

# John W. Knight

## CIPS VP Environment Report 2026

I am introducing an environmental initiative that focuses on angler conduct, fish-care excellence, event sustainability, and data-driven fisheries management—all essential for world-class tournaments. There are no rules or requirements, only the promotion of environmentally sound activities.

### **CIPS Global Sport Fishing Environmental Initiative**

Competitive Angler & Tournament Organizers

*Elevating performance. Protecting fisheries. Securing the future of competitive angling.*

#### **Summary**

Competitive sport fishing depends on healthy fish populations, fair play, and responsible angler behavior. The CIPS Global Sport Fishing Environmental Initiative provides a unified framework that enhances tournament integrity, reduces fish mortality, improves event sustainability, and strengthens the global reputation of competitive angling.

### **Purpose & Vision**

#### **Purpose**

To ensure competitive sport fishing remains sustainable, respected, and environmentally responsible by elevating angler behavior and tournament standards worldwide.

#### **Vision**

For CIPS to reinforce our brand as a global competitive angling community known for elite skill, ethical conduct, and leadership in fish conservation.

### **Core Principles for Competitive Angling**

#### **Fish-First Tournament Culture**

- Prioritize fish survival at every stage of competition.
- Standardize handling, transport, and release protocols.
- Promote gear and techniques that reduce injury.

#### **Responsible Angler Behavior**

- Ethical catch-and-release practices.
- Zero-tolerance for waste, littering, or habitat damage.
- Proper disposal of line, hooks, and plastics.
- Respect for spawning areas and sensitive habitats.

#### **Fair, Transparent, Sustainable Events**

- Consistent habits (*not rules*) across nations.
- Verified weigh-in and release procedures.
- Reduced environmental footprint for all events.

#### **Data-Driven Fisheries Protection**

- Use tournament data to support fishery management.
- Encourage anglers to log catches, water conditions, and species health.
- Share insights with local and national fisheries agencies.



# CIPS Global Sport Fishing Environmental Initiative Components

- ❖ Green Championship Certification
- ❖ Tournament Data Integration
- ❖ Responsible Angler Behavior Award

## Green Championship Certification

A CIPS global standard that recognizes tournaments committed to sustainability and fish care. An event form will be completed by the FIPS onsite representative and returned to committee.

### **Certification Criteria**

- Mandatory fish-care process provided to all competitors.
- Rapid, low-stress weigh-in procedures.
- Reduced use of single-use plastics at event sites.
- Waste-free staging, marinas, and launch areas.
- Verified post-release survival monitoring.

### **Certification Levels**

- Bronze – Basic compliance
- Silver – Strong sustainability measures
- Gold – Advanced fish-care and environmental standards
- Platinum – Industry-leading conservation excellence



### **Tournament organizers gain:**

- Higher angler trust
- Stronger sponsor appeal
- Better public perception
- Long-term fishery stability

## Tournament Data Integration

Competitive events generate some of the most valuable fishery's data in the world.

### **Data Collected**

- Species caught
- Size and weight
- Location (optional)
- Water temperature and clarity
- Fish condition at weigh-in
- Post-release survival indicators

### **Benefits**

- Supports science-based regulations
- Identifies stressed or recovering fisheries
- Helps organizers choose sustainable event locations
- Builds trust with environmental agencies



## **CIPS Responsible Angler Behavior Award**

A global code of conduct for competitive anglers.

Key Behaviors:

- Use of barbless or circle hooks where appropriate.
- Immediate release of non-target or undersized fish.
- Avoiding overcrowding or excessive pressure on fragile areas.
- Proper handling: wet hands, minimal air exposure, horizontal support.
- Voluntary reporting of invasive species or fish health issues.
- Minimizing use of plastics when possible and using alternatives to plastics.
- Promotion of ethical fishing behaviors to youth and adult anglers.

### **RESPONSIBLE ANGLER CODE OF CONDUCT**

-  Use barbless or circle hooks where appropriate
-  Handle fish with care; minimize air exposure and stress
-  Practice proper catch-and-release techniques
-  Avoid sensitive habitats and spawning areas
-  Dispose of line, hooks, and plastics properly

**Anglers who demonstrate excellence can earn:**

- Responsible Angler Certification.
- Recognition at events – winners announced annually at CIPS Congress.
- Respect and recognition from their fellow peers and anglers.
- Angler is now an environmental *'Influencer'*!



### **Submission Process**

- Nation leaders will be sent a form to complete for submitting an angler candidate.
- Environmental Committee will review and choose 3 awards winners each January.
- Anglers will be rewarded a CIPS Environment Excellence Patch and Certificate of Achievement.
- FIPS onsite judges will complete a short form about event environmental efforts.

## **Benefits to Competitive Anglers & Organizers**

### **For Anglers**

- Higher fish survival = stronger future competitions
- Recognition for responsible behavior
- More consistent behaviors across nations
- Improved public perception of competitive fishing

### **For Tournament Organizers**

- Stronger sponsorship opportunities
- Reduced environmental impact
- Enhanced event credibility
- Better relationships with fisheries managers
- Increased angler participation and trust

### **For Fisheries**

- Reduced tournament-related mortality
- Better data for management
- Healthier long-term fish populations



# Implementation Roadmap

## CIPS Global Sport Fishing Environmental Initiative

### Phase 1: Immediate (0–12 months)

- Finalize the report card after getting feedback for best practices from attendees at Congress.
- Provide submission forms for Nations Leaders and FIPS Onsite Representatives.
- Add environmental webpage for initiative details and submission forms downloads.

### Phase 2: Growth (Year 2–3)

- **Certification reports for all FIPS championships. (CIPS Environmental Report Card)**
- Social media promotion of awarded **CIPS Environment Excellence winners. (Influencers)**
- Social media promotion of championships leading conservation excellence. **(Influencers)**

### Phase 3: Leadership (Year 4–5)

- Internationally recognized certification across circuits.
- Annual sustainability reporting and identification of challenge areas.
- Global awards for top conservation-minded anglers and events.

### Branding & Messaging

#### Core Themes

- Performance
- Integrity
- Fish care
- Stewardship
- Global leadership

### Conclusion

Competitive anglers and tournament organizers are the most visible ambassadors of the sport. By adopting **CIPS Environmental Standards**, they demonstrate leadership, protect the fisheries they depend on, and ensure the long-term future of competitive angling worldwide. **This initiative empowers the competitive community to set the global standard for responsible, sustainable, and high-integrity sport fishing.**



## World Environmental Day

CIPS Praesidium has decided to join the **“Environment Day”, on June 5th**, which will mark its 54th edition in 2026 since the first United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm in 1972. The World Environment Day 2026 will be held under the theme **“climate action is not just about reducing carbon emissions—it is about rethinking the systems that power our economies and repairing our relationship with the climate”**.



CIPS invites all our Member Federations to give raise to any possible activities to be realized at national level and that fall within this sphere of action to be realized on June 5, 2026. To find out sources and ideals in this purpose, we invite you to visit the “2026 Environment Day” website: <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/republic-azerbaijan-host-world-environment-day-2026>  
At the conclusion of the day, you will be required to send us evidence of the activities carried out by means of videos, photos, reports, etc. which will merge in our records as a base of the contents of the CIPS’ contribution on that occasion. CIPS will then make available the best practices for the next editions of the “CIPS World Day for the Protection of the Aquatic Environment”.

Thank you,

John Knight  
CIPS Vice President Environment

CIPS Environmental Commission

- Alberto Marchi
- Jerzy Kowalski
- Mike McNett

