

Cairns Recreational Fishing Voluntary Code Of Conduct

Fishing the Trinity Net Free Zone

The Cairns Net Free Zone was declared on 1 November 2015 which meant all commercial gill netting was to cease from a line between False Cape and Taylors Point (North Trinity Beach) in Trinity Bay and all waters upstream including Trinity Inlet and the Barron River delta.

Prawn Trawling is also banned in the zone allowing for a return to a more natural and abundant state for habitat and multiple species.

With the considerable volume of fish no longer being removed, remaining stocks have been allowed to breed and grow, the population of legal-sized fish has risen substantially and dramatically since the closure. The number of barramundi over the magic metre in length continues to multiply each season, and with most of these wonderful sport fish released to fight and breed again, the overall picture is only improving with the passage of time.

This represents a very valuable transfer of stewardship and responsibility to the recreational fishing sector. It is vital that the recreational fishing community take appropriate steps to protect this community resource. To this end, Cairns Regional Council has endorsed the Cairns Recreational Fishing Strategy, constructed by a working group of primary stakeholders, which identifies five themes, along with plans to manage and improve the resource.

A key component of this strategy is a Voluntary Code of Conduct which has also been endorsed by Council, Cairns Fishing Community and relevant stakeholders. It is the third Council in Australia to do so. This code sets out the values that Cairns as a community aspires to, and encourages local and visiting fishers to demonstrate whilst fishing in the regions waters. The code is voluntary and the values are in detail below. Council and the working group members strongly encourage everyone to read and understand the values, and sign up to the Voluntary Code of Conduct.

Cairns Region Recreational Fishing Voluntary Code of Conduct

Your pledge to the following values will help to protect our community resource!

Value 1: Maintaining healthy fish stocks through sustainable harvest behaviours

- Limit the take of barramundi to a maximum of two per trip.
- Do not target or keep barramundi during the closed breeding season and do your best to not fish areas where barramundi congregate during spawning times during this period
- If keeping captured barramundi for consumption, limit the size to between 600mm and 1000mm in length. Barramundi commence breeding at 800mm, best to leave larger fish to do just that.
- Take what you need, not all you can, so there will be more for tomorrow

Value 2: Proper care and handling of all fish being released to maximise survival rate

- Ensure fish that are to be released are supported along their length if removed from the water. This applies to all fish over 400mm
- Do not place fish on hot surfaces or where they may damage themselves.
- When intending to catch and release, consider using barbless or squashed barbed hooks to minimise damage.
- Use knotless landing nets for catch and release fishing.
- If taking photos, be quick. Best to leave large fish in the water

Value 3: Zero tolerance for Illegal fishing activities

- Immediately report any illegal or suspicious fishing activity to the Queensland Boat & Fishing Patrol or Police.
- To report unlawful fishing in Queensland, call the 24-hour Fishwatch hotline on 1800 017 116
- Promote the Code of Practice among friends and visitors fishing in the Cairns Region and elsewhere.
- Promotion of positive images and practice on all forms of social media in regards to recreational fishing.

Value 4: Care and respect

- Do not litter the waterways – you bring it, you take it home. Please assist by removing any existing rubbish.
- Look after nursery areas such as lagoons, brackish and freshwater wetlands and do your best to remove noxious pests such as tilapia.
- Willingly provide information and data regarding your fishing outings and experiences if requested by researchers, agencies and organisations involved in monitoring the status of the Net Free Area.
- Assist with the removal of rubbish, pest species and pest plants that impact the marine ecosystem.
- When fishing from land, ensure that you respect the rules and regulations of the areas that you are fishing and do your best to keep that area litter free and clean for future use.
- Respect all facilities provided to recreational fishers including boat ramps, lighting, and other amenities.

Numbers of Importance

To report any sick or injured animals such as turtles or dugong call 1300 ANIMAL (1300 264 625)

Fishwatch hotline on 1800 017 116

Marine Pollution - MSQ General Enquiries (business hours): 07 4052 7400 After hours incident reporting: 1300 551 899

Biosecurity – 13 25 23

CrocWatch – 1300 130 372 to report a crocodile sighting