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**2nd Australian & New Zealand Edition**

# ***Fishing***

FOR

# **DUMMIES®**

## ***Learn to:***

- Reel in that elusive fish using the latest techniques and gear
- Create a top-notch fishing kit that suits your needs
- Fish sustainably — without damaging the environment
- Pick the best fishing spots in Australia and New Zealand

**Steve Starling**

*Australasia's most respected fishing journalist*





***2nd Australian &  
New Zealand Edition***

***Fishing***  
FOR  
**DUMMIES®**



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***Fishing***  
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**by Steve Starling**



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# About the Author

**Steve Starling** is one of Australia's best known and most respected fishing writers and television/DVD presenters. At the age of seven, he pulled his first fish from the Lachlan River in central western New South Wales, and Steve claims he was just as firmly hooked as that little redfin perch. Thus began a passionate commitment to recreational angling that has only strengthened over the intervening decades.

A teenage Steve had his first magazine article on fishing published in his final year of high school and five years later went on to become editor of the title that had accepted his story. Four years later, he turned freelance and has since written 20 books, thousands of magazine features and numerous video and television scripts. His work has been published in a dozen countries and several languages, and Steve has travelled and fished across the globe, catching several world record fish in the process.

Through the 1990s, Steve became known to a much wider audience at home and abroad as a regular co-presenter on the long-running *Rex Hunt Fishing Adventures* television series. As well, he has performed stints in front of the camera as a presenter on *The Great Outdoors*, *The Australian Fishing Show* and *AFC Outdoors*. Steve and his close angling mate, Kaj 'Bushy' Busch, also completed three series of an outdoor adventure, fishing and cooking television series called *Hooked On Adventure*, which was set initially in Western Australia, before moving east to the rest of the nation. Today, Steve is a major contributor to the quarterly magazine-on-DVD known simply as *The Fishing DVD*.

Steve Starling — better known to many of his fans these days simply as 'Starlo' — is a graduate of the University of NSW, where he majored in Modern History and English Literature, briefly teaching these subjects at high school before embarking on his full-time fishing career. He has two grown up children, Tom and Amy, and now resides in Darwin with his partner, Jo, and her daughter, Charlotte, with plans to eventually return to his beloved far south coast of New South Wales.





# Dedication

This book is dedicated to my fishing partner, business mentor and soul mate, Jo, who never ceases to inspire me, and whose intuitive, left-field/right brain take on angling has taught me to not only give better answers, but also to ask more meaningful questions!

# Author's Acknowledgements

I need to thank plenty of people for their help with this book, and I'm sure to miss a few. First and foremost I'd like to acknowledge all those fellow anglers I've met over the years who've so willingly shared their knowledge and enthusiasm with me. Whatever I know about fishing today is the sum of their wisdom, not mine.

I'd also like to give a big thanks to Wayne Wells, who created the clear, concise illustrations you see on these pages. Having a friend and a fellow fisher as my illustrator made life so much easier.

Writing the original version and now this updated Australasian edition of *Fishing For Dummies* has been an interesting exercise. I've penned lots of how-to material in the past, but before my *Dummies* experience, I had never been called upon to write in a manner that's so accessible and transparent, even to people with zero knowledge of the subject matter. This feat is harder than it looks, and I owe a considerable debt of gratitude to the editors of the original version, Carolyn Beaumont and Karen Earnshaw, and to the always affable and good-humoured Robi van Nooten, my editor on this new version. All three pulled me into line every time I strayed towards jargon and insider-speak, and they constantly posed the simple, incisive questions a newcomer to the sport might be expected to ask. Carolyn, Karen and Robi have made this a much better and more useful book than it would otherwise have been.

Finally, my sincere thanks to Bronwyn Duhigg, the Acquisitions Editor who first suggested and then made possible this timely update of the original book, and its expansion to include our friends across the Tasman in New Zealand. Bronwyn was always a joy to deal with and never got cross with me, even when I bunked off to go fishing instead of finishing my allotted chapters on time! Thank you.

