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## About the Author

Frank Edgley has been a keen fisherman through his life.

Frank said that fishing is a great hobby which has many benefits for just about everyone.

"Fishing offers a variety of experience which can be enjoyed by individuals and, even more, by families!"

Frank said that the cost to start was not high enough to be a barrier. "You can start fishing with a simple rod and reel and a few dollars worth of other bits and pieces. Then, just add more gear as you need it."

"Of course, you can spend a lot of money if you really want to and you decide to travel, get a boat or professional gear."

"My book is based on my experience and what I've learned off many people I know who have found fishing a great way to exercise and get the best and healthiest food they can; fish which they caught and cooked themselves!"

The people I have met when I am fishing have been some of the friendliest and most helpful anywhere! So, even when the fish have been scarce, I always enjoy the experience."

"I've tried to give my readers a simple guide to help them enjoy their fishing and also have fun and stay safe."

"I want them to be able to catch some fish and enjoy this massively popular hobby for the rest of their lives."

## **Introduction**

Fishing has been an important means of feeding people for centuries. It's also been one of the most popular hobbies for all ages in every country I've been to.

I can guarantee that the tips and methods which you get from this book will help you get maximum enjoyment from whatever type of fishing you do and shorten the time before you haul in your first fish!

You will find that it's a great experience to share with your friends and family. That can make those times when the fish aren't hungry more enjoyable too.

This book will give you the information you need to start fishing and have a great time.

I'll help you avoid some common problems and risks.

## **The Fishing Fraternity**

A wonderful part of the fishing hobby is the ready acceptance which you will get from other people who you meet when you start fishing, whatever their level of experience.

Most will be ready to help with information and opinions.

There are a few things to keep in mind though.

### ***Etiquette***

Take care about when you ask questions. Many fishermen, including me, believe that fish can be spooked by noise and movement.

So, don't talk when you have your lines in the water. Also, don't make a lot of movement unless it's absolutely necessary.

If you approach a spot where one or more people are already fishing, check that there's plenty of space before you start setting up your gear.

If someone close to you is trying to reel in a fish, wind in your own line to give them more space. Then, make a new cast only when they have landed that fish or it has got away.

Use the same method as those who are already set up. If you see that the people at that spot are casting their lines and not retrieving them until they get a strike, don't start casting and retrieving so close to them that your lines might tangle. Move far enough away from them that you will not interfere with their lines or their enjoyment.

Being considerate of other people in those areas where you fish helps you make a good connection with the other fishers. It will also help the general impression about fishers to other people who see your courtesy.

## Gear



The range of gear and accessories available for the fishing fraternity is enormous and growing every day.

This section gives you an overview of the essential kit although you will have to add more items relevant to the particular type of fishing you do and your local conditions, including the regulations.

### *False Economy.*

Everybody likes to save money but there are some things where spending a few dollars extra will actually save you money over time.

Buying quality gear is usually the best way to go.

Fishing lines and hooks are two items where you should buy recognized brands rather than the bulk packs of generic-label alternatives.

The hooks you use are critical in getting your whole venture to a successful conclusion. If the fish breaks your line or slips off when the hook breaks, all your effort and expense is wasted.

It's a similar story with the lines you choose. We all suffer broken lines at times. But, the few extra dollars for quality line means that happens less often. And, when you break a line, you lose your bait, hooks and your fish, so all you have left is another "one that got away" story!

If you are using an expensive lure or one that has given you some success, safeguard it with some quality line.

**Licenses** are required in most areas for some types of fishing. Always make sure that you have the appropriate ones before the season starts. The cost of the licenses help to cover the cost of maintaining and improving the fishing stocks and facilities. If you think they need more improvement, tell your political representatives.



## *Lines*

Most lines are **monofilament which is made of extruded nylon**. They are strong, flexible and resist fraying. Buy branded types for peace of mind and consistency. It is graded according to the strain which is estimated to be needed to break it. A 6lb line will break

**Superlines** are made of polyethylene fibers. The fibers may be fused together or not. They are stronger but heavier and less flexible than the monofilament type of line. They cost more and the monofilament will be suitable for your needs.

