



A Simple Guide to Sustainable Recreational Fishing

In Australia, we are lucky enough to be home to some of the most amazing unique and recreational fishing opportunities in the world. Everyone that uses our oceans and waterways needs to make a conscious effort to do everything in their power to protect that environment and the ecosystems that live there. Sustainable fishing practices help to ensure these amazing aquatic resources are there for future generations.

Only take your fair share

Size and possession limits are there to protect fishing stocks. Only taking as much as you need and adhering to local fishing regulations is essential.

Remove your Waste

Dispose of all litter, discarded fishing tackle and fish waste responsibly. If you find discarded fishing line please take it and dispose of it as well. Cut discarded fishing line into small pieces to avoid entanglement in case birds and other animals scavenge rubbish bins.

Disposal of Catch

Quickly and humanely kill your retained catch and noxious species. Percussive stunning should cause immediate unconsciousness followed by piercing the brain (ikying or pithing) with a sharp pointed tool. Please refer to <http://www.ikijime.com/> for information on the brain location for local fish species. To avoid wastage, always immediately chill your retained catch.

Measure you catch

How hard a fish fights is not an indication of whether you can keep it or not. Always measure your catch appropriately and if it's too small put it back.

Release fish properly

A fish with a hook and trace hanging from its mouth has a far lesser chance of survival. Always give the fish the best chance of survival. Remove and hooks or line from the fish and try to return it to the water as soon as possible. This gives the fish the best chance of survival.

Catch and release fishing is also becoming increasingly popular and there are some great resources available to anglers like the NSW Recreational Fishing Catch and Release Handbook. Always do your research on the species you are targeting and practice techniques that reduce mortality rates.

Use approved fishing methods

Some fishing activities are illegal such as explosives or poisons. These can be extremely detrimental to underwater environments so only use approved fishing methods.

Fishing Equipment Regulations

To protect fish stocks from overfishing some fishing equipment must be used in an appropriate manner. This includes but is not limited to breathing devices, net sizes, crab pots and dredges.

There are also limits to how many lines you may have in the water at a time and you must be present with your line at all times.

Always refer to your states fishing regulations.

Use environmentally friendly equipment

Wherever possible, use environmentally friendly fishing tackle such as non-lead sinkers, biodegradable line and non-stainless hooks.

Avoid using break-away fishing floats that are non-biodegradable, or persist as marine debris, such as balloons and polystyrene blocks.

To minimise pollution, maintain boat engines.

Care for the wildlife

Reduce injuries to wildlife by always attending your lines, regularly checking any set traps and hoop nets, and avoiding known feeding and breeding areas of birds, turtles or platypus. Take care when boating and anchoring to avoid damaging habitat.

If you hook a bird, stay calm. Gently reel it in. Even pelicans can be slowly retrieved and are generally placid. Place a towel or shirt over the bird's head and eyes and carefully remove the hook or line. Do not cut the line or release the bird if the hook has been swallowed or embedded too deeply to remove easily. Instead, contact the Australian Seabird Rescue: north 0428 862 852, central 0438 862 676 or south 0431 282 238; or alternatively, call WIRES 1800 641188.

Only use prepared marine baits in freshwater

The use of baits from marine (saltwater) environments can carry parasites and diseases that can be spread through freshwater systems. To protect these systems always use bait that has been frozen, cooked or preserved.

There are always more ways to be more sustainable and reduce your impact on the environment but these simple guidelines should serve as a starting point. Please always think of the world around you and do everything you can to keep it a beautiful place.

Specific State Fishing Rules and Regulations

Queensland - <https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/activities/boating-fishing/rec-fishing/rules/limits-tidal>

New South Wales - <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/recreational/fishing-rules-and-regs>

Victoria - <https://vfa.vic.gov.au/recreational-fishing/recreational-fishing-guide>

South Australia - https://pir.sa.gov.au/fishing/recreational_fishing

Northern Territories - <https://nt.gov.au/marine/recreational-fishing>

Western Australia - <https://www.fish.wa.gov.au/Fishing-and-Aquaculture/Recreational-Fishing/Recreational-Fishing-Rules/Pages/default.aspx>

Tasmania - <https://dpiwwe.tas.gov.au/sea-fishing-aquaculture/publications-and-products/recreational-sea-fishing-guide>