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# Contents at a Glance

|                                                                 |                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b><i>Introduction .....</i></b>                                | <b><i>1</i></b>   |
| <b><i>Part I: Getting to Know Fish .....</i></b>                | <b><i>7</i></b>   |
| Chapter 1: Fishing Fundamentals .....                           | 9                 |
| Chapter 2: Our Favourite Saltwater Fish.....                    | 19                |
| Chapter 3: Our Favourite Freshwater Fish .....                  | 45                |
| <b><i>Part II: Tackling the Right Gear.....</i></b>             | <b><i>61</i></b>  |
| Chapter 4: On a Hook and a Line .....                           | 63                |
| Chapter 5: Hot Rods .....                                       | 77                |
| Chapter 6: The Reel Deal.....                                   | 97                |
| Chapter 7: Terminal Tackle.....                                 | 115               |
| Chapter 8: Baits, Lures and Flies .....                         | 129               |
| <b><i>Part III: Using Your Equipment the Right Way.....</i></b> | <b><i>147</i></b> |
| Chapter 9: Creating Your Fishing Kit .....                      | 149               |
| Chapter 10: Spooling Up .....                                   | 159               |
| Chapter 11: Top Knots to Know .....                             | 169               |
| Chapter 12: Rigs That Really Work .....                         | 191               |
| Chapter 13: Cast Away .....                                     | 205               |
| Chapter 14: Hooking, Playing and Landing Fish.....              | 215               |
| <b><i>Part IV: The New Age of Fishing .....</i></b>             | <b><i>227</i></b> |
| Chapter 15: Kiss or Kill?.....                                  | 229               |
| Chapter 16: Cleaning, Preparing and Cooking Your Catch .....    | 243               |
| Chapter 17: Fishing for the Future.....                         | 257               |
| <b><i>Part V: What Kind of Angler Are You? .....</i></b>        | <b><i>263</i></b> |
| Chapter 18: Specialise or Speculate?.....                       | 265               |
| Chapter 19: Surf Casters and Rock Hoppers .....                 | 269               |
| Chapter 20: Jetty Rats .....                                    | 281               |
| Chapter 21: Estuary Anglers.....                                | 287               |
| Chapter 22: Deep-Sea Anglers .....                              | 293               |



|                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Chapter 23: Freshwater Fanatics ..... | 301 |
| Chapter 24: Fly Floggers.....         | 311 |
| Chapter 25: Ahoy, Captain! .....      | 315 |

***Part VI: The Part of Tens .....*** **321**

|                                                                 |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Chapter 26: The Ten Best Fishing Websites .....                 | 323 |
| Chapter 27: My Ten Favourite Australian Fishing Spots.....      | 329 |
| Chapter 28: My Ten Favourite New Zealand Fishing Spots .....    | 349 |
| Chapter 29: Ten Things No-One Ever Tells You about Fishing..... | 361 |

***Glossary.....*** **373**

***Index .....*** **387**

# Table of Contents



## ***Introduction* ..... 1**

|                                                    |   |
|----------------------------------------------------|---|
| About This Book .....                              | 1 |
| Conventions Used in This Book.....                 | 2 |
| Foolish Assumptions .....                          | 3 |
| How This Book Is Organised .....                   | 3 |
| Part I: Getting to Know Fish.....                  | 3 |
| Part II: Tackling the Right Gear .....             | 3 |
| Part III: Using Your Equipment the Right Way ..... | 4 |
| Part IV: The New Age of Fishing .....              | 4 |
| Part V: What Kind of Angler Are You? .....         | 4 |
| Part VI: The Part of Tens.....                     | 4 |
| Icons Used in This Book .....                      | 5 |
| Where to Go from Here .....                        | 5 |

## ***Part I: Getting to Know Fish* ..... 7**

### **Chapter 1: Fishing Fundamentals .....9**

|                                       |    |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Defining Fish.....                    | 9  |
| Fish galore.....                      | 11 |
| Fish wishes .....                     | 11 |
| Fishing is for Everyone .....         | 14 |
| Hunting for your pound of flesh.....  | 15 |
| Fishing for a top feed.....           | 16 |
| Choosing How to Catch Your Fish ..... | 16 |
| Quality versus quantity.....          | 17 |
| Easy versus hard.....                 | 17 |

### **Chapter 2: Our Favourite Saltwater Fish .....19**

|                                     |    |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Bountiful Bream .....               | 20 |
| Fishing with finesse .....          | 21 |
| Luring 'em onto your line .....     | 22 |
| Passing the taste test .....        | 22 |
| First-Class Flathead .....          | 22 |
| Taking in the extended family ..... | 23 |
| Colouring to kill.....              | 24 |
| Moving makes for success.....       | 24 |
| Frying the best fish 'n' tips ..... | 25 |

