

NSW DPIRD Fisheries Recreational Fishing Licence Fee Survey 2024

Report of results

12 February 2025



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Australian Survey Research Group Pty Ltd conducted this research project in compliance with the ISO 20252:2019 quality standard applying to market and social research.

Introduction

NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD)- Fisheries conducts periodic surveys of recreational fishing licence holders to seek their views on how licence fees could be spent to improve recreational fishing in NSW.

In November 2024, NSW DPIRD Fisheries contracted Australian Survey Research to conduct and report on an online survey of recreational fishing licence holders in NSW, similar to those conducted from 2008 to 2022.

This report outlines the methodology used to conduct the survey, the survey response sample breakdown and the key findings relating to seven funded areas across four groups of fishers: freshwater, saltwater, both fresh and saltwater and those fishers who hadn't fished in the last 12 months.

A copy of the questionnaire used to collect fisher feedback forms is provided in Attachment A.

Survey administration

In 2024, DPIRD Fisheries and ASR reviewed and updated the online questionnaire used in previous surveys. The survey followed a similar format to the 2022 survey.

Survey preparation and deployment

The Department provided ASR with the email addresses of 347,157 current recreational fishing licence holders with email addresses available in the licence database.

To reduce respondent burden, each person in the list of licence holders was presented with questions about current activities from three randomly selected funded areas instead of all seven areas.

Before loading the respondent data file ASR cleaned the file and removed any obviously incorrect email addresses, for example, domains like @gnail, @gmaul.con etc were removed from the mailout. ASR removed a total of n=4,961 obviously invalid email addresses, leaving a total of 342,196 valid email addresses in the potential participant file.

ASR sent one email invitation email and one reminder to each potential participant and the emails contained a unique link which could only be submitted once. After sending all emails, ASR received a total of 7,173 permanent bounce back emails (as distinct from out of office emails).

The survey was infield from 1 November 2024 to 2 December 2024 and the invitation emails were sent in small batches throughout the first three weeks of November. The reminder emails were sent in the final week of November.

All licence holders who completed the survey by 2 December 2024 were entered into a draw to win one of 50 spinning reels valued at \$119.00. At survey completion, ASR provided DPIRD Fisheries with email addresses of 50 randomly selected participants who had completed the survey. DPIRD Fisheries contacted these people about winning a spinning reel.

Survey design

The survey was delivered through ASR's online survey platform, SurveyManager, which is hosted in a high security data centre located in Sydney. No survey data was sent offshore. None of the questions in the survey were compulsory and if respondents did not know how to answer a question, they could leave it blank and move on to the next question.

The online questionnaire addressed seven program areas that the current the licence fee funds.

- Recreational fishing education--answered by n=11,593
- Aquatic habitat protection and rehabilitation--answered by n=11,432

- Recreational fishing enhancement programs--answered by n=11,599
- Research on fish and recreational fishing--answered by n=11,580
- Fishing access and facilities--answered by n=11,771
- Enforcement of fishing rules--answered by n=11,742
- Promoting the health and well-being benefits of recreational fishing--answered by n=12,382.

For each area, respondents were asked to rate two dimensions about each activity within a funded area:

- Perceived **benefit** of activities to improving recreational fishing and
- The **extent** to which activities should be conducted.

For each dimension, frequency distributions of results were produced and four groups of fishers were compared--those who indicated that they:

1. Fished in only or mainly **freshwater**
2. Fished in only or mainly **saltwater**
3. Fished in **both** fresh and saltwater
4. Had not fished in the last 12 months.

Weighting

No weighting was applied to the data from the 2024 survey, primarily because there was no population data available, and the survey sample was large with well over 10,000 respondents for each category / topic.

Records included in analysis

A record was included in the survey sample data for analysis only if a respondent answered about all activities within a funded area. No questions were compulsory, so bases (n counts) fluctuate throughout the analysis within this report.

Rounding

Percentages within tables are displayed without decimal points. At times, this may mean that additions appear incorrect, for example, adding to 99% instead of 100%. These are not errors but rather due to rounding.

Exclusion of *don't know* and *no answer* responses

The proportions (%) in each cell of each table displayed in this report were created by excluding the *Don't know* and *No answer* responses from the answer base, simply because these types of answers do not contribute to the benefit or extent calculations. Only people who answered with a rating scale response to these questions were included.

However, understanding the proportion of *Don't know* responses (only offered in the 'Extent an activity should be done' questions) is useful for targeting communication activities: higher proportions of *Don't know* responses indicate that more people are not aware of an activity and so might benefit from more information.

When reading the tables regarding **the extent an activity should be done**, the bottom row of a table contains the number (count) of *Don't know* responses to the specific question. ASR has provided commentary when the proportion of *Don't know* responses exceeded 10% of all respondents answering a question about an activity.

Survey respondent profile

A total of 27,367 licence holders completed the survey, yielding a response rate of 8%, using the total list of 342,196 email addresses as a base. This is a high response rate for a large scale general population survey (normally around 1% to 2%), indicating that NSW fishing licence holders have a strong interest in the survey topic.

The response sample size was more than sufficient to be statistically representative of the total population of current NSW recreational fishing licence holder database at the 95% confidence level and 1% confidence interval. An acceptable confidence interval in consumer research is $\pm 5\%$, indicating that this survey has a robust sample that is highly likely to be representative of the total fishing licence population. A total of 63% of respondents answered by a mobile phone and 37% answered using another device, for example PC, laptop or tablet. SurveyManager automatically detects the nature of the device and renders an appropriate view for a respondent.

Table 1 below displays the main fishing location/s of survey respondents in the last 12 months. For more detailed analysis in the next section of the report, only and mainly freshwater respondents' answers were combined, as were only and mainly saltwater respondents' answers.

More saltwater fishers answered the survey (60% mainly + only saltwater combined) compared with freshwater fishers (24% mainly + only freshwater combined), while 11% of respondents indicated that they fished about the same in the two types of waters and 5% did not fish in the last 12 months.

Table 1: Fishing location (%)

Fishing location	Freq	%
Only freshwater	2,859	10%
Mainly freshwater but some saltwater	3,758	14%
About the same freshwater and saltwater	3,023	11%
Mainly saltwater but some freshwater	7,052	26%
Only saltwater	9,237	34%
Did not fish in the last 12 months	1,432	5%
Total	27,361	100%

Survey results

This section presents summary tables of higher and lower rated items, followed by individual program area and related activity scores compared by fishing location.

Summary of *Benefit* and *Extent* of activities

For each activity two scores are displayed in Table 2 below: the combined **Benefit** score for each funded activity sorted in descending order with its combined **Extent** score to the right of the table.

A higher **Benefit** score means an activity is perceived to be more beneficial (provides more benefit) than a lower scoring activity. The benefit score combines the results from the two rating points of *Helps a little* and *Helps a lot*. *Don't know* and *No answer* responses were excluded from the calculation of the **Benefit** score.

