



2016/OFWG/009
Agenda Item: VII A

Manual on Good Practices to Improve the Marine Products from the Subsistence Fishery Sector in the Asia Pacific Region

Purpose: Information
Submitted by: Peru



7th Ocean and Fisheries Working Group Meeting
Piura, Peru
20–22 September 2016



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

**Manual on Good Practices
to Improve the Supply Chain
of Marine Products from the
Subsistence Fishery sector
in the Asia Pacific Region**

Oceans and Fisheries Working Group

September, 2016

APEC Project: OFWG 01 2015A

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APEC Publication Number: APEC#216-OF-03.1

Foreword

Small-scale fisheries are highly dynamic, labour intensive and usually not integrated with local marketing arrangements. Small-scale fishers, their families and communities are critically dependent on fish for their food and livelihood security and are extremely vulnerable to external pressures and shocks.

Products originating from subsistence or small-scale fisheries require good handling practices along the supply chain, since up to 30% of the catch in some cases, is lost due to poor handling practices.

Therefore, proper management and efficiency throughout the core of the supply chain can increase the economic growth of the fishery communities, open new job positions for women and strengthen food security; consequently, we will need fewer marine resources contributing to the conservation of the fish stock.

The aim of this manual is to facilitate the improvement of the catch condition of subsistence fishers (aiming at food security) by reducing economic losses and overfishing by the deterioration of fish products that were not properly handled, achieving that consumers receive high-quality products.

A Stakeholders Workshop of APEC Economies took place in Lima, Peru from the 1 to 4 May 2016, with the aim of deciding the contents and format of this publication.

The workshop recommended that:

- The target audience would be the subsistence fisheries segment.
- The key topic would be the application of good fish handling principles to catching, landing and transport to the 1st point of sale.
- The contents do not aim to set the final level for subsistence Fishers, just the initial level.
- Each economy will be free to add up and transform what they require to adapt it to their needs.
- The manual will be delivered to the fisherfolk via the extension offices or the authorities.
- The manual will be delivered in draft pdf for guidance and as an “InDesign” software file bundle as to be easily translated, adapted and printed by the different APEC economies
- The economies can add Chapters, but hopefully, maintain the present minimal content.
- As the “target” audience may have little formal education, the way to engage them is via “cartoon” type illustrations and an informal language to present the key messages in the text.
- The “cartoon” part is to be based on a fishers’ “family” setting and with examples of good and bad practices.
- Illustrations would be in black and white to facilitate printing, and also to be used as “colouring book” by the children in the fishers’ households.
- Fish Handling message would be presented under four simple pillars:
 - Keep it clean
 - Keep it cold
 - Treat it gently
 - Move it fast

How to use this manual

The manual is intended for use as a training aid to help introduce and explain post-harvest fishing topics to subsistence fishermen and other actors in the coastal fisheries value chain. To support this aim, the manual presents as much information as possible in a visual form, for the benefit of fisherfolk whose literacy may be limited. For the same reason, the text has been kept as simple and non-technical as possible.

In compiling this manual, we have split the many interwoven aspects of post-harvest and fishing into a series of individual topics. Each covered in “chapters” intended to convey the information and practices relevant to that particular subject. We have tried to be comprehensive in the coverage of each topic.

Since there is a vast variety of fishers cultures and practices among the APEC membership, we tried to present the range of options or opinions on subjects.

The manual has a structure of separate but consecutive chapters, as to allow for training delivery in an integral programme or by chapters.

Each chapter has guiding text to be used as “aide memoir” by trainers and illustrations for each concept, as to convey the message without relying only on written words.

Chapter 1 deals with the basics of good fish handling and is general to all other chapters

Chapter 2 deals with good fish handling at the time of capture and harvesting.

Chapter 3 deals with good fish handling at the landing.

Chapter 4 deals with good fish handling during transport.

Chapter 5 deals with good fish handling at point of sale and the prior importance of these practices

Chapter 6 deals with very basics of traceability at all stages

Chapter 7 deals with the very basics of the importance of the ecosystems approach to fishing.

The pages of each chapter present the contents in a “graphic narrative” with the key concepts of the chapter supported by minimal text and examples of common good and bad practices.

The illustrations are based on a fisherfolk family along with different “characters” representing fish, bacteria and enzymes. The fisher guides the explanations to his family and colleagues along the manual.

The illustrations are in black and white to facilitate printing, but also to be used as “colouring book” and encourage the children in the fishing families to keep the manual in their households.

Predictably, it has proven impossible to avoid overlap altogether. However, we hope that the cross-references in the text will enable trainers and trainees to follow a given theme through the manual, independently of the mode and time of training delivery.

Disclaimer

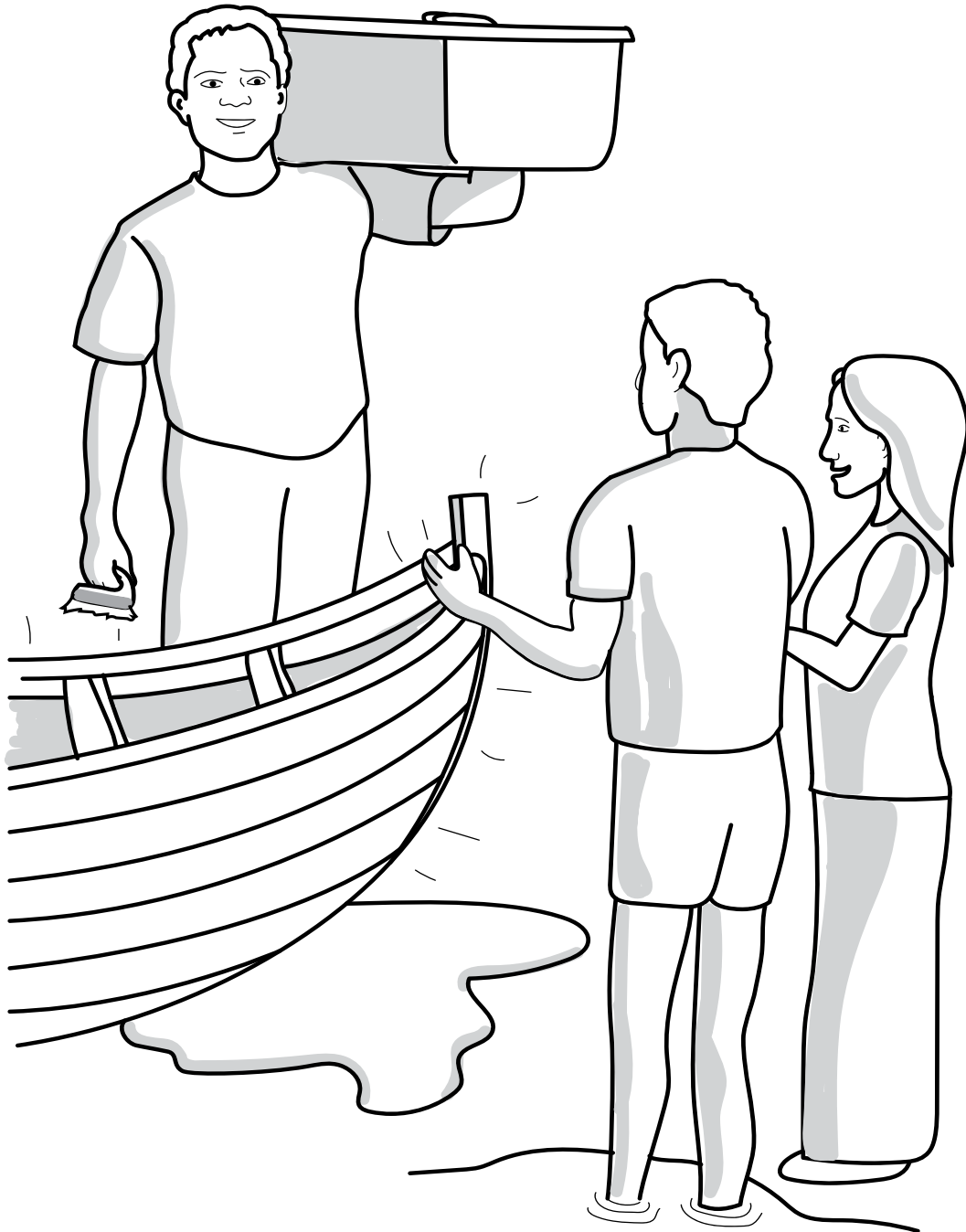
Reference to persons in any particular gender is understood to include persons of the opposite gender unless otherwise stated, or made explicit by the context.

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The 4 Rules of Good Fish Handling

Chapter 1



As the fisherman pulled in his catch, his children ran up to him.

“Dad, Dad, can you tell us about the most important things about catching fish?”

“Sure,” he said and sat down with them and his wife after he’d taken care of his catch and cleaned himself.