|                                                       |           |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Glorious Garfish.....                                 | 25        |
| Working the surface.....                              | 27        |
| Boning up on your skills .....                        | 27        |
| Luverly Leatherjackets .....                          | 28        |
| Collecting a right hook.....                          | 29        |
| Dressing for dinner .....                             | 29        |
| Super Salmon .....                                    | 30        |
| Strong swimmers .....                                 | 30        |
| Wolves of the white water.....                        | 31        |
| Strong on a plate, too! .....                         | 32        |
| Savoury Snapper.....                                  | 32        |
| Making snappy headlines .....                         | 33        |
| Tracking snapper from Tassie to the tropics .....     | 34        |
| Trapping your snapper .....                           | 35        |
| Supping on snapper.....                               | 35        |
| Tasty Tailor.....                                     | 36        |
| Sew simple if you know how!.....                      | 37        |
| Fresh is best.....                                    | 37        |
| Trevally Treats .....                                 | 38        |
| Prize fighters.....                                   | 39        |
| Raw deal.....                                         | 39        |
| Terrific Tuna.....                                    | 40        |
| Fast food.....                                        | 41        |
| Deep and meaningful.....                              | 41        |
| Wonderful Whiting.....                                | 42        |
| Shallow-minded.....                                   | 43        |
| Right royal repast .....                              | 44        |
| <b>Chapter 3: Our Favourite Freshwater Fish .....</b> | <b>45</b> |
| Bagging a Barramundi.....                             | 45        |
| Barra backyards .....                                 | 46        |
| Best baits .....                                      | 47        |
| Banking on Bass.....                                  | 48        |
| Little Aussie battlers .....                          | 49        |
| Bass class.....                                       | 50        |
| Searching for Golden Perch.....                       | 50        |
| Outback survivors .....                               | 51        |
| Perch on the plate.....                               | 52        |
| Catching Murray Cod .....                             | 52        |
| Land of the giants .....                              | 53        |
| Let them go, let them grow.....                       | 54        |
| Seeing whether the Trout Are About .....              | 54        |
| Trout and about .....                                 | 55        |
| Swish fish dish.....                                  | 56        |
| Finding Freshwater Salmon.....                        | 57        |
| Desperately seeking salmon.....                       | 58        |
| To die for .....                                      | 59        |

***Part II: Tackling the Right Gear..... 61*****Chapter 4: On a Hook and a Line .....63**

|                                        |    |
|----------------------------------------|----|
| Looking at Hooks .....                 | 64 |
| Keeping an eye on the basics .....     | 64 |
| Making sense of the sizing system..... | 66 |
| Choosing your hook collection .....    | 67 |
| Picking a pattern .....                | 68 |
| Going barbless.....                    | 69 |
| Learning Your Lines.....               | 71 |
| Nattering about nylon .....            | 72 |
| Gasping over GSP.....                  | 73 |
| Speaking of strength and length .....  | 75 |
| Drawing a line in the sand .....       | 75 |

**Chapter 5: Hot Rods .....77**

|                                                               |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Casting into the Space Age .....                              | 79 |
| Glass versus graphite.....                                    | 79 |
| Fittings and fixtures .....                                   | 80 |
| Inner-line alternatives .....                                 | 81 |
| Choosing the Right Rod for You .....                          | 81 |
| Sinking the myth of the general-purpose rod.....              | 82 |
| Knowing where you're fishing and what you want to catch ..... | 83 |
| Meeting the major rod families .....                          | 83 |
| Buying a rod — shopping around pays off .....                 | 87 |
| Seven Rods for Seven Situations .....                         | 88 |
| Harbour bream.....                                            | 89 |
| Bay whiting.....                                              | 90 |
| Taupo trout.....                                              | 90 |
| Bight mullocky.....                                           | 91 |
| Herring special .....                                         | 91 |
| Barra buster.....                                             | 92 |
| Bass specialist.....                                          | 92 |
| Balancing Your Tackle to Match Your Rod .....                 | 93 |
| Understanding Your Rod Action.....                            | 94 |
| Looking After Your Rods.....                                  | 95 |

**Chapter 6: The Reel Deal. ....97**

|                               |     |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| Spool School.....             | 98  |
| Choosing your eggbeater ..... | 100 |
| Taking a long line .....      | 101 |
| Avoiding line tangles .....   | 102 |
| Seven Deadly Reels.....       | 103 |
| Handcasters.....              | 103 |
| Centrepin reels .....         | 104 |