The color of the line is considered important by some experienced fishermen. I use different colors in clear and murky water but having caught fish on bright orange line and more on clear line in the same area, I'm not inclined to worry about what the color of the line it is very much!

## *Fishing Poles*

The traditional fishing pole is basically a stick with a length of line attached to one end. The user does not have enough control to expect to always cast the line to a particular spot. The pole was mainly a way to get the bait out further.

The basic model has been joined by commercially produced hollow poles where the line runs up inside the pole. There are also poles which come as two or three sections which can be collapsed for easier transport to the fishing spot and then quickly assembled for use.

There are also a number of accessories such as line holders and brackets which fit near the base of the pole and let the user set the pole in position near them and not have to hold it all the time.

## *Rods*

Rods are the basis of most people's fishing kit. I'll concentrate on rod and reel fishing in this Guide.

Most rods are either graphite or fiberglass or a combination of those materials.

Adults can handle a rod about seven feet (210 cm) long.

There are three main types of fishing rods you might try. They are designed for use in spinning, casting and fly fishing.



**Spinning** involves casting the bait (or lure) out with a flick of the rod. When the bait drops into the water, the fisher starts to waiting for a sign that a fish is paying attention to it.

This may be a strike where you feel a strong tug. Sometimes, this can be fairly exciting and tiring.

If you pull too hard and the hook is not set, you could lose the fish.

Sometimes, you will play the fish by letting the line stop for a few seconds before renewing the struggle.

**Casting** involves getting the bait or lure to where you believe the fish are waiting and then waiting for a sign of interest from the fish.



This is just as enjoyable for many fishing people as the more active types of fishing



**Fly-fishing** involves the use of small lures being cast with precision in front of a fish. This can involve causing the bait or lure to make various motions as it is retrieved which are designed to imitate the actions of the fish's natural prey.

It is a specialized form which I suggest you leave alone until you have got a few lines wet with the more common types of gear.

Most start with a spinning rod and reel and the necessary accessories.

Get a spinning reel with eight pound monofilament line.

You'll need sinkers, a fishing knife, bait, hooks, a fishing basket (which may look more like a plastic toolbox), a chair and suitable clothing.

That's the minimum.

The specifics of your equipment will depend on what types of fish you want to catch, your budget and what is working in your area.

### ***Bait***

This can be live, dead or imitation.

Some people swear that a particular bait is the best for a particular type of fish but there are many factors involved. The more consideration you give to them, the better the results you are likely to get.

Live bait like the creatures which your target fish are used to eating in that area are obviously going to get action.

Minnnows, worms, grasshoppers, leeches and other local pond-life are usually readily available.

I've never used frogs because they seem to be rapidly disappearing in many areas where they perform an important role in the ecosystem.

I've used other live baits which are lower on the food chain. I have also used plenty of imitation creatures. Some of which are not living on this planet.

Fish, or pieces of them, are an obvious choice. A strip of fish with the skin attached is usually worth trying. The skin helps to keep the rest on the hook and lengthen the time before the bait needs to be replaced.

***Worms*** are probably the most popular natural bait. Most fish will grab them at times and they don't take much effort to keep fresh and ready for use.

But, it is important to put some damp soil in the container you keep your worms in, punch some holes in the lid so that they get some air and never put it in direct sunlight – fish don't like dehydrated worms!

You can put a few worms on the same hook if you are after larger types of fish. But, a small piece of a worm on a smaller hook is more likely to attract

a fish which has only a small mouth such as little sunfish or perch.

You can get your bait from exploring your neighborhood but I will always check when I get to the area I'll be fishing in for a local supplier.

They will not only have the freshest bait, but also the best local intelligence about what is biting and where you should try to get them.

That is always worth buying along with the bait.

Don't forget your pantry. Bread in various types, almost any kind of meat, corn, cheese and, of course, seafood are appreciated by fish as well as people.

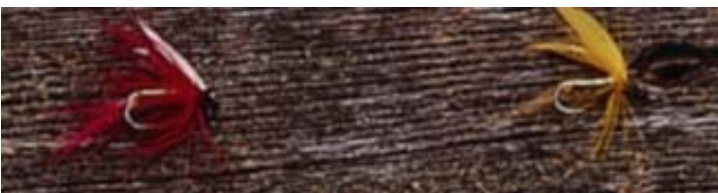
### ***Lures and Flies.***



Many artificial lures resemble live bait. Some don't look like any creature I've ever seen but they have an action when moving through the water which stimulate the fish to attack or at least give it a nibble.