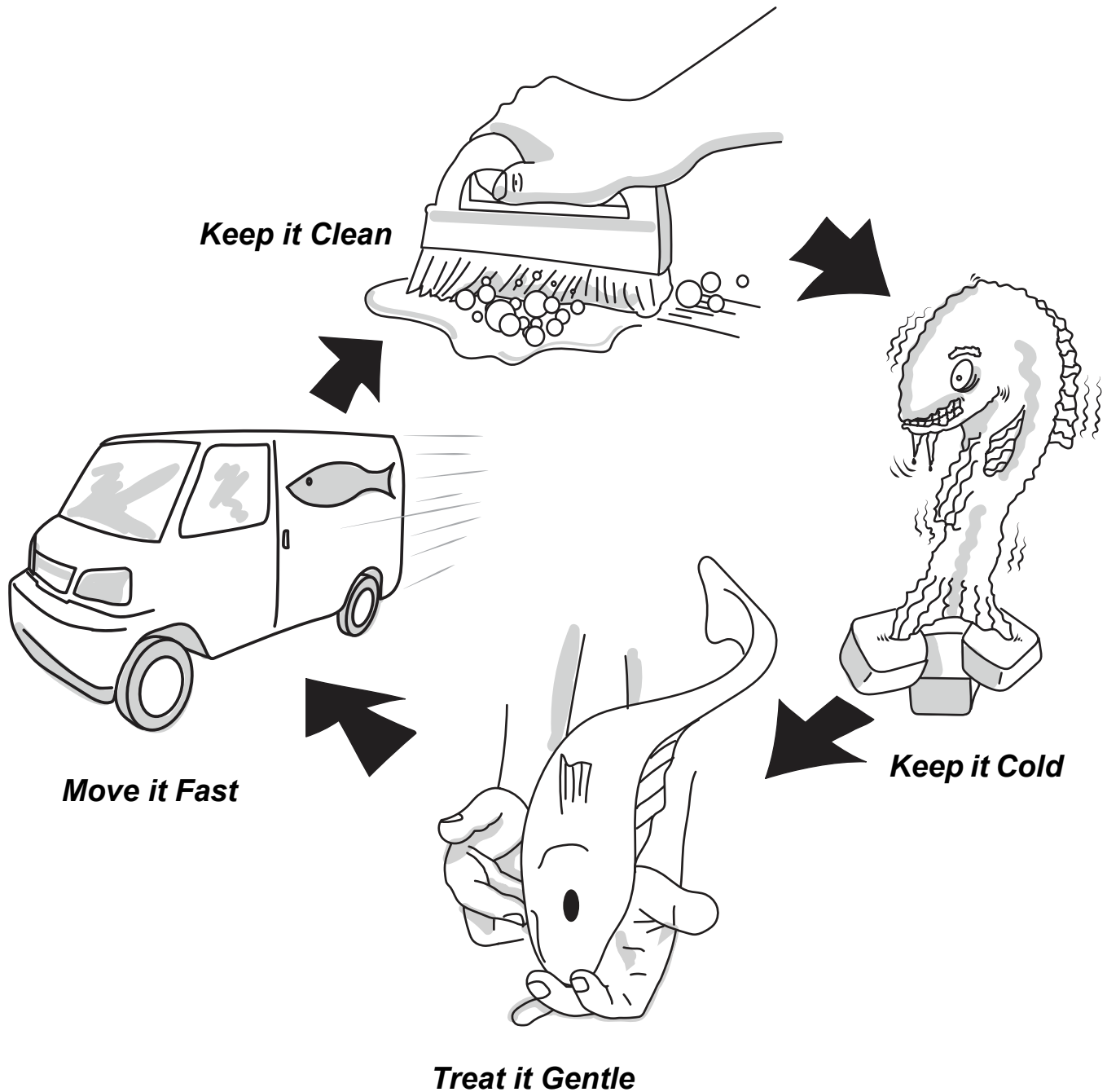
He had a book with lots of pictures to show them.



There are 4 important rules about fish handling.

I'll tell you about them, and how these apply to catching, landing, transporting and selling fish.

The 4 Rules of Fish Handling

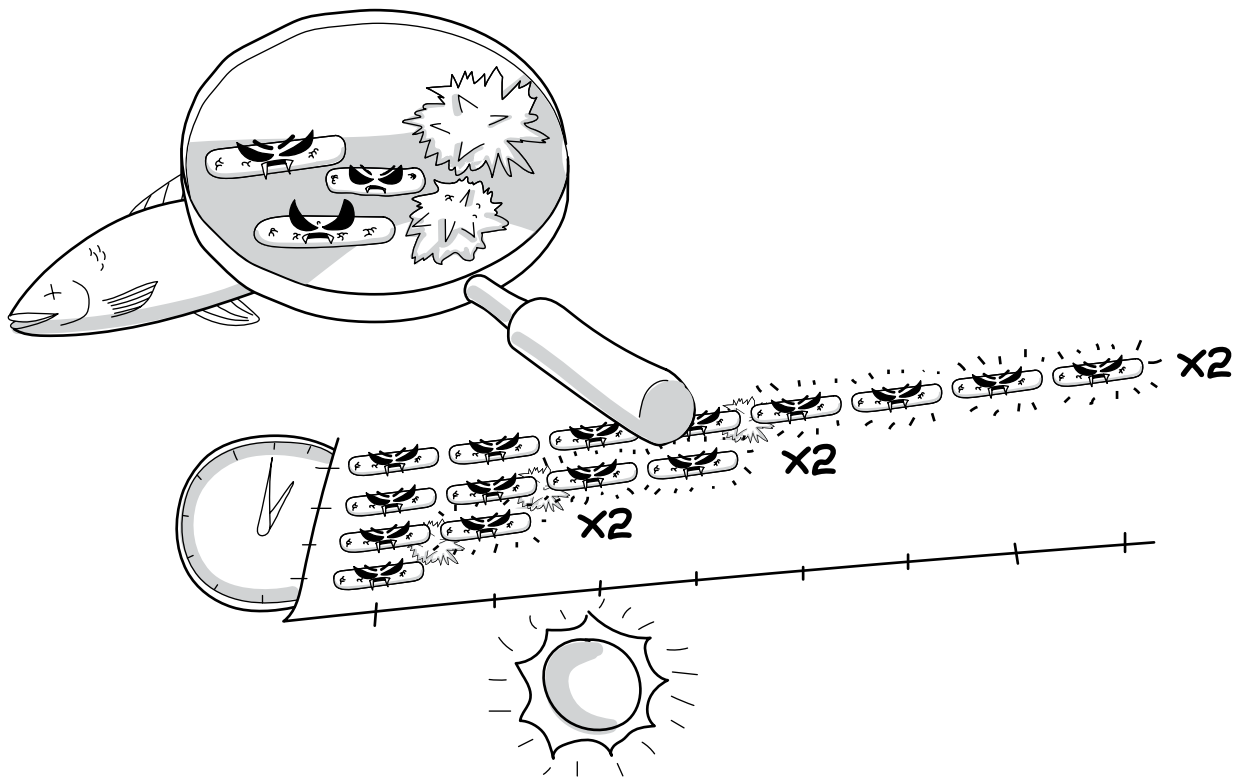


As soon as the fish dies, it begins to break down and rot

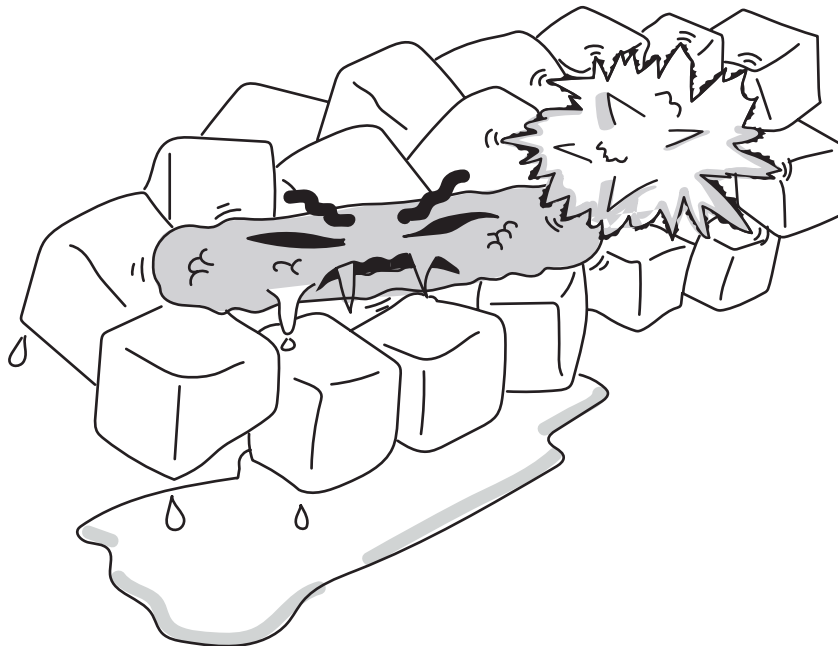
What makes it rot is **Bacteria** that starts to multiply in minutes and start eating the fish and spreading around

