

Advantages

- Gets fish back to its habitat fast.
- Re-pressurises the fish to lessen the effects of barotrauma.
- Reduces predation through decreased surface and mid water exposure time.

Fish handling

- Keep fish out of water for the minimum time possible.
- Work fast but without haste.
- Always use wet hands or a wet cloth.
- Place fish on a wet surface. Avoid hot dry surfaces.
- Avoid contact with gills and eyes of fish and try to keep shaded.
- Fully support the body of large fish at all times to avoid organ damage.

Some species for which the release weight can be used:

- West Australian Dhufish
- Pink Snapper
- Breaksea Cod
- Mulloway / Northern Dhufish
- Baldchin Groper and other tusk fish
- Red Emperor
- Various cod species
- Nor-west Snapper
- Western Foxfish
- Western Blue Groper
- Harlequin



fish today for tomorrow



The Release Weight

Proven Best Practice for Releasing Demersal Fish



rec fish west

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or visit www.recfishwest.org.au

Fisheries regulations in Western Australia stipulate that boat fishers must carry an appropriate 'release weight' device on board when line fishing for or landing demersal fish in the West Coast Bioregion.

The release of marine fish has become increasingly important to recreational fishers. Management tools such as size limits, bag limits and closed seasons as well as a stronger conservation ethic have resulted in an increased number of fish being released. It is important for recreational fishers to understand the safe and correct handling methods when releasing fish, particularly when using a release weight.

Reef fish caught in deep water may require special handling to improve survival. Many deep water reef species are susceptible to barotrauma when raised to the surface from depths of around 20 metres or more.

Barotrauma is a result of the expansion of gases in the swim bladder and other organs when fish do not have time to adjust to the rapid changes in water pressure as they are pulled to the surface.

The physical effects of barotrauma can be seen in the form of inflated abdomen, bulging eyes, stomach protruding from the mouth and distended intestines.

Undersize or unwanted fish that are returned to the water showing signs of barotrauma may often have difficulty swimming and returning to the bottom and subsequently are at much higher risk of post-release mortality.

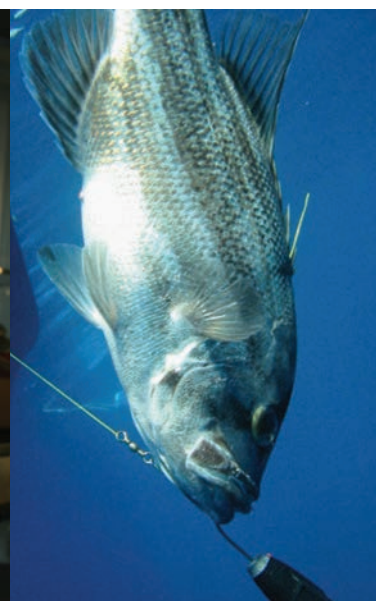
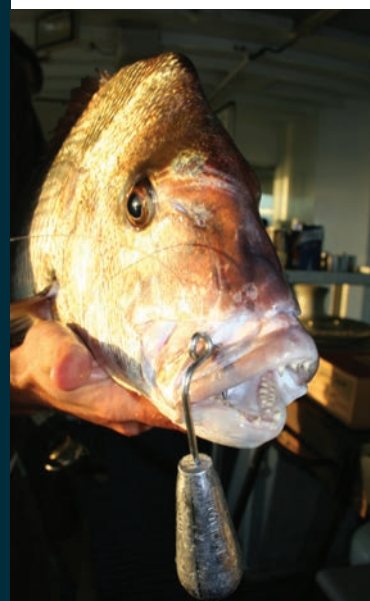


The release weight

The release weight comprises a heavy weighted barbless hook which has a loop at the top to attach a retrieval line. The release weight can be either attached on a rod and reel or a handline, specially set aside for releasing fish. The release weight is attached through the lip of a fish to be released and then gently lowered into the water before being dropped back to the reef. It is then easily detached from the fish by a tug on the line when it reaches the bottom.

Using the release weight

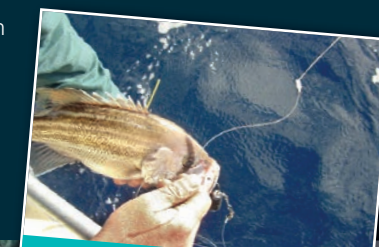
The release weight is simple to use. The complete release procedure can be performed by one person for small fish while larger fish will need the co-operation of two people.



Single operator

• Small fish only

Attach the release weight through the jaw of the fish. Hold the fish in one hand and the rod or handline ready for free spool in the other. Place the fish into the water and let the attached line run free as the fish is released.



Single Operator



Two Person Approach



Two person approach

Whilst one person supports the body of the fish, the other can fix the weight in place and then operate the rod or handline as the fish is released. It is important to get the fish as deep as possible before it gets off the weight. Try not to cause any sudden jerk on the line while the fish is descending, as this may dislodge the weight from the fish before it has safely reached the bottom.