Most fishermen will say that natural bait is more attractive to fish than even the best imitations.

But, some of us have great success with lures that look nothing like any natural creature.



And, keep a couple of lures handy for when you run short of the live stuff.

It's not always easy to find the right type of live bait and you have to look after it if it is to be attractive to your fish.

### ***Scents for Fish***

Lately, some of my friends are using scents on some of the lures and reporting they're getting good results too.

**Color** is also a factor. Many lures sport colors which are never seen in Nature but that doesn't seem to deter the fish. If the water is murky, maybe a bright lure could make a stronger impression than one which mimicked the dull natural colors of whatever it was supposed to resemble.

## Are You as Smart as a Fish?

Every fisher tries to understand what their quarry finds attractive and what might cause them to take a bait.

I'm not sure how smart the average fish is but I think any fisher should be able to work out some ideas about how and why some tactics can attract more fish to. you.

Fish will look for safety and a steady supply of food.

So, those fish which are small and popular as food for bigger types of fish will find an area where there are holes in the bank where they can rest and venture into the current just to grab some food before retreating back to the relatively safe areas.

Larger, more aggressive types will also be wary but show more aggressive according to their size and how far they need to travel to get enough food.



They pick their spots and you will begin to recognize them as you get more experience.

You will start to add to your equipment specific items related to the type of fish you want.

But, your most important advantage is that you have a lot of information available about the fish, while the fish have only their experience and what instincts Nature has equipped them with.

## Safety

Safety is a vital concern of all people who spend time outdoors.



I hope you have a first-aid kit in your vehicle. Get another one to take with you when fishing.

You probably apply some sunscreen and carry bug repellent with you.

But, many people don't use sunscreen unless they can see the sun or feel the warmth from it. Big mistake!

Sunscreen containing D.E.E.T. is among the most effective. Kids and anyone with sensitive skin may want to use something with a lower concentration or a different active substance.

Wear a hat rather than a cap to provide essential shade for your neck and shoulders. Long sleeved shirts will also help provide better protection but be aware that some materials let the UV rays through.

Sunglasses should have side-panels to give protection from glare which is reflected off the water or other surfaces. Yes, this is still a risk even if the sun doesn't seem very strong at the time.

Your glasses, whether they are prescribed for you or just sunglasses should be hardened with strong frames. Most fishermen have been hit by a sinker or even a cluster of hooks when they retrieve a cast or a fish gets off and the line rebounds.

It's almost certain that you or someone near you will get a fish hook lodged under their skin at some point. This can be serious and made worse unless treated with care.

This is one reason that all fishers (in fact, everyone) should have regular tetanus injections.

If you haven't had one for some time, make sure you get up to date at least a couple of weeks before you go fishing again. That's because the injections take a while to start protecting you.

**If the person is hooked near a tendon, large blood vessel or sensitive area such as an eye, they need urgent professional medical assistance – don't muck around.**

If you decide to remove the hook from a less dangerous area yourself, this article may be helpful:

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000055.htm>

However, you would be doing it entirely at your own risk.

### ***Getting Back.***

Whether you are on your boat or in a rural area to a fishing spot, be extra careful if the surroundings are unfamiliar.

Always, make sure you know how to get back to your start point.

As you travel to the fishing spot, check for landmarks which you can use on your way back to confirm that you are heading in the right direction.

Watch for any hazards which you need to avoid.

Make sure that you give yourself plenty of time for the return journey. You will be more tired and lack some of the enthusiasm which anticipating the fishing to come had given you.

You may also have fish and your rubbish to carry.

Always let someone know where you were going and when you expect to return.

You may have a smart phone or other device but you cannot always rely on being able to communicate in all areas.

Always carry spare batteries for your equipment and don't forget a couple of globes or LED arrays for your torches.

Please wear something bright or, at least, have some bright-colored cloths with you which can be used to attract attention.



