



It is illegal to sell, trade or buy recreationally caught fish, bait and shellfish in Victoria.



If you are caught selling, trading or buying recreationally caught fish or shellfish, you could face significant fines and jail terms.

Who do I contact if I suspect businesses or recreational fishers are illegally selling fish and shellfish?

If you:

- are approached by a recreational fisher trying to sell their catch; or
- suspect a business is sourcing its fish or shellfish illegally.

Report them to 13 FISH (☎13 3474)

Using the Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) 24 hour, 7 day a week reporting service.

If you would like to receive this information/publication in an accessible format (such as large print or audio) please call the Customer Service Centre on 136 186, TTY 1800 122 969, or email customer.service@vfa.vic.gov.au.

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For more information about VFA go to www.vfa.vic.gov.au or phone the Customer Service Centre on 136 186.



Only buy safe and legal fish and shellfish

Commercially produced fish and shellfish is safe and legal food

Local restaurants, fish and chip shops, fish wholesalers and fish retailers illegally buying or trading recreationally caught fish and shellfish:

- risk the health of their customers
- damage the commercial fishing industry
- put our fish populations at risk
- weaken Victoria's fisheries management which ensures fish resources can be shared equitably among all Victorians
- harm Victoria's excellent reputation for sustainable production of safe fish and shellfish.

What types of fishers can legally sell their catch in Victoria?

Only fishers who hold valid commercial fishing or aquaculture licences or permits can legally sell the fish and shellfish they catch or produce.

Why is it illegal to trade and buy fish and shellfish from recreational fishers?

The trade or sale of any fish, bait or shellfish caught by recreational fishers breaks laws that protect the health of people buying fish, fish populations and Victoria's commercial fishing industry.

Who are recreational fishers?

Recreational fishers do not hold a commercial fishing licence or permit. Recreational fishers catch fish for fun, sport and to feed themselves and their immediate family.

Why is buying fish and shellfish from a legitimate commercial seller so important?

Fish and shellfish bought from commercial fishers and producers are subject to strict food safety standards, required under the Food Standards Code and administered by Prime Safe.

Recreationally caught fish are not subject to any of these food safety measures. Buyers of illegal recreationally caught fish and shellfish are risking their customers' health and the reputation of their business.

What species are most commonly offered for illegal sale?

The fish and shellfish most commonly caught by recreational fishers and offered for sale include:

- marine scalefish such as tuna, snapper, whiting, bream
- freshwater scalefish such as Murray cod, golden perch
- molluscs such as abalone, pipis and calamari/squid
- invertebrates such as rock lobster

What happens if your business is caught buying fish or shellfish from a recreational fisher?

The maximum penalties for businesses or people convicted of illegally receiving or selling recreationally caught fish and shellfish are:

- fines of >\$30,000; and
- up to 12 months in prison.

The maximum penalties for businesses or people convicted of illegally receiving or selling recreationally caught priority species - abalone, rock lobster, Murray cod and bluefin tuna are:

- fines of > \$180,000; and
- up to 10 years in prison.

Recreational fishers found selling or trading their catch face the same fines.

Non compliance with the Food Standards Code can also result in:

- fines of up to \$40,000 for the individual or \$200,000 for a company; and
- loss or suspension of their licence to operate a food business.

How can I protect my business and ensure the fish and shellfish I buy is safe to eat and legally caught?

If you intend to buy and sell fish and shellfish for human consumption you must:

- Keep a record of the purchase transaction; and
 - Ensure that food you purchase is handled in accordance with the Food Standards Code to avoid contamination.
- To view the code search online 'food standards code australia'.



Don't risk your customer's health or your business reputation when buying fish or shellfish.

Always ask the seller for a receipt.

The legal requirements for receipts vary with fish and shellfish species.

Protect yourself, ensure you have the correct receipt. Check out the requirements at:

www.vfa.vic.gov.au/enforcement/buy-safe-and-legal-seafood