

A GUIDE FOR JUNIOR FISHERS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

GET HOOKED ON FISHING!



TACKLE BOX TIPS

RESPONSIBLE FISHING!

WE TELL YOU HOW!

DANGEROUS CREATURES

LURKING INSIDE!



tied up in knots!

BEGINNERS GUIDE!



IDENTIFY POPULAR SPECIES



Government of Western Australia
Department of Fisheries



Fish for the future

WHAT'S INSIDE?

CARING FOR YOUR CATCH! **PAGE THREE**



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FIND OUT HOW ON **PAGE SIX!**



WATCH OUT!
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HANDS OFF!

CHECK OUT SOME POPULAR SPECIES ON **PAGE 12**



Caring for your catch!

Please take care of the fish you catch. Release undersize and unwanted fish quickly and carefully back into the water.

MEASURING FISH

Touch fish only with wet hands or a wet rag to avoid damaging the scales or the fish's protective slime coating. Gently lay the fish on a smooth, wet surface or foam rubber landing pad and measure the length from its nose to the tip of its tail. Fish rulers and brochures on fish size and bag limits are available free of charge from your nearest Department of Fisheries office.

- Treating the fish gently and not damaging or removing its protective coating will improve its chances of survival after being released back into the water.
- Gently remove hooks with long-nosed pliers or a hook extractor.
- If the hook is stuck in the fish's gills or deep in its gut, cut the line 20 to 30 cm from the hook and let the fish go. Cutting the line close to the fish's mouth could interfere with the fish's ability to feed. The hook will rust and fall out and the fish will be able to grow to be caught again when bigger.
- Use a knottless landing net and not a gaff, so you can put the little ones back!

KEEPING YOUR CATCH

All fish that are not going to be released should be killed humanely and quickly. The best way to do this is by 'iki jimi' - spiking the fish in the brain with a sharp instrument just behind the eye. The fish will convulse, flare its mouth and gills, then suddenly relax. Another quick and humane method is to cut the fish's throat and bend the head back to sever the spine. This approach is better for smaller fish, such as herring and whiting.

Gently place kept fish in an ice slurry (two-parts ice to one-part sea water) in an esky. If you don't have an esky keep the fish in a wet hessian, open-weave or cotton bag in the shade. Please refer to the Department of Fisheries' Catch Care brochure or website for further information.

Remember to release ALL undersize fish so they can grow to become part of the breeding stock and produce more fish for the future!

Remember! You only need enough for a feed.

TACKLE BOX TIPS!

HAVING THE RIGHT GEAR WILL IMPROVE YOUR CHANCES OF LANDING YOUR CATCH AND SUCCESSFULLY RELEASING UNDERSIZE OR EXCESS FISH FOR NEXT TIME.

HERE'S A CHECK LIST FOR YOUR TACKLE BOX!

✓ CHECK LIST!

- ❑ **Hooks 'n' stuff** - always have an assortment of hooks, swivels, sinkers and floats.
- ❑ **Hooks** - barbless hooks, circle hooks and long-shanked hooks are easier to remove from a fish's mouth and reduce injury to the fish. Treble hooks are not recommended. They cause a lot of damage to a fish's mouth and reduce the chance of undersize fish surviving when returned to the water. Buy barbless hooks from tackle shops or modify any barbed hooks you may have by crimping them with a pair of pliers, crushing the barb.
- ❑ **Fishing line** - 6-8 kg breaking strain or less is suitable for most types of beach, rock or jetty fishing.
- ❑ **Long-nose pliers** - help to remove hooks from the fish's mouth with as little damage as possible. They do a similar job to a hook extractor (available from tackle shops).
- ❑ **Wire cutters** - important for safety as they can be used to cut the barbs off hooks when necessary.
- ❑ **Nail cutters or scissors** - an easy way to cut fishing line.
- ❑ **Knife with cover** - for cutting up bait. The cover helps keep the blade sharp and helps protect you from accidental injury.
- ❑ **Cutting board** - provides an even surface to cut your bait on. Cutting bait on hard surfaces such as rocks or concrete will make your knife blunt and damage the blade.
- ❑ **Hook sharpener** - handy to sharpen hooks which have become blunt through use.
- ❑ **Brochures** - make sure you have the appropriate regional Recreational Fishing Guide from the Department of Fisheries and your fish ruler so you know size and bag limits for your catch.