A higher **Extent** score means respondents want *more* of an activity than is currently offered. The **Extent** score combines the results from the two rating points of *A little more* and *A lot more*. *Don't know* and *no answer* responses were excluded from the calculation of the **Extent** score. Note that for some activities, many respondents wanted the activity to continue to be funded at the same level as now which could be an acceptable level for many.

Table 2 has been sorted in descending order of the **Benefit** score.

On average, across all funded activities surveyed, 94% of respondents indicated that the activities were beneficial. Moreover, on average, 60% of respondents believed they were not only just of benefit - but of major benefit (helps a lot) to recreational fishers of NSW. On average, only 6% believed that surveyed activities were not at all beneficial. Nine activities scored over 95% for **Benefit** and came from a variety of funded areas.

On average 67% or more of respondents wanted some more of each activity to be done. Note that *Fishcare volunteers* and *Game fish tagging*, both at 49%, were just under the 50% level.

Table 2: Benefit and Extent scores of all activities (%)

Activity	Benefit score	Extent score
Improving fishing access	96%	80%
Providing fishing facilities for anglers	97%	79%
Building artificial reefs	96%	77%
Recovery of recreational fish under pressure	96%	76%
Research on fish stockings	97%	73%
Freshwater fish stocking	97%	71%
Providing fishing information to anglers	96%	71%
Marine fish stocking	95%	71%
Community partnership projects to improve fish habitat	95%	69%
Schools fishing education	92%	68%
Compliance activities	93%	68%
Habitat rehabilitation grants	96%	68%
Aquatic habitat management	96%	67%
Promoting health and well-being benefits	89%	66%
Biology and ecology of fish	96%	62%
Fish aggregating devices (FADs)	94%	61%
Fishing workshops and fishing days	90%	57%
Surveys of recreational fishing	94%	55%
Game Fish Tagging Program	92%	49%
Fishcare volunteers	91%	49%

Fishing access and facilities funding area

Respondents were asked to respond about two fishing access and facility activities:

- **Providing fishing facilities for fishers**

Fish cleaning facilities, fishing platforms, kayak launching platforms and access tracks provide convenient facilities and access for fishers. These facilities built at popular sites around estuaries, sheltered coastal locations, inland rivers and lakes provide for safe and easily accessible fishing locations.

- **Improving fishing access**

Fisheries managers work closely with other government agencies, landowners, recreational fishing clubs and key stakeholder groups to maintain and improve current access to popular local fishing spots. A major focus of this program is to identify and open new access points for fishing. Providing fishing facilities for fishers

Tables 3 and 4 below show that 97% of respondents (All fishers) indicated that **Providing fishing facilities for fishers** was beneficial and 79% of all fishers wanted more of it. All types of fishers had similar views for both **Benefit** and **Extent** of this activity.

Table 3: Providing fishing facilities for fishers - benefit (%)

Providing fishing facilities for fishers	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
Doesn't help at all	3%	3%	3%	7%	3%
Helps a little	26%	27%	30%	32%	27%
Helps a lot	71%	69%	67%	61%	69%
Total (n)	7047	1285	2801	574	11,707

Table 4: Providing fishing facilities for fishers – extent to which it should be done in NSW (%)

Providing fishing facilities for fishers	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
A lot less	1%	1%	1%	3%	1%
A little less	1%	2%	1%	3%	1%
Keep it the same	17%	18%	20%	24%	18%
A little more	31%	33%	36%	31%	33%
A lot more	49%	46%	41%	39%	47%
Total (n)	6892	1267	2732	528	11,419
<i>Don't know (count)</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>310</i>

Improving fishing access

There was strong support for **Improving fishing access** in NSW. A total of 96% of all respondents presented with these questions indicated that it was beneficial and 80% of respondents wanted more effort in this area. All types of fishers had similar views. Refer to Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5: Improving fishing access - benefit (%)

Improving fishing access	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
Doesn't help at all	5%	3%	3%	8%	4%
Helps a little	26%	23%	24%	28%	25%
Helps a lot	70%	73%	73%	64%	71%
Total (n)	7033	1286	2786	576	11,681

Table 6: Improving fishing access – extent to which it should be done in NSW (%)

Improving fishing access	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
A lot less	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%
A little less	2%	2%	1%	3%	2%
Keep it the same	17%	14%	17%	23%	17%
A little more	29%	30%	30%	28%	30%
A lot more	50%	54%	51%	44%	50%
Total (n)	6890	1272	2738	530	11,430
<i>Don't know (count)</i>	160	13	60	49	282

Aquatic habitat protection and rehabilitation funded area

The questions in this area focused on the following habitat protection and rehabilitation activities:

- **Habitat rehabilitation grants**

Grants have been provided to local councils, fishing clubs, community groups and others to rehabilitate fish habitat in fresh and saltwater areas, including the removal of barriers to fish migration, building fishways and removing weirs; replanting riparian and marine vegetation; and replacing snags in rivers.

- **Aquatic habitat protection**

Fisheries Conservation Managers work to enhance the protection of key fish habitats and increase recreational fisher involvement in fish habitat protection and management. A key responsibility of this program is to assess development proposals with potential impacts on fish habitat, and provide development conditions that ensure “no net loss” of fish habitats.

- **Community partnership projects to improve fish habitat**

Various not-for-profit organisations are running projects to form partnerships with fishers and other groups to be involved in the protection and restoration of our fish habitat and waterways. Projects also include raising awareness and taking action to remove litter and fishing related debris from our waterways across NSW.

At least two-thirds of respondents presented with these questions indicated that all three aquatic habitat protections and rehabilitation activities provided benefit. About a quarter of respondents wanted each activity to be done to the same extent and at least 72% of respondents wanted each activity to be done more.

Habitat rehabilitation grants

Table 7 below shows that 96% of respondents perceived **Habitat rehabilitation grants** to be beneficial (*helps a little* and *helps a lot* combined). All fisher types had similar views.

Table 7: Habitat rehabilitation grants - benefit (%)

Habitat rehabilitation grants	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
Doesn't help at all	4%	4%	2%	7%	4%
Helps a little	35%	31%	30%	34%	33%
Helps a lot	61%	65%	68%	59%	63%
Total (n)	6732	1225	2797	563	11,317

Table 8 indicates that 68% of respondents wanted **Habitat rehabilitation grants** to be done more.

Table 8: Habitat rehabilitation grants– extent to which it should be done in NSW (%)

Habitat rehabilitation grants	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
A lot less	3%	2%	1%	4%	2%
A little less	3%	2%	2%	4%	3%
Keep it the same	27%	28%	26%	30%	27%
A little more	30%	31%	32%	27%	31%
A lot more	37%	37%	38%	35%	37%
Total (n)	6301	1178	2662	502	10,643
<i>Don't know (count)</i>	<i>443</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>143</i>	<i>67</i>	<i>698</i>

Aquatic habitat protection

The table below indicates that 96% of respondents perceived that **Aquatic habitat protection** was beneficial. All types of fishers had similar views.

