

## ADVANTAGES

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

## FISH HANDLING

- Keep fish out of water for a 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 (particularly dhufish).
- Fully support the body of large fish at all times to avoid organ damage.

## SOME SPECIES FOR WHICH THIS DEVICE CAN BE USED

- West Australian Dhufish
- Pink Snapper
- Breaksea Cod
- Mulloway / Northern Jewfish
- Baldchin Groper and other Tuskfish
- Red Emperor
- Various Cod Species
- Nor-west Snappers



It is the responsibility of the angler to maximise the chances of survival of fish that are released. This information is provided as part of the Australian Government, Recreational Fishing Community Grants Programme.



Department of Fisheries  
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# THE RELEASE WEIGHT

PROVEN BEST PRACTICE  
FOR RELEASING DEMERSAL  
REEF FISH



The release of marine fish has become increasingly important to recreational anglers. Fisheries regulations and management tools such as size limits, bag limits and closed seasons as well as a stronger conservation ethic has resulted in more fish being released.

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

Barotrauma results from 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 to post-release mortality.



## THE RELEASE WEIGHT

This device essentially comprises of a weighted barb-less hook. The release weight is attached through the jaw of a fish to be released, lowered into the water, and then easily detached from the fish by a tug on the line when it reaches the bottom.

The release weight can either be attached to an existing fishing rig via the clip or used on a rod and reel or handline specifically set aside for releasing fish.



## 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.



## TWO PERSON APPROACH



-Recommended for large fish

Whilst one person supports the body of the fish the other can attach the release weight to the jaw and then operate the rod or handline as the fish is released.