



Code 5

Don't leave your tackle behind

Code 5 Don't leave your tackle behind Year Level 5/6

You can make a difference!



Specific Learning Outcomes

By completing this code a Junior Fisher learns to:

- collect all their hooks, sinkers, fishing line, bait bags, cans and plastics for safe disposal at home
- be aware that if tackle and rubbish is left behind, it can harm fish, birds or swimmers
- choose their fishing place with care
- collect all food scraps, remaining groundbait (berley) or bait when leaving a fishing site
- ensure that baited hooks are not left unattended in or out of the water

These activities and skills support the following NSW Board of Studies Stage 3 syllabus outcomes:

Science & Technology	PDHPE	English	Creative Arts
LTS3.3 INVS3.7 DMS3.8	COS3.1 INS3.3 DMS3.2	TS3.2	DRAS3.3



Good Junior Fishers don't leave their tackle behind



 View the background information from the *Get Hooked DVD*.

△Background notes

Why is tackle a problem for fish?

Before World War II most fishing gear was made from natural fibres such as cotton, hemp and flax, which disintegrated in a very short time. However, in recent times the “non-degradability, light weight, flexibility and durability of plastic gear make it a major problem if it becomes aquatic debris. Plastics are very resistant to decay in aquatic environments. They may break down into smaller pieces, but degrade very slowly by weathering”⁹ and biological action.

Fishy dangers

- Discarded lines: Discarded fishing line and netting is impossible for many native fish, aquatic mammals and birdlife to see in drifting currents of the water. It can easily become entangled around their bodies causing an inability to swim, hunt or feed. Monofilament line used by recreational fishers is the main form of gear lost or discarded.
- Hooks: Discarded hooks buried in the sand or along river banks, may soon be uncovered by the movement of water, the next tide, or rain, proving hazardous both to humans and aquatic life. Hooks that are still attached to discarded monofilament lines, can add to the problem of ‘ghost fishing’.
- Nets: Lost and discarded nets can lead to ‘ghost fishing’, which may deplete fish stocks. Data on declines in fish stocks is limited, however studies on Australian fur seals at the breeding colony on Phillip Island found 45 seals entangled in net pieces and bait straps.¹⁰ (Bait straps are joined plastic strips used to secure the lids on large boxes of bait.)
- Bait bags: Many species of fish and marine mammals feed on jellyfish, which many plastic bags resemble in the water. It is known that “turtles find plastic bags indistinguishable from food and can ingest large quantities of them”.¹¹
- Drink bottles and plastics: Ingestion of plastics can cause problems to a range of animals. “Starvation is the main cause of death for

animals that ingest plastic, as the animal does not eat sufficient food, and the plastic prevents proper digestion or elimination of food”¹²

Whales have also been found with plastic bags and fragments of sheeting in their stomachs.¹³ Smaller aquatic life can also become entrapped in cans and bottles.

- Six pack rings: These can become harmful ‘neck collars’ on fish, tortoises, platypus and other aquatic life.
- Cigarette butts: Cigarette butts can be mistaken for food, which give the animal who has ingested the product the sensation of being too full to consider hunting for further prey. Cigarette butts also contain toxins harmful to aquatic life. These discarded butts take a long time to decompose in the water.



How can we help our fish?

- 1 Love and enjoy our resource, but leave nothing but our footprints behind when we leave a fishing site.
- 2 Don't bury your rubbish, it will soon become uncovered by the weather, animals' or peoples' foot traffic.
- 3 Take a bag with you to put all your rubbish or discarded tackle in straight away so that it doesn't get accidentally blown around our waterways or become trapped under the sand or leaf litter.
- 4 Put your bait in a designated place in the tackle box before you leave home and throw the plastic bait bag in the bin when you get home, thereby decreasing the risk it could be left at the beach, river, lake or wetland.
- 5 Take your lunch food and snacks in paper bags, rather than in plastic glad-wrap or plastic bags.
- 6 Become part of the annual ‘Clean Up Australia’ campaign and make your local waterway a healthy one for fish.

⁹ Source: p.3 Fishing Debris in the Australian Environment

¹⁰ Source: R. Prendergast, pers. Comm in O'Callaghan, 1993 in Fishing Debris in the Australian Environment

¹¹ Source: p.11 Fishing Debris in the Australian Environment

¹² Estuarine, Coastal and Marine Habitat Integrity: animals killed or injured by litter

¹³ Laist 1987; Walker 1989, in Fishing Debris in the Australian Environment



Fishy activities

Activity will be motivated by a poem as outlined below.

'The old shell'

Motivation for this introductory poem was to be focused on some positive aspect of collecting tackle rather than the normal 'horror' stories of entangled seals, etc.

Props:

 A large gastropod sea shell



Activity:

Seat students in a circle and introduce a poem along the following lines... "Have you ever picked up a large shell like this and listened? What sound does it make?" Give time for students to reply.

I once heard a story that what it was really saying as it was tossed up onto the sand by the waves, was something along the lines of this poem (You, or a nominated child read the poem. The poem can be read several times in verses by different groups of students in the circle.)

"Sssshhhhh

Said the sea/river (alter wording, as appropriate to your location)

Please listen to me

Sssshhhhh

Said the sea/river

Or polluted I'll be

Please don't dump your litter

Your tackle

Or your bait

Please show me just how much you care

Leave nothing but footprints

To show us that you've been there"



'A watery journey'¹⁴

Props:

Copies of the board game below, dice, counters or aquatic animals as board pieces.

