A woman with reddish-brown hair tied back and a young girl with long blonde hair are sitting on a wooden pier, fishing. The woman is wearing a striped tank top and dark pants, and the girl is wearing a colorful swimsuit. A fishing rod is visible on the left, and a blue bucket is on the pier. The background shows a body of water and a clear blue sky.

Get outside,
GO FISHING

WESTERN PORT BAY

WHAT'S INSIDE

- 3 Go fishing
- 4 Why go fishing?
- 5 Planning your fishing trip
- 7 Safety around water
- 8 Fishing locations
- 14 What you'll catch
- 19 Unwanted and unrequired fish
- 20 Responsible fishing behaviour
- 22 Understanding the fishing rules
- 23 What are the fishing rules?
- 24 Fisheries Officers

DID YOU KNOW?

There are more than **30,000** known species of fish. And over **5,000** of those are in Australia.



GO FISHING

Fishing is a fun and healthy activity available to everyone, regardless of your gender, culture, ability or age.

This beginner's guide will assist new anglers to locate good fishing spots around Western Port Bay.

It will also help you plan a stress free, safe fishing experience by explaining:

- the basic fisheries rules
- the role of Fisheries Officers
- tips for fishing safely
- how to rig your fishing rod
- how to handle fish
- what to do with unwanted fish
- how to keep your catch fresh and safe to eat the best places, times and bait to catch a variety of fish.

Share your first fishing memories on social media using #familyfirstbite

WHY GO FISHING?

Fishing can be fun in so many ways. It is a good way to:

- spend quality time with family and friends creating lifelong memories
- unplug from the electronic world, de-stress and relax
- tune into and enjoy the natural world, you never know what you will see
- get you moving by walking, bending and stretching
- top up your vitamin D levels
- experience the thrill of catching your own dinner.

Fishing also introduces children to social responsibilities and ethics. For example, to respect:

- our environment by taking your rubbish home
- our fisheries by knowing and obeying the rules
- fellow anglers by not crowding them
- our fish by treating them carefully and not needlessly harming them
- our fish populations by reporting illegal fishing to 13 FISH (13 3474).

Part of the appeal of fishing is waiting for the fish to bite and trying to catch one – so it also teaches us patience.



PLANNING YOUR FISHING TRIP

Like most activities, a little planning can help make the day go smoother. The basic gear you will need to take with you to go fishing is:

Up-to-date fishing information

- ☐ Your fishing licence or proof of exemption
- ☐ Your free Victorian Recreational Fishing Guide or the free Vic Fishing App
- ☐ Your free fish measuring ruler

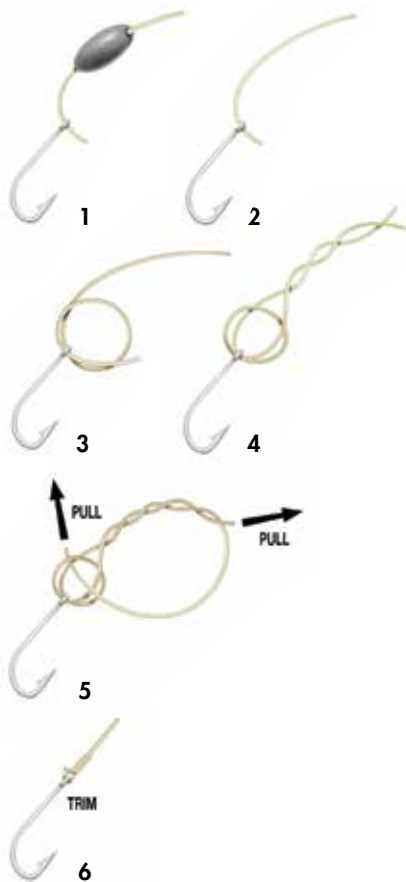
Your fishing gear (a fishing tackle shop will be able to help you with this equipment)

