

Program Supporters



NSW Angel Ring Update

8th July 2009

2009 – Lives lost, Lives saved.

After what seemed like a relatively positive start to the 2009 fishing year with regards to fatalities off the rocks in NSW, a string of drownings recently has hit home how easy it is to find yourself in trouble when rockfishing. A slip, momentarily lapse of concentration or even a larger set of waves can catch even the most experienced anglers off guard.

In the first few months of 2009 we had 4 confirmed rescues with angel rings, a rescue with a bucket and an angler pulled out of the water with a lifejacket. We also lost anglers at Sawtell, Port Kembla, Nth Bondi and Little Bay. We also lost people walking along the cliffs and rocks at North Bondi and Otford in the Royal National Park.

The first rescue occurred at Avoca when an angler was washed off the rocks and rescued with an angel ring. We also had a rescue at Port Kembla when 2 anglers were washed in and a Police officer who dove into the water with an angel ring managed to reach one of them. We had a 5 year old girl rescued by one of the rings at Red Rock just north of Coffs Harbour and then in May we had an angler rescued with a ring at Fraser Park on the NSW Central Coast.

Thrown into the mix was an angler rescued with a bucket just south of Forster and an angler wearing a lifejacket was recently picked up floating off the Avoca fishing platform. This once again reinforced the message that if you can swim away from the rocks and stay afloat you will be rescued.

Tony Wood, Chief Pilot with the Greater Sydney Region Westpac Rescue Helicopter was overjoyed to pluck an angler wearing a lifejacket off Avoca after retrieving a body of an angler a few days before at Little Bay. Tony has always advocated the wearing of lifejackets by anglers who fish the rocks and this one of the key messages we are pushing.

The total number of confirmed rescues with the angel rings has now reached 30 and coupled with the work ANSA is doing with Surf Life Saving NSW, Safewaters, Marine Area Command and the Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW it is hopeful that more anglers heed the message that if you fish the rocks wear a life jacket.

ANSA NSW is working closely with Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) and Surf Life Saving New South Wales (SLSNSW), Australian National Sportfishing Association (ANSA National), the Australian Recreational and Sportfishing Industry Confederation (RecFish Australia), the Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW (RFANSW) and the Westpac Life Saver Helicopter (Greater Sydney Region) on a national rock fishing safety working group.

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After identifying the Randwick local government area as a region over represented in the national drowning statistics, the rock fishing safety working group is currently conducting safety audits of the area. Coastal safety surveys are occurring in the Randwick LGA and translated media adverts are being placed to spread key messages.

During the June long weekend the survey teams were out on the rocks interviewing anglers who fished the area. With almost 50 surveys completed over 2 days some interesting facts are starting to emerge.

Almost 60% of the anglers surveyed lived well outside the area, in areas ranging from Hornsby, Blacktown and Heathcote. These anglers had places like Cape Banks and Sth Maroubra as their “local” fishing spots. These same anglers also fished some of the other well know black spots like Nth Bondi and Royal National Park. The challenge for the team is getting the educational material about rock fishing safety into the suburbs these visiting anglers reside in. The next challenge is getting to our international visitors, with the team encountering 2 experienced Hong Kong nationals who holiday and fish in Australia for 2 weeks of the year and enjoy tangling with the black drummer that reside off the rocks at Cape Banks.

Apart from assisting with the surveys, the angel ring team also identified 4 more locations within the area that could possibly do with new angel ring installations to compliment the 9 already in the area. These requests came from the anglers we spoke to over the weekend. With 100 surveys needed, the team will be out an about in the next few weeks talking to anglers and giving away rock fishing safety DVDs and brochures. With 86 rings installed to date and another 30 rings on the books, 22 of which have already been approved, the rest of 2009 is going to be a busy and hopefully fatality free fishing year.



ANSA NSW is always looking for anglers to assist them with the angel ring program. If you would like more info on the project or info on how to join ANSA NSW online and the Angel Ring Team, visit the following:

<http://www.angelrings.com.au/JoinIntro.html>