Table 9: Aquatic habitat protection- benefit (%)

Aquatic habitat protection	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
Doesn't help at all	5%	4%	3%	6%	4%
Helps a little	33%	29%	32%	29%	32%
Helps a lot	63%	67%	65%	64%	64%
Total (n)	6725	1224	2792	560	11,301

Just over a third of respondents (68%) wanted more **Aquatic habitat protection**. All types of fishers had similar views.

Table 10: Aquatic habitat protection– extent to which it should be done in NSW (%)

Aquatic habitat protection	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
A lot less	3%	2%	1%	4%	2%
A little less	3%	3%	2%	3%	3%
Keep it the same	27%	27%	29%	29%	27%
A little more	30%	31%	30%	26%	30%
A lot more	38%	38%	37%	39%	38%
Total (n)	6356	1178	2665	508	10,707
<i>Don't know (count)</i>	<i>391</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>133</i>	<i>62</i>	<i>631</i>

Community partnership projects to improve fish habitat

Ninety five percent of respondents indicated that **Community partnership projects to improve fish habitat** helped in some way. More freshwater fishers rated this as helpful (63% helps a lot) compared with saltwater fishers (56% helps a lot).

Table 11: Community partnership projects to improve fish habitat- benefit (%)

Community partnership projects to improve fish habitat	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
Doesn't help at all	6%	4%	4%	8%	5%
Helps a little	38%	33%	33%	39%	36%
Helps a lot	56%	64%	63%	53%	59%
Total (n)	6732	1228	2794	562	11,316

Table 12 below shows that 69% of respondents wanted more **Community partnership projects to improve fish habitat**. All types of recent fishers had similar views.

Table 12: Community partnership projects to improve fish habitat – extent to which it should be done in NSW (%)

Community partnership projects to improve fish habitat	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
A lot less	3%	2%	1%	5%	2%
A little less	4%	2%	2%	3%	3%
Keep it the same	26%	27%	23%	29%	25%
A little more	30%	29%	32%	25%	30%
A lot more	38%	39%	41%	38%	39%
Total (n)	6327	1179	2667	506	10,679
<i>Don't know (count)</i>	<i>422</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>136</i>	<i>62</i>	<i>669</i>

Recreational fishing enhancement funded area

Survey questions in this topic were related to the following four fishing enhancement activities:

- **Freshwater fish stocking**

Four inland Government hatcheries produce native fish and trout for stocking in freshwater rivers and impoundments throughout NSW. Trust funds boost production at these hatcheries, which has led to record numbers of fish being stocked and better fishing opportunities across the inland fishery. Last season, more than 5 million native fish and trout were stocked throughout rivers and impoundments in NSW.

- **Marine fish stocking**

Last season 21,000 juvenile dusky flathead were stocked into two key Recreational Fishing Havens, Lake Conjola and Burrill Lake on the NSW South Coast. Additionally, 10,000 mulloway were released into Lake Macquarie, Georges River (Botany Bay) and Hastings River.

- **Fish aggregating devices (FADs)**

Fish aggregating devices are deployed in 34 locations in coastal waters to attract dolphinfish, tuna and wahoo to give anglers a better chance to catch these popular species.

- **Building artificial reefs in ocean waters**

Offshore artificial reefs have been built off Sydney, Shoalhaven Heads, Port Macquarie, southern Sydney, Merimbula, Newcastle, Wollongong, Tweed, the Eurobodalla, the Central Coast, Forster and in some estuaries. The reefs create quality fishing locations for popular fish species such as kingfish, snapper and other key recreational species. More reefs are being planned for the Coffs and Ballina regions.

All activities in this section were perceived to be beneficial by most respondents. The degree of benefit (*helps a little* and *helps a lot* combined) for each activity in this area was at least 94%.

Freshwater fish stocking

Table 13 below indicates that 97% of respondents perceived **Freshwater fish stocking** as beneficial, with 73% perceiving that it helps a lot. Table 13: Freshwater fish stocking - benefit (%)

Freshwater fish stocking	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
Doesn't help at all	4%	2%	2%	5%	3%
Helps a little	27%	19%	17%	27%	24%
Helps a lot	69%	78%	81%	68%	73%
Total (n)	6732	1320	2754	579	11,385

The table below indicates that 71% of respondents favoured increased (a little or a lot more) **stocking of freshwater fish**. Notably, 82% of mainly freshwater fishers supported this, compared to 65% of mainly saltwater fishers.

Table 14: Freshwater fish stocking– extent to which it should be done in NSW (%)

Freshwater fish stocking	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
A lot less	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%
A little less	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%
Keep it the same	31%	19%	16%	27%	26%

Freshwater fish stocking	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
A little more	29%	31%	27%	31%	29%
A lot more	36%	48%	55%	39%	42%
Total (n)	6137	1266	2659	508	10,570
<i>Don't know (count)</i>	665	55	97	76	893

Marine fish stocking

Marine fish stocking was perceived to be beneficial by 95% of respondents, with all types of fishers having similar views at an aggregate level. Note that a higher proportion of mainly saltwater fishers (62%) indicated that it *helped a lot* compared with mainly freshwater fishers (50%).

Table 15: Marine fish stocking - benefit (%)

Marine fish stocking	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
Doesn't help at all	4%	6%	6%	7%	5%
Helps a little	34%	36%	44%	37%	36%
Helps a lot	62%	58%	50%	56%	59%
Total (n)	6810	1312	2684	577	11,383

Just under three-quarters of respondents presented with this question (71%) indicated that **Marine fish stocking** should be done more, with 75% of saltwater fishers wanting a *little / lot more* of this than other types of fishers. Refer to Table 16.

Table 16: Marine fish stocking– extent to which it should be done in NSW (%)

Marine fish stocking	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
A lot less	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%
A little less	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%
Keep it the same	21%	27%	34%	30%	25%
A little more	29%	31%	30%	29%	30%
A lot more	46%	37%	31%	36%	41%
Total (n)	6438	1241	2406	502	10,587
<i>Don't know (count)</i>	414	78	294	83	869

Fish aggregating devices (FADs)

Ninety four percent of respondents indicated that **Fish aggregating devices (FADs)** were beneficial, while over half of all fishers (52%) indicated that the activity *helps a lot*. More saltwater fishers (56%) indicated that the activity *helped a lot* compared with mainly freshwater fishers (45%). Refer to Table 17 below.

Table 17: Fish aggregating devices (FADs) - benefit (%)

Fish aggregating devices (FADs)	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
Doesn't help at all	6%	6%	7%	9%	6%
Helps a little	39%	45%	48%	48%	42%
Helps a lot	56%	50%	45%	43%	52%
Total (n)	6785	1311	2679	571	11,346

Sixty-one percent of respondents wanted more **Fish aggregating devices** in NSW. This varied by fisher type, with 65% of saltwater fishers wanting more FADs compared with 52% of freshwater fishers.

This activity had the second highest proportion of *Don't know* responses across the entire survey (9%), which may be attributed to the offshore nature of the program and may indicate a need for more information. Refer to Table 18.

