

Get outside,
GO FISHING

PORT PHILLIP BAY



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DID YOU KNOW?

There are more than **30,000** known species of fish. 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 Port Phillip 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

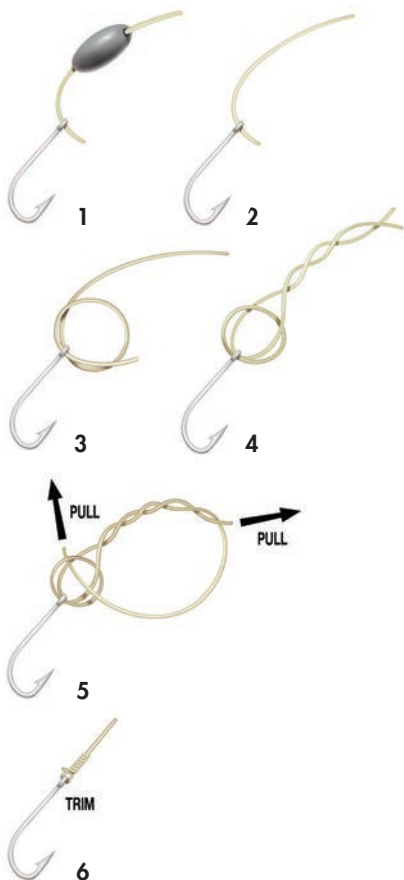
Your fishing gear (a fishing tackle shop will be able to help you with this equipment)

- ☐ 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 (6). 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



Cunningham Pier

3

Barwon River Mouth Bridge

2



Altona Pier

1

11

St Kilda Pier

12

Werribee South Beach

Portarlington Pier

7

Mordialloc Pier

5

Frankston Pier

4

Mornington Pier

6

9

Queenscliff Jetty

8

Portsea Pier

10

Rye Pier

FISHING LOCATIONS

1 ALTONA PIER

At end of this 400m long, lovely wooden pier built in 1888, you will find one of Port Phillip Bay's three inshore fishing reefs. These artificial fishing reefs are only 40–65m from the end of the pier and create a great habitat for fish like Snapper and Bream.

Likely to catch: Bream, Snapper and Squid.

Attractions close by: Scienceworks, Jawbone Marine Sanctuary, Glow Golf Docklands.



2 BARWON RIVER MOUTH BRIDGE

The spectacular holiday town of Barwon Heads is in dream position, with a mix of gentle estuary, rocky coastal headland and ocean beaches. The river mouth and bridge, with its tranquil views, offers some great beginner's fishing.

Likely to catch: Bream, King George Whiting, Yellow-eye Mullet and Elephantfish.

Attractions close by: Queenscliff historic railway, numerous walking and biking tracks including the Bellarine Rail Trail, Barwon Bluff Marine Sanctuary and Jirrahalinge Koala and Wildlife Sanctuary.



3 CUNNINGHAM PIER

This iconic 1850s pier is situated in central Geelong and is part of the Geelong Waterfront. The area was redeveloped in the 1990s. It provides for family friendly fishing opportunities.

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

Attractions close by: carousel, shopping, Adventure Park, numerous eateries.

Tip: You can drive onto this pier and fish next to it, however, this is a private pier and fishing hours are restricted.



4 FRANKSTON PIER

Built in 1857, Frankston Pier has always been a popular destination for anglers. A large variety of fish can be caught here throughout the year. An artificial inshore reef near the end of the pier has improved the habitat for several species.

Likely to catch: Garfish, Australian Salmon, Snapper, Flathead and Silver Trevally.

Attractions close by: 'Sight Line' nautical sculpture, Frankston Sunday Market, Performing Arts Centre.



5

MORDIALLOC PIER

Situated on Beach Road in Mordialloc, this long pier provides a range of fishing opportunities. Mordialloc Creek, which runs into the bay alongside this pier, offers additional fishing opportunities. Please note if you decide to fish in the river you can only use 2 lines. (See page 23)

Likely to catch: Bream, Australian Salmon, Yellow-eye Mullet and Snapper.

Attractions close by: Mordialloc Skating Centre.



6

MORNINGTON PIER

The picturesque Mornington Pier, which also acts as a breakwater for a boat harbour, provides quality fishing all year round with summer and autumn being the best times. Mornington is known for its village atmosphere and its beautiful beaches. It's also a fantastic spot to try your luck fishing.

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

Attractions close by: cafés, shopping, cinema.