A first-aid course through a recognized organization is worth considering. You not only improve your chances of a safe trip, the fees or donation for the course will help the organization to give more training to other people in your community.

## Clothing.

Good clothing choices will help you and your family enjoy your fishing days much more.

**Bad Example:** The gentleman in shorts in our picture is not really a good example of well-attired fisherman.

He has a hat to protect his head from sunburn. But, the hat and the rest of his gear will not do a very good job of that.

The sun's rays will probably penetrate the shirts and shorts to some extent unless they are a sun-resistant fabric. His face and, especially, his eyes will be affected by those rays which are reflected off the sand and the water.

His legs will get burned unless he uses a strong sun-screen. If he hooks a large fish, he is not clothed for following into the water.



People often wear heavy clothing when they go fishing but that can be uncomfortable and risky.

Layering is better than wearing thicker items which can be awkward and heavy if they get very wet.

Select quality items which have some water or sun resistance but use thin items so that you can adjust how warm they make you by adding or removing a layer as the conditions around you change.

**Be prepared to pay for quality gear.** It will not only be more comfortable, it could save your life or reduce injuries in the case of an accident.

This picture shows a jacket, Trousers and boots. These gumboots can be useful but be careful that you don't step into a deep underwater hole.

If the boots fill with water, they can hold you down!



A fishing jacket should have pockets in a variety of sizes and shapes.

Keep a couple of large pockets for lures etc. Make sure they open at the top and you always close the pockets before bending over or walking around. The day

that you don't is when you will lose your favorite lure without even attaching it to your line.

Small inside pockets, with closures made of Velcro®(or similar) are the place for your spare car key and maybe other small vital items.

Any other small pockets it has will give you room for your extras you can't do without but haven't bought yet!

If you don't want to put your lunch in one of your gear bags, put it in a bumbag and hang it at the back of your belt. Wrap it in a sealable, thick plastic bag which you can use to carry your scraps back to your vehicle in.

**Treat your Personal Flotation Device (the modern form of the lifejacket) as an essential part of your outfit. Wear it whenever you are close to the water. If you don't, you might as well have left it at home.**

Layer your clothing rather than wear heavy or bulky items (your fishing jacket being an exception). Then, you can add, remove or change one layer when required by a change in the weather or because you need extra warmth.

Quality gear costs but usually pay for itself in added comfort and reducing how tired you feel because it stands up to bad conditions better and does not wear out as quickly.

An oversize rain-proof jacket (or a cape) and trouser (called a rain-suit in

some areas) can be handy for keeping out the spray when you are in a boat. They range from thin vinyl outfits, which come in a plastic pouch, to expensive ones made from quality materials which you can wear most of the time without discomfort.

**Waders** are advisable if you are walking in the water. Some people also use them if they are sitting in a flotation ring in calm water. Be aware of the conditions and especially careful if you can't see the bottom of the water you are in. If you fall in a hole, your waders might fill, making the risk much greater.

Hip-length waders are probably more comfortable than the waist-high type. You can't go as far into the water but they're easier to handle for someone starting out. They're also much more convenient if you feel a call of nature!

Chest-high waders are the best for surf fishing. They will stop sand and other rubbish getting in and weighing you down.

Felt soles are better if you are walking on slippery material such as seaweed and slippery sand.

The soles which have lugs work best when you are on sticky surfaces such as mud or sticky sand.

A variation is a wader which has stockings instead of the shoe part of the chest-high wader. These are worn with separate wading boots which many feel give you better traction on varied surfaces.

Always wear appropriate socks with them to protect your feet from injury and keep them dryer.

The waders are usually made of rubber, neoprene or the more expensive (and more comfortable) materials such as Gore-Tex®

The rubber and nylon waders are cheapest. They are subject to rips but can be patched. They will last a while if cared for. Some areas may be reinforced and seals are usually fairly strong.

Neoprene (the material for wetsuits) is used for waders too. They will keep you warm in cold, but not freezing, water. But, they can be very hot on a hot

conditions.

Waders made of Gore-Tex® and similar materials are more comfortable in cold or warm water.

## Getting on the Water



Fishing from a boat of any type adds a lot to your fishing experience.