Table 18: Fish aggregating devices (FADs) – extent to which it should be done in NSW (%)

Fish aggregating devices (FADs)	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
A lot less	3%	3%	3%	5%	3%
A little less	3%	3%	4%	4%	3%
Keep it the same	29%	35%	41%	37%	33%
A little more	30%	32%	29%	31%	30%
A lot more	35%	27%	24%	24%	31%
Total (n)	6324	1206	2376	475	10,381
<i>Don't know (count)</i>	<i>511</i>	<i>113</i>	<i>323</i>	<i>108</i>	<i>1055</i>

Building artificial reefs in ocean waters

Tables 19 and 20 show that 96% percent of respondents indicated **Building artificial reefs in ocean waters** was beneficial, with 77% supporting increased efforts in this area. The responses varied by fisher type: 81% of mainly saltwater fishers supported the creation of **more artificial reefs**, compared to 70% of mainly freshwater fishers.

Table 19: Building artificial reefs in ocean waters - benefit (%)

Building artificial reefs in ocean waters	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
Doesn't help at all	3%	3%	4%	6%	4%
Helps a little	23%	26%	29%	27%	25%
Helps a lot	74%	71%	67%	67%	72%
Total (n)	6816	1321	2689	577	11,403

Table 20: Building artificial reefs in ocean waters – extent to which it should be done in NSW (%)

Building artificial reefs in ocean waters	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
A lot less	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%
A little less	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%
Keep it the same	16%	21%	25%	21%	19%
A little more	28%	30%	31%	29%	29%
A lot more	52%	45%	39%	44%	48%
Total (n)	6511	1243	2489	508	10,751
<i>Don't know (count)</i>	332	77	218	77	704

Promoting the health and well-being of recreational fishing funding area

Fishing as a recreational activity generates benefits beyond just catching a fish. These include fishing with friends and family, connecting with nature and a chance to unwind and relax.

Various programs receive funding from the Recreational Fishing Trust each year to promote fishing as a healthy, outdoors family activity. There are also community projects designed to assist people who are suffering health issues, including mental health, which use fishing as a supportive and therapeutic activity. Another program is the Fish for Life program aimed at promoting the many social and well-being benefits of fishing.

Eighty-nine percent of respondents indicated that **Promoting health and well-being activities** were beneficial and 66% of respondents wanted more of this type of activity. Responses were similar across all types of fishers. Refer to Tables 21 and 22.

Table 21: Promoting health and well-being activities - benefit (%)

Promoting health and well-being activities	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
Doesn't help at all	12%	10%	8%	15%	11%
Helps a little	43%	41%	40%	45%	42%
Helps a lot	45%	49%	52%	40%	47%
Total (n)	7263	1360	3037	641	12,301

Table 22: Promoting health and well-being activities – extent to which it should be done in NSW (%)

Promoting health and well-being activities	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same - salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
A lot less	6%	4%	3%	7%	5%
A little less	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%
Keep it the same	25%	27%	25%	28%	26%
A little more	30%	31%	29%	30%	30%
A lot more	36%	35%	39%	34%	37%
Total (n)	7043	1327	2954	598	11,922
<i>Don't know (count)</i>	245	37	94	46	422

Enforcement of fishing rules funding area

Using Recreational Fishing Trust funds, 18 Fisheries Officers are employed to ensure high levels of compliance with fishing rules. These Fisheries officers conduct a range of activities to encourage and maximise compliance. This program particularly targets high risk offenders and known 'black spots'.

Respondents were asked to answer about fishing compliance activities in NSW.

Fishing compliance activities were rated as beneficial by 93% of all respondents. Refer to Table 23.

Table 23: Fishing compliance activities - benefit (%)

Fishing compliance activities	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
Doesn't help at all	7%	7%	5%	12%	7%
Helps a little	42%	42%	40%	41%	41%
Helps a lot	51%	51%	55%	48%	52%
Total (n)	6926	1294	2827	643	11,690

Sixty-eight percent of respondents expressed a desire for increased fishing compliance activities, while 27% preferred maintaining the current level. A higher proportion of mainly saltwater fishers (45%) favoured *a lot more* compliance activities compared to other fishing groups (all at or near 38%).

Table 24: Fishing compliance activities – extent to which it should be done in NSW (%)

Fishing compliance activities	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
A lot less	2%	2%	2%	6%	2%
A little less	2%	3%	2%	5%	2%
Keep it the same	25%	31%	30%	28%	27%
A little more	26%	26%	28%	23%	26%
A lot more	45%	38%	38%	39%	42%
Total (n)	6751	1256	2755	598	11,360
<i>Don't know (count)</i>	<i>184</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>348</i>

Recreational fishing education funding area

Randomly selected respondents were asked to answer about the following fishing education activities:

- **Fishcare volunteers**

Over 120 trained volunteers are involved in face to face education of recreational fishers to help them to be familiar with fishing rules and to promote sustainable fishing. Fishcare volunteers also play a big role in running fishing workshops, educating school children and manning advisory stands at community events across NSW.

- **Fishing workshops and fishing days**

Fishing workshops and fishing days are run across NSW each year to teach children and adults how to fish sustainably, providing for an enjoyable fishing educational experience.

- **Schools fishing education**

Teaching primary and secondary school children about our aquatic habitat, sustainable fishing and how to fish, various programs receive funding from the Trusts each year to teach students about the importance of aquatic habitats and to introduce them to safe and responsible fishing practices.

- **Providing fishing information for fishers**

A range of fishing brochures, booklets, sticky rulers and fishing guides are distributed free of charge every year to help anglers to keep up-to-date on the latest fishing rules and sustainable fishing practices.

Fishcare volunteers

Most commonly, all respondents indicated that **Fishcare volunteers** were beneficial to some extent (*helps a little* 45% and *helps a lot* 46%). Refer to Table 25.

Table 25: Fishcare volunteers – benefit (%)

Fishcare volunteers	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
Doesn't help at all	10%	9%	7%	13%	9%
Helps a little	46%	42%	44%	41%	45%
Helps a lot	44%	49%	50%	46%	46%
Total (n)	6823	1259	2727	610	11,419

Forty-nine percent of all respondents indicated that the **Fishcare volunteer activity** should be conducted *a little or a lot more* while 42% indicated it should *kept the same amount* as it is now. There were minimal differences between fisher types. Refer to Table 26.

This activity had the highest proportion of *Don't know* responses across all activities. Eleven percent of respondents indicated that they did not know whether this activity should be done more or less. Refer to Table 26.

Table 26: Fishcare volunteers – extent to which it should be done in NSW (%)

Fishcare volunteers	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
A lot less	5%	5%	3%	7%	5%
A little less	5%	5%	4%	5%	5%
Keep it the same	42%	41%	43%	40%	42%
A little more	28%	29%	31%	28%	29%
A lot more	20%	20%	19%	20%	20%
Total (n)	6076	1161	2490	499	10,226
<i>Don't know (count)</i>	<i>770</i>	<i>101</i>	<i>248</i>	<i>112</i>	<i>1231</i>

Fishing workshops and fishing days

Fishing workshops and fishing days were rated as beneficial (*helps a lot* and *helps a little*) by 90% of respondents with similar results between salt and freshwater fishers. This was one of two activities to score 10% or more on *Doesn't help at all*.

