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Hands up to snag recreational fishing funding!

Millions of dollars in Community trust funds are now available to fund projects that improve recreational fishing. The NSW Recreational Fishing Trust provides a chance for recreational fishing groups, individual anglers, councils and other community organisations to improve recreational fishing in their local areas. This trust funding comes from the sale of recreational fishing licences to anglers and the money raised is placed into two trusts, one for saltwater and the other for freshwater. Anyone can apply for funding from the Recreational Fishing Trusts, including keen fishers, fishing clubs, organisations and universities. Joint applications are also encouraged. The NSW Recreational Fishing Trust has already allocated over \$3 million to new and ongoing freshwater projects while around \$9 million will be spent on saltwater fishing projects, next financial year. Committees of expert fishers allocate the funds as part of a five year strategy that includes projects with immediate and long term timeframes. Projects funded in previous years include artificial reefs, fish stocking programs, fish aggregating devices (FADs), Fishcare volunteers, fishing platforms, fish cleaning tables and science and research.

Applications for funding close on Wednesday, 17 March 2010. Funding applications must benefit recreational fishing. Contributing funding and in-kind support, such as voluntary labour, is encouraged. For more information or assistance with applications contact I&I NSW on 02 6648 3917, email recreational.fishingtrust@industry.nsw.gov.au or visit the website www.industry.nsw.gov.au

2010 Fishcare Volunteer Program Recruitment Underway

I&I NSW, Fishcare program, which is funded by the Recreational Fishing Trust, is currently recruiting for volunteers, so if you are passionate about fishing, have an interest in the environment or just want to network with other like minded people, nominate now. Training is being undertaken across NSW for the two streams of this popular volunteer program.

Stream 1, is for dedicated schools Fishcare volunteers, to assist with the Get Hooked...It's Fun to Fish program which has 100 schools registered in 2010. These schools are very keen to have volunteers come to visit their students and talk about sustainable fishing and habitat protection. New volunteers are needed for both freshwater and saltwater regions in NSW throughout March 2010. Training locations and dates for 2010 include; Newcastle 23/24 Feb, Dubbo 2/3 March, Tamworth 4/5 March, Albury 9/10 March, Port Macquarie 16/17 March, Coffs Harbour 18/19 March, Cronulla 23/24 March, Nowra 25/26 March. If you are interested, please contact Louise Roberts 95278515, 0437860299, gethooked.fisheries@industry.nsw.gov.au.

Stream 2, is for general Fishcare volunteers, whom assist I&I NSW staff with angler advisory (land and water), fishing workshops, event attendance, angler surveys, club talks and much more. New volunteers are needed for the Newcastle (Brooklyn to Port Macquarie) and North Coast (Port Macquarie to Tweed Heads) regions. Training will be held at Port Macquarie on 27/28 Feb 2010. If you are interested please contact Jamie Burns 4980 9204, 0408609332, Jamie.burns@industry.nsw.gov.au.

How many carp is a tinny worth?

Its carp muster time! Catch a carp at the third annual Namoi Carp Muster and go into the draw to win over \$4,000 in prizes including a 10ft tinny and motor, kayak, fishing gear, fuel vouchers and much, much more! Anglers of all ages and abilities will head to the Namoi River in Narrabri on March 6 and 7 for their chance to catch some of these feisty fish, do something positive for the river and maybe win some of the prizes on offer. There will be a free BBQ and plenty of fun to be had. The Carp Muster forms an integral part of the Namoi Aquatic Habitat Initiative, a joint project between I&I NSW, Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) and Namoi Catchment Management Authority (CMA), which aims to bring back native fish to the Namoi by improving aquatic and riparian habitat.

Registration will be held at the Crossing Theatre, Narrabri in the Exhibition Room (Saturday) from 8am to 5pm, and the Riverside Room (Sunday) from 8am to 12 noon. The cost is \$2 for children and pensioners and \$5 for adults. All entrants are required to abide by the current NSW Fishing Rules and Regulations. For more information call Milly Hobson, I&I NSW on (02) 6763 1206. Joint hosts, the Narrabri Amateur Fishing Club will donate 50% of funds raised from registration on the weekend to the McGrath Foundation. Individual donations can also be made over the weekend. Major sponsor for the 2010 Namoi Carp Muster is Boggabri Coal, with assistance again being given by Namoi Valley Aquafarming.