But, there are also extra risks and responsibilities involved too.

### *Canoe or Kayak*

Using a canoe or kayak is a relatively cheap way to get on to the water.

They have limits as to the amount of gear you can carry and the amount of fish you can pull aboard.

Some are not very stable but there are plenty which are. You have to decide whether the cost and extra work is worth being able to fish on the water instead of just near it is worthwhile to you.

They can be carried on most vehicles and used in almost any body of water, even some where larger craft are not allowed to operate.

You can get small motors which will help with the work involved too. Of course, these are easier to use if you boat has a flat end and a fitting for it.

There are flat-bottomed models which are reported to be more stable than many with the traditional V-shape. Don't get one which is very small as it will limit your options too much.

Get good, independent advice, a Personal Flotation Device and swimming lessons if you can't swim.

Keep an eye on the weather and water conditions. Carry a radio or use your smart device to check weather reports every hour or so and be cautious at all times.

### *Inflatable boats.*

Although you can have a lot of fun with these, especially the larger ones which carry up to four people, think carefully about the potential downside to

these relatively cheap craft.

They can be punctured fairly easily, so have the repair kit where you can get it quickly and make sure that you've gone through the instructions at least a couple of times before getting on the water.

Paddling them is something that needs practise. It gets much harder in any sort of bad weather. It is a bit easier when there are at least two of you and you both have paddles.

Make sure you have at least one other person with you for at least your first few rides. If you can afford an inflatable with a motor, that will make it a little safer but you need to have fuel with you which can be a hazard (no smoking!). You still need your paddles in case you run out of fuel or the motor fails.

NEVER stand up in an inflatable. So, casting can only be done from a sitting position and you may still tip over if you aren't careful.

### ***Floats***

These are an inflated ring with a seat and two holes in the floor for you to dangle your legs through.

They are used to get on the water in overgrown areas where you can't maneuver a boat.

If they tip over for any reason, it can be difficult to get them up the right way again.

They are not safe enough for any stretch of water where you might be drawn too far from shore or strongly affected by the tide or weather.

The other significant reason for caution is they are awkward to steer (you have swim fins attached to your feet or little paddles which you can fix to your boots).

Waders will help you keep a little warmer but not much.

### ***V Hull***

These are a basic runabout and possibly the ideal choice at the lower end of

the available motorized options. They have a v-shaped bow and the body tapers to a flat-bottom and a square end for attaching the motor. The design is considered very stable and an all-round good choice.

A flat-bottom aluminum boat, called a John Boat in some areas, is cheaper and also worth considering. It will take you out on the water and you can add accessories which will improve its safety, comfort and usability.



Whatever type of craft you choose, take your time. Get advice from owners of the various brands and also check their opinions of the motors and other important add-ons which you might be considering.

Usually, a package deal for the boat and the most important extras will get you a better price. If it doesn't, you may want to find out what other dealers will do for you.

I am very wary of buying a second-hand motor unless you have sufficient knowledge, or a friend)

Remember that boat manufacturers may offer better deals just before they release a new model. Sometimes, you can get a good deal on a second-hand boat but you need to have knowledge of the potential risks with them or get someone who is to give you advice or even go with you before you make any deal.

**Motors:** You may not need a motor if you have a fairly small boat and can launch it onto the waters where you want to fish. But, a motor can be seen as a form of insurance (like your oars and radio).

Check carefully before buying any motor. The warranty may be great but a confirmed record of reliability on the water is even more important.

Will it be repaired locally or returned to the factory or service in another part



of your State? That could mean a longer time when you won't have the use of it.

You need to ensure that the motor you choose will pull or push your boat in poor conditions and also that it is not too powerful for it. Don't exceed the boat supplier's recommendation as to the size of the motor you use.

Some places ban or restrict outboard motors.

Electric motors can be a little more fiddly to operate but technology is making them easier to use with each new season.

### *Safety Accessories.*

These are the mandated or common-sense required items which every boat should carry.

**Personal Flotation Device:** Boats above a certain length must have PFD's which can be worn for each person on board. I would carry one of these for each person on a smaller boat as well. If there is a problem, you may not have time to get them out of a locker and put them on each child and yourself. You can get P.F.D's which are inflated by a gas cartridge. That makes them more convenient but, like everything, the convenience comes at a price.