Table 27: Fishing workshops and fishing day - benefit (%)

Fishing workshops and fishing days	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
Doesn't help at all	10%	10%	8%	14%	10%
Helps a little	46%	43%	45%	41%	45%
Helps a lot	44%	47%	48%	45%	45%
Total (n)	6814	1259	2725	608	11406

Around three fifths of respondents overall (57%) wanted more **Fishing workshops and fish days**. There was little variation between different fisher types for this activity. Refer to Table 28.

Table 28: Fishing workshops and fishing days – extent to which it should be done in NSW (%)

Fishing workshops and fishing days	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
A lot less	5%	5%	3%	7%	4%
A little less	5%	6%	4%	4%	5%
Keep it the same	34%	32%	34%	38%	34%
A little more	31%	34%	33%	30%	32%
A lot more	25%	25%	26%	22%	25%
Total (n)	6304	1193	2552	514	10563
<i>Don't know (count)</i>	<i>552</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>186</i>	<i>99</i>	<i>907</i>

School fishing education

Most commonly (57%) respondents indicated that **School fishing education** *helps a lot*. Salt and freshwater fishers had similar views. Refer to Table 29.

Table 29: School fishing education - benefit (%)

School fishing education	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
Doesn't help at all	8%	8%	7%	13%	8%
Helps a little	36%	34%	36%	32%	36%
Helps a lot	56%	58%	57%	54%	57%
Total (n)	6838	1257	2731	604	11430

Over a third of respondents (38%) wanted *a lot more* **School fishing education**. Views were similar across the various fisher types. Refer to Table 30.

Table 30: School fishing education – extent to which it should be done in NSW (%)

School fishing education	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
A lot less	3%	3%	2%	6%	3%
A little less	3%	4%	2%	3%	3%
Keep it the same	25%	25%	25%	28%	25%
A little more	30%	31%	33%	27%	31%
A lot more	38%	38%	37%	36%	38%
Total (n)	6361	1198	2561	518	10638
<i>Don't know (count)</i>	499	65	178	93	835

Providing fishing information to fishers

Ninety-six percent of respondents rated **Providing fishing information to fishers** as beneficial (*help a lot* and *helps a little* combined). Different types of fishers had very similar views. Refer to Table 31.

Table 31: Providing fishing information to fishers - benefit (%)

Providing fishing information to fishers	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
Doesn't help at all	4%	4%	4%	7%	4%
Helps a little	30%	32%	28%	29%	29%
Helps a lot	66%	64%	69%	64%	66%
Total (n)	6873	1263	2742	614	11492

Most commonly, respondents wanted more **provision of fishing information to fishers** (71%). Different types of fishers had similar views on the extent to which this activity should be done. Refer to Table 32.

Table 32: Providing fishing information to fishers – extent to which it should be done in NSW (%)

Providing fishing information to fishers	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
A lot less	2%	2%	1%	3%	2%
A little less	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%
Keep it the same	25%	27%	27%	31%	26%
A little more	30%	32%	32%	28%	31%
A lot more	41%	37%	38%	37%	40%
Total (n)	6576	1225	2637	554	10992
<i>Don't know (count)</i>	311	38	113	62	524

Research on fish and recreational fishing funding area

Respondents were asked to answer about the following five fish and recreational fishing research activities.

- **Research on biology and ecology of fish**

Researchers investigate the biology and habitats of key recreational species. This provides essential information for the sustainable management of fish stocks. Another research initiative is the Research Angler Program which partners with fishers to obtain donated fish frames which are used to build a picture of the age structure of various fish species.

- **Research on fish stockings**

Scientific studies are done on fish stockings to maximise the benefits of stocking procedures and improve survival rates of stocked fish.

- **Recovery of recreational fish species under pressure**

Biological research and monitoring is done on fish species that are important to recreational fishers, but which have suffered declines in abundance. This work assesses increases in these fish populations, and how to return to sustainable fishing for these species in the future.

- **Surveys of recreational fishing**

Surveys of recreational fishers are done to determine the numbers of anglers that fish in different waterways and the numbers of fish that they keep and release. This provides important data for monitoring changes in recreational fishing activities and catches and is used to assess the status of fish stocks.

- **Game fish tagging**

The DPIRD Game Fish Tagging Program is the largest saltwater tagging program of its kind in the world. It is used to obtain information on the biology (distribution, movement, growth, exploitation) of billfish, tunas, sharks and sport fish and encourages recreational fishers to participate in the management of their fishery.

Research on the biology and ecology of fish

Table 33 below shows that 96% of respondents believed that **Research on the biology and ecology of fish** was beneficial. All types of fishers who fished in the last 12 months had similar views.

Table 33: Biology and ecology of fish- benefit (%)

Biology and ecology of fish	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
Doesn't help at all	4%	3%	3%	8%	4%
Helps a little	37%	33%	38%	37%	37%
Helps a lot	59%	64%	60%	55%	59%
Total (n)	6794	1295	2752	581	11,422

Sixty-two percent of respondents wanted more (*a little or a lot more*) **Research on the biology and ecology of fish** in NSW. Salt and freshwater fishers had the same views. Refer to Table 34.

Table 34: Biology and ecology of fish– extent to which it should be done in NSW (%)

Biology and ecology of fish	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
A lot less	2%	2%	1%	5%	2%
A little less	3%	3%	3%	4%	3%
Keep it the same	33%	31%	35%	35%	33%
A little more	30%	31%	31%	28%	31%
A lot more	31%	33%	30%	29%	31%
Total (n)	6352	1218	2556	508	10,634
<i>Don't know (count)</i>	455	77	203	79	814

Research on fish stocking

Research on fish stocking was rated as beneficial by 97% of respondents. All types of fishers had similar views. Refer to Table 35.

Table 35: Research on fish stockings - benefit (%)

Research on fish stockings	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
Doesn't help at all	3%	3%	2%	6%	3%
Helps a little	28%	24%	25%	32%	27%
Helps a lot	69%	73%	73%	62%	70%
Total (n)	6804	1294	2757	582	11437

Seventy-three percent of respondents wanted more **Research on fish stocking** in NSW. Refer to the table below.

Table 36: Research on fish stockings – extent to which it should be done in NSW (%)

Research on fish stockings	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
A lot less	2%	1%	1%	4%	1%
A little less	2%	2%	1%	3%	2%
Keep it the same	24%	21%	22%	27%	23%
A little more	31%	33%	34%	29%	32%
A lot more	41%	43%	43%	36%	41%
Total (n)	6487	1242	2632	518	10,879
<i>Don't know (count)</i>	330	53	132	70	585

Recovery of recreational fish under pressure

Tables 37 and 38 below show that **Recovery of recreational fish under pressure** was rated as beneficial by 96% of respondents and 76% of respondents want a *little or a lot more* of it.