- ☐ A fishing rod and reel or a hand line (2-4 kg rating)
- ☐ Fishing line (3 kg capacity)
- ☐ Hooks and a squid jig
- ☐ Sinkers
- ☐ Towel or gloves
A wet towel or gloves protects both you and the fish when you are handling it.
- ☐ A bucket or esky with a rope attached
This is used to keep your catch cool and safe to eat (and also serves as a floatation/rescue device).
- ☐ A knotless landing net
This allows you to bring the fish to land without causing it harm.
- ☐ A hook remover or long nosed pliers
- ☐ A fishing priest
This is a wooden or metal tool with a heavy blunt end that is used to kill fish very quickly and painlessly. To kill a fish, strike the top of the head just behind the eyes with a sharp heavy blow.
- ☐ Sharp knife (to cut up bait, gut fish and cut the fishing line)
- ☐ Bait and ice
Once you have decided where you are going and which fish you are targeting, buy bait and ice, which will keep your water, food and hopefully your freshly caught fish cool.

Ask for environmentally friendly fishing gear where you can

Rigging your line

- Thread fishing line through the sinker (1) and move up towards the tip of the rod, out of the way (2).
- Thread fishing line through the eye of the hook twice making a circle (3). Take end of line and twist it back around the main line (4).
- Take the end of the line and thread it through the circle made previously (5).
- Pull both the main line and the end of the fishing line at the same time to form a knot. Trim excess line (6).



SAFETY AROUND WATER

*Our waterways are beautiful and must be treated with respect.
For a fun filled, safe fishing adventure use the following checklist.*

☐ **Check the weather and water forecast BEFORE you go fishing**

The BOM (Bureau of Meteorology) has accurate information on weather and water conditions across Victoria. If the forecasts are not favourable then find a place that has safer conditions or postpone your trip.

☐ **Make sure someone knows your plans**

Always tell someone where you are going fishing, who you are going with, including their mobile phone numbers and what time you will be back. Should the worst happen, this person will have the right information to help find you. Remember if you change your plans, let this person know.

☐ **Always fish with a friend – never fish alone**

Take a mate who can watch your back. Conditions on or near water (everywhere) can change very quickly. Trust your mate to help keep you safe.

☐ **Take your safety gear and keep it close-by**

Basic safety gear includes a first aid kit, esky/bucket and rope, phone, water, sunscreen, hat and non-slip shoes.

☐ **Fish from a jetty or fishing platform**

These places are safer than beaches, river banks, or rocks. There are usually other people around to help you.