|                                                |            |
|------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Sidecast reels.....                            | 107        |
| Closed-face reels .....                        | 108        |
| Threadline reels .....                         | 109        |
| Baitcaster reels .....                         | 110        |
| Overhead reels .....                           | 112        |
| Reel Respect .....                             | 113        |
| Don't faucet .....                             | 114        |
| Oil toil.....                                  | 114        |
| Pro-active .....                               | 114        |
| <b>Chapter 7: Terminal Tackle .....</b>        | <b>115</b> |
| Sinkers Away! .....                            | 116        |
| Thinking small.....                            | 116        |
| Picking a sinker shape.....                    | 117        |
| Using split shot .....                         | 117        |
| Buying and making sinkers .....                | 119        |
| Swivels' Turn.....                             | 120        |
| Switching swivels.....                         | 121        |
| Discovering a few swivel secrets .....         | 121        |
| Buying and keeping swivels.....                | 122        |
| Quick Connection .....                         | 122        |
| Adding a weak link.....                        | 122        |
| Enjoying the two-ringed circus .....           | 123        |
| Bobbers' Job .....                             | 123        |
| Using stemmed floats .....                     | 123        |
| Using floats without stems .....               | 124        |
| Fixing the position of floats .....            | 125        |
| The Lure Cure .....                            | 125        |
| Take Me to Your Leader .....                   | 126        |
| Using wire leaders and traces .....            | 127        |
| Working with snells and snoods .....           | 127        |
| <b>Chapter 8: Baits, Lures and Flies .....</b> | <b>129</b> |
| Seducing Saltwater Fish .....                  | 130        |
| Coming the raw prawn .....                     | 130        |
| Picking the best of the rest .....             | 131        |
| Catching your own bait .....                   | 132        |
| Considering the great de-bait .....            | 134        |
| Tempting Freshwater Fish .....                 | 135        |
| Desperately seeking supplies .....             | 137        |
| Opening a can of worms .....                   | 137        |
| Trapping shrimps and crayfish .....            | 138        |
| Latching On to Lures and Flies .....           | 139        |
| Bait-catching rigs .....                       | 140        |
| Lead-head jigs.....                            | 141        |



|                                      |     |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Metal jigs, slices and slugs.....    | 141 |
| Plugs and minnows.....               | 141 |
| Poppers and surface lures.....       | 142 |
| Soft plastics.....                   | 142 |
| Spinners.....                        | 142 |
| Spinnerbaits.....                    | 143 |
| Spoons.....                          | 143 |
| Trolling lures.....                  | 143 |
| Dispelling the Fly-Fishing Myth..... | 144 |
| Lining up your target.....           | 145 |
| Earning frequent flyers.....         | 145 |

### ***Part III: Using Your Equipment the Right Way ..... 147***

#### **Chapter 9: Creating Your Fishing Kit .....149**

|                                          |     |
|------------------------------------------|-----|
| Assembling the Rod and Reel.....         | 149 |
| Reeling with Choices.....                | 151 |
| Organising the Whole Box and Dice.....   | 152 |
| Boxes earn brownie points.....           | 152 |
| Buckets can do the job.....              | 154 |
| Taking Along the Tools of the Trade..... | 154 |
| Essential items.....                     | 154 |
| Non-essential items.....                 | 155 |
| Being Safety and Comfort Conscious.....  | 156 |

#### **Chapter 10: Spooling Up .....159**

|                                    |     |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| Feeding the Line to the Spool..... | 159 |
| Tying One On.....                  | 161 |
| Tying for testing times.....       | 162 |
| Tying up loose ends.....           | 162 |
| Winding Up the Process.....        | 163 |
| Spooling your resources.....       | 164 |
| Watching as the tension rises..... | 164 |
| Working out when to stop.....      | 165 |
| Topping up the spool.....          | 167 |

#### **Chapter 11: Top Knots to Know. ....169**

|                                          |     |
|------------------------------------------|-----|
| Meeting the Major Knot Families.....     | 169 |
| Tying In with the Blood Knot Family..... | 170 |
| Half blood knot.....                     | 171 |
| Improved half blood knot.....            | 172 |
| Full blood knot.....                     | 173 |

|                                                           |            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Meeting the Uni Knot Family.....                          | 175        |
| Uni knot.....                                             | 175        |
| Double uni knot.....                                      | 177        |
| Looking at Exotic Knots.....                              | 178        |
| Double knots.....                                         | 179        |
| Looping the loop.....                                     | 185        |
| Shock leader knot.....                                    | 187        |
| Slim and beautiful.....                                   | 188        |
| <b>Chapter 12: Rigs That Really Work.....</b>             | <b>191</b> |
| Choosing from Five Basic Rigs.....                        | 191        |
| No-sinker rig.....                                        | 192        |
| No-sinker rig with swivel.....                            | 192        |
| Running sinker rig.....                                   | 193        |
| Running sinker and swivel rig.....                        | 195        |
| Paternoster rig.....                                      | 196        |
| Mastering Five Fancier Rigs.....                          | 197        |
| Fixed float rig.....                                      | 198        |
| Running float rig.....                                    | 199        |
| Bubble float rig.....                                     | 201        |
| Ganged-hook rigs.....                                     | 202        |
| Lure fishing rig.....                                     | 204        |
| <b>Chapter 13: Cast Away.....</b>                         | <b>205</b> |
| The Mechanics of Casting.....                             | 206        |
| Casting with a Threadline Outfit.....                     | 206        |
| Working out when to release the line.....                 | 209        |
| Restricting the length of your cast.....                  | 209        |
| Casting with a Sidecast Outfit.....                       | 210        |
| Casting with an Overhead Outfit.....                      | 211        |
| Banishing backlash.....                                   | 212        |
| Practising makes perfect sense.....                       | 213        |
| Casting with Fly Gear.....                                | 213        |
| <b>Chapter 14: Hooking, Playing and Landing Fish.....</b> | <b>215</b> |
| Fish or Wish?.....                                        | 215        |
| Controlling the line.....                                 | 216        |
| Striking and setting the hook.....                        | 217        |
| Play Time.....                                            | 218        |
| Playing the fish.....                                     | 218        |
| Pumping and winding.....                                  | 220        |
| Catch Me if You Can.....                                  | 222        |
| Using a landing net.....                                  | 223        |
| Using a gaff.....                                         | 225        |

