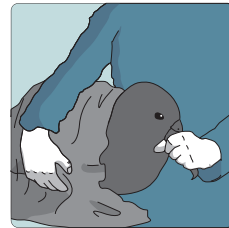




Responsible Fishing Guidelines



Fishing around seabirds

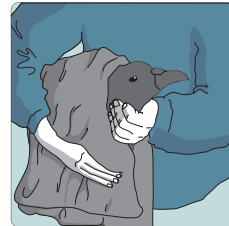


Seabird handling

Just like an undersized fish – the way you treat a hooked seabird can make all the difference to its survival.

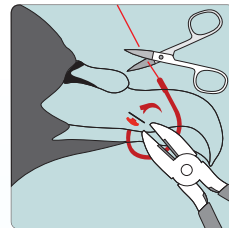
Put on sunglasses to protect your eyes and wear gloves.

Reel a seabird in slowly, it may drown if it gets pulled under the water. Use a landing net to scoop it out of the water.



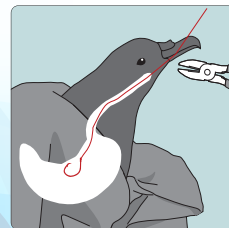
Holding a seabird

Wrap bird in towel, tuck feet in and hold firmly. If necessary, hold the bird firmly but carefully around the base of the head pointing beak away from you, or hold beak shut. Do not cover nostrils.



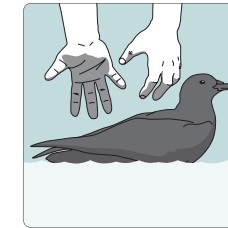
Removing tackle

Cut the fishing line from the hook. Use pliers to flatten barb or cut hook with small bolt cutters. Back the hook out. Untangle or cut off all fishing line from birds body.



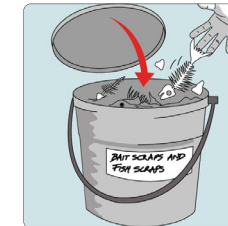
Swallowed hook

If hook is swallowed, cut fishing line as close to the beak as possible. Fishing line left on a bird can tangle on plants, rocks or other birds.



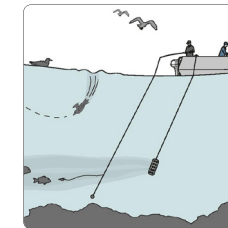
Release bird

Release bird at water level. If bird is waterlogged or stressed, let it rest onboard before releasing it.



Avoid attracting seabirds

Seabirds are hunting for food – keep decks clean and put bait scraps and fish waste in covered bins until you finish fishing.



Sink bait and burley

Most seabirds fish within six metres of the surface, if seabirds are around, sink your bait and burley below six metres fast.

If you are fishing work-ups, fish around the outside and behind the birds.

Seabirds move fast – set and retrieve your gear quickly and always watch for birds.



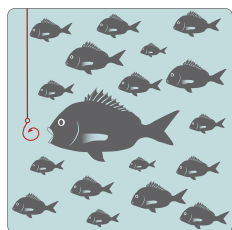
Distract seabirds away from hooks

Use a kids 'super soaker' style water gun or a deck hose to spray water towards seabirds.

If seabirds won't leave you alone, try a different fishing technique, have a break or move to another fishing spot.

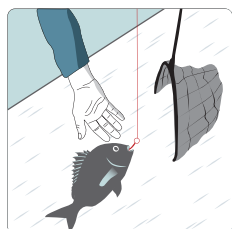


Fish handling



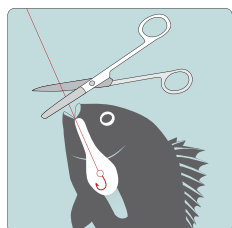
Avoid catching undersized fish

The best way to protect small fish is to not catch them at all. Use a larger hook and a bigger bait as these are less likely to be swallowed by small fish. Do not keep fishing in an area where most of the fish are small.



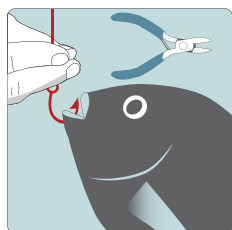
Keep fish in the water

Keeping fish in the water while removing the hook greatly reduces stress to the fish. Fish hooked in the gills or gut should never be lifted by line. If you need to bring the fish on-board, use a knotless or rubberised net. Make sure the fish is supported at all times.



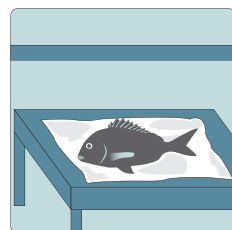
Cut the line for gut hooked fish

If a fish is gut hooked always cut the line. It is likely to die if you try to remove it. Make the cut as close as possible to the mouth, and consider a lost hook a small price to pay for the enjoyment you gain from fishing.



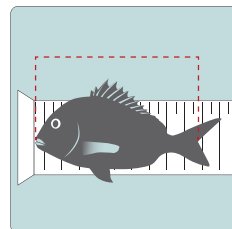
Getting the hook out

Remove the hook gently from mouth hooked fish. Try to push the hook back the way it came. If it is difficult to remove the hook by hand, use a pair of pliers to get a better grip.



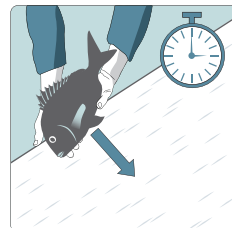
Put fish on a soft wet surface

Wet your hands before handling fish. Lay the fish down on a soft, wet surface and remember to be as gentle as possible. Avoid gripping the gill or gut area.



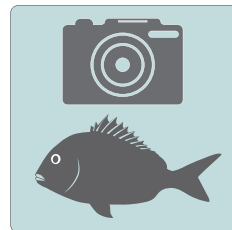
Measure your catch

Finfish length is measured from the tip of the nose to the end of the middle ray or "V" of the tail. Measure your catch carefully as there are large penalties for breaking the law. Size limits help keep our fisheries sustainable.



Return to the sea quickly and gently

Minimise the time the fish is out of the water and always return fish back to the sea gently, head first and from the lowest possible height.



Photograph fish quickly

If you are taking photos before releasing make sure you don't hold fish under the gill cover. Lifting the fish by the tail can dislocate the spine and holding around the gut area can cause organ damage.

Out of sight, out of mind

A badly handled fish may swim away and die on the bottom, especially fish caught in deep water. So consider keeping every legal sized fish you catch within your daily limit. Keep just enough for a feed. Remember, it's not how many you keep that counts, it's how many you kill. Dead fish don't breed.

Catching small fish? Move on

The best way to protect small fish is to not catch them at all. Use a larger hook and a bigger bait as these are less likely to be swallowed by small fish.

Remember to do these things

- Remove fish from the water only if you have to
- Wear rubber gloves or at least wet your hands
- Lie fish on a soft wet surface if you need to handle them out of the water
- Change to a larger hook size if you are catching a lot of undersized fish
- Remove the hook carefully from mouth-hooked fish
- Cut the line for gut-hooked fish
- Return fish gently to the sea

Please do not

- Poke or touch the eye, and never hold fish by the eye sockets
- Drop or place fish on a hot, dry deck or on rocks