Research examines Murray cod breeding

An innovative project to study Murray cod is underway, thanks to \$50,000 in funding from the NSW Recreational Freshwater Fishing Trust, I&I NSW. Murray cod, the largest freshwater fish in Australia, is a premier recreational fish that is now listed as a vulnerable species by the Commonwealth Government. This research project will determine key aspects of Murray cod reproduction in selected parts of the northern Murray-Darling River System. The project will complement various management programs based on research findings that have already been undertaken during the past two decades to promote a recovery of Murray cod. This project will provide information on the movement of adult fish, the type and location of spawning sites, spawning behaviour, parental protection of eggs and larvae, effects of coldwater pollution, and the timing and duration of the breeding season in the northern tributaries. This research project has the support and co-operation of the Queensland Department of Primary Industries & Fisheries, the University of New England, the Native Fish Strategy, the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin Committee, the Murray-Darling Basin Authority, and recreational fishers and fishing clubs.

2010 fishing guides released for summer fishing season

Fishers flocking to the water in 2010 should make sure they grab their copies of the NSW Recreational Saltwater and Freshwater Fishing Guides. The guides are produced by I&I NSW and funded from the Recreational Fishing Trust, to provide recreational fishers with comprehensive and user-friendly information regarding fishing rules and regulations in NSW waters. Two separate guides are produced every year, the NSW Recreational Saltwater Fishing Guide and the NSW Recreational Freshwater Fishing Guide. Included in the free guides is information on fishing fees, catch and release fishing, safety tips, knots and rigs, fishing rules, legal lengths, bag limits, protected and threatened species, and tide charts. They also explain how fish licence fees are invested back into fishing through the Recreational Fishing Trusts of NSW which fund various projects such as the provision of fish cleaning tables at popular fishing spots, the mooring of fish aggregating devices (FADs) offshore to promote new fishing areas and fish restocking programs across the state. Copies of the NSW Recreational Saltwater Fishing Guide 2010 and the NSW Recreational Freshwater Fishing Guide 2010 are available from I&I NSW Fisheries Offices and most fishing tackle shops. They are also available to download online at www.industry.nsw.gov.au/fisheries, or email fishingguide.fisheries@industry.nsw.gov.au.

Tracking Harbour sharks, it's no bull!

State Government scientists are another step closer to unlocking the mysterious underwater world of Sydney's sharks following the successful tagging of three male bull sharks in Sydney Harbour. The team of I&I NSW shark experts have been fishing the waters of Sydney Harbour several nights a week for months in an effort to locate and tag sharks swimming within their Sydney Harbour habitat. A 2.76 metre bull shark was tagged west of the Harbour Bridge on 21 January, another 2.57 metre bull shark was tagged on the same night and a third 2.35 metre bull shark was tagged in the Parramatta River on 24 January. Each tag has its own unique ID code and a transmitting life of ten years which can be detected by the network of acoustic listening stations deployed throughout Sydney Harbour and along the NSW coast. The tags register migratory paths and natural movements of the animals to determine if there are any potentially dangerous areas in Sydney Harbour. The Sydney Harbour Shark tagging research project forms part of the NSW Government's wider scientific guidelines for minimising the risk of shark attack. Swimmers can follow some simple common sense tips to reduce their risk of an encounter with a shark, including not swimming at dusk and dawn, avoiding swimming alone and avoid murky water. More information can be found at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/info/sharksmart.

Playmates for Sydney's resident wobbegong sharks

Another ten wobbegong shark pups have been released in Sydney waters, as part of an Australian first study to unlock the secret life of the iconic shark species. The wobbegong shark pups were released into the sea at Cabbage Tree Bay Aquatic Reserve at Shelly Beach, near Manly, as part of a collaborative research project with I&I NSW. This is in addition to the ten Wobbegong shark pups released at the same location in 2008. The wobbegong shark pups were born at the Sydney Aquarium as part of this Australian first study which researches the movements of wobbegong sharks within an aquatic reserve, ensuring future reserves are designed with these charismatic species in mind. The research is also exploring the use of captive-bred sharks that can help replenish wild populations that may be depleted through fishing. Successful re-introduction into the wild is critical to allowing captive breeding programs to contribute to the conservation of species, particularly of marine predators like the wobbegong shark. The research has been supported by I&I NSW, NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water, Sydney Aquarium Conservation Fund, Sydney Institute of Marine Science, Australian Acoustic Tagging and Monitoring System (part of the Integrated Marine Observing System), Defence Maritime Services, and Macquarie University.