Table 37: Recovery of recreational fish under pressure - benefit (%)

Recovery of recreational fish under pressure	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
Doesn't help at all	4%	3%	3%	6%	4%
Helps a little	27%	25%	26%	30%	26%
Helps a lot	69%	72%	71%	64%	70%
Total (n)	6795	1292	2750	582	11,419

Table 38: Recovery of recreational fish under pressure – extent to which it should be done in NSW (%)

Recovery of recreational fish under pressure	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
A lot less	2%	1%	1%	4%	2%
A little less	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%
Keep it the same	20%	19%	20%	21%	20%
A little more	27%	27%	28%	26%	27%
A lot more	49%	50%	49%	46%	49%
Total (n)	6436	1237	2595	519	10,787
<i>Don't know (count)</i>	<i>374</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>159</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>661</i>

Surveys of recreational fishing

Ninety-four percent of respondents indicated that **Surveys of recreational fishing** were beneficial with all types of fishers having similar views. Refer to Table 39.

Table 39: Surveys of recreational fishing - benefit (%)

Surveys of recreational fishing	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
Doesn't help at all	6%	6%	5%	10%	6%
Helps a little	45%	44%	44%	49%	45%
Helps a lot	49%	50%	51%	41%	49%
Total (n)	6792	1293	2747	579	11411

Over half of respondents wanted more **Surveys of recreational fishing** (55%). Current fishers had similar views.

Table 40: Surveys of recreational fishing – extent to which it should be done in NSW (%)

Surveys of recreational fishing	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
A lot less	3%	3%	2%	5%	3%
A little less	5%	4%	4%	6%	5%
Keep it the same	37%	36%	40%	38%	38%
A little more	29%	30%	29%	26%	29%
A lot more	27%	27%	25%	25%	26%
Total (n)	6467	1229	2612	518	10826
<i>Don't know (count)</i>	347	67	143	70	627

Game fish tagging

Tables 41 and 42 below show that 92% of respondents rated **Game fish tagging** as beneficial and 49% wanted more of it. Current fishers had similar views on both **Benefit** and **Extent** for this activity.

Table 41: Game Fish Tagging Program - benefit (%)

Game fish tagging	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
Doesn't help at all	8%	7%	9%	11%	8%
Helps a little	42%	41%	45%	45%	43%
Helps a lot	50%	52%	47%	45%	49%
Total (n)	6776	1289	2723	577	11365

Table 42: Game Fish Tagging Program – extent to which it should be done in NSW (%)

Game fish tagging	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
A lot less	4%	3%	3%	7%	4%
A little less	6%	6%	6%	4%	6%
Keep it the same	41%	41%	43%	42%	42%
A little more	24%	25%	25%	23%	24%
A lot more	25%	25%	23%	23%	24%
Total (n)	6263	1203	2460	491	10417
<i>Don't know (count)</i>	542	92	283	95	1012

Suggestions for spending recreational fishing trust funds

All respondents were asked 'What other activities do you think should be funded from your fishing licence?'

The more common themes of suggestions offered are displayed in Table 43 below. Many respondents offered more than one suggestion and so the total number of suggestions was much higher than the number of respondents who answered the question. Percentages have been calculated on the number of respondents who provided at least one valid codable suggestion. See bottom row of Table 43 for bases. A total of 9676 respondents offered one or more codable suggestions which is over a third of respondents and a very typical / expected proportion for a survey of this type.

Only themes which were mentioned by 3% or more of respondents are included in the table below.

The full code frame with expanded definitions is included in Attachment B. The Department has been provided with all de-identified verbatim comments.

The five most frequently mentioned suggestions across all fishers were:

- Fishing Facilities (19%)
- Enforcement of fishing rules (illegal fishing) (19%)
- Fisheries compliance and patrolling (more fisheries officers) (16%)
- General Fishing Education (16%)
- Habitat restoration and protection (12%)

More saltwater fishers made suggestions compared with freshwater fishers. The most commonly mentioned theme for freshwater fishers was about the need for increased freshwater fish stocking and fishing facilities.

Table 43: Suggestions for spending recreational fishing trust funds (%)

Suggestion	Mainly / only saltwater	About the same – salt and freshwater	Mainly / only freshwater	Did not fish in last 12 months	All fishers
Fishing Facilities	22%	17%	14%	7%	19%
Enforcement of fishing rules	23%	15%	10%	16%	19%
Fisheries compliance and patrolling	19%	14%	9%	14%	16%
Education fishing general	17%	15%	14%	17%	16%
Habitat restoration and protection	12%	11%	11%	8%	12%
Freshwater fish stocking	6%	13%	19%	5%	10%
Fishing safety education	11%	9%	6%	8%	9%
Support for existing projects	7%	10%	7%	11%	8%
Recreational fishing access	6%	10%	10%	3%	7%
Boat ramps (new/improved)	8%	5%	6%	4%	7%
Commercial fishing (reduced access, buyout, gear restrictions etc.)	8%	4%	1%	4%	6%
Litter and waste management at fishing sites	7%	5%	3%	5%	6%
Recreational fishing licence matters	5%	5%	4%	19%	6%
Conservation education	6%	6%	4%	6%	5%
Inclusive fishing programs for all	5%	6%	5%	7%	5%
Youth engagement and school programs	5%	5%	7%	6%	5%
Waterway health management	4%	6%	8%	4%	5%
Community social fishing events	4%	5%	6%	5%	5%
Sustainable fishing education	5%	5%	4%	3%	5%
Appreciation 'other'	4%	6%	5%	4%	5%
Saltwater fish stocking	5%	6%	3%	4%	4%
Carp eradication programs	1%	6%	12%	3%	4%
Aquatic pollution control	5%	3%	2%	6%	4%
Fisheries research	5%	4%	3%	4%	4%
Saltwater artificial reefs & FADS	5%	2%	1%	3%	4%
Freshwater invasive species management	2%	5%	7%	2%	4%
Total (n)	5989	1066	2231	390	9676

Notes: Only themes with at least 3% responses are displayed in the table.

The total n count represents all respondents who provided a valid codable response to this question.

A dash “-” means no respondent mentioned a particular theme.

The percentages are column percentages based on the total n at the bottom of each column in the table.

Attachment A: Questionnaire

Where you fish in NSW

Where did you mostly fish in **New South Wales**?

*Choose the option that best describes where you fish in **New South Wales**, not anywhere else in Australia. Fishing includes spearfishing and invertebrate collecting.*

Freshwater includes NSW inland rivers, dams and lakes / ponds.

Saltwater includes offshore NSW, inshore NSW and NSW estuaries.

