Conduct of a True Boland Spearfisherman

Guidance for responsible, safe and respectful spearfishing

Spearfishing is a privilege. As spearfishers, the way we behave in the water, on the coast and in public influences how others see our sport.

Good conduct means promoting positive publicity, environmental sustainability, responsible use of our marine resources, and improving the public image of spearfishing and crayfishing.

A responsible spearfisher should:

Respect the law and our marine resources

- Conduct yourself in accordance with laws governing the sport, including applicable SAMSA maritime requirements, the Marine Living Resources Act and Marine Protected Area regulations.
- Know and respect all applicable minimum sizes, bag limits, closed seasons and restricted species.
- Respect Marine Protected Areas and no-take zones.
- **Take only what you need.** A legal bag limit is a maximum permitted limit, not a target that needs to be reached.
- **Treat the ocean and the fish we harvest with respect.**
- Never waste fish unnecessarily.

Protect the image of spearfishing

- **Every spearfisher is an ambassador for the sport.**
- Conduct yourself in a way that encourages other people to view spearfishing favourably.
- **What we show the public, particularly through photographs and social media, can influence people's perception of spearfishing far beyond our own diving community**.

Responsible fish photography and social media

- Hold up and photograph yourself with your best fish.
- **Avoid photographs displaying large numbers of fish spread across the ground, piled together or held up simply to demonstrate the quantity taken.**
- A photograph of one quality fish generally represents our sport far better than a photograph dominated by a large catch.
- Consider how a photograph will appear to someone who is not a spearfisher before posting it publicly.
- Remember that even a completely legal catch can create a negative impression when presented badly.
- Use photographs and social media to show the skill, selective nature, adventure and respect for the ocean that are part of responsible spearfishing.

Show the experience and the quality of the catch, not simply the quantity.

Respect your gun

- Never load a speargun out of the water.
- Unload your speargun before leaving the water.
- When transporting or carrying a speargun out of the water, ensure that the spear tip is safely covered or protected.
- Never point a speargun, loaded or unloaded, towards another person.
- Always remain aware of other divers, swimmers, boats and people around you with that weapon.

Understand freediving safety

- Understand the dangers of hyperventilation.
- Understand the risks of hypoxic blackout and loss of motor control.
- Know your own limits and do not allow competition, fish or other divers to pressure you beyond them.
- Whenever possible, dive with someone who understands freediving and spearfishing safety.
- Use an appropriate dive float and dive flag and remain aware of boat traffic.

Tell someone before you dive: the Four Ws

- **WHERE** you are going to dive.
- **WHEN** you expect to return.
- **WHAT** you are doing and what boat or vehicle you are using, where relevant.
- **WHO** you are diving with.
- If your plans change significantly, update the person who has your dive information.

Leave the sport better than you found it

- Respect fellow divers, recreational fishers, commercial fishers, conservation authorities, landowners and other users of the ocean.
- Help less experienced divers develop good habits.
- Look after the coastline and ocean, remove rubbish where practical, and never leave fishing equipment or waste behind.
- Most importantly, remember that our individual behaviour reflects on every spearfisher.

Take what you need.
Respect the fish.
Respect the ocean.
Respect the law.
Dive safely.
And represent spearfishing in a way we can all be proud of.