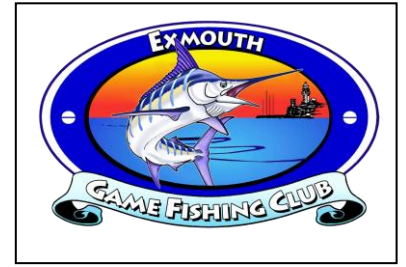


GAMEX

With over forty different game species on offer and such diverse areas in which to fish, it's no wonder GAMEX has been labelled as Western Australia's premier game fishing event.



The inshore fishery throughout the Exmouth gulf, numerous surrounding islands and the shallow sheltered waters inside the Ningaloo reef, is home to every species of sports fish imaginable. The eight-day event of GAMEX, including six days of fishing, is only just long enough to scratch the surface of what's on offer; maybe that's why so many anglers keep coming back for more. Then at the other end of the scale the offshore canyons are some of the closest to the mainland anywhere in the world, with fantastic billfishing available for six different species of billfish. These offshore features hold large numbers of marine creatures, including acres of baitfish, which in turn attract predatory species including wahoo, sharks, tuna and billfish.

GAMEX is designed for anglers to pit their skills against the fish, the elements and each other all in the name of fun, while also learning more about recreational fishing through educational sessions, meeting with other anglers and actually getting out on the water and experiencing the whole tournament. GAMEX has not only a magnificent fishing history, but also a very special social history with great camaraderie throughout its near 40 years of running. The atmosphere outside fishing times of "lines in" is jovial and laid back; although when it comes to fishing it is most definitely fished hard by one and all. The current era of anglers are comprised of both big and small vessels, with a lean towards the trailer boats in numbers. Anglers are a mix of novice and experienced, with over 20 anglers tagging their first billfish nearly every year for the past decade.

Many people think that game fishing is only for the big boats with lots of big gold reels and money thrown around. In GAMEX you can fish from a small tinny right up to a massive luxury vessel; if that's what you can afford. In fact, you can even fish from a kayak. The good thing is that the small boats have just as much chance tagging billfish with such a high number of smaller billfish in close to shore. Besides, it's not the size of the fish that counts for the tagging sections, but the number of fish tagged. In fact, if you want to target the capture sections, the smaller boats have an advantage over the bigger vessels for getting in to the shallow areas to chase different species. There are rules via national standards to abide by which make it an even playing field and there are good fishing ethics to ensure the sustainability of the event and gamefishing in to the future. Fish must be carefully handled boatside if they are to be released and in-line circle hooks are only allowed for live baiting for billfish. Anglers who fish tournaments know that we must take care with all fish. Any species brought in for weighing must be kept on ice for consumption and fully used. Scientific research is now conducted every year at GAMEX with students taking samples of fish brought in for weighing. Filleting demonstrations are also a regular feature of GAMEX to assist anglers and visitors to maximise use and reduce waste, while appreciating and respecting the fish and environment.

Some of the best statistics include GAMEX 2014 and the 3 day AIBT (Australian International Billfish Tournament) event prior. In those two events there were 2499 billfish raised and 904 tagged (for 9 days of fishing over the two events). That is an average of over 100 billfish tagged daily for approximately 50 boats that were targeting billfish. These statistics place GAMEX on a par with the best billfishing events in the world. In the summer of 2016, Captain Eddy Lawler managed to get a grand slam of marlin grand slams. We don't believe this has ever been done in the world. Yes, he managed to tag a black, blue and striped marlin on 3 consecutive days. In the summer of 2017 one of the best days recorded was a sked of 24-16-10 blue marlin and 1-1-1 striped marlin. It is common for boats to get grand slams these days with so many more vessels on the water. Nearly every year there are state, national and world records broken from the boats targeting the capture sections.

The EGFC has special guests attending each year. This year the EGFC are focussing on the great fishing, the camaraderie, the anglers and the sponsors. There is a New Angler Incentive Program that will allow 50 new anglers the opportunity to fish GAMEX with free entry. There's something for existing anglers too, and any existing angler that encourages a new angler to participate will get their entry at 50% off. If you haven't fished GAMEX before, now is the best chance to do so.

There will be social evenings with live music, dress-up nights to show off your team shirts, scientific studies in which people can engage, educational sessions for adults and kids, and much more. These are intended to assist anglers with their knowledge of fishing for enjoyment, while respecting the environment and to ensure the sustainability of the event, and game fishing in to the future.

There are thousands of dollars in cash and prizes for the many sections (over 30) that include junior, team, angler and kayak team. In 2016 there were over \$125 thousand dollars in cash, prizes, giveaways and raffles. 2017 is expected to be another big year.

Here is further insight to the event for competing.