**Toilet;** Many men just lean over the side of a small boat and let go. Several men have drowned doing that when a sudden gust of wind or wave has interrupted them.

If all on board are comfortable about it, consider taking a container to use instead. It could save your life.

**Signal Device:** Another important item is an **Airhorn** or other loud device which you can use to attract attention.

Always carry **lights**, whatever the size of your boat, if you will be on water at night. The new **LED Arrays** are very bright and you also might find the **Luminous plastic sticks** which you bend to mix the chemicals inside easy to carry and use.

But, check the specific regulations for your area and ask experienced boaters

or your supplier for their recommendations.

**B.T.W.** Never point a LED torch directly at anyone's eyes as some are so bright, some damage may result. That include animals.

## **Fishing Diary.**

I have a special diary just to record what happens on my fishing trips. It's focused on the details of the actual fishing

I also include information about people we meet, meals and the places we may visit.

The most valuable part are the entries about each fish I catch. I put what bait I used, details of the fish and the conditions which may have affected the contest between me and the fish.

Some other relevant details might be the sort of bait or lure, how deep in the water I set the lure or the bait and how fast was I moving the line etc.

I have found out a few things which have caused me to change some of my tactics.

I think this has been worthwhile and suggest that you try it. Possibly because of the changing climate in our area, some methods which have been successful are not getting such great results anymore and this is helping me to get more fish than if I stuck to the methods which many of the locals have used for years..

Doing this has helped me become more observant, Instead of just doing the same things the same way s we always have.

I am adjusting my methods and getting better results with less effort than before.

## **How to Kill Your Catch.**

Most fishermen I know carry a club or similar item to do this in a quick and relatively humane way. They lay the fish on a firm surface and hit them on top of the head above their eyes.

One blow is usually enough.

Some people push a sharpened screwdriver through a spot above the eyes on top of the head into the brain.

Then, they put one hand over the middle of the fish's back, the other hand under the gills behind the head and pull the head up separating from the rest of the fish.

This snaps the spine and ensures the fish is dead.

If you want to bleed the fish, which some people say can make some species taste better, you can stand the body of the fish with its tail up in a clean bucket.

Don't let any water get into the body as it can make the flesh soft and then it will start to deteriorate.

## What's the Forecast

Every fisherman likes to know the weather forecast before starting a trip but you may not know how the weather can affect your results on any particular trip.

### *Go Where the Wind Blows.*

When you are setting your line from a jetty or elsewhere on the shore when the wind starts to become stronger, you may decide to move to a more sheltered spot so you can be more comfortable.

But, provided the wind stays at a speed which is not posing a risk, you could find it worthwhile to try putting your line into the side of the jetty where the wind is strongest.

It will be pushing the waves and any small creatures into that area and it is likely that the bigger fish will already be here ready for a feast.

So, a little discomfort could earn you some nice catches.

The downside is that the wind and water could drive your lure or bait under an obstruction.

### *Weather Watching*

Early in my own fishing experience, I was on a small boat and studying the movement of the dark clouds.

They were ominous but I was catching a few fish and felt I had time for a few more casts. The fish stopped biting but I persisted. My stubbornness almost cost me my life!

I had not realized that the winds near the water can differ from those driving the clouds. My little boat was battered and so was I. It pays to become familiar with the conditions so that you can stay out of trouble.

The weather Channel has useful information on its website for fishers in the U.S.A.

<http://www.weather.com/activities/recreation/outdoors/fishing/>

## Accessories which are really Essential

Most of these items are available in various price ranges. I would not go cheap because some could save your life or that of a family Member – that's got to be worth!

**Tackle Box:** This might have been sold as a Toolbox for a tradesman with a lot of gear.

You need one with different sized compartments, strong clasps and trays which are attached to the box. Taking out loose trays and putting on the rocks where you are fishing means you will be buying more gear the next day.

I accumulated several over the years. But, each of the boxes I have now are stocked for different types of fishing.. If I was starting now, I would get one of those boxes which have removable storage shelves and some extra sets of shelves which fitted the box. Then, I'd stock a set of shelves for each type of fishing. Then, I'd just change the shelves around when I was preparing for a trip.