And there is the **Enzymes**, which also make the fish rot. They normally break down the food in the fish's stomach, but they start breaking down the fish instead once it's dead

The best way to slow down Bacteria and Enzymes, is by making them feel cold

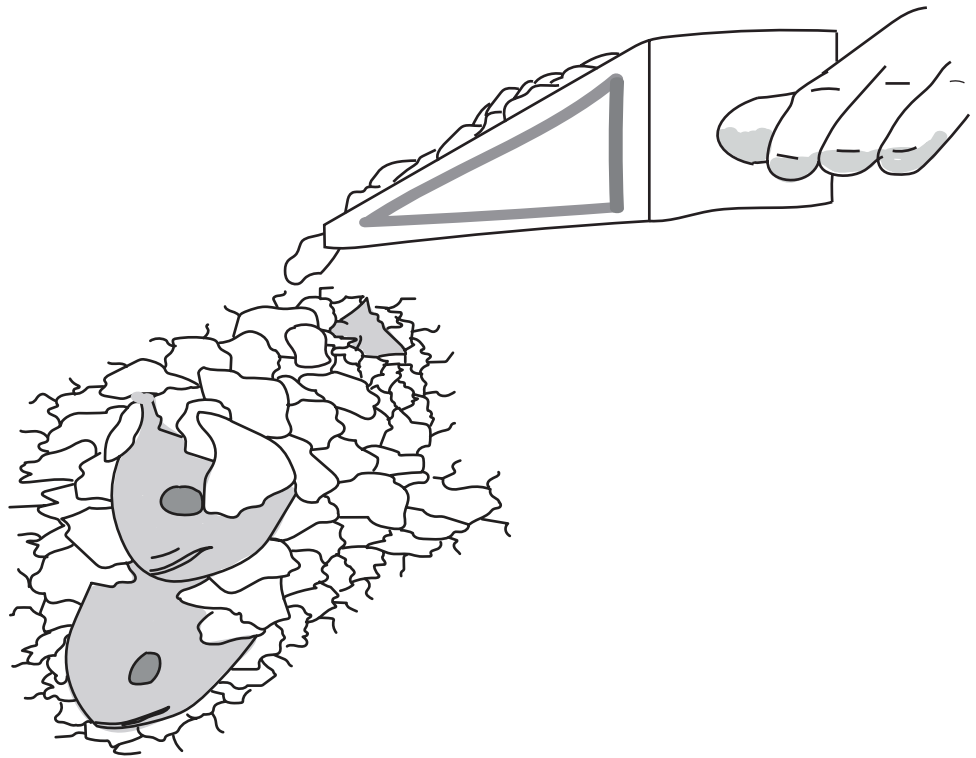


As soon as you catch the fish, the initial rule is to **KEEP IT COLD** as quick as possible otherwise it will start to break-down very fast

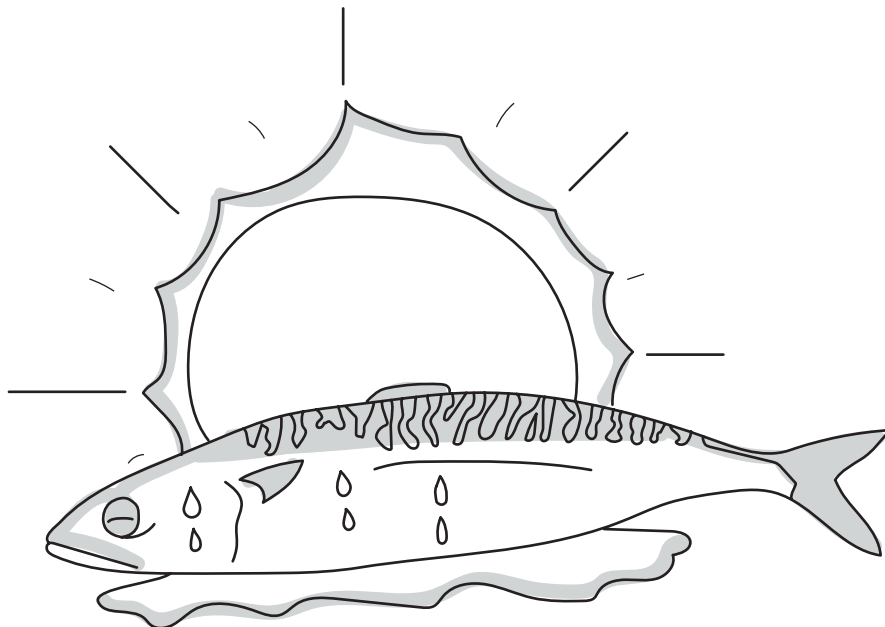


Ice well the fish or store it in a cold place to reduce the bacteria's multiplication and the enzyme's activity

The colder the fish, the longer it will stay fresh and the fresher it will taste



Can you recover the good quality of the fish once is warm by puting it in ice?



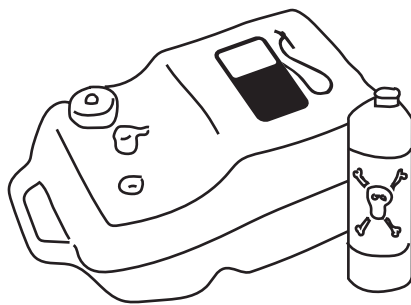
“Unfortunately not, once they are spoiled, nothing makes them better again”

The next rule is to keep **EVERYTHING CLEAN**

“Everything the fish touches, including people, must be kept very clean.
Your boat, fishing gear, equipment and even the fishers”

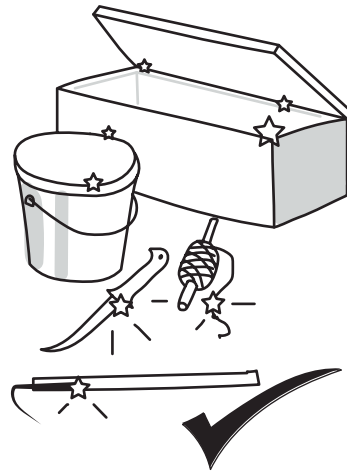
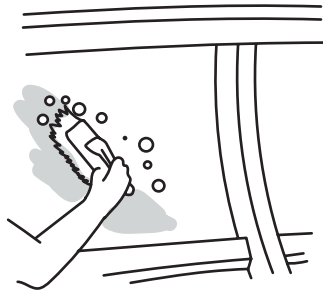


“The cleaner the boat, the fish baskets and bins, the cleaner the ice and the fishers, the longer the fish will stay fresh and the fresher it will taste”

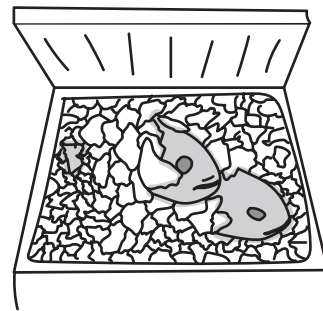


Make sure that the fuel and oil don't mess up the boat and ruin the fish

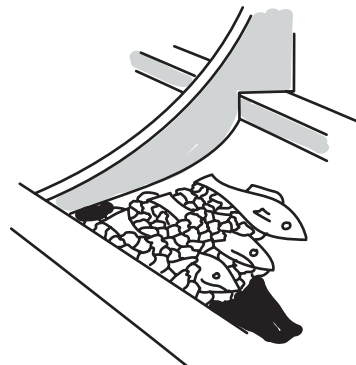
The most important rule of cleaning: We cannot clean with dirty stuff!



Use clean water for washing and keep everything clean.
Use brush, detergent and disinfectant if it possible.