## ***Part IV: The New Age of Fishing ..... 227***

### **Chapter 15: Kiss or Kill? .....229**

|                                          |     |
|------------------------------------------|-----|
| Let 'em Go, Let 'em Grow.....            | 230 |
| Deciding how many fish to keep .....     | 230 |
| Releasing fish to ensure survival .....  | 231 |
| Kill 'em and Grill 'em .....             | 235 |
| Killing Your Catch with Care .....       | 237 |
| The last rites.....                      | 237 |
| A bloody business.....                   | 237 |
| Good point! .....                        | 239 |
| Keeping Your Catch Cool.....             | 241 |
| Ice is nice .....                        | 241 |
| Slurry with a fringe benefit on top..... | 242 |
| Ice boxes are cooler.....                | 242 |

### **Chapter 16: Cleaning, Preparing and Cooking Your Catch .....243**

|                                               |     |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----|
| Getting 'em Clean and Prepared for Chef ..... | 243 |
| Gutting and gilling fish .....                | 245 |
| Scaling fish .....                            | 247 |
| Filleting fish .....                          | 248 |
| Skinning fish.....                            | 250 |
| Making steaks .....                           | 251 |
| Cooking Your Catch.....                       | 252 |
| Dining In Is Simply Delicious.....            | 253 |
| Adopting a Recipe for Success.....            | 253 |
| Freezing Points.....                          | 256 |

### **Chapter 17: Fishing for the Future .....257**

|                                              |     |
|----------------------------------------------|-----|
| Thinking About Yesteryear.....               | 257 |
| Thinking About Tomorrow .....                | 258 |
| Limit your kill .....                        | 258 |
| Toxic tackle? .....                          | 259 |
| Fish for your kids and their kids, too ..... | 261 |

## ***Part V: What Kind of Angler Are You?..... 263***

### **Chapter 18: Specialise or Speculate? .....265**

|                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Anglers versus Dangers ..... | 266 |
| The All-Rounder .....        | 266 |
| The Specialist.....          | 267 |
| The Serial Specialist .....  | 267 |

|                                                  |            |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Chapter 19: Surf Casters and Rock Hoppers</b> | <b>269</b> |
| Finding Fish off the Beach                       | 270        |
| Reading the waves from the beach                 | 271        |
| Timing the tide                                  | 272        |
| Baiting Your Beach Fishing Rig                   | 273        |
| Introducing Rock Hopping                         | 274        |
| Locking into Rock Fishing Locations              | 274        |
| Fishing on shallow reefs                         | 274        |
| Rock fishing in mixed-depth locations            | 276        |
| Rock fishing from deep-water ledges              | 277        |
| Recognising the rock formations of overlap zones | 278        |
| Rock Fishing and Reading the Tides               | 279        |
| Watching the ebb and flow                        | 279        |
| Rock fishing safety first — staying alive        | 279        |
| <b>Chapter 20: Jetty Rats</b>                    | <b>281</b> |
| Picking Prime Piscatorial Real Estate            | 281        |
| Finding Treasures at Your Feet                   | 283        |
| Tuning in to the changing conditions             | 283        |
| Casting out to cover all bases                   | 284        |
| Landing Fish from Jetties                        | 284        |
| <b>Chapter 21: Estuary Anglers</b>               | <b>287</b> |
| Taking a Look at Estuary Fish                    | 287        |
| Reading Estuaries                                | 288        |
| Understanding tidal influences                   | 289        |
| Looking out for structural features              | 291        |
| Looking at the Big Picture                       | 291        |
| <b>Chapter 22: Deep-Sea Anglers</b>              | <b>293</b> |
| Boating Out to Deep Water                        | 293        |
| Bouncing into Bottom Fishing                     | 294        |
| Drifting the Sand and Gravel Beds                | 296        |
| Fishing for Game                                 | 296        |
| Learning from the experts                        | 298        |
| Trolling offshore                                | 298        |
| <b>Chapter 23: Freshwater Fanatics</b>           | <b>301</b> |
| Singing the Sweetwater Tune                      | 302        |
| Fishing Trout Streams                            | 303        |
| Spotting pools and riffles                       | 303        |
| Working the transitional zones                   | 305        |