- Only freshwater
- Mainly freshwater but some saltwater
- About the same freshwater and saltwater
- Mainly saltwater but some freshwater
- Only saltwater
- Did not fish in the last 12 months

All money raised by the NSW Recreational Fishing Licence Fee is placed into the Recreational Fishing Trusts and can only be spent on projects to improve recreational fishing in NSW.

The Trusts currently fund a variety of projects to improve recreational fishing opportunities. These include:

Major funding categories	Project examples
Recreational fishing education	Fishing workshops and events, schools education programs, providing fishing information to fishers, Fishcare volunteers
Fishing access and facilities	Fishing platforms, fish cleaning tables, kayak launching platforms, access tracks, fishing safety infrastructure, providing more fishing locations
Research on fish and recreational fishing	Game fish tagging, catch surveys, biology of popular recreational species, improving fish stocking
Aquatic habitat rehabilitation and protection	Aquatic habitat protection and community grants to remove barriers to fish migration, replanting & protecting riverbank vegetation, restoring water flows
Enhancing recreational fishing	Fish aggregating devices (FADs), artificial reefs, fish stocking
Enforcement of fishing rules	Fisheries officers
Social and wellbeing benefits of fishing	Promoting the health and well-being benefits of recreational fishing, fishing for therapy initiatives

For more information on where your licence fees are being spent, including hundreds of projects, check out the latest Recreational Fishing Trusts annual report on the DPIRD website - [Recreational Fishing Trust Annual Report](https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/recreational-fishing-trusts-annual-report) (nsw.gov.au).

You will now be asked questions on **three** of these major funding categories.

Recreational fishing education

Fishcare volunteers

Over 120 trained volunteers are involved in face to face education of recreational fishers to help them to be familiar with fishing rules and to promote sustainable fishing. Fishcare volunteers also play a big role in running fishing workshops, educating school children and manning advisory stands at community events across NSW.

Fishing workshops and fishing days

Fishing workshops and fishing days are run across NSW each year to teach children and adults how to fish sustainably, providing for an enjoyable fishing educational experience.

Schools fishing education

Teaching primary and secondary school children about our aquatic habitat, sustainable fishing and how to fish, various programs receive funding from the Trusts each year to teach students about the importance of aquatic habitats and to introduce them to safe and responsible fishing practices.

Providing fishing information for anglers

A range of fishing brochures, booklets, sticky rulers and fishing guides are distributed free of charge every year to help anglers to keep up-to-date on the latest fishing rules and sustainable fishing practices.

How much do each of the educational activities just mentioned **help improve** recreational fishing in NSW?

	Doesn't help at all	Helps a little	Helps a lot
Fishcare volunteers			
Fishing workshops and fishing days			
Schools fishing education			
Providing fishing information to anglers			

How much should each of these educational activities be done?

	A lot less	A little less	Keep it the same as now	A little more	A lot more	Don't know
Fishcare volunteers						
Fishing workshops and fishing days						
Schools fishing education						
Providing fishing information to anglers						

Aquatic habitat protection and rehabilitation

Habitat rehabilitation grants

Grants have been provided to local councils, fishing clubs, community groups and others to rehabilitate fish habitat in fresh and saltwater areas, including the removal of barriers to fish migration, building fishways and removing weirs; replanting riparian and marine vegetation; and replacing snags in rivers.

Aquatic habitat protection

Fisheries Conservation Managers work to enhance the protection of key fish habitats and increase recreational fisher involvement in fish habitat protection and management. A key responsibility of this program is to assess development proposals with potential impacts on fish habitat, and provide development conditions that ensure “no net loss” of fish habitats.

Community partnership projects to improve fish habitat

Various not-for-profit organisations are running projects to form partnerships with fishers and other groups to be involved in the protection and restoration of our fish habitat and waterways. Projects also include raising awareness and taking action to remove litter and fishing related debris from our waterways across NSW.

How much do each of the protection and rehabilitation activities just mentioned **help improve** recreational fishing in NSW?

	Doesn't help at all	Helps a little	Helps a lot
Habitat rehabilitation grants			
Aquatic habitat protection			
Community partnership projects to improve fish habitat			

How much should each of these protection and rehabilitation activities be done

	A lot less	A little less	Keep it the same as now	A little more	A lot more	Don't know
Habitat rehabilitation grants						
Aquatic habitat management						
Community partnership projects to improve fish habitat						

Recreational fishing enhancement programs

Freshwater fish stocking

Four inland Government hatcheries produce native fish and trout for stocking in freshwater rivers and impoundments throughout NSW. Trust funds boost production at these hatcheries, which has led to record numbers of fish being stocked and better fishing opportunities across the inland fishery. Last season, more than 5 million native fish and trout were stocked throughout rivers and impoundments in NSW.

Marine fish stocking

Last season 21,000 juvenile dusky flathead were stocked into two key Recreational Fishing Havens, Lake Conjola and Burrill Lake on the NSW South Coast. Additionally, 10,000 mulloway were released into Lake Macquarie, Georges River (Botany Bay) and Hastings River.

Fish aggregating devices (FADs)

Fish aggregating devices are deployed in 34 locations in coastal waters to attract dolphinfish, tuna and wahoo to give anglers a better chance to catch these popular species.

Building artificial reefs

Offshore artificial reefs have been built off Sydney, Shoalhaven Heads, Port Macquarie, southern Sydney, Merimbula, Newcastle, Wollongong, Tweed, the Eurobodalla, the Central Coast, Forster and in some estuaries. The reefs create quality fishing locations for popular fish species such as kingfish, snapper and other key recreational species. More reefs are being planned for the Coffs and Ballina regions.

How much do each of the fishing enhancement activities just mentioned **help improve** recreational fishing in NSW?

	Doesn't help at all	Helps a little	Helps a lot
Freshwater fish stocking			
Marine fish stocking			
Fish aggregating devices (FADs)			
Building artificial reefs			

How much should each of these fishing enhancement activities be done?

	A lot less	A little less	Keep it the same as now	A little more	A lot more	Don't know
Freshwater fish stocking						
Marine fish stocking						
Fish aggregating devices (FADs)						
Building artificial reefs						

Research on fish and recreational fishing

Research on biology and ecology of fish

Researchers investigate the biology and habitats of key recreational species. This provides essential information for the sustainable management of fish stocks. Another research initiative is the Research Angler Program which partners with fishers to obtain donated fish frames which are used to build a picture of the age structure of various fish species.

Research on fish stockings

Scientific studies are done on fish stockings to maximise the benefits of stocking procedures and improve survival rates of stocked fish.

Recovery of recreational fish species under pressure

Biological research and monitoring is done on fish species that are important to recreational fishers, but which have suffered declines in abundance. This work assesses increases in these fish populations, and how to return to sustainable fishing for these species in the future.

Surveys of recreational fishing

Surveys of recreational fishers are done to determine the numbers of anglers that fish in different waterways and the numbers of fish that they keep and release. This provides important data for

monitoring changes in recreational fishing activities and catches and is used to assess the status of fish stocks.