☐ **Don't drink alcohol**

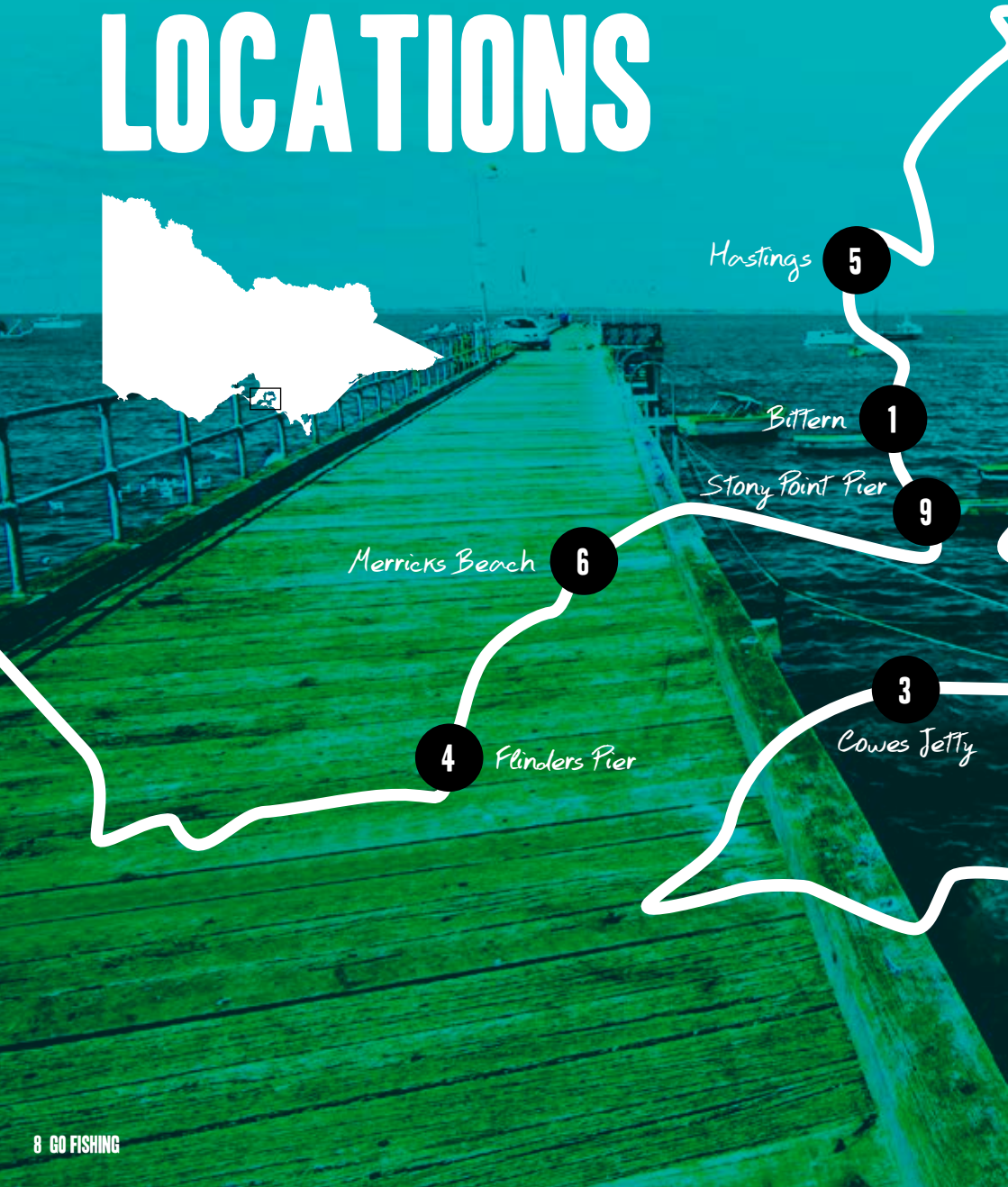
☐ **Keep your eye on the water**

Wave heights are unpredictable and can change quickly.

If someone falls into the water:

1. Tell the person the **stay calm** and roll onto their back
2. Throw them something that floats like a bucket or esky with a rope tied to it so you can pull them to safety
3. Call or phone for help
4. **DO NOT** enter the water yourself unless you are a trained lifesaver.

FISHING LOCATIONS



Hastings

5

Bittern

1

Stony Point Pier

9

Merricks Beach

6

4

Flinchers Pier

3

Cowes Jetty

Tooradin Inlet

10

Corinella Jetty

2

7

Rhyll Jetty

8

San Remo Jetty

FISHING LOCATIONS

1 BITTERN

The sleepy hollow of Bittern offers a long sandy beach which provides room for plenty of fishing fun.

Likely to catch: Australian Salmon, Flathead, King George Whiting and Yellow-Eye Mullet.

Attractions close by: Bittern Sunday Market, wineries.



2 CORINELLA JETTY

Corinella is a hidden gem. Settled in 1826, Corinella and its jetty is set in a quiet natural setting. A mixture of rural farmland and oceanic calmness. Corinella Peir is settled in Western Port Bay and offers a great variety of fishing opportunities. There is some excellent fishing also to be had 500m to the left of the pier from the point.

