



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Young Anglers Experience Offshore Fishing at Ngibtal

(Koror, Palau) – The Palau Sport Fishing Association, in collaboration with the Bureau of Fisheries, hosted a youth fishing competition on Saturday, September 20, 2025.

Many of the children who took part are already competitive fishers, skilled in casting lines from the shorelines of their villages. But on this Saturday, they were offered something entirely new: the chance to head offshore aboard two boats generously donated by NECO Marine. Out at sea, the young anglers faced the challenge of deeper waters, different fish, and an entirely different kind of fishing experience.

Safety officers from the Civic Action Team were present to ensure the day ran safely, but the children hardly needed encouragement—the excitement of reeling in fish in the open ocean was written on their faces. The top performers of the day were:

1. **Kirk Polycarp** – 13.36 lbs
2. **Alan Aldan** – 8.61 lbs
3. **Tyron Molan** – 5.10 lbs

Yet beyond the competition and the thrill of a catch, the most important lesson was about letting go. Each child learned and practiced *catch and release*—a simple but powerful act that turns fishing from extraction into stewardship.

From Youth Lessons to Tourism Potential

For Palau, these lessons reach far beyond one afternoon on the water. Catch and release is the very foundation of the kind of sport fishing tourism that draws travelers from across the globe. Around the world, anglers are booking charters not simply to fill coolers, but to experience the excitement of the fight, the beauty of the fish, and the satisfaction of releasing it back into the ocean.

This is the future of sport fishing in Palau: visitors boarding well-equipped boats, guided by experienced local captains, chasing the thrill of big game fish in pristine waters, and returning to shore with nothing more than stories, photos, and memories. For them, the value lies in the

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experience itself—the challenge of the chase, the guidance of knowledgeable crew, and the authenticity of fishing in one of the last untouched marine environments on earth.

By teaching children to embrace catch and release today, Palau is preparing its next generation not just as fishers, but as the future captains, guides, and ambassadors who will welcome these visitors tomorrow. The economic ripple effect is immense: every tourist who comes to fish fuels local livelihoods, from boat operators and tackle suppliers to hotels, restaurants, and transport services.

“This event is about more than just fishing—it’s about investing in our youth and in Palau’s sustainable economic future,” said Willa Wong, PAN Coordinator for Ngiwal State. “Sport fishing, paired with conservation values like catch and release, gives Palau the power to attract visitors seeking once-in-a-lifetime experiences in our waters. Our young anglers are learning to be the stewards of both our oceans and our economy.”

The Palau Sport Fishing Association extends its gratitude to NECO Marine, the Bureau of Fisheries, the Civic Action Team, and all partners who helped make this event possible. Mark your calendar, the next Jr. Angler Derby is November 8th in Melekeok!