

Results of the NFSA Membership survey carried out November 2006 .

In late 2006 the NFSA conducted a survey within its membership with 2 objectives. The first was to be sure that it understood how the membership views the importance of its focus areas and how well its performance in those areas is perceived. The second was to seek an understanding of what Sea Anglers think about three “hot” topics being discussed today, licensing, bag limits and catch and release.

The survey went out to some 5000 NFSA members, returns were anonymous and over 600 returns were received, The results of the survey are summarised in the table below. They will be used by the Executive of the NFSA to set our priorities for the year. We will focus on the top 5 priority areas and develop clear activity programmes and objectives for them. The intention is to repeat the survey in 12 months time to measure and report on progress and reconfirm members’ priorities.

Results Table (Ratings out of 5)

Position.	Topic being responded to	Importance Rating.	Performance Rating
1	Conservation (lobbying Government)	4.44	3.66
2	Third Party Insurance	4.26	3.92
3	Joining the NFSA	4.26	3.73
4	Conservation (Access)	4.10	3.45
5	Membership Renewal Process	3.98	3.54
6	Head Office Communications	3.64	3.48(Handbook) 3.66(journal) 2.5(Website)
7	Education & Training	3.52	3.1
8	Communications from Divisions	3.04	2.55
9	Specimen Award Scheme	2.94	3.14
10	Competitions (Divisions)	2.47	2.55
11	Competitions (National)	2.31	2.58

The following table shows the responses to the “Hot Topic” questions asked in the survey. The question asked was –
 “The government seems determined to introduce legislation that would allow it to License sea anglers, introduce bag limits is it deems it appropriate and introduce Marine Protected Areas where Angling could be banned or curtailed. Given the current poor state of fish stocks and longstanding neglect of Recreational Sea Anglers (RSA) the NFSA opposes such moves. **However, we are fighting hard for a change in fishery management. If we are successful and get actions implemented that control gill nets, increase Minimum Landing Sizes, increase RSA target fish stocks and improve access how would you feel about the following topics.**”

Results

	Outright opposed to the principle	Agree if improvements are implemented and funds invested in RSA.	Outright agree with the principle
Licensing Sea Anglers	292 (49.2)	258 (42.9%)	45 (7.5%)
Bag Limits on some species in specific conservation cases.	45 (7.5%)	222 (36.9%)	327 (54.4%)
Mandatory catch and release if it lets angling continue in Conservation areas.	80 (13.3%)	188 (30.3%)	326 (54.2%)

There are 3 clear messages in these answers the NFSA will take on board when lobbying Government.

Licensing. The Sea Angling community is split on this question. Nearly half think it totally unacceptable, the other half would accept if fish stocks improved and the funds gained were ploughed back into the sport. The NFSA will continue it’s stance of opposing licensing until at such times as real improvements are seen in the Sea Angling experience.

Bag Limits. More than half of anglers back the concept of bag limits **in conservation situations** and the majority back the principle if improvements are achieved in target fish stocks. The NFSA will support

the concept of bag limits where they are part of a balanced range of measures designed to improve or conserve specific fish stocks.

Catch and Release. The majority of anglers would support this concept if it allows fishing to continue in a conservation area that would otherwise ban it. The NFSA will adopt this position in specific case as and when it becomes appropriate.

Richard Ferre. Chairman NFSA.