



**AUSTRALIAN RECREATIONAL
FISHING FOUNDATION**

MEDIA RELEASE

**tackle
box**

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5 Million Recreational Fishers Empowered By Mobile App Technology – Education Through Citizen Science To Optimize Sustainability & Promote Stewardship.

The Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation (ARFF), the recognised national peak body for recreational fishing, recently launched a new initiative the Tackle Box project. The Tackle Box project uses recreational fishing citizen science and digital approaches to optimise sustainability and engagement of recreational fishers in Commonwealth Marine Parks on a national scale.

During the first year of the project, ARFF intends to pilot the state-of-the-art digital platform in 14 fishing events located throughout the nation. A minimum of one event per state is planned in the next few months, tapping into existing fishing club tournaments. This could not be achieved without the unwavering support of the different state recreational fishing peak bodies and national associations throughout Australia paving the way for the Tackle Box project to communicate with fishing clubs on the frontline.

The first event was recently in Exmouth WA, the app handled the Exmouth Game Fishing Club's Billfish Bonanza. The event and smart phone app functioned very successfully and was well received by the tournament competitors. This was achieved in no small part by the support of the Exmouth Game Fishing Club and the Tackle Box team onsite overseeing the app tuition and education of the project. The first event collected hundreds of high-quality datasets which has the potential to improve future recreational fishing management within our marine estate.

The project in its current form has developed a smart phone app and management software which offers an array of tools to all recreational fishers of Australia, some of the key tools are:

- An interactive national mapping system which will provide information about the location of marine parks and real time alerts to fishers when they are entering an area that they cannot fish.
- A powerful recreational fishing reporting tool. This reporting tool takes centre stage of the app utilizing InfoFish's unique and proven technology. This logging technology is Australia's flagship fishery data collection system, setting the benchmark for collecting recreational fishing effort data and KPIs to better inform management of recreational fisheries. The reporting tool is designed to accept catch data from volunteers and any kind of recreational fishing tournament via its comprehensive fishing tournament app platform and management software.
- An up to date feed of all the Australian ocean temperature and ocean current regions. An excellent tool for recreational fishers to decipher the most likely location of pelagic species in their region.
- A complete and extensive library of national and international records catches from the IGFA, GFAA and ANSA. This tool gives recreational fishers the opportunity to compare their catches with those found on the extensive library.
- A wide-ranging library of fish species articles with scientific links and videos. An exciting tool which can be used by everyone educating them about the intricate details of hundreds of fisheries.
- Species Recognition Artificial Intelligence. An amazing feature supplied by the IGFA which continually learns and significantly improves the identification of species which ensures correct identification for personal, tournament and recreational fishery management data.

- The National Code of Practice for recreational fishing. The Code offers 14 key points with attached links educating recreational fishers on best practices, improving the recreational community's social license.
- Social science surveys. The surveys will help all of us understand what drives fisher folk to participate in recreational fishing and how they interact with marine protected areas.

These features will improve how ARFF communicates with different stakeholders and the recreational community, anticipating their needs into the future.

One of the key project consortium members is InfoFish. Managing Director Stefan Sawynok and his team at InfoFish play an integral role in the development of the project. With over 30 years' experience in fishing related app development, InfoFish has strived to ensure that the Tackle Box app features all the data capture needs of recreational fishers and project stakeholders. While many of the methods used in fisheries science are tried and true, the modern world has made many of them harder to implement. InfoFish are always looking to update their methods in gathering and interpreting data, so long as it's done ethically and with robust science. ARFF is delighted to partner with InfoFish and explore the real-world experiences through the project which will ground us and keeps us focused on meaningful outcomes

The Tackle Box project has tremendous potential in delivering positive outcomes for the recreational fishing community into the future. ARFF engaged Adam Martin as project manager to coordinate the many segments of the project. Adam has many years of experience managing multimillion-dollar projects and is an advocate and representative of recreational fishers in his region of Australia on the far south coast NSW. Adam has a solid grasp on recreational fishery management models and is using this knowledge by paving the way forward on how fishing clubs and the recreational fishing community will naturally progress into the future. Adam looks forward delivering this project which will have long lasting benefits to the 5 million recreational fishers nationwide and working with all ARFF's members helping them to make the project their own and contribute to the nation's recreational fishing community narrative.

In the following weeks and months ARFF's Tackle Box project will make special announcements and invitations giving all recreational fishers including Game, Generalists, Spear and Sport fishers of Australia the opportunity to participate in this exciting initiative being the stewards of the ocean, acting as the eyes and ears above and below the waterline. The project also looks forward working with all our member bodies whereby contributing to a positive future of the recreational fishing community. ARFF's Tackle Box project received grant funding from the Australian Government, without this support the project would still be at square one. The potential of the Tackle Box project can provide many win-wins for all stakeholders in our national marine estate.

For more information

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