

Circle hooks



Circle hooks have been shown to increase the survival of angler released fish. With their success already proven for many game fish species, these hooks are now used increasingly for many other common recreational species.

Many studies have shown that one of the most influential factors affecting the survival of fish released by anglers relates to where the fish was hooked. Specifically, survival has been shown to be greatly reduced for fish deeply hooked in the throat or gut.

Various studies have shown that circle hooks mouth-hook a greater proportion of fish than typical 'J' pattern hooks.



Circle hook research results

SPECIES STUDIED	MOUTH-HOOKED %
Yellowfin Bream	Up to 90%
Sandy/Dusky Flathead	Up to 96%
Silver Perch	Up to 79%
Red Drum (similar to Mulloway)	Up to 96%
Sailfish	Up to 98%
Atlantic Bluefin Tuna	Up to 94%
Yellowfin Tuna	Up to 95%
White Marlin (similar to Striped Marlin)	Up to 100%



Benefits of circle hooks

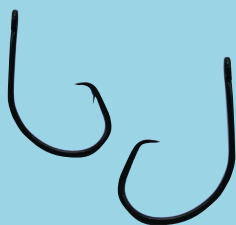
- Circle hooks have been shown to increase survival of angler released fish.
- Reduced deep hooking, improved survival of released fish and decreased loss of fishing tackle.
- Improved hook-up and landing rates for many species.
- The strike time is not as crucial for hook-up of fish.
- Lighter leaders/traces can be used as the line is generally away from abrasive mouth surfaces.

How to use circle hooks

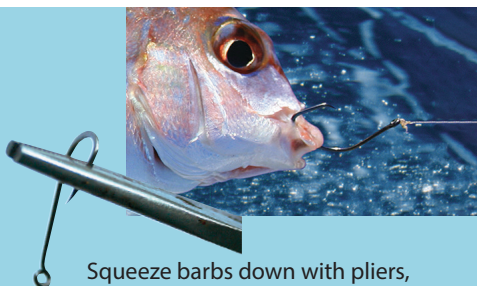


- Do not bury your hook (particularly with tough baits). Lightly hook the bait so that the point and barb are exposed or 'bridle' the bait.
- When using soft baits like peeled prawns or bread it is not so important to expose the hook as fish will crush the bait during bite and become hooked.
- Do not strike at the fish. Allow the fish time to take the bait into its mouth and then apply slow and steady pressure to set the hook in the mouth area. Fish often hook themselves.
- Non-offset circle hooks are recommended for the best mouth-hooking results.
- Use a de-hooker or needle-nosed pliers to help with unhooking.

Occasionally fish will be deep hooked. To maximise survival, cut the line and release fish with hook still intact (rather than attempt to remove it). Float rigs, short leaders and keeping your line tight can increase the number of fish hooked in the mouth.



Non-offset circle hooks are recommended



Squeeze barbs down with pliers, or file down larger barbs

For information on other catch and release techniques, including gear selection and fish handling, please see the **Improved catch and release techniques** brochure, or check out www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries

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