|                                                                        |                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Fishing Aussie Outback Rivers .....                                    | 305            |
| Who's coming to dinner? .....                                          | 306            |
| Where to find dinner.....                                              | 307            |
| Fishing in Stillwater .....                                            | 307            |
| Stillwater revival .....                                               | 308            |
| Cracking the stillwater code.....                                      | 308            |
| Spotting stillwater structures.....                                    | 309            |
| <b>Chapter 24: Fly Floggers .....</b>                                  | <b>311</b>     |
| Examining the Art of Fur and Feathers .....                            | 311            |
| Using natural and synthetic materials .....                            | 312            |
| Tying your own flies .....                                             | 313            |
| Choosing the Right Gear .....                                          | 314            |
| Reading Up on Fly-Fishing .....                                        | 314            |
| <b>Chapter 25: Ahoy, Captain! .....</b>                                | <b>315</b>     |
| Defining Fishing Boats.....                                            | 316            |
| Asking Yourself 'Do I Really Need a Boat?' .....                       | 316            |
| Taking the Plunge and Buying a Boat.....                               | 317            |
| Giving In to the Lure of Boating.....                                  | 318            |
| <br><b><i>Part VI: The Part of Tens .....</i></b>                      | <br><b>321</b> |
| <b>Chapter 26: The Ten Best Fishing Websites .....</b>                 | <b>323</b>     |
| Watching the Weather .....                                             | 323            |
| Tracking the Tides.....                                                | 324            |
| Finding Your Way There and Back.....                                   | 324            |
| Getting Hooked On the Fishing Rules .....                              | 325            |
| Chatting to Fellow Fishers .....                                       | 326            |
| Logging On to the Super Sites.....                                     | 326            |
| Competing in Tournaments.....                                          | 327            |
| Buying, Selling and Owning a Boat.....                                 | 327            |
| Shopping for Fishing Gear .....                                        | 327            |
| Buying at an Electronic Auction .....                                  | 328            |
| Wandering the World Wide Web .....                                     | 328            |
| <br><b>Chapter 27: My Ten Favourite Australian Fishing Spots .....</b> | <br><b>329</b> |
| Trying Out Tassie's Treats.....                                        | 330            |
| Trekking for wild trout .....                                          | 330            |
| Working the Great Western Tiers.....                                   | 331            |
| Coping with four seasons in one day .....                              | 331            |

|                                                             |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Fishing Victoria's Bountiful Bemm .....                     | 332 |
| Catching a mixed bag .....                                  | 332 |
| Casting around for the hot spots .....                      | 333 |
| Discovering the NSW Far South Coast .....                   | 333 |
| Nailing 'em in Narooma .....                                | 333 |
| Travelling from Bermagui to Tathra .....                    | 334 |
| Piering into the southern delights .....                    | 334 |
| Conquering Big River Country .....                          | 335 |
| Exploring the Clarence .....                                | 336 |
| Tangling with bass .....                                    | 337 |
| Visiting Queensland's Valley of Lakes .....                 | 337 |
| Starting with Somerset .....                                | 338 |
| Working Wivenhoe Dam .....                                  | 339 |
| Checking out Cressbrook and Cooby .....                     | 339 |
| Cruising Cape York's Crystal Coast .....                    | 340 |
| Lodging Your Vote for Melville Island .....                 | 341 |
| Enjoying all the comforts of home .....                     | 341 |
| Following the catch-and-release philosophy .....            | 342 |
| Finding value for money .....                               | 342 |
| Roaming West Australia's Kimberley Region .....             | 343 |
| Walking on the Kimberley's Wild Side .....                  | 343 |
| Exploring the Kimberley's south end .....                   | 344 |
| Extending Yourself at Dirk Hartog Island .....              | 344 |
| Hooking in to the fish .....                                | 345 |
| Boating for variety .....                                   | 345 |
| Making a Killing at South Australia's Kangaroo Island ..... | 346 |
| Sampling the action .....                                   | 346 |
| Fighting with whiting .....                                 | 347 |
| Trying for bream .....                                      | 348 |

## **Chapter 28: My Ten Favourite New Zealand**

### **Fishing Spots ..... 349**

|                             |     |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Tough at the Top .....      | 350 |
| A Bay Full of Islands ..... | 351 |
| Earning your stripes .....  | 351 |
| Inside story .....          | 352 |
| Auckland for Anglers .....  | 352 |
| Plenty On Offer .....       | 353 |
| Taupo Temptations .....     | 354 |
| The Excellent Eg' .....     | 356 |
| Pick of the Upuk' .....     | 357 |
| Pomahaka Perfection .....   | 357 |
| Staircase to Heaven .....   | 358 |
| Gem of a Creek .....        | 359 |