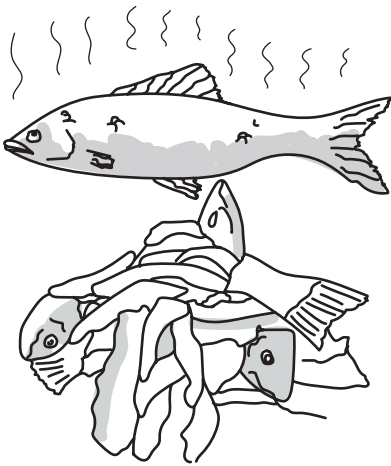


Use clean ice in clean fish containers and keep it iced



Don't wash the fish in dirty seawater, and don't keep it in dirty places

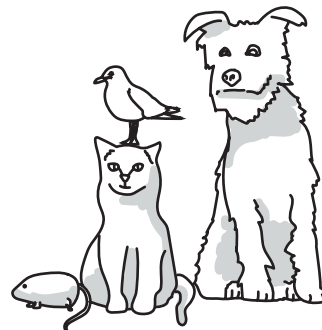
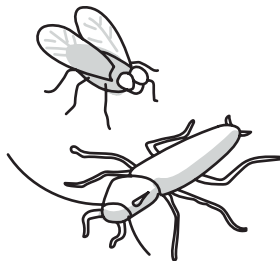
We need to make sure that



Also all the fish guts, bait and rotting fish must be keep as far away as possible from fresh fish, to avoid cross-contamination

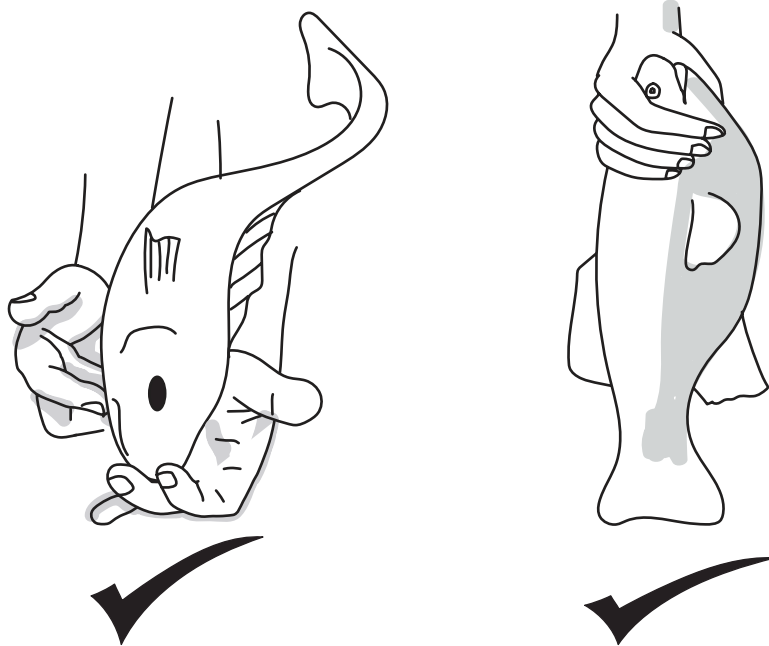


And you must be clean and on good health to work with fish, otherwise you'll infect the fish and make people sick

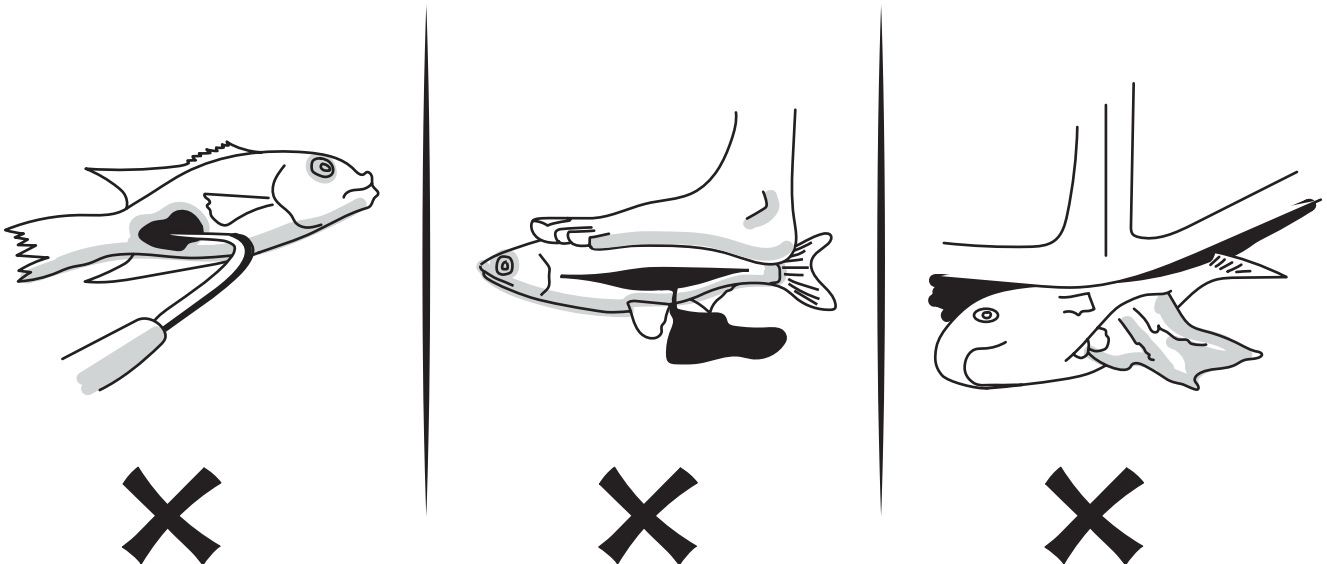


Insects, pests, domestic animals and birds can also infect you or the fish, and make people sick. So we have to keep them away from fresh fish

The next rule we must remember is to **BE GENTLE** with the fish



The fish will spoil faster if you bruise it, split the skin, or burst the guts
Holding fish from the head is a good way to avoid damage



Don't gaff the fish on
the body

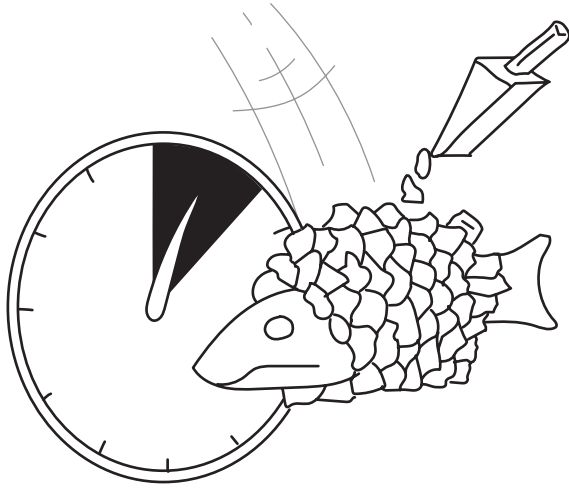
Don't stand on the fish

Don't squash the fish
under heavy objects

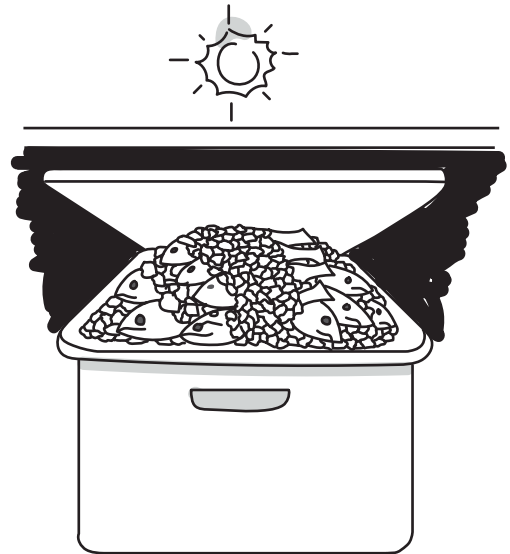
If you're a good fisher, you should treat your fish with respect and care
from catching to selling

The fourth rule to remember is to **'BE QUICK'**

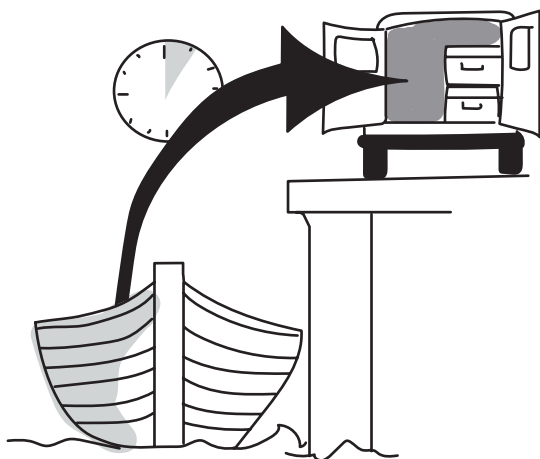
To avoid bacteria and enzymes damaging the fish, ice it and transport it quickly



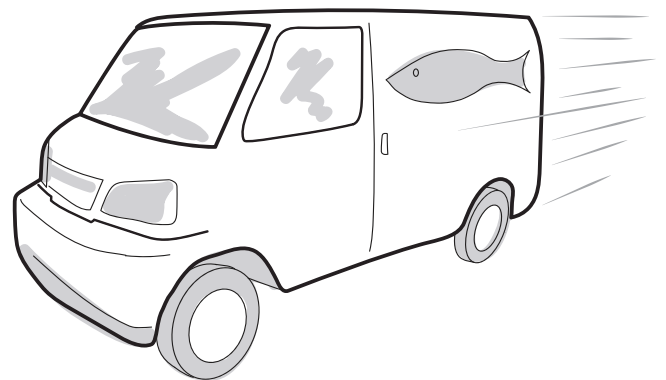
If you're low on ice, you
need to transport it quickly



