



PROTECT PROMOTE PRESERVE

The USFA's priorities for the future

The Underwater Skindivers and Fishermen's Association (USFA) 'Three P' framework highlights three aspects of spearfishing that by virtue of their simplicity fosters easy recall amongst the spearfishing community and other stakeholders. It aims to build on the framework provided by the Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW (RFA) and is designed to highlight spearfishing's specific needs for the future.

1) PROTECT the spearfishers

Maximising the safety of spearfishers (skindivers) whilst they are diving is the USFA's utmost priority. Statistics show that shallow water blackout followed by boat strikes as being two of the greatest dangers to spearfishers in NSW. Developing safety programs and getting that information to divers is a key aim.

Work with DPI to review and update existing diver safety programs and develop new ones where needed, to ensure the safety of spearfishers. Look at methods for the wider distribution of this information to spearfishers across the state. Develop a collaborative program in which information developed by the USFA is shared with DPI for input and endorsement prior to being distributed to spearfishers.

Align with industry and DPI to ascertain the number of spearfishers actively participating in NSW. Understanding this becomes critical when reviewing catch limits comparable to the numbers of divers and their effort.

Work with RMS to educate boat drivers to be aware of their responsibilities regarding divers/spearfishers in the water. Greatly increase awareness through, for example, signage at boat ramps advertising the Alpha dive flag as well as the accompanying high-vis fluoro yellow flag to signify spearfishers/surface swimmers.

Look at ways to maximise harmony between aquatic user groups such as boaters, divers and fishers.





2) PROMOTE the sport

Promote the highest standard of ethics for all divers and prospective new divers. Promote safety education on the water and under it. Promote the sport as an ecological method of recreational fishing that is environmentally sustainable through its selective limited use of the renewable resource.

Increase positive public sentiment towards recreational spearfishing through collaborating with DPI, local government and industry.

Work with local communities and government to promote renowned spearfishing destinations e.g. Coffs Harbour, South West Rocks and Jervis Bay. Provide equitable access to key information and locations sought by developing spearfishers. Contribute to local economies.

Through a strategic industry partnership USFA has created a means to communicate with over 70,000 spearfishers. This is a powerful platform to communicate state-wide or even nationally to promote key messages that are imperative to sustaining safety and the marine ecology.

3) PRESERVE for the future

Preserve spearfishing for future generations by supporting respect for the environment, no-rubbish policies, and protection of the sport's heritage, history and ethics. Ensure the future of spearfishing by promoting sustainable underwater fishing well within legal bag limits developed in accordance with non-biased scientific studies.

Preserve the history of spearfishing through the collection, housing, preservation and display of NSW's spearfishing and SCUBA diving heritage.

Seek recognition from the NSW Fisheries Minister and Fisheries NSW to recognise and support the need for the establishment of a Fishing and Diving Museum and Resource Centre. The resource centre is necessary for the preservation of written, photographic and film records specific to spearfishing and diving that will be readily available in one location for research and study.





The need to preserve and protect what remains of spearfishing's cultural heritage becomes even more urgent with the passage of time. If action is not taken, a great number of valuable historical artefacts and records may be lost.

Preserve access to the resource, meaning that legitimate access to areas that can be safely dived areas (reefs and headlands <25m deep) and fish stocks is retained. A key concern is the loss of access to the resource through lockouts and marine parks that may not fully consider the impact to spearfishers. Most marine reserves and sanctuary areas tend to focus on these shallow areas resulting in spearfishers being excluded and forced into smaller and smaller areas.

The USFA and its members are very conservation-minded. However we believe that there are better management options than total lockouts such as those that occur in marine parks. Fish stocks are a renewable resource if managed correctly. The USFA would like to see increased monitoring of the important recreational and commercial species to ensure that any declines are picked up well before it becomes a problem and management strategies can be adjusted accordingly.