7

PORT ARLINGTON PIER

Quiet and sheltered, Portarlington offers great fishing from the pier. Enjoy the sweeping views of Corio Bay and the Melbourne skyline while waiting for a bite.

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

Attractions close by: Portarlington Bayside Miniature Railway, cafés, safe swimming beaches, ferry to Docklands.



8

PORTSEA PIER

Portsea is located on a thin strip of land just two kilometres wide, fronting the calm waters of Port Phillip in the north and the rugged surf beaches along Bass Strait in the south. Portsea Pier, jutting out from a sheltered bay, is an idyllic spot to cast a fishing line, take in bayside views and explore the underwater world with a snorkel.

Likely to catch: Snapper and Squid.

Attractions close by: Point Nepean National Park, swimming with dolphins and seals, celebrity spotting, diving.



9

QUEENSLIFF JETTY

The Borough of Queenscliff – take a deep breath, look around and fall in love. Queenscliff built its history on fishing fleets and cotta boats which used to operate from the historical jetty. The jetty caters well for the recreational fisher.

Likely to catch: Australian Salmon, Snapper and Whiting.

Attractions close by: Queenscliff/Sorrento Ferry, Maritime Museum, Point Lonsdale Lighthouse, Queenscliff historic railway.



10

RYE PIER

The coastal town of Rye is situated on the popular holiday destination of the Mornington Peninsula, nestled between Rosebud and Blairgowrie. Rye's main beach, fronting Port Phillip, offers safe sandy beaches, ideal for swimming and boating. There is a jetty and attractive foreshore facilities.

Likely to catch: Salmon, Squid, Flathead, Leatherjacket and Whiting.

Attractions close by: Summer Carnival, Peninsular Hot Springs, Wineries, Gunnamatta horse riding, golf courses, walking tracks.



11

ST KILDA PIER

A colony of little penguins have made their home at this beautiful pier and kiosk. Built in 1853 followed by the breath-taking kiosk in 1904, this historical landmark is also a great fishing spot.

Likely to catch: Snapper, Flathead and Squid.

Attractions close by: Luna Park, St Kilda Botanical Gardens, Fitzroy Street shopping.



12

WERRIBEE SOUTH BEACH

When people think of Werribee they don't think of a lovely white beach, large grassy areas and great fishing, but that's exactly what you'll find here, nestled amongst the market gardens. Off the jetty, there is fish to be caught.

Likely to catch: Bream, Australian Salmon, Yellow-eye Mullet and Snapper.

Attractions close by: Werribee Open Range Zoo, Werribee Mansion.



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:

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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 16)

Baits: Bass yabbies, sandworms, prawns, mussels.

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

Locations:

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12

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



WHAT YOU'LL CATCH



Elephantfish

Peak season: March – May

Minimum legal size: no minimum

Bag limit: 1 per person per day
(must be retained in whole or carcass form – see fish fact on page 16)

Baits: Pilchards, squid, fish fillets.

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

Locations:

2



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:

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Elephantfish are actually a species of shark.

You measure shark differently to fin fish. You must measure them from the rear-most gill slit to the base of the tail fin.





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:

4

6



King George Whiting

Peak season: November – April

Minimum legal size: 27cm

Bag limit: 20 per person per day
(must be retained in whole or carcass form – see fish fact on page 16)

Baits: Pipis, mussels, bass yabbies, squid.

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

Other locations:

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WHAT YOU'LL CATCH



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:

6

10



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:

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



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 on page 16)

Baits: Pilchards, silver whiting, whitebait, squid.

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

Locations:



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:



WHAT YOU'LL CATCH



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:

2

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12



Yellowtail Kingfish

Peak season: December – January

Minimum legal size: 60cm

Bag limit: 5 per person per day

Baits: Lures.

Time and tides: Morning and afternoon fishing best but can be caught all day. Tide doesn't matter.

Locations:

6

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.**



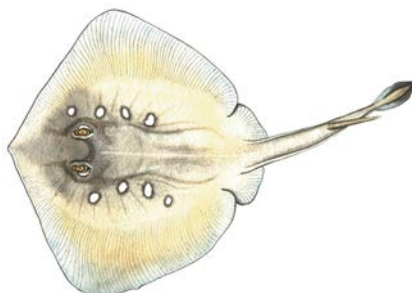
Toadfish



Puffer



Eleven 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's mouth if it 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.



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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More Victorians fishing, more often