If you can't be quick you'll
need lots of ice



Make sure that you don't leave
the fish untended for longer than
strictly necessary



Make sure that the transporter does
not ruin the fish by not icing it or
leaving it for long time in the truck

Catching the Fish

Chapter 2

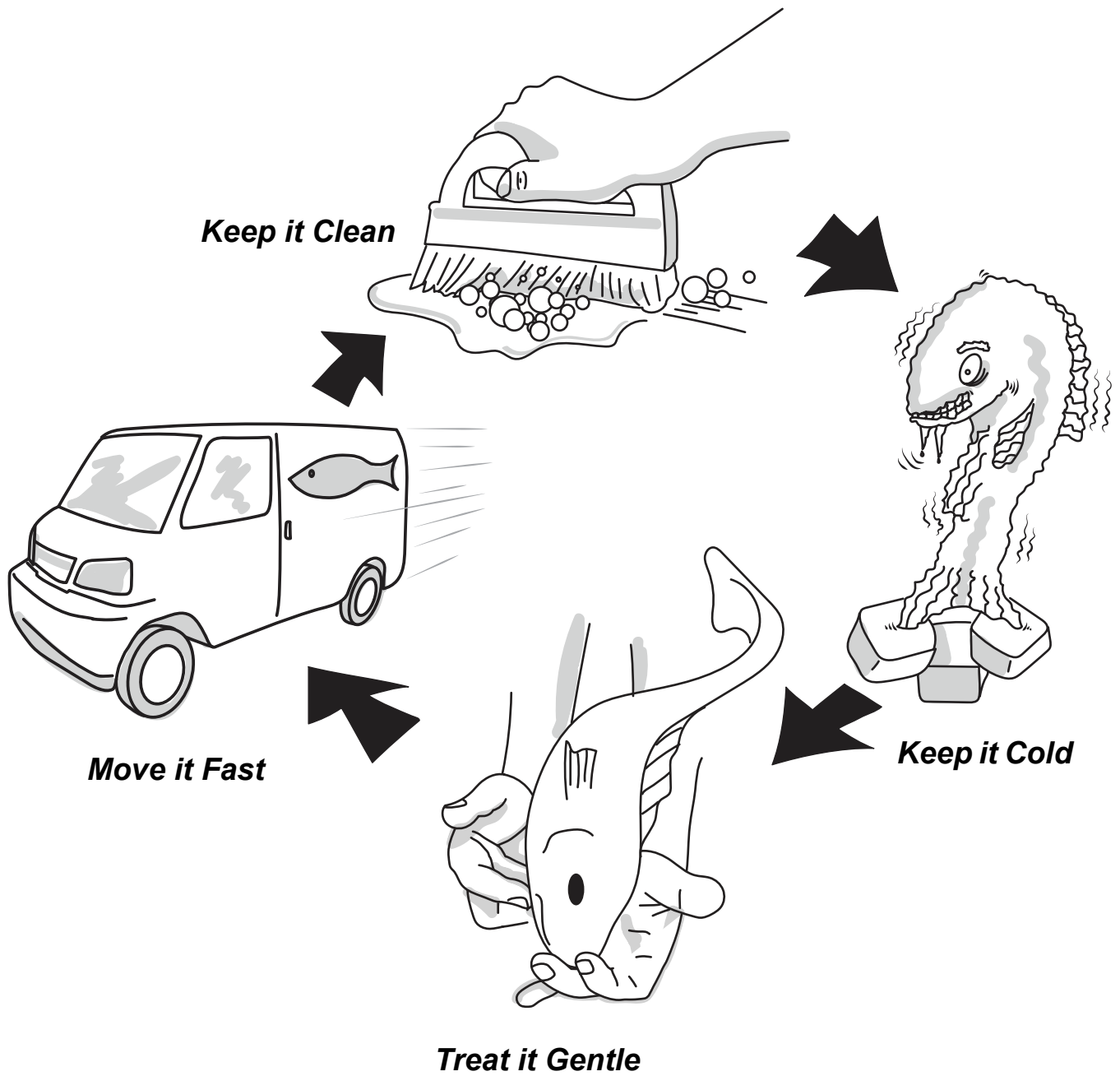
“It doesn’t matter how you catch fish, the 4 Rules of Fish Handling always apply”



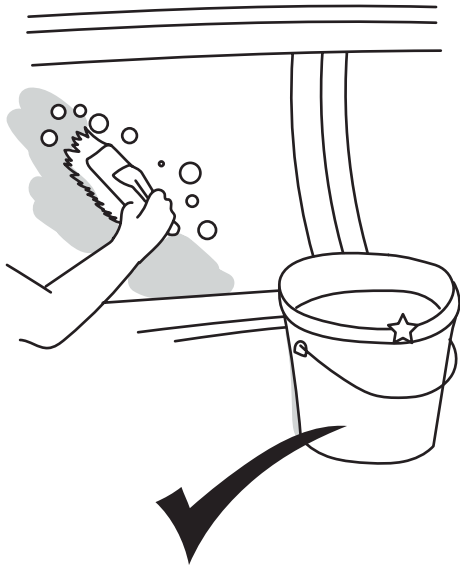
It could be fishing from a boat somewhere, spearfishing or from the shore.

Lets see how they work in different situations

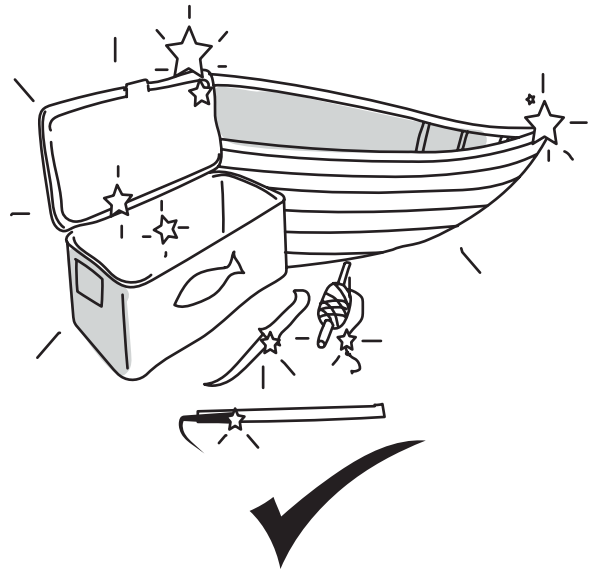
“Can you remember the rules?”



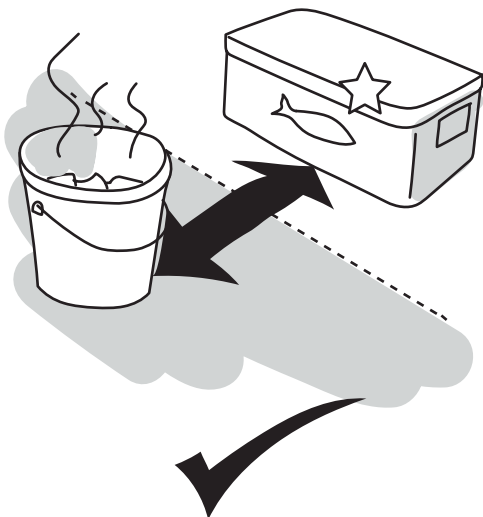
“How to keep your boat CLEAN”



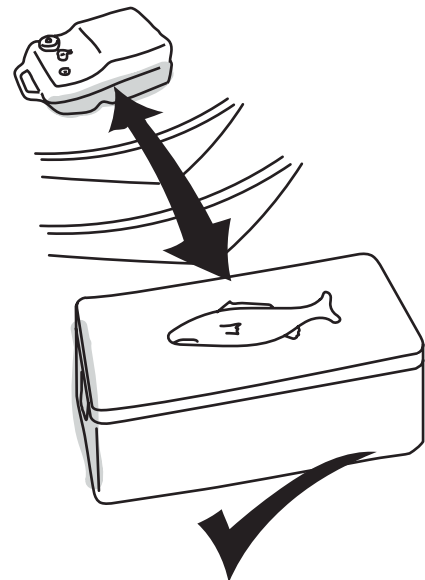
Keep the boat clean with clean water, a scrubbing brush and detergent/desinfectant mix



Clean equipment means less bacteria and enzymes, and that means better fish



“Separate bait or old fish from new fish”
The bacteria in the old fish or bait will spoil the new fish if they’re together in the same place



“Keep fuel away from your fish to avoid spoiling your catch”
“Buyers will pay less money for fish smelling like fuel