If you are fishing from the shore , I also recommend that you get a water-resistant cloth bag with a shoulder-strap so you can put a few things in that and leave the main box locked in your vehicle if you want to try another spot within walking distance.

**Belts:** Your belt should be strong and comfortable. Check how it feels with your knife and other accessories hanging off it.

**Knife:** This has to be a quality item. A good utility knife ensures you can cut line or whatever and also kill your catch quickly and cleanly. A filleting knife is worth the investment to save time and effort when cleaning your catch. Carry a sharpening stone but check the instructions carefully so that you don't damage the knife. Using a stone on a serrated knife will ruin it.

**Gloves:** I always wear gloves when I'm fishing, either for warmth or for protecting my hands and maintaining a firm grip when I'm using tools. This may not suit your style of doing things but it is worth having gloves in your

kit because you will find some tasks much easier and safer with them.

**Fishing Tool:** There are a number of tools with various fittings for fishing tasks. Look them over and find one or more which suit the types of fishing you will do.

Some of the most important features you want on a combination tool (or as separate implements) are;

**Line-cutter:** These are nail clippers for cutting line. You'll use them more often than you might think, so put them on your belt clip or a cord round your neck. If they are in a pocket or your tackle box, you'll waste time pulling them out frequently. **Don't** put this or any other small accessory on your key ring. You might drop the ring and all your keys into the water.

**Towel:** Everyone needs a towel when they are handling fishing gear, bait and, hopefully, fish. I use disposable synthetic cloths off a roll I keep in the tackle box.

**Rubbish container:** Be a good citizen and ambassador for the fishing fraternity. Take all your rubbish with you, even the smallest scraps. This is good manners but it also keeps the area a bit cleaner and the fish healthier!

**Plastic bags:** I use the zippable kind for fish I've cleaned and others for rubbish or items which I don't want to get wet.

**Wire-cutter.** This can be useful with the various rigs that have wire on them. The rigs can be adjusted to attract fish at different levels under the water.

**Hook sharpener:** Use with care. I prefer to replace hooks but will use these as a temporary fix.

**Needle-nosed Pliers:** These are good for tasks with sinkers, swivels and other bits and pieces. Some experienced fishermen even use them to remove hooks which don't have the barb under your skin. If you have a steady hand, you can also use them to remove your hook from inside the fish.

**Forceps:** These are preferred for removing hooks by some fishers. They say they're better for using on fish you will release.

**Spare Glasses:** You might drop your glasses or they could be damaged. That's bad enough but how do you drive the car or boat home? Carry the spares in a strong, lined container so they are protected.



You could consider getting a pair which are polarized. This reduces the effect of strong sunlight and may also help you see fish and other materials beneath the water. The shade provided by your hat/cap will also help that in some circumstances.

**Cord:** Put a cord on your glasses and your hat and fix them in place when you put them on - fifty cents insurance for things you can't afford to lose.

**Batteries and Globes:** I mentioned this before but it's worth repeating.

**I.D's:** Everyone should have their name and other contact details plus any important medical information in a waterproof sleeve on them. Sounds a bit morbid but it's actually just being realistic when you are going to an area where you are not well-known and more so if you go out on a boat.

**Live Bait container:** Always carry your live bait in a suitable container which will keep the comfortable until needed.

**Lure retrievers:** This device might seem a luxury but most fishers get upset if their favorite lure is trapped at the bottom of the water.

The "bomb" type has a long, strong cord tied to a heavy sinker which has a couple of short, strong chains attached to its sides.

When your lure gets caught on something underwater that is not a fish, you move your boat to a position over the spot.

Attach the "bomb" and let it drop down onto the lure. A simple jiggle will usually cause the chains to catch on the lure.

Then, the weight of the retriever may cause the lure to come loose of the snag and you can haul it up.

Otherwise, another jiggle or two will usually bring it free under the pressure from the chains. You may have to replace the hook(s) which were caught if



they were damaged in the rescue. But, they cost less than replacing a good lure and very few fishers regret buying a retriever.

