



## Tagging fish

Tagging fish provides data for research. For the tagging data to be useful the tagging needs to be done properly and the tagging event recorded accurately. The NSW-DPI Game Fish Tagging Program is currently the best source and repository of recreational game fishing tags and data.

Tags (and associated data cards) can be sourced from GFAA affiliated game fishing clubs.

It is best to tag the fish while it is still in the water, particularly for larger fish.

If applying the tag while the fish is out of the water ensure that it is carefully placed on a wet, padded surface.

Administer the tag using an appropriate tagging tool, place the tag directly under the second dorsal fin, and insert the tag at an angle leaning back towards the tail. Ensure the tag anchor passes through the muscle and bones under the fin.

Record the length of the fish as accurately as possible.

Record all the capture details accurately on the tagging card.

Return the tagging card to the administering group as soon as possible.

## Other sources of information

This code of practice relates specifically to recreational fishing for Southern Bluefin Tuna, but a lot of the practices described are just as relevant for other game fish species. For more information on best practices when recreational fishing for large pelagics and recreational fishing in general, the following links are useful:

Recfish Australia National Code of Practice:

[www.recfishingresearch.org/national-code-of-practice/](http://www.recfishingresearch.org/national-code-of-practice/)

Gamefishing Association of Australia Code of Practice for a Responsible Gamefish Fishery

[www.gfaa.asn.au/new/index.php/gfaa-information/gfaa-principles-code-of-practice](http://www.gfaa.asn.au/new/index.php/gfaa-information/gfaa-principles-code-of-practice)

Neatfish: A standard for the National Environmental Assessment of Tournament Fishing

[www.neatfish.com](http://www.neatfish.com)

Ike jime (also available as a mobile device application)

[www.ikijime.com/fish/tuna-southern-bluefin](http://www.ikijime.com/fish/tuna-southern-bluefin)

New South Wales Department of Primary Industries Game Fish Tagging Program

[www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/recreational/saltwater/gamefish-tagging](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/recreational/saltwater/gamefish-tagging)

Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and the Environment Tasmania

[www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/sea-fishing-aquaculture/recreational-fishing/scalefish/tuna-fishing/](http://www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/sea-fishing-aquaculture/recreational-fishing/scalefish/tuna-fishing/)

[www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/sea-fishing-aquaculture/recreational-fishing/scalefish/responsible-fishing](http://www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/sea-fishing-aquaculture/recreational-fishing/scalefish/responsible-fishing)

Primary Industries and Regions South Australia

[www.pir.sa.gov.au/fishing/recreational\\_fishing/handling\\_your\\_catch](http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/fishing/recreational_fishing/handling_your_catch)

BlueWater Boats & Sportsfishing magazine

Booth, G. (2010). Tagging - for results, making it easier for you and better for science. *BlueWater Boats & Sportsfishing magazine*. 82: 82-88.

## SOUTHERN BLUEFIN TUNA

### Code of Practice - Recreational Fishery

Information for responsible catching, handling, releasing and tagging of **Southern Bluefin Tuna**.



Photo: Al McGlashan

Endorsed by:



Research by:



Funded by:



## Catching Southern Bluefin Tuna

Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT) are a large fish with those caught by recreational fishers typically weighing 10 – 50 kg, although it is not uncommon for recreational fishers to catch fish in excess of 100 kg. Is your fishing gear up to the job? Are you using gear that will minimise impacts to the fish? Are there things you can do to avoid degrading the quality of the flesh if you plan to keep it for eating, or improve its chance of survival if you plan to release it?

**Minimising the time it takes to retrieve a fish to the boat will reduce the stress it experiences.**

**Fight time can be reduced by using a heavier line class, buying a good quality rod and reel that is up to the job and educating yourself on good fishing techniques.**

**Consideration of the type of hook you use can minimize damage to the fish. J hooks on trolled lures cause far less damage than treble hooks. Circle hooks should be used when bait fishing for SBT.**



**Avoid fishing in areas where predators are in high abundance. Never feed a predator, including fish carcasses after filleting. Minimise fight time to reduce the possibility of predation.**

## Retaining fish

Whether you plan to retain or release a fish, it is important to consider how you handle it. Poor handling can affect the welfare of the animal, reduce its chance of survival if released and affect flesh quality if you plan to keep it to eat.



**Know the regulations before you head out fishing, they may be different in each state. Think about the quantity of fish you need to keep, and note that highgrading is illegal. Catch regulations are a limit not a challenge!**

**Bring the fish aboard carefully, trying to avoid damaging the fish as bruising will affect the quality of the flesh.**

**Immediately dispatch the fish by administering a spike to the brain then bleed the fish by making a cut behind the pectoral fins on both sides.**

**Remove the gills and organs straight after brain spiking and bleeding. Then put the fish trunk into a fish bag, ice chest or esky with ice to cool the body temperature.**

**Reduce wastage by learning how to fillet Southern Bluefin Tuna effectively. There are some good instructional videos on YouTube.**

## Releasing fish

A fundamental assumption of catch and release is that the released fish survive. Research has shown that the survival rate of SBT is greater than 80%, if the fish are treated well.

**When releasing a fish hold it alongside the boat while moving ahead slowly so that water is passed over the gills until it actively swims away. Be aware of avoiding predation by sharks or marine mammals.**

**If the hook can be seen, and is not in a position where removal will cause major damage, remove it with pliers or a de-hooker while the fish is still in the water.**

**If the fish is deep hooked consider keeping it as part of your bag limit as the potential damage may affect survival after release, but if you choose to release it leave the hook in the fish and cut the line as close as possible to the hook, making sure the fish is resuscitated prior to release.**

**If the hook has caused damage to the gills the fish has a far lower chance of survival, consider keeping fish with gill damage as part of your bag limit.**

**Make sure anything that comes into contact with the fish is wet.**

**If removing a fish from the water for a photo prior to release, consider using a landing net, avoid lifting it by the gill plate or tail, try to support the whole body, and minimise time out of water.**