Taking good care of your equipment



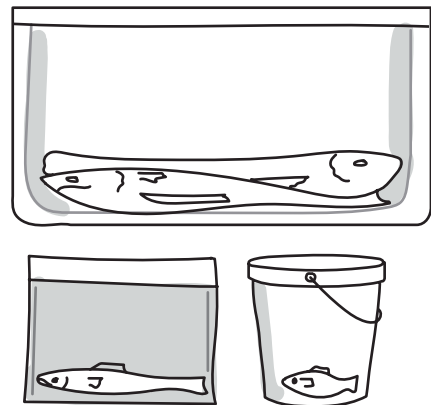
Keep a cleaning set, use it with clean seawater, scrubbing brush and detergent/disinfectant mix



If you run out of detergent, at least clean your stuff with clean seawater, and a clean scrubbing brush

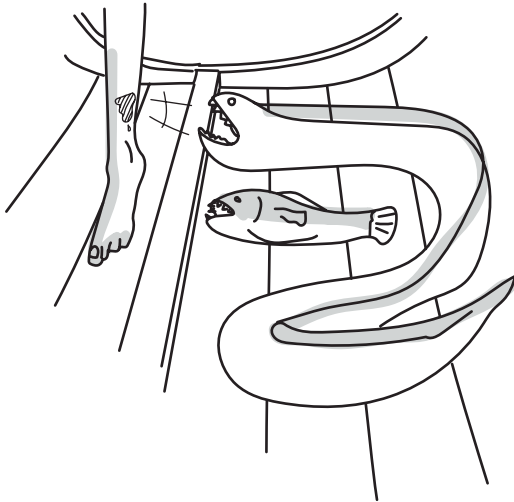


Once is well cleaned, drying it under sunlight is a good way to kill any remaining bacteria



Make sure your containers are well maintained and adequate for the fish you catch

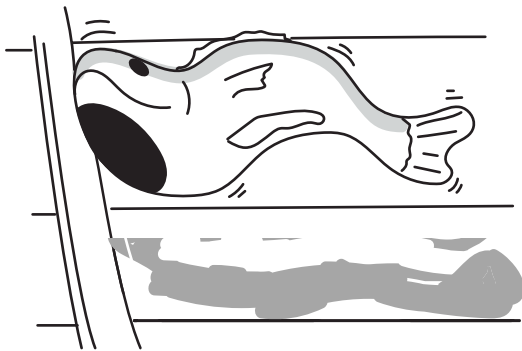
Fish kept in the bottom of the boat can cause a number of problems



Spikes and teeth of thrashing fish can cause you injury.



Slime and blood from fish makes the boat slippery and dangerous



Thrashing fish hit themselves against frames or hard items, cutting, bruising and lowering the quality of the fish

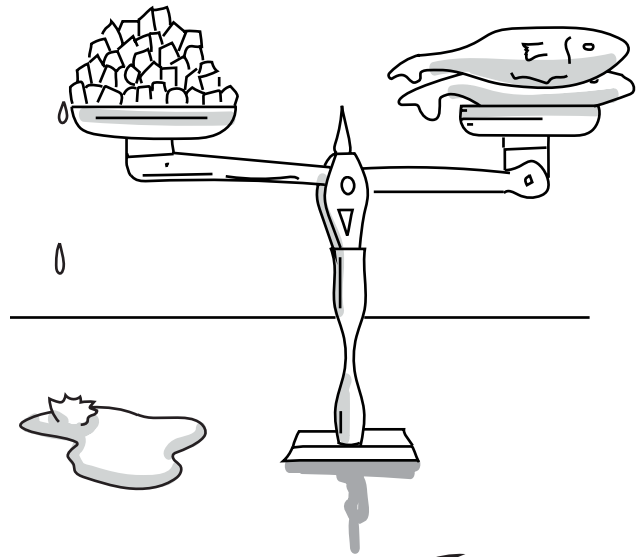


Any dirty or contaminated things your handle risk falling on good fresh fish and ruining it

How to keep your fish COOL onboard

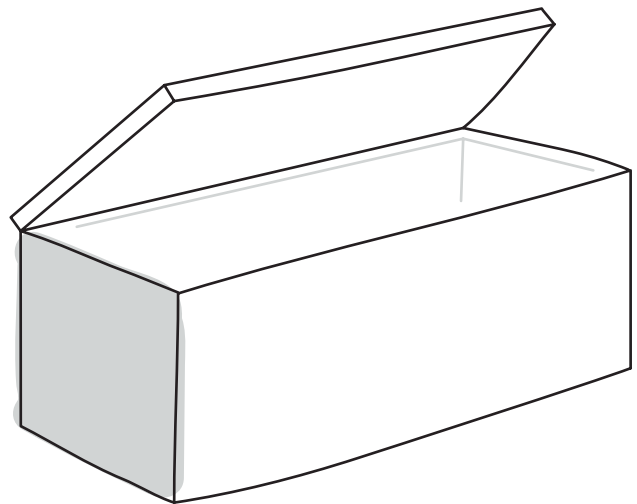
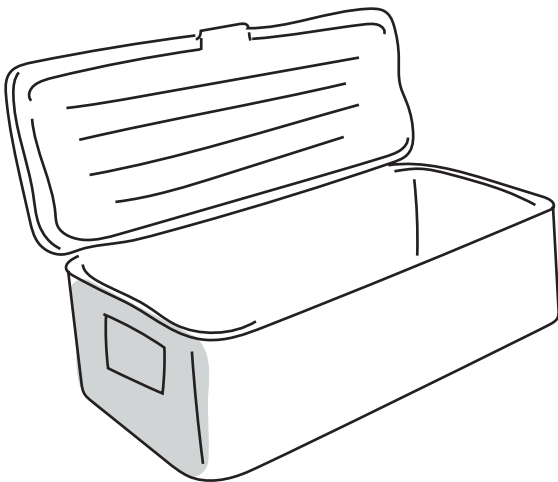


The fish needs to “feel” cold when you touch it



Try to have as much ice as fish you are trying to catch

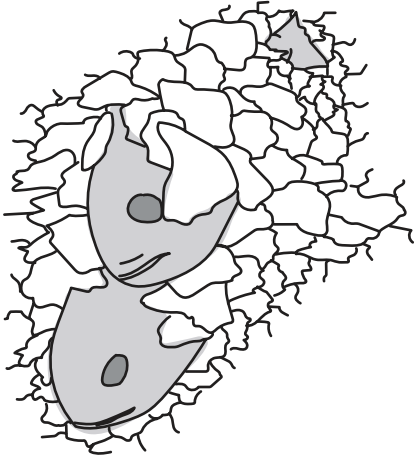
The best way to carry ice is in an insulated container



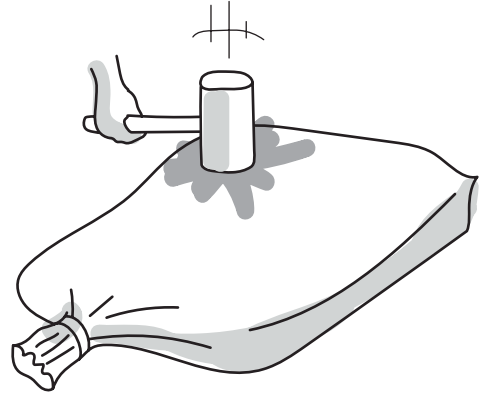
Plastic Chiller Bins work well in all types of boats, in big boats you can use old fridges or chest freezers, but they are more dangerous to handle, harder to clean and rust away very quickly

The cooler you keep your fish the longer it will last

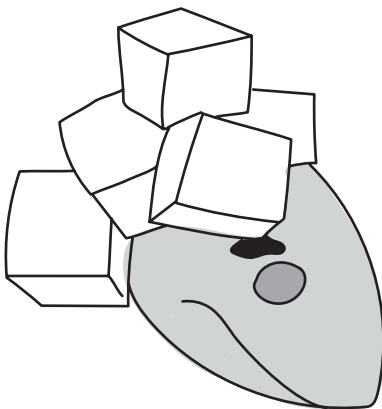
But not all icing works the same



Flake or small ice is best.
The small pieces to surround the
fish closer, so it's better cooled



You can smash the big pieces of ice
into smaller inside a bag to avoid
loosing ice and making it dirty



