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Alberta introduces mandatory licensing of fishing derbies

Edmonton... As part of better management for Alberta's fisheries, competitive fishing events – also called fishing derbies or tournaments – will now require a licence.

“Fishing derbies add to the pressure on our fisheries, and licensing these events will ensure a more sustainable approach,” said David Coutts, Minister of Sustainable Resource Development. “Responsibly run tournaments can have much less impact on our fish populations and will help promote education. Our consultations confirmed that Albertans support licensing of these events.”

Beginning August 1, 2006, organizers of derbies with 26 or more participants must purchase a licence to conduct their event. Licences will be issued for events classified as small, medium or large, depending on the number of participants and prize values. Only Alberta residents will be eligible for a licence. Organizers of medium or large derbies must also provide a charitable society number and be able to confirm the event is not for individual profit. Only event organizers must obtain an event licence – derby participants only require a regular sportfishing licence.

Event organizers can obtain an application for the \$25 licence at any Fish and Wildlife office or print a licence application form available on the website of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development: <http://www.srd.gov.ab.ca/fw/fishing/>. Applications must be submitted to a Fish and Wildlife office.

A social competitive fishing event with 25 or fewer participants does not require a licence, but organizers are encouraged to voluntarily register the event, use best practices and provide a summary report.

Conditions attached to licences ensure good practices, and promote maximum catch-and-release survival rates and lower harvest levels. Fisheries managers will phase in the new rules over the next two years to allow event organizers time to adjust.

About 300,000 anglers enjoy sportfishing in Alberta each year. Angling contributes approximately \$350 million annually to the provincial economy.

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