

Podcast 74 – Gone Fishing

Learn English while learning about daily life in Australia,
with Rob McCormack

Podcast Number 74 – Gone Fishing

<http://traffic.libsyn.com/slowenglish/podcast74.mp3>

Hi,

Australia has around 47,000 kilometres of coastline, so it is no wonder that recreational fishing is popular. In fact, it is estimated that more than 5 million Australians have fishing as one of their hobbies. In this podcast, I would like to tell you a little about this very popular pastime in Australia and my experiences, such as they are, as a recreational fisherman.

Fishing is one of those pastimes which you can do from your childhood, right through your adult life and into your old age. You don't have to be rich to participate and wherever you live in Australia, there is usually a place nearby where you can go fishing.



The main place to fish is of course the sea. Most Australians live near the coast so that means they have ready access to a coastal fishing spot. There is also some river and lake fishing which people enjoy, which is in freshwater. On balance however, it is fishing on our coastline which is most popular.

The most common fish caught on our coastline and in bays and inlets on the coast include snapper, King George whiting, flathead, bream, Australian salmon, flounder and tailor. I can remember getting my first fishing rod when I was about 8 years old. It was made out of fibreglass. I still have it today. It had a small fishing reel attached which held the fishing line. I can remember practising how to cast in my back yard, without a hook attached of course. My Uncle Bob taught me how to rig it up with a hook and sinker.



I used to go fishing with him down near the wharf in my home town of Bunbury in Western Australia. We fished off the rock breakwater early in the morning and we caught tailor most often. I used to go and stay at his place overnight so we

could get up around 5.00am and get to the water early when the fish were biting. We would then fish for 3 or 4 hours. He was in his late 60s at the time and he taught me a lot about fishing. I have very fond memories of my Uncle Bob and I was very sad when he passed away in his early 80s.

Those fishermen who are more serious about catching big fish will usually buy or hire a bigger boat to go a bit further away from the coast to those spots only the real fishing experts know about. <http://www.deepseacharters.com.au/>.

Personally, I only had one experience of that type of fishing. When I was a young man, I had a work colleague called David whose father had a large 8 metre long power boat which could go off the coast a kilometre or so. One year in my early twenties I went on a fishing trip with them in their boat off the coast of Western Australia near the town of Geraldton. We went out a kilometre or so off the coast to a place where David's father knew there were good fish to catch. We did catch some bigger fish, but I also got terribly sea sick. I got so weak from being sea sick, that when I finally had a big fish on the end of my line, I could not pull it into the boat. It is interesting that I was the only one who got sea sick on that boat. David and his father didn't get sick at all and they thought it was hilarious when I went a pale colour and started throwing up over the side of the boat. After that I decided I would only fish from a jetty, from the rocks by the harbour or from the beach. No more fishing off boats in the ocean for me.

Fishing can be a cheap pastime. Nowadays, there is a small licence fee which you may have to pay in order to go fishing. This fee varies a little depending on which Australian state you live in. I live in Victoria and if you are under 18 or aged 70 or over, you don't have to pay. However, if you are aged between 18 and 69 you have to pay for a recreational fishing licence which costs around \$66 a year. Alternatively, you can buy a licence for just 2 days or for

just a month and it is much cheaper. So even with the cost of a recreational fishing licence, fishing is still a cheap hobby. All you need is a line, perhaps a fishing rod, some sinkers and hooks to put on the end of the line and some bait. I like to use prawns as my bait. You also need a bucket, just in case you do catch any fish and a ruler to measure any fish you catch. All these things, including a recreational fishing licence, can be bought at one of the many fishing tackle shops which you will find in any coastal town in Australia.

It's also important to know that there are bag limits on how many fish you can catch for each type of fish. For example, in Victoria, unless otherwise specified, the limit is 5 fish per day per person. However for the more common varieties of fish such as tailor or flathead, the bag limit is usually 20 fish. There are also restrictions on the size of the fish you can catch and keep. If the fish is too small, you have to throw it back. For example, a tailor must be at least 23 cms long and a flathead must be at least 27 cms long. When I was a boy, I can't remember any rules like that, but I guess nowadays these rules are necessary so that we don't over-fish our stocks of fish in the ocean and our coastal bays. If we do, then there will be no fish to catch in the future and that would be a disaster for everyone, both now and for future generations. All the rules about recreational fishing in Victoria can be found in the Victorian Guide to Recreational Fishing, which is free on line. Just do a Google search. (See <http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/fisheries/recreational-fishing/recreational-fishing-guide>). Every Australian state has similar rules about recreational fishing.

By the way, these rules are enforced by Fisheries Officers who visit fishing areas and do spot checks regarding bag limits and recreational fishing licences. There are substantial fines if you don't follow the rules.

As long as you follow the rules however, fishing can be a

great hobby. The thing I like most is the possibility that, in the next second, or the next minute, you could get that strong tug on your line which tells you that a fish is down there nibbling at your bait. Expecting and then getting that next bite is what fishing is all about.

If you have a question or a comment to make, please leave it in the comments box at the bottom of this page. Or, you can send me an email at rob@slowenglish.info. I would love to hear from you. Tell me where you live, a little bit about yourself and what you think of my Slow English podcast. I will write back to you, in English of course. If you would like to take a short quiz to see if you have understood this podcast, you will also find it on my website. Goodbye until next time.

Rob

Podcast 74 Quiz - Did you understand the podcast?

You can take the quiz as many times as you like.

Start quiz

Vocabulary

alternatively = another way

attached = when something is held or connected to something else

bait = some food (usually meat) which you put on your hook in order to catch a fish

bays = circular areas of the sea which are sheltered from the

wind

biting = when an animal or human eats food with their teeth

cast = when you use your fishing rod to throw out the end of your fishing line

coastline = where the sea meets the land

depending = when one thing changes because of something else

disaster = when something really bad happens

enforced = when someone else tells you that you must do something

estimated = when you guess something

fibreglass = a strong material made from chemicals and glass fibres

fishing rod = a long stick which holds a fishing line, usually made from fiberglass

fishing tackle = hooks, sinkers, fishing rods, etc. Things you need to catch fish

fond = happy

freshwater = water without salt. For example, in a river or inland lake

future generations = your children and their children

jetty = a type of bridge which goes out into the water. You can walk on it or you can tie a boat up to it

hilarious = very, very funny

hobbies = things you like to do in your free time

hook = a piece of bent metal with a sharp point put onto the

end of fishing line – used to catch a fish

inlets = an area of water usually at the mouth of a river

nibbling = biting

on balance = when you consider all points in the discussion

pale = when a colour is very light

participate = to do something with other people

pastime = hobby

ready access = you can easily find something

recreational = when you do something for fun, you do not get paid

reel = a tube around which you wind fishing line, with a handle

regarding = about

restrictions = things you are not allowed to do

rig = to put a sinker and a hook on your fishing line

rock breakwater = a man made jetty made out of rocks – to keep waves away from a harbour

ruler = a straight piece of wood or plastic which shows how long something is

sea sick = when you feel sick from the rocking of a boat on the ocean

sinker = a heavy weight made from lead, used to make your fishing line sink in the water

spot = place

spot checks = when someone checks to see if you are following

the rules. They don't tell you that they are coming to do the check

stocks = amounts

substantial = large

such as they are = not very good (an expression)

terribly = very badly

throwing up = to vomit, to bring up the food in your stomach (not pleasant!)

tug = when something pulls at you

unless otherwise specified = means that you can assume something (literally – only if something different is written down)

varies = changes

varieties = types

wharf = a type of jetty for big ships in a port