Big blocks of ice don't cool as well
ones and damage the fish

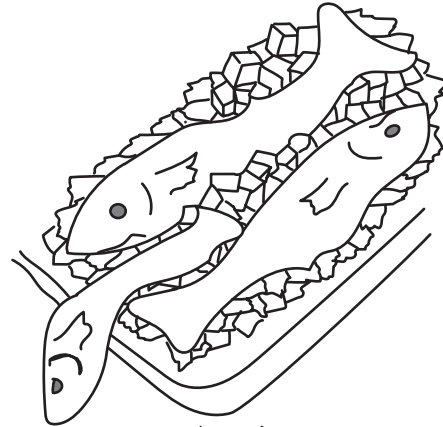


Reusing old dirty ice is not a good
idea as it contaminates the "new" fish

Good Icing practices



Layer the fish and the ice, so there is always ice on top and below the fish

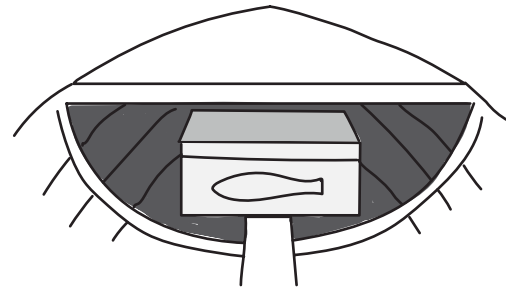


If the top layer has melted or the ice shifted repack the fish

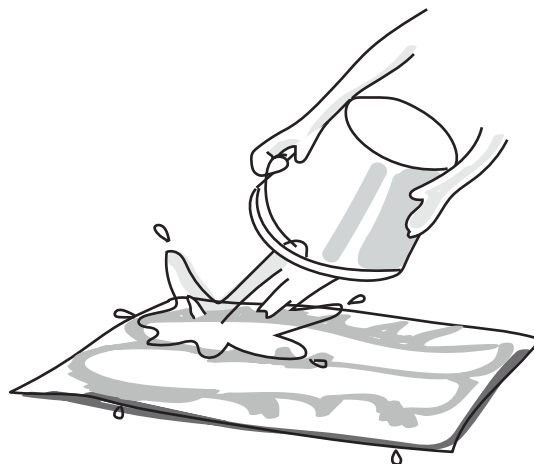
What can be done if you have no access to ice?



Get the guts and gills out and rinse it well in clean seawater

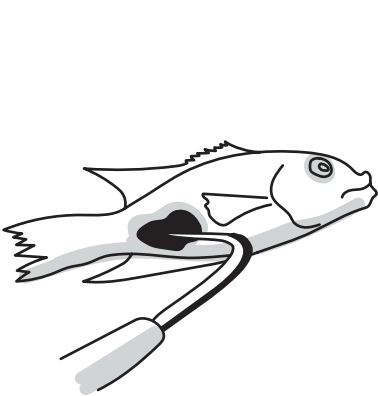


Store the fish in shaded area of the boat away from the sun

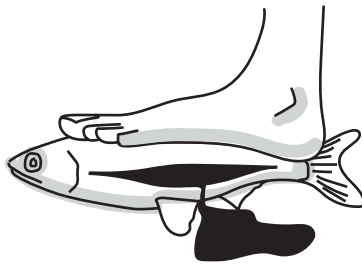


If the fish are too big, put a clean thick wet cloth over the them and keep it wet

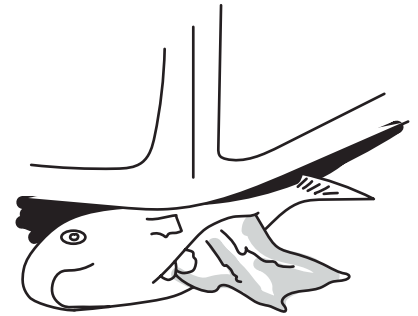
Be GENTLE with the fish in the boat



Don't gaff the fish on the body.



Don't stand on the fish.

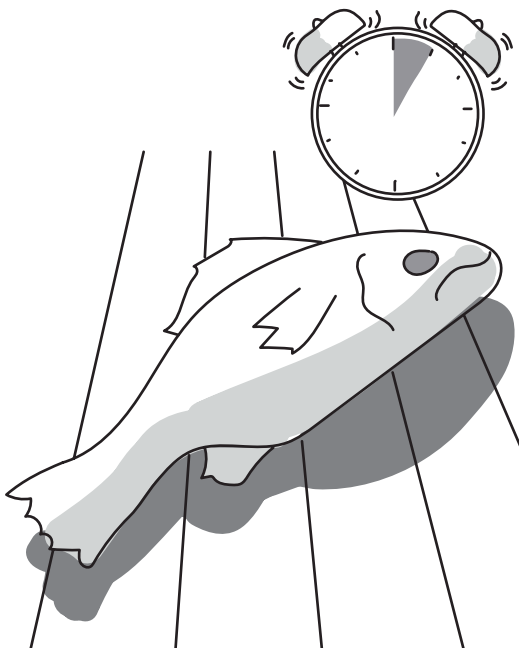


Don't squash the fish under heavy objects

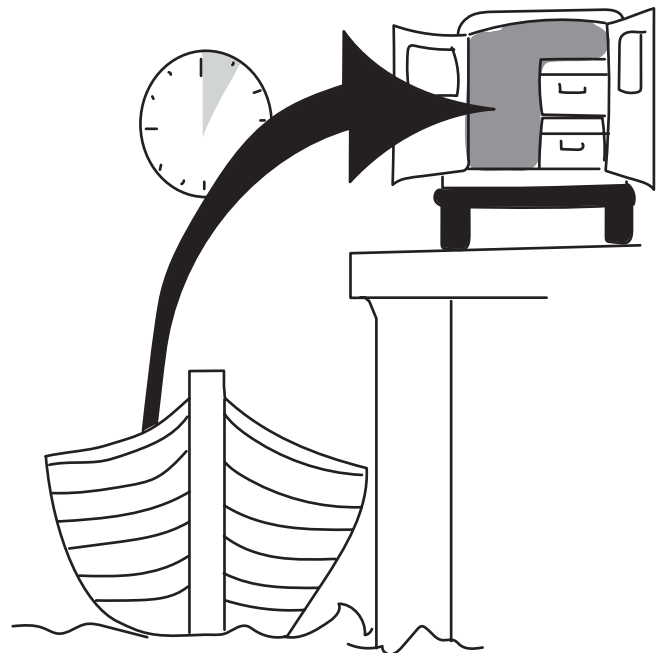
Be QUICK moving the fish out of the boat

The less time bacteria and enzymes have, the better the catch will be.

If you cannot be cold with fish, then definitely be quick!



Don't leave the fish unattended on the deck of the boat for too long.



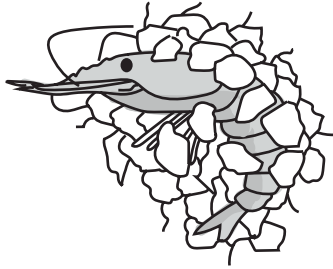
Unload the fish as quick as possible after fishing.

Many fishers catch other species, but do it from the shore.

The 4 rules apply to them too and what they're catching.

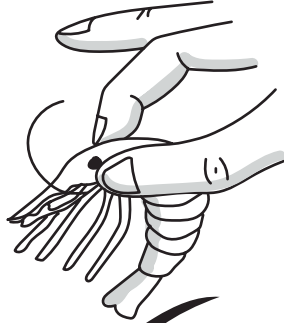
Prawns and Shrimp

Can spoil quickly and loose their fluids, which reduces their value and flavour



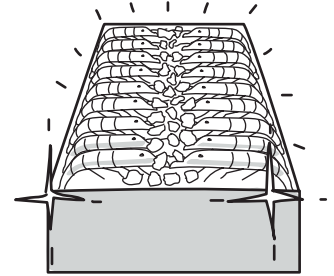
Be Quick and Keep Cool

Cool them down quickly with ice because prawns spoil quickly



Be Gentle

Because they damage easily and loose value. Broken ones spoil faster

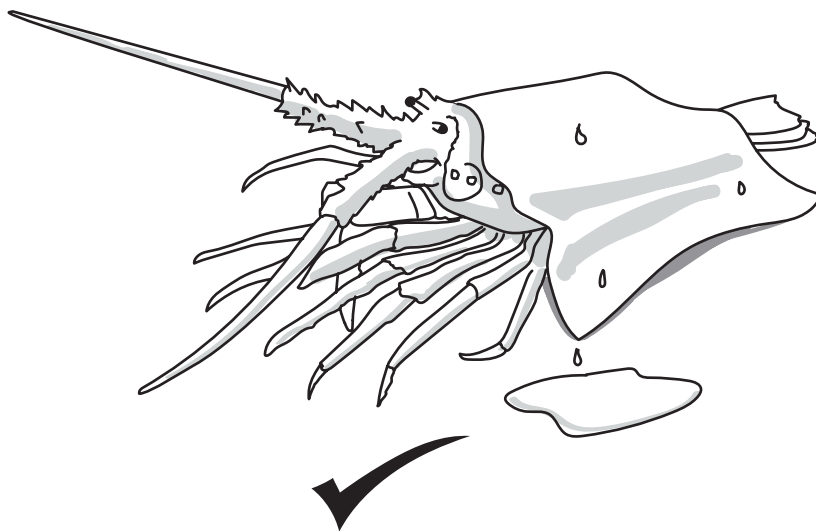


Be Clean

The cleaner the ice and the containers the longer and fresher they will last

Lobsters

Lobsters have more value when alive, putting them in ice will kill them, but is important to keep them cool and hydrated



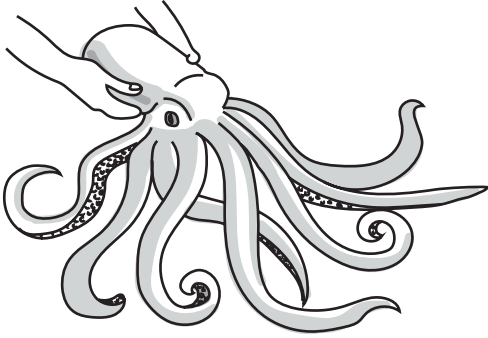
Keep them Cool

By wrapping them into a tight damp cloth

Many fishers catch other species, but do it from the shore.
The 4 rules apply to them too and what they're catching.