Game Fish Tagging

The DPIRD Game Fish Tagging Program is the largest saltwater tagging program of its kind in the world. It is used to obtain information on the biology (distribution, movement, growth, exploitation) of billfish, tunas, sharks and sport fish and encourages recreational fishers to participate in the management of their fishery.

How much do each of the research activities just mentioned **help improve** recreational fishing in NSW?

	Doesn't help at all	Helps a little	Helps a lot
Biology and ecology of fish			
Research on fish stockings			
Recovery of recreational fish under pressure			
Surveys of recreational fishing			
Game Fish Tagging Program			

How much should each of these research activities be done?

	A lot less	A little less	Keep it the same as now	A little more	A lot more	Don't know
Biology and ecology of fish						
Research on fish stockings						
Recovery of recreational fish under pressure						
Surveys of recreational fishing						
Game Fish Tagging Program						

Fishing access and facilities

Providing fishing facilities for anglers

Fish cleaning facilities, fishing platforms, kayak launching platforms and access tracks provide convenient facilities and access for fishers. These facilities built at popular sites around estuaries, sheltered coastal locations, inland rivers and lakes provide for safe and easily accessible fishing locations.

Improving fishing access

Fisheries managers work closely with other government agencies, landowners, recreational fishing clubs and key stakeholder groups to maintain and improve current access to popular local fishing spots. A major focus of this program is to identify and open new access points for fishing.

How much do each of the facility and access activities just mentioned **help improve** recreational fishing in NSW?

	Doesn't help at all	Helps a little	Helps a lot
Providing fishing facilities for anglers			
Improving fishing access			

How much should each of these facility and access activities be done?

	A lot less	A little less	Keep it the same as now	A little more	A lot more	Don't know
Providing fishing facilities for anglers						
Improving fishing access						

Enforcement of fishing rules

Using Recreational Fishing Trust funds, 18 Fisheries Officers are employed to ensure high levels of compliance with fishing rules. These Fisheries officers conduct a range of activities to encourage and maximise compliance. This program particularly targets high risk offenders and known 'black spots'.

How much do compliance activities just mentioned **help improve** recreational fishing in NSW?

Don't help at all

Help a little

Help a lot

How much should compliance activities be done?

A lot less

A little less

Keep it the same as now

A little more

A lot more

Don't know

Promoting the health and well-being of recreational fishing

There are many benefits of fishing beyond just catching a fish, including fishing with friends and family, connecting with nature and a chance to unwind and relax.

Various programs receive funding from the Recreational Fishing Trusts each year to promote fishing as a healthy, outdoors family activity. There are also community projects designed to assist people who are suffering health issues, including mental health, which use fishing as a supportive and therapeutic activity. Another program is the Fish for Life program aimed at promoting the many social and well-being benefits of fishing.

How much does promoting health and well-being activities just mentioned **help improve** recreational fishing in NSW?

Doesn't help at all

Helps a little

Helps a lot

How much should promoting health and well-being activities be done?

A lot less

A little less

Keep it the same as now

A little more

A lot more

Don't know

Anything else?

What other activities do you think should be funded from your fishing licence?

When answering, please keep in mind all of the fishing activities mentioned above that receive funding from the Recreational Fishing Trusts each year. If you have no further suggestions, please leave the box blank and click Finalise to submit your answers.

Attachment B: Open ended code frame

Theme	Sub theme	Definition
Appreciation/support	Support for existing	Supportive of current allocation of funds/programs funded.
Appreciation/support	Appreciation 'other'	General support.
Access and facilities	Fishing facilities	Physical structure used directly for fishing activities such as fishing platform, fish cleaning station/table, kayak launching, infrastructure lighting.
Access and facilities	Boat ramps and 'other'	Other facilities (not currently within Trust funding guidelines) such as boat ramps.
Access and facilities	Recreational fishing access	Access through revised management or to gain access to a fishing location (e.g. staffing, wharf patrols, increased access in marine parks, opening locations to fishing).
Access and facilities	Disability fishing facilities / access	Facilities and access specifically designed to cater for people with disabilities or limited mobility.
Commercial fishing	Commercial fishing	Commercial fishing including buyout of professional operators, reducing commercial bycatch, impacts of commercial fishing gear etc.
Compliance	Illegal fishing	Increased enforcement of illegal fishing activities.
Compliance	Fines	Greater penalties for illegal fishing.
Compliance	Fisheries compliance and patrolling	Increased need for surveillance and more fisheries officers.
Conservation	Habitat restoration and protection	Improve riparian vegetation, increase in native vegetation etc.
Conservation	Waterway health management	Improvements for water quality for system health, improved water allocation, reduce blackwater events etc.
Conservation	Litter management at fishing sites	Fishing litter solutions, including tackle and line bins.
Conservation	Aquatic pollution control	Managing pollution in the aquatic environment, including fishing marine debris, rubbish etc.
Conservation	Marine parks and conservation	Increase marine protected areas.
Education	General fishing education	Increased education on fishing rules and recreational fish species,, including signage, other education materials & online resources.
Education	Fishing safety education	Education on safety such as rock fishing, boating, diving etc.
Education	Conservation education	Educating the community about maintaining healthy fish populations and ecosystems .

Theme	Sub theme	Definition
Education	Sustainable fishing education	Promoting responsible fishing practices including catch and release, correct handling, sustainable fishing techniques etc.
Education	Youth engagement and school programs	Involving students in fishing programs that promote environmental stewardship.
Fish stocking and enhancement	Freshwater fish stocking	Support for increased fish stocking in freshwater rivers, dams and impoundments.
Fish stocking and enhancement	Saltwater fish stocking	Support for increased fish stocking in saltwater estuaries and oceans.
Fish stocking and enhancement	Saltwater artificial reefs & FADS	Increase in artificial structures for fishing such as FADs, reefs and oyster reefs.
Fisheries management	Bag and size limits	Comments regarding bag and size limits for recreational fishers in NSW.
Fisheries management	Gear	Comments regarding fishing gear rules for recreational fishers in NSW.
Fisheries management	Other	Comments regarding other management tools for recreational fishers, including seasonal closures .
Pests and diseases	Freshwater invasive species management	Eradication of invasive pest species.
Pests and diseases	Carp eradication programs	Eradication of Carp in NSW waterways.
Programs and promotion	Inclusive fishing programs for all	More fishing programs that welcome all individuals, promoting accessibility, diversity and inclusion.
Programs and promotion	Community social fishing events	Increased community fishing events i.e. workshops and competitions.
Programs and promotion	Social benefits / promotion	Increased promotion of fishing and the social and wellbeing benefits associated with the activity.
Programs and promotion	Technology /new programs	Innovative technology and programs to enhance recreational fishing
Recreational fishing licence fees	Reciprocal licence	Support for reciprocal licensing with neighbouring states.
Recreational fishing licence fees	Recreational fishing licence	Comments regarding current fishing licence and fees.
Research	Fisheries research	Fisheries surveys, tagging programs, fisheries research and water quality or habitat research.
Survey	Survey issues	Comments regarding this RFT survey.