

# Rock fishing safety tips

## Factsheet

### WEAR A LIFEJACKET WHEN ROCK FISHING

**IT'S THE LAW.**



Rock fishing is one of the most dangerous sports in Australia.

The majority of rock fishing-related deaths in Australia occur in NSW, with an average of eight people losing their lives rock fishing in NSW every year.<sup>1</sup>

This factsheet contains some safety tips to help you plan your rock fishing outing.

#### Stay alert to the weather conditions

Check the weather and the tide conditions before you leave home and monitor them while you're out fishing.

DO NOT rock fish when the conditions are dangerous.

- High tides can cover your rock fishing spot with water.  
Rising tides and high tides make waves break onto rock fishing locations.  
You might get trapped or swept off your rock fishing spot by a high tide.
- Large seas or swell waves can be hazardous.  
You might get swept off your rock fishing spot by large waves.
- Strong winds can create hazardous waves or push you off wet, slippery rocks.
- If you are fishing in an exposed area during rough seas, find a calmer spot.
- Monitor the weather and tidal conditions while you're out fishing and be alert to any changes.
- Check for **severe weather warnings** on the Bureau of Meteorology website at [www.bom.gov.au/australia/warnings/](http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/warnings/)
- Check the **coastal waters forecast** on the Bureau of Meteorology website at [www.bom.gov.au/marine/](http://www.bom.gov.au/marine/) or call 1300 659 218.
- Check **tide predictions** on the Bureau of Meteorology website at [www.bom.gov.au/australia/tides/](http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/tides/)
- Always watch the waves.  
Never turn your back on the ocean.

#### Learn how to swim

Learn how to swim so you have the best chance of surviving if you get washed into the water

<sup>1</sup> Surf Life Saving NSW *Coastal Safety Report 2016*, p.10. See <http://www.surflifesaving.com.au/beach-safety/coastal-safety-report>

## Choose the safest possible location

- Always check and understand the weather conditions and tides before you leave home. This will help you to choose the safest possible location to go fishing.
- Ask local people and experienced anglers who know the area about the safest possible locations to fish.
- Look for Angel Ring locations.  
Angel Rings are lifebuoys installed at popular rock fishing spots across NSW.  
Angel Rings can keep a person afloat and away from the rocks until help arrives.  
More information about angel rings is available at [www.angelrings.com.au](http://www.angelrings.com.au).
- Take time to observe the weather and tide conditions. Spend at least half an hour watching the wind and wave action before deciding whether a location is suitable as your fishing spot.
- Think about what your fishing spot might be like in a few hours if the weather and tides change.
- Plan an escape route in case you are washed into the water.

## Wear the right gear

Always make sure you are wearing the right safety gear when you go rock fishing. Wearing the right gear can stop you from slipping into the water and can save your life if you do end up in the water.

- Always wear a lifejacket.
- Always wear appropriate footwear with non-slip soles or cleats. Rock plates or cleats are essential on wet, weedy rocks.
- Always wear lightweight clothing.  
Together with your lifejacket, lightweight clothing will help you be buoyant and not weigh you down if you do get washed into the water.

## Never fish alone

No place is perfectly safe for rock fishing.

- Fish only with other people and only in places where experienced anglers go to fish.
- Make sure you tell someone who is not going fishing with you where you are planning to go and when you plan on returning.

## If someone is washed into the ocean

DO NOT jump into the water after anyone if they are washed off the rocks and into the water.

- Look for an Angel Ring, a lifebuoy or something else that floats and throw it to the person in the water to hold onto.
- Dial 000 on your mobile phone or go and get help.

## You MUST wear a lifejacket when rock fishing in the Central Coast local government area

Don't risk your life. Wear a lifejacket.

- The *Rock Fishing Safety Act 2016* (NSW) commenced on 1 December 2016, meaning people must wear a lifejacket when they go rock fishing anywhere in the Central Coast local government area.
- From 1 December 2017 there will be a \$100 fine for not wearing a lifejacket when rock fishing in the Central Coast local government area.
- Information about the new law, including high risk locations, can be found at: [www.watersafety.nsw.gov.au/rockfishing](http://www.watersafety.nsw.gov.au/rockfishing).

### For more information

Visit the website at  
[www.watersafety.nsw.gov.au/rockfishing](http://www.watersafety.nsw.gov.au/rockfishing)

**WEAR A LIFEJACKET**  
**DON'T RISK YOUR LIFE**