In groups of 4 or 5 play the 'Watery Journey game'.

Life for you in the water is tough...you have to find your own food, hide from predators and find shelter. Sometimes it is made even tougher when something unnatural is introduced into the water...become an aquatic animal, play our game and find out more!

Use a blank game template from the activity sheet to make up your own game from the marine or freshwater perspective of:

- a seabird, shark, dolphin or a killer whale.
- a platypus, tortoise, eel, or a trout cod.

20	21	22 Danger alert! You have swallowed a clear bait bag floating in the water. Go back to 17.	23	Finish 
19	18 A young boy removes fishing lines wrapped in underwater plants. Move 2 spaces.	17	16 The tide has turned and is washing in discarded fishing line. Go back to 13.	15
10 School students visit and take their rubbish home. Advance 3 spaces	11	12 A hook gets snagged in a penguin's foot. You like to eat penguins but you are in danger of swallowing the hook. Go back 4 spaces	13	14 A junior fisher quickly cuts a hook from an undersize bream's mouth and returns to the water to be caught another day. Advance to 17
9	8 You see a fisherman pulling an old floating 'ghost' net from the water. Move 3 spaces.	7	6	5
Start here 	2	3 A young scientist designs a bait box that disintegrates after a week in water. Move ahead 2 spaces.	4	

¹⁴ Based on p.47 Environmental Activities Around Inverloch

'Don't Leave your tackle behind'

Activity

Props:

- Old fishing hat
- Tackle box
-  Fishing rod
- Empty drink bottle
- Brown paper bag, sandwich wrapper, and
- Lollie papers.

Method:

Introduce code using either a poem or mime based on some positive aspect of collecting left over or scraps of tackle rather than a "horror" story.

Mime:

a fishing excursion using props detailed above.

- Fisher relaxing, baiting hook, casting line [no hook attached], nibbling on food and drinking. At the end of the mime the fisher collects rod, tackle box and any pretend fish that were caught and makes his/her way home.
- The evidence of a good day is left behind. Without comment on the scene, ask the audience if they would leave the area in the same condition or would they make some changes?
- Choose a person who said they would make changes and ask them to repeat the mime with the changes they would make.

Discuss

- Briefly discuss the repercussions of both mimes. Ask the students which mime would reflect their fishing excursion?
- Plan an environmentally friendly fishing trip. Consider food wrappings, drink containers, and bait packaging. Also to be considered is the best way to access the area.

Evaluation activity:

'Don't leave your tackle behind'

Props: one 'Don't leave your tackle behind' activity sheet for each student.

'Fishy survival game'

Props: nil

Activity

- In groups of 8-10, students form a circle on their hands and knees, with their head facing inwards so they are all looking at each other.
 - The students place their hands, so that they are overlapping (See graphic).
 - They then take on the role of being a nominated fish in a rockpool or river.
1. Trial moving around the rockpool in sequence by banging their hand on the floor (much like a 'Mexican wave'). As they bang their hand on the floor, they can only change the direction of the water if they say one thing that you've learnt that fish need in order to survive.
 2. As they say this, they bang the floor twice and the water moves in the opposite direction, ie. fish need rocks, fish need reeds, fish need clear water, fish need snags, etc.

¹⁵ Source: Graphic from p.22 The Student leaders' *Manual for The Elizabeth Campbell Peer Support Program for Secondary Schools*



Suggested follow-up class activities for teachers

'Design an environmentally friendly bait box'



Props:

Recycled materials, such as: cardboard, plywood, paper, straw, twine, string, cotton wool, wool, material scraps, cardboard fruit juice containers, etc.



Activity

If possible, let the students come up with the characteristics themselves.

- Must be made of a substance that is biodegradable or reusable.
- Must be able to transport fish.
- Must not have anything on it that will endanger aquatic life.
- Must be lightweight.

'Tackle game'¹⁶

Props:

Enough chairs for all students except the 'caller'.



Activity

- Students sit on chairs in a large circle. The chairs represent aquatic habitats used by fish, penguins and seals. One student, the 'caller', stands in the centre of the circle. There is no extra chair for the 'caller'.
- The 'caller' walks around the group designating each person to be a 'fish', a 'penguin', or a 'seal'. (Alternatively, nominate freshwater aquatic animals.)

- The 'caller' then calls either 'fish', 'penguin', 'seal' or 'tackle'. 'Tackle' includes everyone in the circle. For example, when caller calls out 'penguin', all the 'penguins' swap spaces, but they must not swap spaces with someone next to them. The caller tries to reach an empty chair before all the 'penguins' have changed places.
- When they call out 'tackle', this includes everyone, therefore everyone must change places.
- When 'tackle' is called a chair is removed by an adult observer simulating the disturbance and destruction caused by tackle debris in the water.

Discuss

- The implications of both the same and different types of discarded tackle on aquatic fish and wildlife.
- Are there any implications for fishers if penguins and seals are caught up in tackle?
- Can this disadvantage all fishers?
- Explore the role of higher predators such as marine mammals and birds on fish stocks. Do they have a positive role to play?

¹⁶ (Based on game 'Fruit Bowl')