The other retriever is a pole with a heavy wire shape designed to catch on your lure a push it off the snag so that you can bring it back. The pole may consist of a few sections you screw together before use or be telescopic.

This type is more expensive than the first but they are both worth considering.

Some fishers make their own to keep costs down. The first type just needs a heavy weight with a couple of small chains at the end of a long cord.

The second type needs a small loop or coil of heavy metal (a corkscrew shape is ideal) which will push the lure downward off the snag.

Either type may become snagged itself but you should have enough control over it to get it free fairly quickly and then complete the rescue of your lure.

**Tools:** I keep a "repair kit" for quick fixes to any of the equipment I have with me. When I unpack after a trip, I put the kit on top of the closed tackle box so that I remember to refill or replace any items which are getting low or worn.

There's a couple of good small screwdrivers, an adjustable wrench, a spare needle-nosed pliers, sewing kit, reel oil, waterproof tape etc.

You will probably add other items after a few trips or when you ask other fishers what repair gear they carry.

**Digital camera or smartphone:** I like to take pictures of the area, the people we meet and the fish we eat or release. Unfortunately, having the camera or phone always ready to collect evidence means I can't get away with some of the stories which I used to, but it's nice to look through the pics at home months or years later.

**Duct Tape:** This is an essential for me. If you have cheap waders, they will give you a reasonable seal if you don't have a proper patching kit with you.

## Releasing what you Catch



If you want to release any fish you catch, please do it as soon after bringing it in as you can.

You may be following the rules for under-sized catch or you may just want to put back what you won't eat.

Always take care of yourself when you try to remove your

hook. You could release the fish but get a spine or teeth in your hand as thanks.

Keep the fish in the water if you can.

Wet your hands before you grab the fish so that you minimize damage to the fish's natural protective coating and its scales.

Use needle-nosed pliers, hook remover or forceps to gently get the hook out.

If you damage the fish at this stage, it may not survive being released.

Decide if you will still let it go possibly to die and be eaten or kill it and take it home.

If the hook is lodged where you can't remove it, you can cut the line and leave the hook in place. Provided the fish can still eat and swallow food, it may survive and the hook may not be a problem for it.

If you gently let it go, it may just swim away.

If it doesn't move much, it may be almost dead or just exhausted.

You may be able to revive it if the fish doesn't go belly-up or just lay on its side.

Gently hold it from above with its head pointed into the current.

Gently move it forward and then a shorter distance backward.

Doing this a few times should encourage it to get its gills moving and put more oxygen into its body.

If it perks up, it will probably move away and you've done your good deed for the day.

## **Fish Bits**

Here are some small tips that can make all the difference to a successful fishing trip.

### ***What are they Trying to Catch?***

Before you buy some new gimmick, check with more experienced fishermen or wait for the reviews to appear online or even in your local paper.

Most of the breakthrough gear which has been advertised on TV or the Net in the last couple of years has caught more anglers than fish!

### ***Quiet, please!***

Fish may not be as smart as some humans but they have instincts which are pretty sharp.

When you are near anyone that is fishing, move quietly and keep your shadow off that area of water. It's a good idea to put rubber matting on the floor of your boat and on the jetty. It will help keep you from falling in as well as reducing the amount of noise which is transmitted to the water.

### ***Good company***

The best thing to take with you each trip is another human being. If your family aren't available, try to get someone else to share the adventure.

I will sometimes invite a fiend that doesn't fish, just so they know why I disappear into the bush so often. Sometimes, they become a fisher too, which means I may have them along sometimes in the future as well!

### ***Setting the Hook***

When we feel a fish at our bait, we pull the rod to "set the hook". That probably hurts the fish but it also can ensure the creature is better able to be released if we decide to do that.

An early setting of the hook will probably mean it's in the fish's jaw rather than its stomach. That means removal could be much easier and the fish has a better chance if we carefully deliver it back to the water.

## Happy Hooking!



I wish you tight lines and loads of fish in your future.

I hope that my book will get you started more quickly on your journey with whatever type of fishing you enjoy.

One thing which I forgot to mention is that you should try any other type of fishing which you get the opportunity to.

Don't limit yourself except where you have regulations!

*Frank Edgley.*

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