**Chapter 29: Ten Things No-One Ever Tells You about Fishing . . . . 361**

|                                     |     |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Letting It All Hang Out.....        | 361 |
| Saving time and motion.....         | 362 |
| Putting safety first.....           | 362 |
| Coming to Grips with Snags .....    | 363 |
| Jiggling and wiggling.....          | 364 |
| Struggling and tugging.....         | 364 |
| Taming the Hook.....                | 365 |
| Hooking a Human .....               | 366 |
| Banishing barbs .....               | 366 |
| Removing hooks from people.....     | 366 |
| Targeting One Species.....          | 368 |
| Doubling Your Money.....            | 369 |
| Repeating Productive Patterns ..... | 369 |
| Taking the Good with the Bad.....   | 370 |
| Lying for a Living! .....           | 371 |

***Glossary* ..... 373*****Index* ..... 387**





# Introduction

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**S**urveys of the leisure activities of Australians and New Zealanders constantly place recreational fishing among our top three most popular outdoor pursuits, along with swimming and the various court sports (tennis, squash, bowls and so on).

As many as one in four of us over the age of ten casts a line each year, representing an army of some five million hopefuls, each one captivated by the promise of catching a dream and hauling home a whopper. Yet the vast majority of foot soldiers in this angling army are occasional dangles and casual anglers, and the sad reality is that most of them rarely hook anything more exciting than a lump of weed or an old boot.

My aim in writing this book is to redress the imbalance and empower these rod-wielding dreamers to a stage where they actually begin catching fish on a regular basis. A big call? Yes. But I believe this challenge is achievable.

## *About This Book*

Back in the 1970s, I remember there being a great deal of talk about the coming social revolution. Computers and robotics, it was said, would free modern man and woman from the drudgery of work, making the closing decades of the 20th century a golden age of unprecedented leisure. People would be required to invent stimulating new ways to entertain themselves in this brave new world of unbridled recreation... Huh! Sure thing!

As with so many predictions about the future, this one missed the mark by a country mile. In reality, Aussies and Kiwis are toiling longer and harder today than at any time since the introduction (in Australia in 1856) of the 40-hour working week. Like most of the Western world in this new millennium, Australia and New Zealand are nations of workaholics; rich in material goods but increasingly starved for time to enjoy the fruits of this hard labour.

One symptom of time poverty has been a dramatic shift in the way anglers acquire new skills such as the ability to rig a rod, tie a knot, hook a fish and clean the catch. In my youth, budding junior anglers typically spent a long and unstructured fishing apprenticeship at the elbow of a wise parent, grandparent, sibling, aunt, uncle or mate. For better or worse, those days are largely a memory. Today, people's lives are part of an era of out-sourcing, re-training and power seminars, where everything from cooking a meringue to changing an oil filter is taught in high energy bursts of instruction, employing multi-media presentations, spreadsheets and interactive computer displays. Today, people want to know how, and they want to know *now*! So, this book is for anyone who wets a line in Australian or New Zealand waters or plans to do so, regardless of age (assuming they're old enough to read!) and initial skill level.

While much of this book is pitched squarely at the new chum (especially those time-poor individuals I mentioned earlier), these pages contain plenty of information that benefits more experienced anglers. The truth is: You're never too old to learn. I pick up new tidbits of fishing know-how every time I cast a line, read a magazine article or visit an angling website. I doubt you're any different.

## *Conventions Used in This Book*

Important bits of information are formatted in special ways to make sure you notice them right away:

- ✓ **In This Chapter lists:** Chapters begin with a list of the topics I cover in that chapter. This list represents a table of contents in miniature.
- ✓ **Numbered lists:** When you see a numbered list, follow the steps in the specific order to accomplish a given task such as learning the art of tying knots.
- ✓ **Bulleted lists:** Bulleted lists (like this one) indicate things that you can do in any order or list related bits of information such as what to pack into your everyday fishing kit.
- ✓ **New terms:** Recreational fishing terms appear in italics and are closely preceded or followed by an easy-to-understand definition.
- ✓ **Web addresses:** When I describe activities or websites of interest, I include the address in a special typeface like this: `www.fishnet.com.au`. Although the website is current at the time of writing, web addresses can be pretty fickle. So, if you can't find the site, try looking for it by using an internet search engine.

