

Improved catch and release techniques



Based on this research, the following *improved fishing practices* are suggested to *maximise fish survival*

- 1 Use methods and rigs that increase the frequency of mouth-hooked fish (rather than gut-hooked):
 - Target fish with artificial lures
 - Choose non-offset circle hooks when using bait.
- 2 If the fish is hooked deeply, cut the line as close as possible to the fish's mouth. Do not try to remove the hook.

Compared to removing swallowed hooks from bream and mullet, cutting the line increased their short-term survival from 12% to more than 85%. Up to 76% of the released line-cut, gut-hooked bream shed their hooks within three weeks.
- 3 Minimise the length of time the fish is out of the water. Ideally unhook the fish whilst it is still in the water. Try to retrieve hooks and release fish as quickly as possible. The use of needle-nosed pliers or hook retrieving devices can greatly reduce time spent unhooking.
- 4 Remove hooks from mouth-hooked fish.
- 5 Use fish-friendly landing nets with soft, knotless mesh. Avoid knotted landing nets which may damage the fish's scales, skin, eyes and fins.
- 6 If live wells are used, maintain good water quality by using flow through, aerated systems. Poorly designed live wells reduce fish survival—particularly silver trevally where survival dropped from 98% to 63%.



Use artificial lures and non-offset circle hooks



If deeply hooked, cut the line close to mouth



Minimise the fish's time out of water and unhook



Use soft, knotless nets



Maintain good water quality in wells