



MEDIA RELEASE

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Fishing a hot option for healthy life

Health and lifestyle experts say fishing may help you to live a longer, healthier and happier life.

Curtin University's Centre of Excellence for Science, Seafood and Health has conducted a study on quantifying the health and well-being benefits of recreational fishing in Western Australia and combined with other research has unveiled some positive results.

Project manager and deputy director of CESSH, Dr Wendy Hunt, said the study, which featured more than 600 respondents from Kununurra to Esperance, showed almost 95 per cent of recreational fishers had their first fishing experience by the age of 14 and that it was a healthy and great family bonding experience.

"This study and many previous studies have shown the biggest benefits from fishing include relaxation and stress relief, as well as being outdoors in the fresh air, a form of exercise and a good mental health boost," Dr Hunt said.

"The health aspects of fly-fishing are another interesting element people forget about it. Research in the United States has shown that fly fishing for women recovering from breast cancer provides an opportunity for women who have been affected by the disease to gather in a beautiful, natural and relaxing environment and learn a fun new skill.

Recfishwest has in the past have run specific 'Pink Fly Fishing' clinics for women who need support in recovering from breast cancer and there are plans to run future clinics.

"These special fly-fishing clinics offer women an opportunity to meet new friends and create a support network, but most importantly to have fun. Fly fishing is a sport where women can chat while fishing and offer much needed support for each other," Recfishwest chief executive officer Dr Andrew Rowland said.

"Many fishers would agree that the gentle lapping of waves and tug on a fishing line is enough to push any stress far from the mind."

Dr Rowland said fishing not only helps people to lead a happier, healthier life but it is one of the most accessible outdoor sports in WA.

"Regardless of age or even fitness ability, anyone can easily participate."

Dr Rowland said recreational fishing is not known for its dramatic heart rate spikes which leave you gasping for air (unless you catch the fish of a lifetime), but many a good fishing spot may require you to walk, paddle or ride a bike to get away from the crowds.

"Another element of fishing people forget about is that it can be a real adventure. Whether paddling to an island, walking through a forest or crossing rugged bush terrain to reach that elusive spot, they all involve



an element of adventure. Or if you just want to sit on a beach with a rod in the water, you can do so with peace of mind of it's actually doing your health and wellbeing a favour!"

And eating fish can also help you live longer, according to accredited practising dietitian, (APD), Adelle Purbrick from Body Balance Nutrition.

"Dietary sources of long chain Omega-3, known as marine Omega-3 (EPA and DHA) are found in seafood, particularly oily fish such as salmon, sardines, mackerel, mullet, herring, blue eyed cod, gemfish along with blue mussels, calamari and oysters." Ms Purbrick said.

"Omega-3 fatty acids are a vital part of every cell-membrane in our bod and play a role in cancer prevention, brain development and function, vision, preventing depression, reducing pain, reducing body fat and insulin resistance (reducing diabetes risk).

"As powerful anti-inflammatory agents, Omega-3's reduce the risk of heart disease via reducing blood pressure and resting pulse rate, raising HDL (good cholesterol) levels and reducing triglycerides (blood fats), among other roles."

Other experts believe that fishing can help decrease symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.

"The combination of mental relaxation and an easy form of exercise could also help those who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder," Janna Superstein, president of US-based fly fishing company Superfly International Inc.

"Studies show that fishing can lower PTSD symptoms and increase the mood of those who suffer from the disorder. After three days of fly fishing, survey participants reported a 32 percent reduction in guilt and a 43 percent decrease in feelings of hostility. The feeling of fear was also reduced by 30 percent, and sadness dropped by 36 percent. A portion of these positive effects remained even a full month after the fishing retreat."

Plus, Mr Superstein says, fishing helps you unplug.

"Some of the mental benefits of fishing may be thanks to the opportunity it offers for us to unplug from our digital lives and enjoy nature. Sure, many love to take snap shots of their big catches for various forms of social media or to print off and frame the old-fashioned way, before there were selfies, there were 'fishies'.

"Many of us use technology, for music, pictures or GPS, when participating in outdoor activities but overall, fishing offers a way to cut back on screen time. It gives us a chance to unplug from daily lives and plug into something completely natural. "

Recfishwest says recreational fishing is an enjoyable and rewarding activity with far reaching social, cultural and health benefits, which is of great social and economic importance to WA.

"Everyone gets something positive out of learning how to appreciate our aquatic resources while at the same time becoming better at fishing." Recfishwest advocates for sustainable fishing resources and policies that ensure long term benefits to all recreation al fishers. Interested in taking up the sport yourself? Check out www.recfishwest.org.au or phone 9246 3366.

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