



# Bycatch handling *your responsibilities*

You are responsible for handling all bycatch species appropriately to maximise the chance of their survival. Mishandling bycatch species can significantly reduce their chances of survival and have long term impacts on the sustainability of the species.

Please familiarise yourself with the **six handling principles** below to make sure that you are not at risk of breaching your bycatch handling obligations.

## Principle 1 Safety of the boat and its crew are paramount

Mishandling does not include actions taken (or not taken), which are reasonably necessary<sup>1</sup> to ensure the safety of the boat and or its crew.

## Principle 2 All reasonable steps should be taken

Operators are expected to take all reasonable steps to ensure that bycatch is returned to the water as quickly as practicable and in a manner which does not reduce its chance of survival.

## Principle 3 Minor gear recovery is not 'reasonably necessary'

Actions taken for the sole purpose of recovering minor<sup>2</sup> fishing gear, are not considered 'reasonably necessary'.

## Principle 4 Expediting removal from gear is not 'reasonably necessary'

It is not 'reasonably necessary' to injure bycatch when removing it from fishing gear to save time.

## Principle 5 Harm, injury or death caused during capture is not mishandling

Mishandling does not include where bycatch is already dead, injured or stressed when it is brought on-board<sup>3</sup>.

## Principle 6 Compliance with approved bycatch management plans

Handling of bycatch in accordance with AFMA approved bycatch management plan(s) is not mishandling.

## More information

For more information, visit the AFMA website at [www.afma.gov.au](http://www.afma.gov.au).

<sup>1</sup> See principles 3 and 4

<sup>2</sup> 'Minor' gear includes items such as hooks, which are unlikely to cause further harm to the bycatch, or marine pollution, if discharged/discarded attached to the bycatch.

<sup>3</sup> Unless further deliberate action or inaction results in the death or further injury to the bycatch