Techniques 1.

Employing the right techniques in how we fish is the first step to reducing our impact on our fishery and the marine environment. The next step is to avoid catching fish you don’t want e.g. undersized specimens.

Selectivity is the key word when it comes to considering which techniques will best help target the fish we want to catch and keep.

There are several techniques that you can use to improve your fishing success while reducing your impact on the fishery, these include:

1. Use suitable lures, like softbaits or slow jigs.
2. Use big baits with big hooks, preferably circle hooks.
3. Use Target appendage hooks.

**Lure fishing**

Modern lures such as softbaits and slow jigs not only catch fish of legal size more often, they are far less likely to gut hook fish.

Using large hooks with large baits is another effective way of avoiding the capture of undersized fish. Large circle hooks and J hooks (7/0 or larger) with a corresponding large sized bait help target the larger sized fish.

**Big baits – big hooks**

If you are fishing with large hooks and losing lots of bait to the small ones without any larger fish to show for your efforts, you still have options open to you. It can be frustrating to be getting bites and not catching fish however, changing to smaller hooks to catch the bait thieves is not the answer. Some patience can pay off with larger hooks as losing bait and feeding the fish can draw the larger fish to your area where they eventually get caught.

Another option is to simply move to a different location and see if you can find the sort of habitat holding larger fish.

**Target appendage hooks**

A lot of research has gone into determining the effectiveness of Target appendage hooks. They are designed to avoid catching small fish and have proven to be effective at catching larger fish.

Lures, large hooks, and appendage hooks are less likely to gut hook fish and are best used in areas where you might catch a fish that you must release. Gut hooked fish have a very low chance of survival when released.

Infection is another killer. Infection occurs after the protective mucus or slime is removed from the fish’s skin. You may see the fish swim away strongly after release however, a loss of slime from handling can result in death days later. Please read the Handling techniques covered in a different section.

So, avoiding the handling of undersized fish reduces the risk of killing them and is the first step to a healthier fishery. This is easily accomplished by using techniques that are better at selectively targeting the legal sized fish.

Think about how you fish – can you adopt some of these techniques to help our fishery?

For more information, go to [www.fishcare.co.nz](http://www.fishcare.co.nz).

To keep up to date with topics related to the management and health of our fishery, sign up for our newsletter - [www.legasea.co.nz/subscribe](http://www.legasea.co.nz/subscribe).