Likely to catch: Flathead, King George Whiting, Silver Travelly and Snapper.

Attractions close by: Phillip Island and its many attractions.



3 COWES JETTY

Make your way around Phillip Island and discover seaside hamlets, iconic wildlife, stunning coastal landscapes, and international motorsport events. Get up close to little penguins on the beach, come face-to-face with snoozing koalas then enjoy some wonderful fishing opportunities from the Cowes Jetty.

Likely to catch: Australian Salmon, Flathead, King George Whiting, Silver Trevally, Snapper and Squid.

Attractions close by: Phillip Island Nature reserve, Koala Sanctuary, Mini Golf, Moto grand prix track, Churchill Island.



4 FLINDERS PIER

Flinders Pier is one of the best land-based locations in Western Port for catching a variety of species, especially Squid and King George Whiting. It is also a picturesque coastal town with lots to offer including some of the cleanest air in the world due to the Antarctic winds that get blown straight into the town.

Likely to catch: Australian Salmon, King George Whiting, Leatherjacket, Silver Trevally and Squid.

Attractions close by: Chocolate shops, Wineries, Pt Nepean National Park, swimming, Horse riding, Sunny Ridge Strawberry Farm.



5 HASTINGS

Amaze at the pelicans assembling on the Hastings foreshore as you watch the fishing boats come in and out of this historic fishing village.

Likely to catch: Australian Salmon, Flathead, King George Whiting and Silver Trevally.

Attractions close by: There is an indoor swimming pool and café right at the entrance of the pier. Tyabb Packing house, Golf, charter boats, Moonlit Sanctuary.



6 MERRICKS BEACH

Merricks Beach is a small seaside town. It is one of the few coastal places within a 100 km radius of Melbourne that has been basically untouched by development and as such has a significant Koala population. An interesting fact about Merricks Beach is that all of the streets in the area are still unsealed and it has experienced little change since the 1960s.

Likely to catch: Australian Salmon, Flathead, King George Whiting and Yellow-Eye Mullet.

Attractions close by: Sommers Camp, Coolart Park.

7 RHYLL JETTY

This small and peaceful fishing village is located at the northern end of Phillip Island. Enjoy a wander through the pristine natural landscapes surrounding the village, discover abundant wildlife, and cast a line in at the Rhyll jetty to catch your own fresh seafood dinner.

Likely to catch: Australian Salmon, Flathead, Garfish, King George Whiting, Silver Trevally and Yellow-Eye Mullet.

Attractions close by: Koala Conservation centre, Phillip island nature reserve, Rhyll trout and bush tucker farm, Cowes.



8 SAN REMO JETTY

San Remo is the gate way to Phillip Island and a beautiful, rugged town in its own right. There are deserted beaches, historical walks and a vibrant village atmosphere waiting for you.

Likely to catch: Australian Salmon, King George Whiting, Leatherjacket, Silver Trevally, Snapper, and Squid

Attractions close by: San Remo to Cowes Cycling track, Cape Woolamai walking track, George Bass Coastal Walk, Phillip Island.



9

STONY POINT PIER

Crib Point, Victoria lies on the shores of Western Port Bay in the heart of the beautiful Mornington Peninsula. This small coastal township is adjacent to HMAS Cerberus the Australian Navy's major training base.

Likely to catch: Australian Salmon, Flathead, King George Whiting, Silver Trevally, Snapper, Squid and Yellow-Eye Mullet.

Attractions close by: French Island (catch the ferry) and it's iconic inhabitants.



10

TOORADIN INLET

Tooradin is a pleasant costal village, home to the channel of Sawtells Inlet which meanders through this small town.

Likely to catch: Australian Salmon, Bream, Flathead, King George Whiting, Silver Trevally and Yellow-Eye Mullet.

Attractions close by: the Dolphin fish made for the 2006 Commonwealth games calls Tooradin home, Local fishing museum.



