



# SPEARFISHING & DIVING

Spearfishing and diving are rewarding and sustainable ways to harvest fish, providing opportunities to connect with the marine environment. However, these activities must be conducted responsibly to ensure the health of our fisheries and marine ecosystems. This guide outlines the five key FishCare principles to help spearfishers and divers practise sustainable and ethical fishing.

## PRINCIPLE 1: REDUCE WASTAGE

1. Only shoot fish you plan to consume. Waste not, want not.
2. Spearfishing is the most selective harvest technique. Target species that you know are more abundant – species such as squid and parore are often overlooked.

### PRESERVING SMALL AND JUVENILE FISH

Avoid shooting at small or juvenile specimens. Use size guides and local regulations to ensure compliance.

Remember that objects seen through the diving mask will appear to be closer and larger. Objects are magnified by about 25 to 30% and appear closer than they actually are by about 25%. If in doubt, don't shoot it.

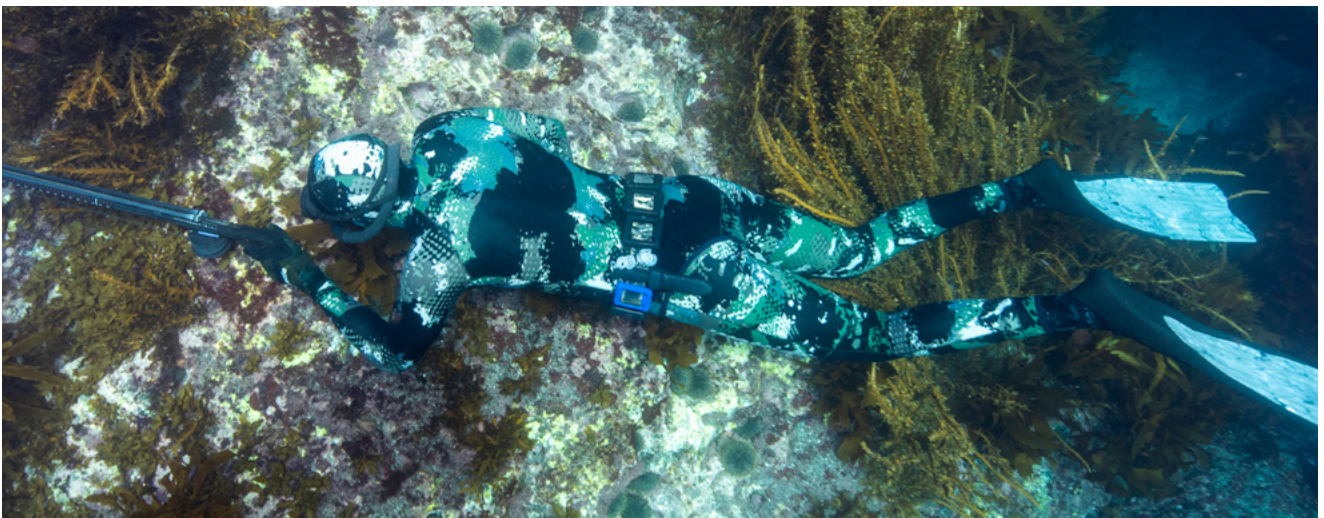
**Species Identification:** Learn to identify different fish species accurately and know the size limits. This will help you make informed decisions about which fish to catch

Get yourself a measuring device. Ignorance is no excuse for flouting the regulations. .

### KEEPING RUBBISH OUT OF OUR OCEANS

Do more than just take your own rubbish home. Carry a small bag to collect any debris or rubbish encountered during dives. Every piece of trash removed helps keep our oceans clean.

Nylon is often seen tangled on reefs, rocks and seaweed. Apart from the environmental problems nylon is a safety risk. Other divers could get tangled in it. Cut it off, tuck it into your wetsuit and take it with you.



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**Minimise Gear Loss:** Secure all equipment properly to avoid losing gear that could become marine debris.

## PRINCIPLE 2: MAXIMISE THE SURVIVAL RATE

If in doubt, don't shoot it. There's no point in asking what the fish species is after you have put a spear through its side – so know your fish species and only shoot what you know.

## PRINCIPLE 3: MAXIMUM UTILISATION

### USING ALL PARTS OF EVERY FISH CAUGHT

**Full Utilisation:** Minimise waste, and use every part of the fish, including the head and wings. Remember, anything inedible makes great fertiliser for the vege garden at home

**Creative Cooking:** Explore recipes and techniques that use less commonly consumed fish parts. Fish heads and bones can make nutritious broths, while offal can be used in various dishes.

## PRINCIPLE 4: MINIMISE IMPACTS ON MARINE LIFE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

1. Don't shoot red moki. They mate for life and are slow-growing.
2. Q – Which other accessible reef species mate for life?
3. Observe local regulations and rahui. Particularly shellfish and crayfish.

## PRINCIPLE 5: PRIORITISING PERSONAL WELL-BEING AND SAFETY

1. Focus on the dive – check your gear before you get on the boat and get comfortable in the water.
2. Be careful with your gun. Don't load a gun out of the water, don't use the butt of a loaded gun to crack kina. Don't point it at other people.
3. Gloves are safety items. Kina and crayfish spikes in your hands ALWAYS get infected and it's easier to protect yourself if you're getting washed around on the rocks when shore diving.

4. A fish is not worth your life. Kingfish and predatory fish like high current areas. If you are going to dive into these areas, make sure you have a plan suitable to get home safely – level of fitness, exit strategy or boatman as you may not be able to swim against the current.

5. Be mindful of apex predators.

- a. We are domesticating sharks. Bronzies in particular know that a spearfisherman often produces a free lunch. Think about how you're going to store your catch and keep it out of harm's way.
- b. Don't fillet fish in an anchorage. Sharks are learning that anchorages are often a good source of food. Kids also swim off the boats so let's not put the two together.

**Buddy System:** Always dive with a buddy for increased safety. Keep an eye on each other and communicate regularly.

**Proper Training:** Ensure adequate training in spearfishing and diving techniques. This includes understanding how to use equipment, equalising pressure, and emergency procedures.

**Physical Fitness:** Maintain a good level of physical fitness to handle the demands of diving and spearfishing.

**Environmental Awareness:** Be aware of the conditions and potential hazards of the diving area, such as currents, marine life, and weather changes.

## CONCLUSION

By adhering to these FishCare principles, spearfishers and divers can significantly reduce their impact on the marine environment while enjoying their sport. Sustainable practices ensure that future generations can also experience the beauty and bounty of our oceans. Remember, responsible fishing today leads to abundant and healthy fisheries tomorrow.

## POWERED BY



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and resources

[fishcare.co.nz](http://fishcare.co.nz)

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