



fishcare
victoria

Green Tackle Guide



There is a more sustainable way to pack your tackle box than you may realise.

Plus it won't affect your catch rate!



Casting and Catching Sustainably



Fish will likely be lip hooked, allowing for a quick and harmless catch and release. – Photo *Brien Roberts*

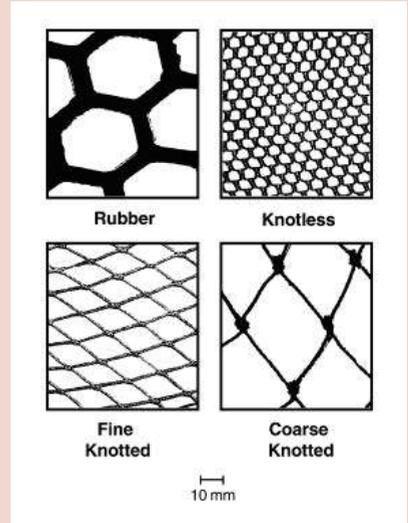
Circle Hooks

- Circle hooks are curved back in a circular shape rather than the common J-hook, a design aimed at lip hooking fish.
- Circle hooks set themselves when the fish picks up the bait and makes to turn away, **there is no need to strike when using circle hooks.**
- Mortality rates are decreased by approximately 50% when using circle hooks compared with the traditional J-hooks due to minimal instances of internal damage via gut hooking.
- Suitable for most species of fish both fresh and salt water. If deep hooking does occur leave the hook and cut the line as close to the mouth as possible.



Knotless or Fish Friendly Landing Nets

- Knotless or Fish Friendly nets are made out of a smooth PVC mesh.
- The risk of damage to fins, scales and mucus layer are significantly reduced through using a knotless net.
- The finer the mesh diameter the better to avoid injury.
- Traditional nets cause significant tears to fins affecting mobility and significant loss of the slime layer and scales leading to abrasions and infections.
- The fine mesh evenly supports a fishes weight reducing internal injury to organs.
- A must have for all sustainable anglers.



Fine mesh prevents injury to scales/fins and supports the fish while out of the water. – Photo *David Cleeland*





Best Handling Practices

You must support the fishes weight, keeping them horizontal while using lip grips. Photo – *Jesse Zaharin*

Lip Grips

- Lip grips are a mechanical handling tool with opposing metal or plastic plates (typically in a “C” shape) which operate by gripping the lower jaw of the fish.
- If used, Lip Grips, should only be used in conjunction with supporting the fish’s weight as seen above.
- Fish held vertically with lip grips risk damage to the lower jaw and misalignment of the spine which will not return to normal after release, significantly reducing survival rates.
- Lip Grips can allow faster unhooking times minimising the amount of time the fish is exposed to air. If using grippers, do not allow the fish to flail as it will increase the amount of physical damage.
- Lip Grips are a great way of holding a large fish in the water while removing a hook/lure for a quick release.

Fish Handling

Fish are very delicate, especially when out of water, if you are planning to catch and release or the fish is undersize they need to be returned in the best condition possible to ensure survival.

- If possible do not take the fish from the water, simply remove the hook while the fish is still in the water and release.
- If a fish must be taken from the water keep them horizontal and either keep them in a fish friendly net or lay them on a cool, wet towel to remove the hook. Hot jetties and boat decks are extremely hazardous to fish.
- Use a glove or wet towel to handle fish, in the very least ensure bare hands are wet. Damage to fishes scales and slime layer results in infections and possible death.
- Use pliers to remove hooks not fingers!
- If the fish is gut hooked cut the line as close to the mouth as possible.
- Place fish back in the water rather than throwing/dropping them, fish will be extremely dazed if thrown into the water from height and will likely provide waiting birds/fish with a meal in open water. A bucket on a rope can be used from jetties to lower fish to water level.
- Be decisive, if keeping a fish dispatch and cool immediately, if releasing remove hook and release. Time out of the water is critical for survival rates.

Great photos can still be taken without lifting large fish from the water. – Picture Noel O'Connor



Non-Lead Sinkers

- Using lead sinkers can be bad for the aquatic environment with a build up of lead from lost sinkers.
- Non lead sinkers prevent lead building up in our waterways where it has devastating impacts that will significantly reduce fish populations in the future.
- The impacts of lead include, limiting plant growth and killing micro-organisms (the base of the fish food chain), poisoning of waterfowl and aquatic species through ingestion.
- There are bans on certain types of lead sinkers in America and Canada. Victoria has banned the use of lead shot in waterfowl hunting situations. Is it a matter of time before anglers are banned from using lead weights?
- Alternative options to lead sinkers are; iron, copper, steel, brass and ceramic. Any sinker made from an alternative to lead, is a good choice.
- Non-lead sinkers look like, work like and catch as many fish as lead sinkers.
- Ask at your local tackle store for non-lead sinker options.
- The pictured non- lead sinkers are an iron based sinker. Made in Australia and available at most good tackle stores. Iron simply rusts away in waterways with no significant negative impact on our environment or fish populations.



Australian made non-lead sinkers pictured here come in all shapes and sizes.

– Picture *David Cleeland*

Sustainable Anglers Checklist

Have these items at the ready on your next fishing trip, not only will you find it easier to catch and release fish more safely for the whole family but the fish will have a much higher chance of survival.

- Fishing Licence - Unless exempt, everyone requires a current Victorian Fishing Licence to fish in Victorian waters. All revenue raised goes directly to improving Recreational Fishing opportunities in Victoria.
- Circle Hooks
- Knotless/Fish Friendly Net
- Non-Lead Sinkers
- Wet Towel/Gloves
- Long Nosed Pliers
- Fish Ruler or Tape Measure
- A Recreational Fishing Guide or the Vic Fishing App on Smartphone – So you know all the up to date rules and regulations around fishing in Victoria.
- An Esky filled with an ice slurry (if planning to keep fish)
- A bucket

It's important to note that none of these items are extremely expensive, no more expensive than J-hooks, Lead Sinkers and Knotted Nets so have a think next time you visit your tackle store what sort of angler you want to be.

Purchase your **Fishing Licence** online here: www.vic.gov.au/fishinglicence



Fishcare Victoria Inc.

Fishcare Victoria is a community based not for profit organisation funded by the Victorian Government to improve recreational fishing in Victoria through revenue from Recreational Fishing Licences.

The organisation focuses on educating Victorian school children and the broader community in safe, responsible and sustainable attitudes towards our fishing resources and precious waterways.

If you would like further information on the Fishcare program or would like to become a volunteer to help shape our fishing future please visit our website www.fishcare.org.au



Fishcare volunteers in action, getting kids outdoors enjoying safe, sustainable fishing.