There are many marine protected areas along the Victorian coast line that you are not allowed to fish in.

*If you choose to fish in a location not covered in this book make sure it is not in a one of these areas.
For a full list of these sites visit www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/explore/find-a-park/marine-protected-areas*



WHAT YOU'LL CATCH



Australian Salmon

Peak season: March – September

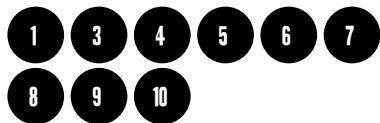
Minimum legal size: 21cm

Bag limit: 20 per person per day

Baits: Pilchards, whitebait, pipis, squid.

Time and tides: Morning or late afternoon.
A few hours either side of high tide.

Locations:



Bream

Peak season: June – November

Minimum legal size: 28cm

Bag limit: 10 per person per day
(must be retained in whole or carcass form – see fish fact on page 17)

Baits: Bass yabbies, sandworms, prawns, mussels.

Time and tides: Morning or late afternoon.
A few hours either side of high tide.

Locations:



Measure fish from the tip of the snout with the mouth closed to the end of the tail.





Flathead

Peak season: October – March

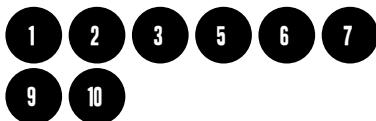
Minimum legal size: 27cm

Bag limit: 20 per person per day

Baits: Pilchards, whitebait, prawns, squid.

Time and tides: Can be caught throughout the day. A few hours either side of high tide.

Locations:



Garfish

Peak season: November – July

Minimum legal size: no minimum

Bag limit: 40 per person per day

Baits: Pipis, prawns or any fish flesh.

Time and tides: Can be caught throughout the day. Run-in tide.

Other locations:



WHAT YOU'LL CATCH



King George Whiting

Peak season: November – April

Minimum legal size: 27cm

Bag limit: 20 per person per day
(retained whole or in carcass form
– see fish fact on page 17)

Baits: Pipsis, mussels, bass yabbies, squid.

Time and tides: Morning or late afternoon.
A few hours either side of high tide.

Other locations:



Leatherjacket

Peak season: Year round

Minimum legal size: no minimum

Bag limit: 20 per person per day

Baits: Small pieces of pipi or squid.

Time and tides: Can be caught throughout
the day. Tide not important.

Other locations:





Silver Trevally

Peak season: October – May

Minimum legal size: 20cm

Bag limit: 20 per person per day

Baits: Pilchards, whitebait, pipis, squid.

Time and tides: Morning or late afternoon.
A few hours either side of high tide.

Other locations:



Snapper

Peak season: October – May

Minimum legal size: 28cm

Bag limit: 10 per person per day
(of which no more than three can exceed 40cm and must be retained in whole or carcass form – see fish fact below)

Baits: Pilchards, silver whiting, whitebait, squid.

Time and tides: Morning or late afternoon.
A few hours either side of high tide.

Locations:



*Keep your fish whole as this enables Fisheries Officers
to measure the fish to ensure they are legal length.*

WHAT YOU'LL CATCH



Squid

Peak season: April – October

Minimum legal size: no minimum

Bag limit: 10 per person per day

Baits: Pilchards, silver whiting.

Time and tides: Can be caught through the day and at night under lights. Run-in tide is best.

Locations:

3

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9



Yellow-eye Mullet

Peak season: March – September

Minimum legal size: no minimum

Bag limit: 40 per person per day

Baits: Sandworms, small pieces of pipi, whitebait or chicken, bread crust or raw dough.

Time and tides: Can be caught throughout the day. Rising or run-out tide.