So, how *does* the tournament tick? What entails a good capture? What is the scoring for the sections? The full details are in the rules which can be found on the website www.GAMEX.net.au or www.egfc.com.au and here is a few points to note.

The tag and release sections are simple and from the rules it states the following:

Tag and Release Sections

Tag and release section winners will be decided by:

- a) Boat/Angler with the highest total of Tag and Release points.
- b) In the event of a tie on points the Boat/Angler with the lowest average line class.
- c) If still tied for the billfish section, the Boat/Angler achieving the points first according to the time of tagging logged with Radio Base.

Points are calculated as:

- T&R Whaler Shark 1-15kg line 200pts, 24-60kg line 100pts
- T&R Other Shark 1-15kg line 300pts, 24-60kg line 200pts
- T&R Sailfish/Spearfish 1-15kg line 400pts, 24-60kg line 200pts
- T&R Marlin/Broadbill 1-15kg line 500pts, 24-60kg line 400pts

If a team/angler tags a fish, then captures (weighs) the same fish, only capture points will apply. Points accrued for tag and release sections are per tag, not per line class.

The rest of the species sections excluding billfish and sharks are worked out on a point scoring system. For example if you land a 15kg Spanish mackerel on 6kg line your points scored would be 250. The formula is the weight of the fish x 100 then divided by the line class used. Now then, here is where it takes the mind to work a little. Once you have used a line class and captured a certain species it isn't really worth doing the same thing again. Meaning it is only the highest point scoring fish of each species on each line class that will actually score you points. So in the short of it, the easiest way to think is land as many different species of fish on as many varying line class and you are on the way. Competition fishing is always a little hard at the start; rules and regulations to abide by can vary from tournament to tournament so always read your rulebook and ask the committee any questions.

From the rules it states:

Champion Boat and Angler: The winner of these sections will be the highest point scoring Boat/Angler based on the following formula - Highest point scoring fish on each line class + Highest point scoring fish of each species = Total number of points.

Points will be awarded as follows:

- T&R Whaler Shark 1-15kg line 200pts, 24-60kg line 100pts
- T&R Other Shark 1-15kg line 300pts, 24-60kg line 200pts
- T&R Sailfish/Spearfish 1-15kg line 400pts, 24-60kg line 200pts
- T&R Marlin/Broadbill 1-15kg line 500pts, 24-60kg line 400pts

Weighed Shark - weight of fish x 15 divided by line class = points.

Weighed Billfish - weight of fish x 40 divided by line class = points.

Weighed Billfish and Sharks must be a minimum weight of four times the line class. Weighed other Game Fish - weight of fish x 100 divided by line class = points.

Weighed Golden Trevally on 1kg line - weight of fish x 50 divided by line class = points.

The line used is another very important aspect of competition fishing. Line that is officially IGFA (International Game Fishing Association) approved and tested is only permitted. There are many such lines on the market but if you're not sure, ask at your local game fishing tackle shop for assistance. There are also rules that apply to GAMEX for leader lengths and hook set ups for example, so again if you're not sure don't be afraid to ask. All the rules and regulations the Game Fishing Association of Australia (GFAA) standards for fishing a tournament are found on the GFAA website.

Outfits for chasing small billfish such as the Shimano TLD25, which easily holds 6,8,10, or 15kg line class retails at around \$185. This reel can be used further down the track after the event with braid for reef fishing or keep it as a trolling outfit with monofilament line. Compared with large gold "marlin reels" that retail at the \$1000+ mark, it's not too hard to get in to the billfishing fun. Of course there are always many other things to add to the shopping list such as tag poles, teasers, lures, hook rigs etc, but it's all worth it when you've just tagged that awesome fish you hooked and watch it swim away it to the deep blue. It's even more interesting when you catch a fish that has already been tagged and work out where it has been and how much it has grown.

It's important also to remember that ethics and honesty plays a big part in sports fishing and game fishing. If the time has come that it is your turn to experience the thrills and spills of GAMEX, don't hesitate to ask any questions to the committee.

To be a part of this exciting event or get further information, go to www.GAMEX.net.au or www.egfc.com.au

If your partner or friends are thinking of coming to GAMEX 2017, there is lots to see and do in Exmouth, so don't hesitate to ask the local visitor centre for further information. Plus they can come down to the weigh-in each evening at the EGFC from 6-8pm (except Tues, which is 4-6pm)

There are meals available every night at EGFC. See menu on our website.

Any queries, please contact us?

Jeni Gates and Sharon Mumby

EGFC GAMEX Coordinators

0408 905 448

Exmouth Game Fishing Club

Po Box 121

Exmouth WA 6707

08 9949 4567

www.egfc.com.au

www.gamex.net.au

