



ROCK FISHING

Q. What is rock fishing?

A. Rock fishing is the process of fishing from rock ledges, submerged rocks, rock faces and rocks that go out into the water.

Q. Why is rock fishing dangerous?

A. Rock fishing is probably the most dangerous sport in Australia. Seventy-four people died while rock fishing between the years 1992 and 2000, in New South Wales alone. Rock fishing is dangerous due to the difficult locations where people are fishing, the sometimes unpredictable nature of the ocean and the nature of the rocks themselves - slippery, wet, uneven and often sharp.

Q: What is the best type of gear to wear when rock fishing?

A. Wear gear that stops you from slipping into the water or reduces problems if you do go into the surf. Wear lightweight clothing such as shorts and a spray jacket so that if you are swept off the rocks, you are buoyant and your clothes don't drag you down. Jumpers may be heavy and difficult to take off. Wear a PFD. Wear shoes with non-slip soles or cleats. Rock plates or cleats are essential on wet, weedy rocks. Also, wear head protection. Evidence suggests that many people who have drowned received some sort of head injury.

Q: How do I know whether a spot is safe for rock fishing?

A. No place is perfectly safe for rock fishing. To minimise risks, fish only with others in places where experienced anglers go. Spend at least half an hour watching the wind and wave action before deciding whether a place is suitable. Think – what will your fishing spot be like in a few hours time with different tides and weather? Perhaps a local can help you.

Q. What should I do if I or another fisherman gets into trouble?

A. Don't ever turn your back on the sea – if the waves, weather or swell threaten your fishing spot then leave immediately. If you do find yourself in trouble stay calm - if you are washed in, swim away from the rocks and look for a safe place to come ashore or stay afloat and wait for help to arrive. Always wear a PFD.

Fish in a group of at least three people and stay within sight of each other. If someone is washed in, one person can stay and help while the other alerts emergency services (dial 000). Mobile phone users can also dial 112 to access emergency services.

Rock fishing is an extremely popular activity in Australia, however it can also be extremely dangerous and claims a number of lives every year. People who go rock fishing need to undertake a number of safety precautions to ensure they remain safe.

Rock Fishing Safety CHECKLIST:

- Choose the safest possible location
- Take time to observe the conditions
- Always fish with others
- Always watch the waves
- Be aware of the tides and weather
- Wear appropriate footwear, clothing and head protection
- Wear a PFD (buoyancy vest), especially if you are not a strong swimmer
- Carry a float and line to help anyone washed in.

Royal Life Saving has developed a number of fact sheets on water safety issues in Australia. Contact Royal Life Saving on:

1300 RESQ ME
(1300 7377 63)

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