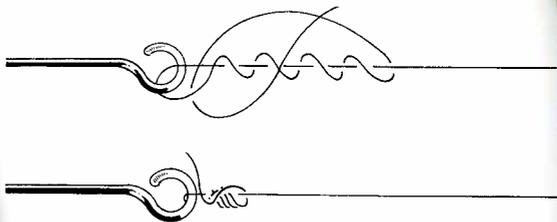
Tied up in Knots!

TOP REASONS TO TIE GREAT KNOTS!

- Makes sure the fish stays on the end of your line.
- Saves you money - you won't be losing your fishing gear in the water.
- Saves the environment - fishing line can be harmful to birds, fish, dolphins and seals.

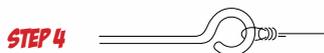
LOCKED HALF-BLOOD KNOT

The locked half-blood knot is a simple knot to learn and can be used for most of your fishing needs. Follow the simple diagram and have a go!



UNI KNOT OR HANGMAN'S KNOT

More experienced knot tiers may like to try the uni knot or hangman's knot.



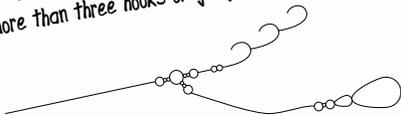
KNOT-TYING TIPS

- Practise using a rope or light cord until you perfect your knot-tying skills.
- Knots should be tied slowly and steadily and then eased tight.
- Always wet the knot on the fishing line before pulling it together.
- Rinse your line in fresh water after every fishing trip.

Responsible Fish

FISHING EQUIPMENT

In Western Australia, fishers may use no more than three hooks or gangs of hooks per line.



Shore-based fishers may use no more than two rods or handlines or one of each at the same time.

PERSONAL SAFETY

It is important to look after yourself as well as your equipment when you go fishing.

Take the following tips - they'll help make your trip a lot more fun!



- ✓ Dress for the weather conditions.
- ✓ Avoid being out between 10 am and 3 pm to reduce the risk of sunburn and skin cancer. A long-sleeved shirt and long pants will protect you from the sun's harmful rays.
- ✓ Use a good sunscreen and remember to reapply it as directed on the container.
- ✓ Always wear shoes (preferably enclosed, like runners) to protect your feet.
- ✓ Wear a hat (a broad-brimmed hat or legionnaire-style cap is best) and sunglasses.
- ✓ Take some water and a snack to eat.
- ✓ Always fish with a friend, and tell someone where you are going fishing and what time to expect you home.
- ✓ Check the weather forecast and watch out for unexpected changes.
- ✓ Have a plan for what you would do in case of an emergency.

**SLIP
SLOP
SLAP!**



ing

FISHING FROM ROCKS

- It is important that you know how to swim before you fish from rocks.
 - Always fish with a friend.
 - It is easy to get washed in so avoid wet rocks, narrow ledges, rocks that slope towards the water, and steep and slippery surfaces.
 - Look carefully at your fishing spot. Watch it for 15 minutes and if the rocks you were thinking of fishing from get covered with water spray, choose another place!
- Have a flotation device on hand that can be thrown to someone in trouble in the water. Even a capped, empty two-litre soft drink bottle can be used in an emergency.
- Never turn your back on the sea and be aware of what's happening around you - conditions can change unexpectedly with the tide.
 - Remember, don't take unnecessary risks - your life is worth more than a fish or snagged tackle!

