



NEWS BULLETIN 12

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Released Fish Best Practices Reports Available

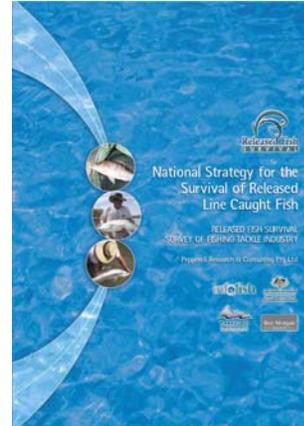
During 2003 there was national campaign to promote best practices in releasing fish by recreational fishers.

Prior to the campaign a survey was undertaken to assess attitudes and practices in releasing fish. Following the campaign a follow up survey was undertaken to determine the effectiveness of the campaign. A survey was also undertaken of tackle outlets to see if there had been any changes in the sales of fish friendly tackle such as knotless landing nets, circle hooks etc.

The follow up survey showed that 35% of those surveyed had changed their practices as a result of the campaign. Sales of fish friendly gear were reported to have increased in 2003 by 40-50% of suppliers surveyed.

All the data collected showed the campaign was very successful and that behavior had changed. This was supported by the increases in sales of fish friendly gear.

A non-technical summary of the project is available from the website under Research Abstracts and there are 4 reports available covering the project under Research Reports. These reports cover the Planning, Project Management and Communications, the initial and follow up surveys into attitudes and practices and the industry survey into fish friendly gear.



Website Revamped and Updated Fact Sheets now Available

The released fish website has received a facelift and most of the fact sheets have been updated. We have simplified access to information as well as adding some new sections.

Fact sheets have now been standardised and based on the best available scientific data with improved reference to material from which the information was derived. More fact sheets on releasing particular species have been added to cover the majority of the species the were caught the most by recreational fishers as identified in the National Survey.

RELEASED FISH SURVIVAL FACT SHEET
ISSUE AFFECTING FISH SURVIVAL
Hooking

DESCRIPTION
 Hooking injury is one of the most significant causes of fish mortality. Minimising hook damage will improve the chances of fish survival on release.

The places where hooks get lodged in fish can be categorised as:

- In the lips or jaw (L)
- Inside the mouth (M)
- In the gills or throat (T)
- In the gut (G)
- Foul hooked in the body outside the mouth

Deep hooking in the gills, throat or gut causes the greatest mortality as the hook can damage vital organs.

BEST PRACTICES IN DEALING WITH HOOKING

Recommended practices on hooking:

- Use hooks that reduce the incidence of deep hooking
- Minimise additional damage when removing hooks
- Use a hookset or long nose pliers to assist in removing hooks

REDUCE DEEP HOOKING

Using larger hooks than normal, modified hooks to reduce swelling of bait or hook patterns that improve lip hooking (eg straight circle hooks (no offset)) will reduce the incidence of deep hooking for some species (1). Use lures in preference to bait as the incidence of deep hooking is significantly less (2).

MINIMISE HOOK DAMAGE

Using barbless hooks will reduce mortality for some species (3). Barbless hooks, especially on treble hooks on lures, will make it easier to remove hooks and reduce additional damage to the fish. There is a perception that using barbless hooks on lures reduces catch rates however this is well supported by research or by experienced fishers using them. Using single barbless hooks on lures will also reduce additional damage.

This bulletin is produced by Inforfish Services on behalf of the National Strategy for the Survival of Released Line Caught Fish



This email bulletin is to keep stakeholders up to date with what is happening in the National Strategy. Anyone with an interest in the subject can subscribe just by sending an email with "subscribe to Released Fish Survival News" to inforfish@zbc.com.net or subscribe through the website at www.info-fish.net/releasefish.