

## Estuary Protection Policy

TARFish have the underlying philosophy that management of marine resources and habitats is based on the principles of Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management (EBFM). EBFM is world's best practice fisheries management program recognised by the Australian Government Fisheries Research and Development Corporation. EBFM looks at marine environment impacts across connected and related fisheries rather than looking at individual fisheries independently of each other. EBFM takes into consideration marine habitats and the entire food chain effects from the top predators, such as sharks and whales, to the smaller species such as anchovies, sardines and krill.

One of the 4 major areas of fishing responsibility within the TARFish Recreational Fishing Code of Practice is "Protecting the environment". Protecting the environment includes taking steps to ensure the marine environment is not damaged or disturbed thereby impacting on important habitat needed to support ecosystems under EBFM.

Estuaries are a particularly important part of the marine environment. Estuaries around Tasmania provide essential fish habitat and act as nursery grounds for many marine species. Scientific research has confirmed that "juvenile growth and survival are determined by both the capacity and quality of these nursery habitats. The increase of human activities along rivers, estuaries and in coastal areas affects ecosystems, in particular by pollution and habitat destruction. Habitat destruction is one of the most serious threats for the recovery of fish stocks."<sup>1</sup>

Habitat destruction can be as a result of the impacts of certain fishing gear types, pollution and incorrect boating and anchoring techniques. To minimise the chances of human induced habitat destruction and protect estuary habitat TARFish require fishers to;

- show care when anchoring, particularly around reef or seagrass areas
- refuel on land wherever possible
- not discharge wastes, oil or sewage into the water
- be aware of your boating speed to minimise erosion of riverbanks from excessive wave action in estuaries
- avoid disturbance to fish habitat while diving
- not use nets of any description for the purposes of catching fish other than hand held scoop nets in estuary waters
- report environmental damage and pollution to the relevant authorities
- prevent pollution and protect the marine environment by removing rubbish

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<sup>1</sup> Effect of nursery habitat degradation on flatfish population. Journal of Sea Research 64, Rochette S. Et al

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In support of sustainable fishing and habitat protection of estuaries TARFish maintain that;

1. extensive studies and mapping be undertaken to identify critical estuarine habitat including sea-grass, reef and shoal areas and once identified these critical areas be declared “No Netting Areas” for both commercial and recreational fishers.
2. all stakeholders work towards development of techniques and practices that prevent habitat damage to benthic and non-target species.
3. all commercial fishing endorsements that override management plans that cover estuary waters be extinguished.

Note: Estuary/Estuarine Waters are those generally defined as bounded by the seaward limits noted in the respective management plans for regions and/or fisheries.