CARING FOR YOUR ENVIRONMENT

- When walking through sand dunes or river vegetation always use the paths provided.
- Always put your rubbish in the bin.
- Plastic bait bags floating in the water can be deadly to marine animals, which mistake them for jellyfish and eat them.
- Discarded fishing line can get tangled around seabirds' legs or other marine life.
- When fishing by boat, drop your anchor in clear sand patches to avoid damaging the seagrass and reefs.
 - Do not feed marine life such as dolphins, seals and seabirds because they may start to rely on us for food and this will interfere with their natural behaviour.





LIONFISH

DANGEROUS

Animals have developed feeding and defence mechanisms to help them survive in their natural habitats. We need to be aware of these to avoid being accidentally injured.

ANIMALS WITH SPINES

Fish with spines include stingrays, cobbler (or catfish), flathead, stonefish, scorpioncod, lionfish and Port Jackson shark. The spines contain venom, which is released on contact with the skin. This venom may cause extreme pain, depending on the size of the fish and the amount of venom injected.

Handle the fish carefully to avoid the fins and gills where spines may be located. Some stingrays have a barb at the base of the tail, which is highly mobile and can inflict a harmful injury. If you do hook a stingray, cut the line near the fish's mouth rather than trying to remove the hook - but be careful of the tail.

FIRST AID FOR VENOMOUS SPINES

1. Remove the patient from the water.
2. Apply pressure to the wound to stop bleeding.
3. Immerse the wounded limb in hot water (be careful not to burn the skin).
4. Immobilise the limb and cover with a clean dressing.
5. Send for an ambulance/medical help.

ANIMALS THAT BITE

Be aware that many fish have sharp teeth and that some marine animals will bite if they feel threatened. If you get bitten, apply pressure to the wounded area to stop bleeding. It may be



BLUEBO



CREATURES

necessary to seek medical aid. Some animals can be potentially deadly to humans, including the cone shell, blue-ringed octopus and sea snakes. Leave them well alone.

ANIMALS THAT STING

Jellyfish are the most common stinger encountered at the beach. Corals and anemones also have stinging cells, which can inflict a painful sting to humans.

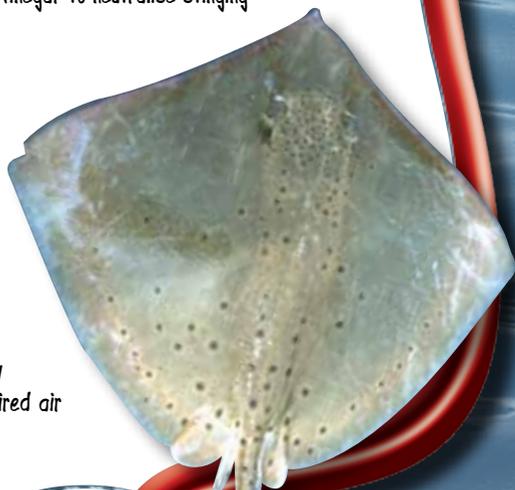
For jellyfish stings where there is minimal pain, apply a cold compress. Vinegar is not appropriate for some species, particularly the bluebottle (Portuguese man-o-war).

Do not put water on **any** jellyfish sting, as it could set off undischarged stings.

If stung by a box jellyfish, remove the patient from the sea, being careful to avoid contact with further tentacles. Flood the stung area with vinegar to neutralise stinging cells, and seek urgent medical aid.

ANIMALS THAT ARE POISONOUS TO EAT

Puffer fish, including northwest blowfish, toadfish and porcupine fish - including the common "blowie" - are poisonous to eat. They contain a strong toxin which attacks the nervous system, resulting in paralysis and the inability to see, swallow or speak. However, the victim may remain conscious! Seek **URGENT** medical aid. Expired air resuscitation (EAR) may be necessary.