Locations:

1

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9

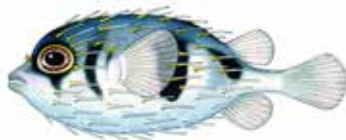
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UNWANTED AND UNREQUIRED FISH

Unwanted fish (e.g. puffers, toadies) or **fish that are not required** (you don't want/not allowed to keep) **must be returned to the water immediately and without harm or injury.**



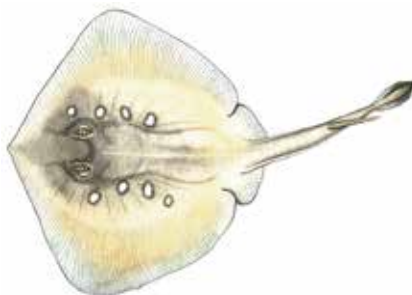
Toadfish



Puffer



|| Armed Seastar



Ray

There are new restrictions around taking rays.

*For further information visit
www.vfa.vic.gov.au/recreational-fishing/ray-protection-fishing-rules*

RESPONSIBLE FISHING BEHAVIOUR

Responsible fishing is not only about fishing within the rules but also about respecting and caring for the fish, native animals, the environment, other water users and fishers.

Responsible fishers care for:

- **the fish they catch by:**

- never leaving their fishing rod unattended
- using a net without knotted mesh to bring the fish in
- handling the fish carefully using a wet glove or towel
- supporting the fish in a horizontal position, not dangling it from a line
- removing the hook from the mouth quickly with a hook remover or long nosed pliers
- cutting the line as close as possible to the fish mouth if the fish has swallowed the hook
- identifying the fish immediately
- measuring the fish quickly on a cool, wet surface, to ensure they are of a legal size
- quickly deciding if you can and want to keep the fish.

- **the fish they release by:**

- gently and quickly lowering them into the water using a bucket of water on a rope to reduce further damage
- releasing immediately and carefully unwanted fish, like Toadfish, stingrays and seastars to the water.

- **the fish they are legally able to keep by:**

- killing them quickly with a fishing priest, using the method described on page 5
- storing them on ice to keep them safe to eat.

- **our fish resources by:**

- ALWAYS following the rules
- reporting illegal fishing to 13 FISH (13 3474)
- respecting Fisheries Officers who help people understand and enforce the rules.

- **their fishing spots by:**

- leaving the area clean and taking rubbish home including leftover bait and any fish waste
- using environmentally friendly fishing tackle
- sharing the space respectfully with other users including other anglers, swimmers and snorkelers.



UNDERSTANDING THE FISHING RULES

There are many rules associated with recreational fishing in Victoria. Not all are covered in this beginners guide.

Why do we have fishing rules?

Fishing rules guarantee that we have fish now and in the future. Fishing rules ensure:

- we secure our fish populations by:
 - not taking too many
 - returning young, small fish to the water so they can breed
 - returning larger, best breeding fish to the water
 - stopping fishing in certain areas and at certain times to protect fish stocks.
- we share our fish by:
 - specifying the number of fish a person can catch each day
 - specifying the type and amount of fishing equipment a person can use.
- we grow our fisheries by:
 - licensing fishers and using this money to improve facilities, fish populations and fishing experiences.

Fishing rules protect fish populations so there are different rules, for different fish, in different locations.

Do I need a fishing licence?

Generally, if you are over the age of 18 and under the age of 70 and fishing in Victoria then yes, you need a licence, even if you are just assisting your children.

Some people are exempt from having a fishing licence. For a list of exemptions search online.

Where can I buy a fishing licence?

Fishing licences can be bought online (search Victorian Recreational Fishing Licence). You can also buy them at most fishing tackle shops.

A licence can be purchased for 3 days, 28 days, 1 year and 3 years.

The revenue raised from fishing licences is used to improve our recreational fisheries.

For information on all the fishing rules search online for 'Victorian Recreational Fishing Guide' or download the free 'Vic Fishing' App.

WHAT ARE THE FISHING RULES?

