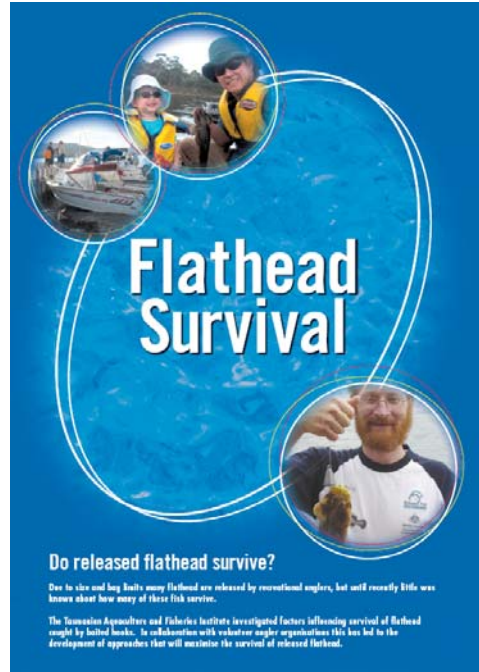


## Best practices for releasing Flathead

The Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute (TAFI) investigated factors influencing survival of Sand Flathead caught by baited hooks. In collaboration with volunteer angler organisations this has led to the development of approaches that will maximise the survival of released Flathead. A user friendly has been produced outlining the best practices for releasing Flathead.

Copies of the brochure can be obtained from TAFI by contacting Alastair Morton on 03-6227-7246 or at [Alastair.Morton@utas.edu.au](mailto:Alastair.Morton@utas.edu.au) or from Infofish Services by contacting Shirley Sawynok on 07-4928-6133 or at [shirleys@zbc.com.net](mailto:shirleys@zbc.com.net).

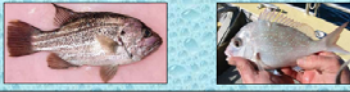


## Preliminary results of WA Reef fish project available

Preliminary results are now available on key WA reef species West Australian Dhufish and Pink Snapper. The results focus on recapture rates of fish using three methods for the treatment of the effects of barotrauma. The release methods used being no treatment, venting and shotline.

The preliminary results can be downloaded from the Recfishwest website [www.recfishwest.org.au](http://www.recfishwest.org.au) or from the Infofish website. Printed copies of the preliminary results can be obtained by contacting Andrew Rowland at Recfishwest on 08-9246-3366 or at [andrew@recfishwest.org.au](mailto:andrew@recfishwest.org.au).

MAXIMISING THE SURVIVAL OF RELEASED UNDERSIZE WEST COAST REEF FISH (FRDC PROJECT 2000/194)  
**PRELIMINARY RESULTS**



**Project Background**  
Many anglers are keen to know the fate of released fish and how to best enhance their chances of survival. The information contained here details the preliminary findings of a collaborative WA project designed to study the post-release survival of released reef species. The results discussed here focus on the West Australian dhufish (*Glaucosoma hepbraicum*) and pink snapper (*Pagrus auratus*).

**Barotrauma**  
Barotrauma results from the expansion of gases in the swim bladder and other organs when retrieved fish do not have time to adjust to the rapid changes in water pressure as they are pulled to the surface. Undersize or unwanted fish that are returned to the water showing signs of barotraumas may often have difficulty swimming and returning to the bottom. Such fish may be unable to reach a depth where water pressure would allow their swim bladder to revert to the normal size and therefore may require special handling to improve survival. Furthermore, barotrauma injuries may have longer term internal effects that may influence the survival of a released fish. Various reef species, such as dhufish and breaksea cod, are susceptible to barotrauma when raised to the surface from depths of around 20 meters or more. During this study tagged fish were released by one of three methods:

**Shotline** - a release weight is used to return the fish to the bottom.  
**Vented** - excess gas is released from the swim bladder using a hollow spike.  
**Simple** - the fish is released at the surface with no other treatment.

Information collected during this project is providing a better understanding of the post-release survival of some important reef species. The data can help anglers to mitigate the effects of barotrauma and enhance the survival of the released fish.

**The Release Weight**