STINGRAY

**WANTED
ALIVE!**

PROTECTED



**POTATO
COD**

In Western Australia, fish are protected by fishing rules and regulations, including bag and size limits, to ensure there will be fish for the future. The exceptions are bait fish (pilchards, scaly mackerel, whitebait, anchovies and hardyheads) and feral freshwater species like carp, tilapia, goldfish and redfin perch.

For bag and size limit information go to www.fish.wa.gov.au or pick up a regional Recreational Fishing Guide at your nearest Department of Fisheries' office.

Some fish are totally protected because they are low in number, are under threat from overfishing or are highly valued by the marine tourism industry. If caught, they must be returned immediately to the water.



**WANTED
ALIVE!**



**GREAT WHITE
SHARK**

**WANTED
ALIVE!**



**LEAFY SEA
DRAGON**

**WANTED
ALIVE!**



**HUMP
HEAD
WRASSE**

D SPECIES



THE FOLLOWING SPECIES ARE TOTALLY PROTECTED IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND MAY NOT BE TAKEN:

- Potato cod (*Epinephelus tukula*)
- Humphead maori wrasse (*Cheilinus undulatus*)
- Leafy seadragon (*Phycodurus eques*)
- Whale shark (*Rhinodon typus*)
- Great white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*)
- Grey nurse shark (*Carcharias taurus*)
- Coral (Order *Sceractinia*)

WANTED
ALIVE!



GREY NURSE
SHARK

ED
VE!



HEAD
RI
SSE

WANTED
ALIVE!



CORAL

WANTED
ALIVE!



WHALE
SHARK

SOME POPU



TAILOR

Other names: Choppers (small fish below one kg) and jumbos (more than 3 kg).

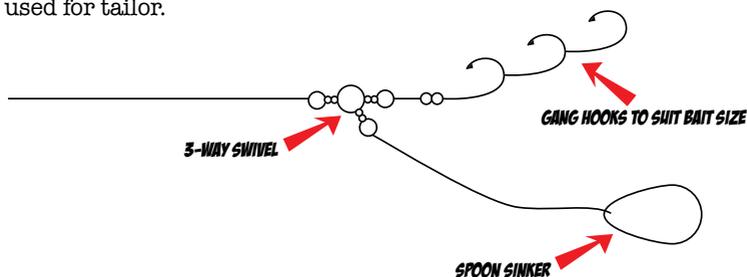
Scientific name: *Pomatomus saltatrix*.

Distribution: In WA, from Wilson Inlet to Coral Bay.

Habitat: Tailor generally live in rivers and estuaries in summer and move to the ocean in winter.

Recommended bait: Mulies, whitebait and sardines.

Recommended rigs: In sandy bottom conditions, use a Paternoster rig - the sinker is tied to the end of the line and a separate line with a gang of hooks is attached above the sinker (see below). When casting over reef use a bait-casting rig - the gang (hooks) is simply attached to a 600 mm trace and swivel. Popper lures and metal spinners can also be used for tailor.



ULAR SPECIES

TARWHINE

Other name: Silver bream.

Scientific name: *Rhabdosargus sarba*.

Distribution: Esperance to Shark Bay.

Habitat: Coastal marine and estuaries, occasionally offshore reefs (to 35 metres deep).

Recommended bait: Squid, prawns and worms.

Recommended rig: Running sinker rig (see whiting).



SKIPIACK TREVALLY

Other names: Skippy and silver trevally.

Scientific name: *Pseudocaranx dentex*.

Distribution: Southern Australia to North West Cape in WA.

Habitat: Coastal waters, often enters estuaries.

Recommended bait: Whitebait and prawn.

Recommended rig: Running sinker rig (see whiting).

Fishing tips: Best targeted from February to May.





AUSTRALIAN HERRING

Other names: Tommy rough, ruffie and sea herring.

Scientific name: *Arripis georgianus*.

Distribution: Southern Australia to Shark Bay in WA. Very common at Rottneest Island.