Basic fishing rules

If you go fishing at the places listed in this booklet these are rules you need to know:

1. Legal size

The smallest (minimum legal size) and the largest (maximum legal size) fish you can legally keep. Fish outside the legal size range must be returned to the water immediately and without harm.

The legal size of fish must be checked quickly. Measure fish from the tip of the snout with the mouth closed to the end of the tail. Fish that you wish to keep should be dispatched immediately and placed on ice.



2. Bag limit

The maximum number of legal sized fish of a given species you catch in one day.

3. Return unwanted fish

Return unwanted fish to water immediately and without any further harm.

4. Legal fishing equipment

Each person fishing can have:

- 2 fishing rods with 2 hooks attached in rivers and lakes (inland waters)
- 4 fishing rods with 2 hooks attached in the ocean and bays (Marine waters)
- you must stay with your rods while they are in the water.

5. Don't fillet your fish while you are fishing

You can however gut and scale your dead fish.

If you are fishing in areas not included in this beginners guide you will need to also check that you are:

- **not** fishing in a Marine National Park or Sanctuary
- **not** in Intertidal Protected Areas (where some types of fishing is prohibited)
- **not** fishing in a closed season.

All the fishing rules can be found in the Victorian Recreational Fishing Guide and the Vic Fishing App.

Where to get the correct information

Help protect our fisheries by always having the most up-to-date information:

- download the free Vic Fishing App or get a free paper copy of the Victorian Recreational Fishing Guide sent to you by calling 13 61 86
- copies of the Victorian Recreational Fishing Guide can also be found at any Fisheries office and most bait and tackle shops across Victoria.

Breaking the fishing rules can result in large fines and other serious consequences.

STAY UP TO DATE

Download the free
Vic Fishing App here



FISHERIES OFFICERS

A Fisheries Officer's main responsibility is to help people fish within the rules.

How will I recognise a Fisheries Officer?

Fisheries Officers usually wear a dark blue uniform that shows the Officer's name and title.

Sometimes a Fisheries Officer will not be in uniform. If not, they will always show you official identification when they approach you.

What can I expect when a Fisheries Officer approaches me?

A Fisheries Officer can:

- give you educational material and information about fisheries
- ask you to produce your current fishing licence or proof of your exemption and your driver's licence
- ask to look in your bag, fishing equipment, esky, container, vehicle and/or boat
- measure and count fish in your possession to check compliance with size and bag limits.

What powers do Fisheries Officers have?

By law Fisheries Officers can:

- stop and inspect any boat or vehicle
- ask for your name and home address
- search any equipment such as baskets, eskies or other containers
- issue 'on the spot' fines (infringement notice)
- seize any fish, fishing gear or other equipment, including vehicles and boats, that may have been used to commit an offence
- place alleged offenders under arrest.

Fisheries Officers are also authorised to enforce laws relating to:

- litter, maritime safety and protected areas.

What happens if I am caught committing a fisheries offence?

Under the *Fisheries Act 1995*, Fisheries Officers have extensive powers of arrest, search and seizure.

If found to be doing the wrong thing, or the Officers believe you have committed an offence, a Fisheries Officer will:

- explain the nature of the alleged offence
- request your full name and home address which you **MUST** provide
- ask you to participate in an interview
- issue a receipt if any fish, property or documents have been seized
- advise you of the likely outcome.

A photograph of two fisheries officers standing on the deck of a boat, looking out at the ocean. The officer on the left is wearing a dark uniform with 'FISHERIES' written on the back. The officer on the right is also wearing a dark uniform with 'FISHERIES' written on the back and is holding binoculars to their eyes. The background shows the ocean and a clear sky.

REPORT ILLEGAL FISHING

If you see or think someone is breaking our fishing rules, move away and call

13 FISH (13 3474).

Provide as much detail as possible including:

- time and date
- location
- car or boat registration numbers
- the number of people involved
- what the people are doing.

Information you give is very valuable and treated in strict confidence. Your information helps us to plan patrols and other enforcement operations.



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