

NSW DPI Game Fish Tournament Monitoring Program (GTMP) – in operation since 1994

Information Sheet for Tournament Participants

Re: New Post-Tournament Phone Surveys

Why is this project important?

Outcomes from this project have been used by the Game Fishing Association of Australia (GFAA) and the Commonwealth to support resource sharing negotiations between commercial longliners and recreational fishers. Information on recreational game fish catches is crucial to understand game fishing and assist the management of these resources. Data provided by game fishers are used to improve outcomes from negotiations and strengthen the basis for long-term access rights to the fishery. These data also provide information that can be used by scientists to support assessments of game fish species. This project has generated a unique dataset and is one of very few long-term datasets for NSW recreational fisheries.

How are data collected?

Radio sched data: These provide accurate information on fishing effort (number of boats fishing per tournament day) and information on 'reported' catch. However, catch of non-point score species and sometimes low-point score species (that may be kept for food as opposed to entered into the tournament) are not always reported. Also scheds do not include accurate information about fish size and do not always provide fishing method information for each boat (i.e. trolling, drifting, anchored or bait fishing), to allow the partitioning of effort in the calculation of catch rates.

Post-fishing interviews: For the above reasons, post-fishing interviews have become an important component of the GTMP. Post-fishing interviews provide more detailed catch information, which enables us to calculate more accurate catch and effort indices and total catch estimates.

Testing assumptions: A number of assumptions currently need to be made when analysing these data. These assumptions are a result of tournament structures and locations, which result in some crews not being available for interview. For example, during some events, the majority of participating boats return to their home ports on the last day of the tournament. This means that post-fishing interviews (when undertaken on the last day) may be biased towards boats that catch fish

(as these are the boats that return to the tournament's host club). These assumptions may have ramifications to the calculation of catch and effort indices and total catch estimates.

To date there have been no attempts to test these assumptions. One way to test these assumptions would be to undertake post-tournament phone interviews. These would include phone calls to participating boat skippers who were unable to be accessed for on-site interview at the end of their fishing day. The phone interviews would be short (2-5 mins and similar to post-fishing interviews undertaken at tournaments). These phone surveys will only be conducted at a selection of events throughout the season. Once these phone surveys are undertaken for a 2 or 3-fishing season period, results would be evaluated. These results will form the basis for decisions on the design of the GTMP into the future. After this period and depending on results, phone interviews may not need to be continued.

Why is testing project assumptions important?

The goal of any research program is to provide the most accurate and unbiased information possible. Testing assumptions and data quality must therefore be an ongoing focus of any monitoring program.

The support of the GFAA, NSW GFA, NSW game fishing clubs and club anglers is greatly appreciated. Data that are collected for this project is information that you as an association can use to fight for your beliefs and rights to the fishery. It is, however, regarded of utmost importance that the most accurate and unbiased data are collected. These post-tournament phone surveys are the first step to ensure that this is achieved. Your cooperation and assistance in reaching this project goal is one way of supporting the fisheries that support your sport.

Please note: Individual records of anglers and their associated data are confidential and are only reported in a highly aggregated form.

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