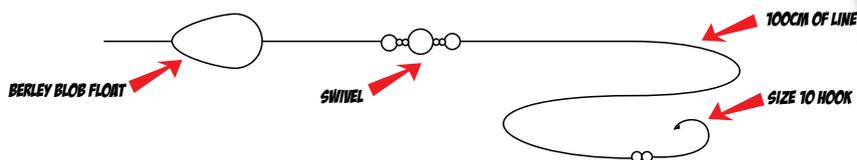
Habitat: Usually caught close to reefs along the coast or in estuaries.

Recommended bait: Whitebait, prawn, squid and maggots.

Recommended rig: Berley blob float rig - the berley blob allows the bait to float near the surface of the water while the berley attracts the fish to the bait. Other fish caught on this rig include garfish.

IMPORTANT!

The Australian herring looks similar to a juvenile Western Australian salmon. The difference is that the salmon has smaller eyes and lacks the black dots on the end of the caudal fin (tail).





AUSTRALIAN SALMON

Other names: Salmon, kahawai and salmon trout.

Scientific name: *Arripis truttaceus*

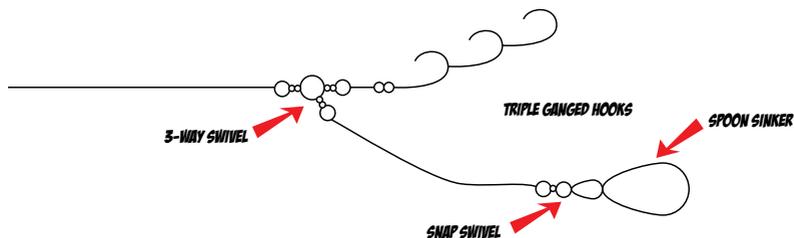
Distribution: Kalbarri in WA (rare north of Perth) to Victoria.

Habitat: Estuaries and coastal waters generally adjacent to rocky shorelines.

Recommended bait: Pilchard and whitebait.

Recommended rig: Bottom rig for beach fishing (see below), floating rig for use around reefs, bait casting and popper lures.

Fishing tips: Best targeted from February to May.



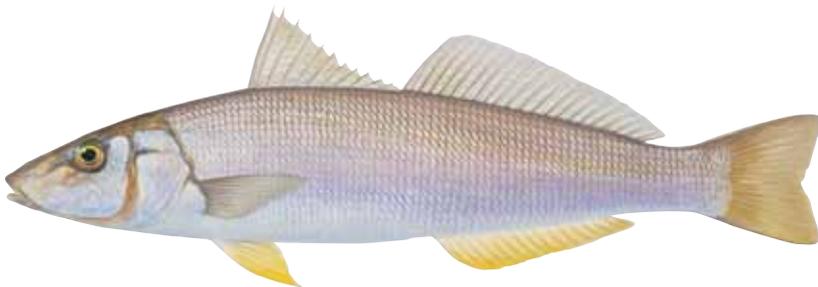
some POPULAR species...



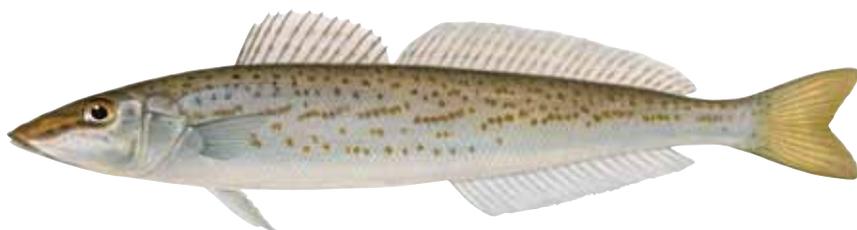
WESTERN SCHOOL WHITING



SAND WHITING



YELLOWFIN WHITING



KING GEORGE WHITING

WHITING

Other names: There are 13 species of whiting in Australian waters, with various names!

Scientific name: *Sillaginodes* spp.