- ✓ **Currency:** When I give you an idea of costs, for example, the price of fishing tackle, all figures are in Australian dollars unless otherwise stated.
- ✓ **Sidebar:** Text enclosed in a shaded grey box consists of information that's interesting to know but not necessarily critical to your understanding of the topic.

## *Foolish Assumptions*

Forgive me for making assumptions about my readers, but as part of the large and ever-growing *For Dummies* library, *Fishing For Dummies*, 2nd Australian & New Zealand Edition, is a how-to book that assumes absolutely no prior knowledge of the subject on the part of the reader. At times, my definitions and explanations may seem overly simplistic. I apologise in advance for times when you may feel I'm spelling out in painstaking detail what our English friends so aptly call the bleedin' obvious. But for every reader who rolls his or her eyes skywards and mutters 'I knew *that*', at least another three faces are going to light up with understanding of a concept or a process for the very first time. This book is especially for those people... and also for the rest of us!

## *How This Book Is Organised*

This book is divided into six parts.

### *Part I: Getting to Know Fish*

This part does what it should do: it introduces you to a fish. You may think fish are just waiting to be caught, but to achieve a catch you have to know how these little critters operate. Part I fills you in on the basics of understanding fish.

### *Part II: Tackling the Right Gear*

Without the right gear, you can't catch the right fish. By the time you complete Part II, you're likely to know enough to want to walk into a tackle store anywhere in Australia or New Zealand without feeling out of your depth and begin shopping for the bits and pieces you now know you need to go fishing.

## ***Part III: Using Your Equipment the Right Way***

This part teaches you how to put together all the bits and pieces you may need to go fishing. You can find out how to mount reels on rods, learn new twists on tying knots and discover how to construct effective rigs for different target species and styles of fishing.

## ***Part IV: The New Age of Fishing***

Knowing why you're going fishing is very important these days because more and more fisher-folk decide to return some or most of their catch to the water. This part examines both catch-and-release and kill-and-eat philosophies and explains their relative merits, as well as espousing the benefits of a sustainable approach to the sport. And when you do decide to take your catch home for dinner, you can also read about the most humane and efficient way to prepare your fish for the seafood feast you're planning.

## ***Part V: What Kind of Angler Are You?***

You're definitely not a deep-sea angler if you can't stand to sit up straight in a bath tub without getting nauseous. Anglers fall into many different categories and you may change from one category to another over your fishing life. Knowing which kind of angling best suits you is important, so take a trip through the chapters in Part V to find out who you really are.

## ***Part VI: The Part of Tens***

Here's where you get lists of helpful hints from my ten favourite websites to the best fishing destinations in Australia and New Zealand and all those little trivial bits that are usually left out of fishing books.

## Icons Used in This Book

Throughout *Fishing For Dummies*, 2nd Australian & New Zealand Edition, you encounter little icons in the left margin of the pages that alert you to specific types of information in the text. Here's what the icons mean:



Catch Words are terms unique to recreational angling (and often specific to Australian or New Zealand fishing). The expressions are angling lingo or jargon. Sometimes these words mean very different things to their standard dictionary definitions when used in a fishing context. As well as being flagged with this icon and italicised the first time they're used in the book, all Catch Words are explained in layman's terms at their first occurrence.



Tips are little nuggets of know-how I've accumulated over a lifetime of angling. Often, the tips describe short cuts or sneaky tricks that make the fishing process easier and more efficient. Think of the paragraphs marked as tips as the piscatorial equivalent of insider trading on the stockmarket, but without the associated risks of prosecution and imprisonment!



Every now and then I mark a point to remember. These are the rules that can get you into catching fish and keep you out of trouble. Look for this icon every time you need to refresh your fishing fact file.



Warnings are exactly that — a heads-up to potential dangers facing you or your fishing tackle. Be sure to read and take heed of all passages of text flagged with the Warning icon!

## Where to Go from Here

*Fishing For Dummies*, 2nd Australian & New Zealand Edition, is a teaching tool aimed at the time poor. I've squeezed four decades of personal experience into these pages, along with all the things I've learnt from a phalanx of grandparents, parents, sibling, aunts, uncles and fishing mates from Darwin Harbour to the Derwent River, and the Bay of Islands to the Buller River. If you can make the time to read this book, you'll understand at least the basics of the recreational angling process as it's practised in Australia and New Zealand today... and that's a promise!

*For Dummies* titles are reference books and if you don't want to read from Chapter 1 right through (maybe because you're a seasoned angler and way past the need to define what a hook or sinker is or be taken step-by-step through spooling up a reel), the beauty of this book is found in the way that you can browse here and there — rather like dropping a line at one snag, then moving to another, as the urge takes you. You can take on board those topics you know little about or want to brush up on and just skip over the others. All in a day's fishing really . . . um, reading, I mean!