shehadie AC, OBE

ABN 64 138 663 947

**President: DON GOSWELL**

Home Phone: (02) 4455 2707

Facsimile: (02) 4455 2707

Mobile: 0417 770 400



**Secretary: PAT JONES**

Home Phone: (02) 4971 3936

Facsimile: (02) 4971 4319

Mobile: 0417 770 900

The Minister of Environment, Water, Heritage & The Arts  
The Hon. Peter Garrett A.M. M.P.  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra. ACT. 2600

Dear Minister

Re: Listing of Mako Sharks & Porbeagle on Appendix II of the C.M.S.

I write on behalf of the New South Wales Game Fishing Association (NSWGFA) and our 24 affiliated Member Clubs.

We note in your media statement released on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2010 "that the Government would move to introduce legislative amendments to ensure that international changes to the status of mako sharks would not affect recreational fishing activities in Australia" and "while a listing of the three shark species would still have to take effect on 29 January 2010 the Government will act as a priority, upon the resumption of the Parliament. In the interim the Government has already announced that catch and release fishing of these species is not expected to have significant impact on populations and therefore is unlikely to be subject to enforcement action."

NSWGFA wrote to you on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2010 regarding this issue and outlined how the NSWGFA Game Fishing Tournaments assisted scientific research, following is the information from our previous correspondence:

The Association's Members over many decades have assisted Scientific research on many fish species by way of tag & release and tournament sampling. Our Members have a long history of self regulation and have introduced our own Code of Practice. We have imposed rules on ourselves by way of bag limits, minimum weights and have banned the capture of some species prior to any Government regulation, a prime example of this is that our Members in 1977 recognised that Grey Nurse Shark stocks were in trouble and from then on the species was no longer recognised as a capture species. Our Members have imposed these regulations on themselves to prevent interfering with key species or species in potential threat or jeopardy.

Currently there is a Scientific program undertaken at NSWGFA Club Tournaments and the NSWGFA Interclub Tournament which is the largest gamefishing tournament of its kind held in the Southern Hemisphere and is held out of Port Stephens, NSW in February/March of each year.

The 2010 Interclub Tournament will again be the focus for carrying out important monitoring and research for a number of Australian and International studies on billfish, sharks and other gamefish. The Interclub is an especially important venue for such work since there is some certainty that scientists will have access to specimens of fish that would otherwise be difficult to obtain. It is important to recognise the funding and assistance received for this ongoing sampling program and facilitating other studies. The NSW Recreational

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**All Correspondence to:**

**The Secretary, P.O. Box 414, Swansea. NSW. 2281**

**email: [secretary@nswgfa.com.au](mailto:secretary@nswgfa.com.au)**

Saltwater Fishing Trusts funds scientific attendance at the Interclub and other major tournaments by Dr. Julian Pepperell and assistants by means of an annual grant (funding has been approved for the 2010 season). This work would not be possible without the full assistance of the Officials and Anglers that take part in NSWGFA Tournaments.

The 2010 NSWGFA Interclub Tournament will assist the following studies:

- Genetic discrimination between Atlantic and Pacific billfishes
- Global genetics of black marlin
- Ecology and genetics of mako sharks
- Age, growth and reproduction of wahoo
- Routine monitoring of billfish and sharks

#### Ecology and genetics of mako sharks

Samples of muscle will again be taken from landed mako sharks to assist two studies – a Ph.D project by Paul Rogers of Flinders University, South Australia to investigate small scale genetic partitioning of mako sharks in Australia, and a study by the US National Marine Fisheries Service which is repeating a global review of the genetics of mako sharks. As well, if possible, stomach samples of makos sharks will also be examined to assist Paul Rogers' study of the ecology of makos.

#### Routine monitoring of billfish and sharks

As has been the case for many years, routine measuring, sexing and tissue sampling on all landed fish will be undertaken by Dr Julian Pepperell of Pepperell Research, and Drs Nick Otway and Megan Ellis of NSW Industry & Investment (formally NSW DPI). The data collected in this way are very valuable in studying catch and size composition of gamefish through time, and also provide an invaluable store of tissue samples (muscle and hard parts) which can be used by other researchers in the future. This has proven to be the case on many occasions thus far.

Club Tournaments and the Interclub Tournament have provided an extremely cost effective means of obtaining important information concerning shark species that would normally require large sums of money to sample on an annual basis.

Shark Biology/Ecology research questions addressed by the various sampling techniques:

- Morphometrics
- Length-weight relationships
- Morphology of fin denticles and species taxonomy
- Reproductive biology
- Diets and feeding biology
- Parasitology
- Physiology
- Plasma biochemistry and haematology
- Population genetics
- Internal anatomy via ultrasonography (for general biology, veterinary and animal husbandry applications).

The sampling has also permitted the development and testing of various sampling techniques that have subsequently been used with other species including threatened species.

All Mako Sharks that are presented for Scientific evaluation at the NSWGFA Interclub Tournament are donated to the local Bible College and are consumed by the College attendees during the year.

The Association is as well involved in the NSW Government I&I - NSW Game Fish Tournament Monitoring Program by providing a cost-effective means of collecting relative catch and effort and size composition data over a long temporal and large spatial scale. These data include primary species of billfish, tuna and shark and also sportfish species. The collection of these data is aimed at supporting stock assessment of these species and in monitoring the recreational game fish fishery in NSW. These data provide one of very few long-term recreational fishing data sets for these species in Australia. These types of data would not be feasible to collect without the support and the organised structures of the NSWGFA.

We do want to stress that 90% of all fish hooked are tagged and released.

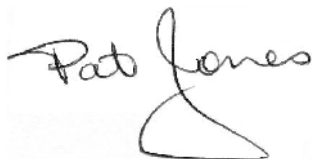
Given the Scientific Studies that have been planned for our forthcoming tournaments (please find listed tournaments which will be held in February/March 2010) we request that an exemption be given to NSWGFA to allow NSWGFA recreational anglers whilst competing in NSWGFA tournaments and competitions to catch and tag & release Mako Sharks.

February 5 – 7	Lake Macquarie GFC – Big Fish Bonanza	Swansea, NSW
February 5 – 7	Ulladulla GFC – Jess Sams Tournament	Ulladulla, NSW
February 13 – 14	Shellharbour GFC – Open Tournament	Shellharbour, NSW
February 20 – 21	N'cle & Port Stephens GFC – Tournament	Port Stephens, NSW
February 27 – 28	NSWGFA Interclub Tournament	Port Stephens, NSW
March 6 – 7	NSWGFA Interclub Tournament	Port Stephens, NSW
March 19 – 21	Broken Bay GFC – Invitational Tournament	Broken Bay, NSW
March 26 – 28	Shoalhaven GFC – Open Tournament	Shoalhaven, NSW

We do welcome the news that the Government will be moving to introduce these amendments so that recreational fishing activities in Australia will not be affected however our Scientific Program that we have established over many years will be affected in the interim unless an exemption can be given during this period.

We look forward to your early reply,

Kind regards



Mrs Pat Jones  
Secretary  
NSWGFA  
4 February 2010