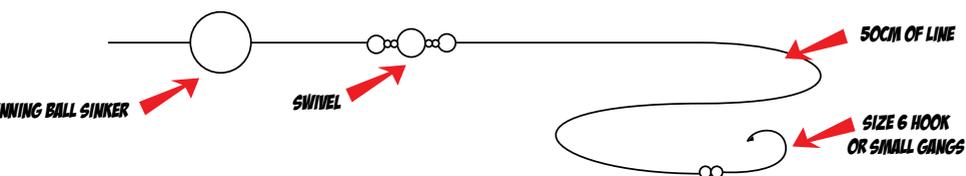
Important: How do you tell the difference between King George whiting (*Sillaginodes punctata*) and the other 12 species? The King George whiting has distinctive small brown spots on its sides.

Distribution: Southern Australia to Lancelin in WA.

Habitat: Coastal sandy bottoms or around offshore reefs and estuaries.

Recommended bait: Prawns, squid and mussels.

Recommended rig: Running sinker rig - the line is threaded through the sinker rather than being tied to it, enabling you to feel fish that are timid biters. Other fish also caught on this rig include skipjack trevally, bream, flathead and flounder.





SQUID

Other name: Southern calamari

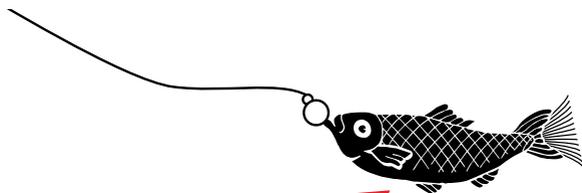
Scientific name: *Sepioteuthis australis*

Distribution: South from Dampier, in WA.

Habitat: Inshore marine and estuarine areas, including seagrass beds and exposed sand.

Recommended rig: Squid jig (plastic prawn or metal 'mulie' spike - no bait is used).

Fishing tips: Cast jig and let it sink almost to the bottom. Wind in line with a jerking motion, pausing between each jerk. When you hook a squid, try to allow it to dispel its ink before bringing it ashore. The best time for squid fishing is early morning or evenings. Squid can be caught all year round but the peak time is from April to September.



METAL 'MULIE' SPIKE



BLUE SWIMMER CRAB

Other names: Blue manna crab and sand crab.

Scientific name: *Portunus pelagicus*.

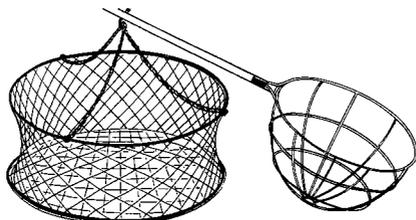
Distribution: From Augusta to Dampier, in WA.

Habitat: Estuarine and inshore waters.

Recommended bait: Fish skeletons and scraps or meat and bone scraps.

Recommended rig: Scoop nets or drop nets.

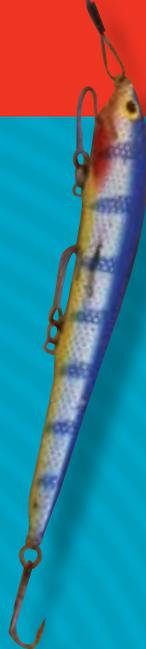
Fishing tips: Best fishing times are late afternoon, evening and early morning. Crabs can be caught all year round but peak between January and May. Estuaries are best targeted for crabs in late summer and autumn, and oceanic waters in winter and spring.





GET HOOKED ON FISHING!

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FOR MORE INFORMATION ...

Contact the Department of Fisheries Head Office:
Level 3, The Atrium
168 St Georges Tce, Perth 6000
Ph: (08) 9482 7333
Fax: (08) 9482 7389

**OR CHECK OUT OUR AWESOME WEBSITE AT
WWW.FISH.WA.GOV.AU**



Department of
Fisheries



Fish for the future

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