

# Fish Right with Fishcare

Promoting responsible and sustainable attitudes and practices amongst recreational anglers and the wider community



## Know your limits.

Know the Victorian fishing regulations including fishing gear restrictions, catch limits and area closures. Don't take more than you need and let the little ones go!



## Use fish friendly tackle.

Circle hooks and knotless landing nets can reduce stress and damage to fish that are to be released.



## Return unwanted or undersize fish to the water.

Use the right techniques to help increase released fish survival (see over page).



## Take your rubbish with you.

Reduce the impact of litter on our waterways and aquatic environment.



## Help maintain water-quality and fish habitat.

Use designated access tracks along the shoreline to try and help reduce erosion and damage to bankside vegetation.



# We Fish We care



# When releasing your catch....

The National Recreational and Indigenous Fishing Survey undertaken in 2000 estimated that 43.9% of fish captured by recreational anglers were released. There are many reasons why anglers release their catch these include when fish are legally undersized, the bag or possession limit has been exceeded, when anglers have caught more than they need or when anglers are practicing catch and release only. Here are some initiatives you can adopt to voluntarily help make your fishery sustainable and reduce fishing impact on fish stocks.



## Do not play a fish out to exhaustion before landing.

Fish that are landed quickly are usually not as tired as fish that have been played on a line for a long period. If you intend to release a fish and can land it quickly, it is likely it will be revived much more quickly and also will be more able to escape predators after its release.



## Use a knotless landing net.

Body slime and scales are important for preventing damage to the fish's skin, internal organs and preventing the invasion of disease. By using knotless landing nets damage to the fishes skin and scales is reduced.



## Wet your hands before handling the fish & avoid touching the gills.

Wetting your hands or by wearing wet gloves reduces the possibility of removing slime and scales from the fishes body. Using a wet towel on which to rest the fish is also a good way to settle the fish before removing the hook and can help protect your hands from spines, sharp fins and teeth! Avoid touching the gills as these are very sensitive and delicate.



## Support or cradle large fish after landing & avoid holding the fish vertically.

When fish are removed from the water their bodies can struggle to support their own weight. To reduce damage to the fish and their delicate internal organs try supporting the fish's belly or remove the hook from the fish in the water or in the net if practical. Using a fish grip is also a good way to hold fish carefully for hook removal, but avoid holding the fish vertically as this can damage the fish's mouth and head.



## Use long nosed pliers to quickly and carefully remove the hook.

Long nosed pliers allow you to quickly and carefully remove a range of hooks. This is important as it means that the fish is out of the water for only a short period. It also makes removing treble hooks usually used on bibbed lures safer for the angler to manage and reduces the likelihood of further hook damage to the fish. Crimping your hook barbs with pliers also makes removing the hooks much easier and can reduce hook damage to the fish's mouth.



## Try using circle hooks or artificial lures or baits to reduce the likelihood of deep hooked (gut-hooked) fish.

Circle hooks usually result in the fish being shallow hooked in the mouth or lip. As a result these fish can usually have the hook removed quickly and with minimal damage to the fish's mouth. When fishing keeping a tight line between the rod tip and the hook, or fishing with a moving lure or soft plastic can also reduce deep-hooking significantly.



## Cut the line as close to the fish's mouth as possible if the fish is deep hooked.

Studies on a number of fish species have shown that fish can either regurgitate hooks or dissolve them in the gut when a fish is deep hooked in the throat, gills or stomach. When a fish is deep hooked, simply cut the line as close to the fishes mouth as possible and release the fish.



For more information about Fishcare Victoria log onto our website [www.fishcare.org.au](http://www.fishcare.org.au)

You can also download a huge range of free Fishcare products online on the resources page of our website.

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