

# THE RIGHT GEAR – ROCK FISHING



Rock fishing is arguably one of the most dangerous sports and hobbies in Australia. Every year a disproportionate number of people are killed while rock fishing. Rock fishing is undertaken in a number of locations with small and large rock formations.

While rock fishing can be a dangerous activity, there are a number of key safety tips you can follow to ensure you stay safe and remember your day on the water for all the right reasons. This also applies if you are collecting abalone, oysters or other creatures off the rocks.

In response to the high numbers of drowning deaths, a coronial inquest (2015) recommended mandatory and enforced lifejacket usage which led to compulsory lifejacket usage being trialled within high risk local government areas in NSW and WA. In NSW, the Rock Fishing Safety Act 2016 was passed to support this recommendation and legislates it compulsory for anyone participating in rock fishing within a declared area, including children, to wear an appropriate lifejacket.

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## MINIMISING YOUR RISKS

Before you go rock fishing it's important that you **STOP. LOOK. PLAN**

### STOP

Observe first, fish later. Be sure to check for:

- Waves
- Swell period
- Slippery rocks

### LOOK

- Seek advice from locals and regular fishers
- For larger waves in the swell cycle
- Watch for changing weather and tides

### PLAN

- Let someone know where you're planning to go and when you plan to be back
- Wear a lifejacket
- Wear appropriate footwear
- Have an exit strategy in case you're swept in

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## WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

- Dial 000 on your mobile or go to get help
- Do NOT jump in if someone is washed into the water
- If possible use a rope or something that floats to throw to the person
- If you are swept into the water don't panic. Stay calm and swim away from the rocks
- If there is an angel ring nearby, know how to use it