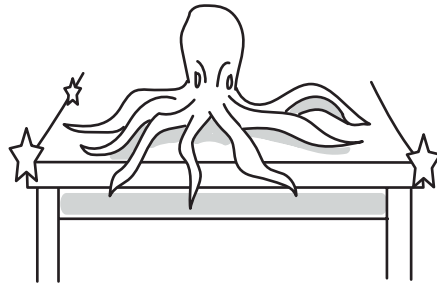
Octopus

Are very delicate because they don't have a rigid bony skeleton



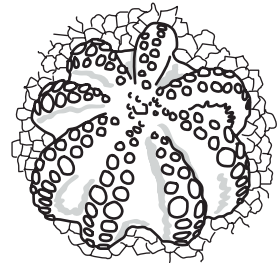
Be Gentle

Minimise physical damage,
the skin breaks easily



Be Clean

When you gut it, clean it
and cut it



Keep Cold

Once dead keep it
iced as they spoil fast

Shellfish

Harvest only come from clean places. If the water smell foul is better for you to
cook them, and don't eat them raw



Be Clean

Don't harvest after big
rains if cattle is nearby



Be Gentle

Don't throw them.
They should be alive

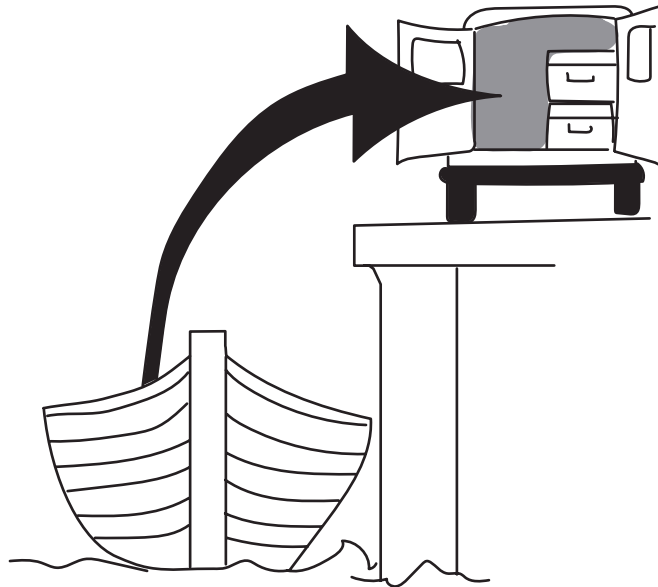


Keep Cold

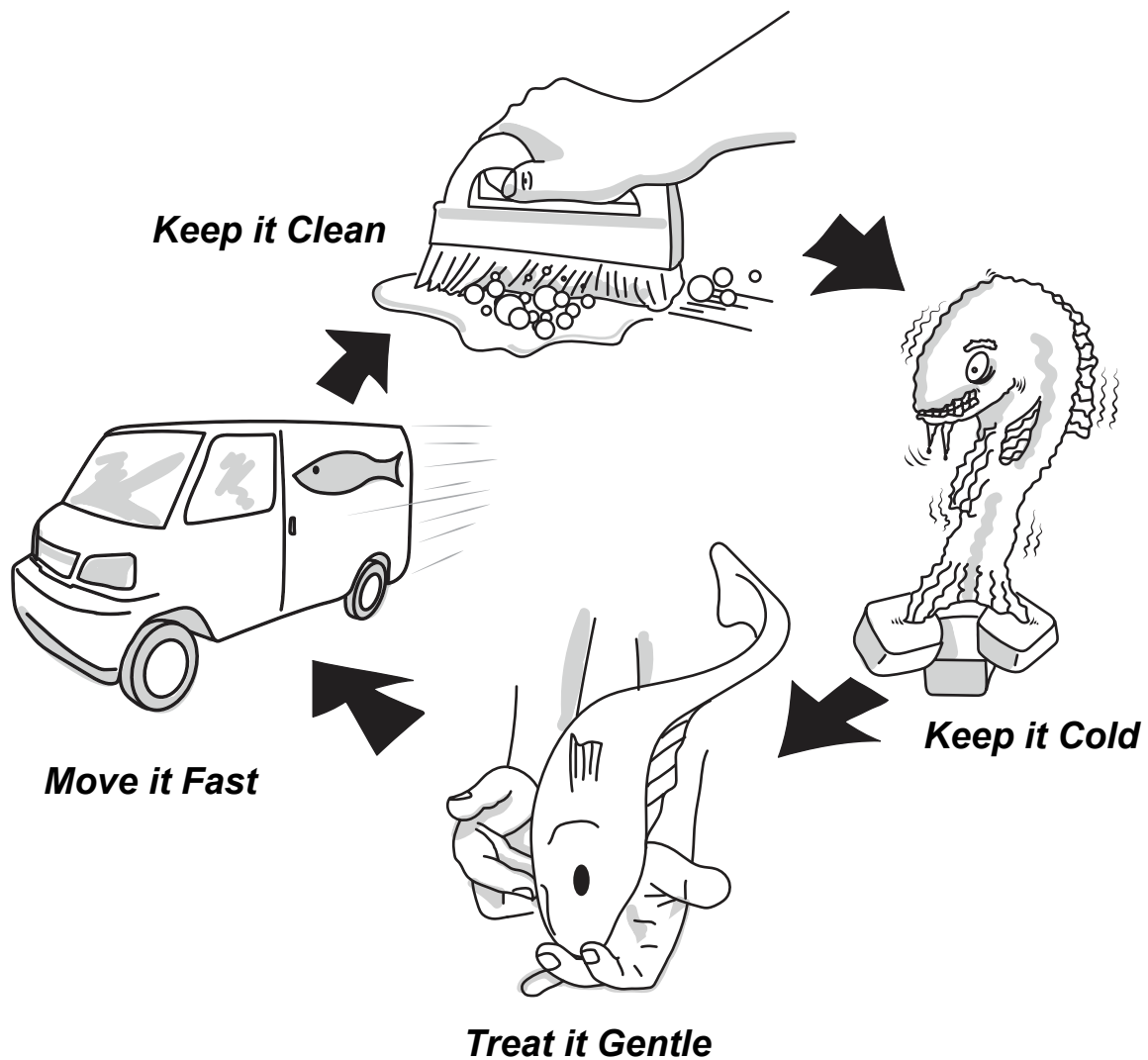
Keep them in a damp
place without sunlight

Landing the Fish

Chapter 3

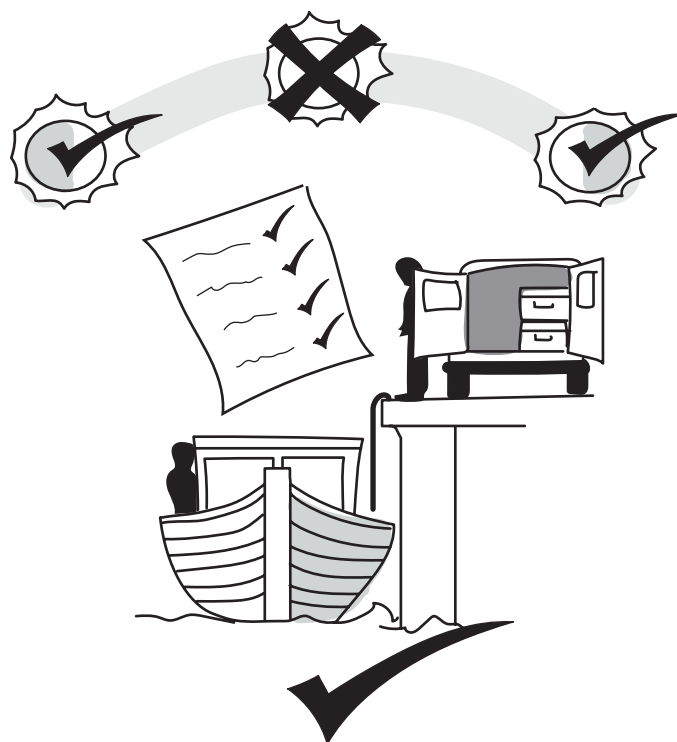


It doesn't matter where or when you unload your fish, the 4 rules are important

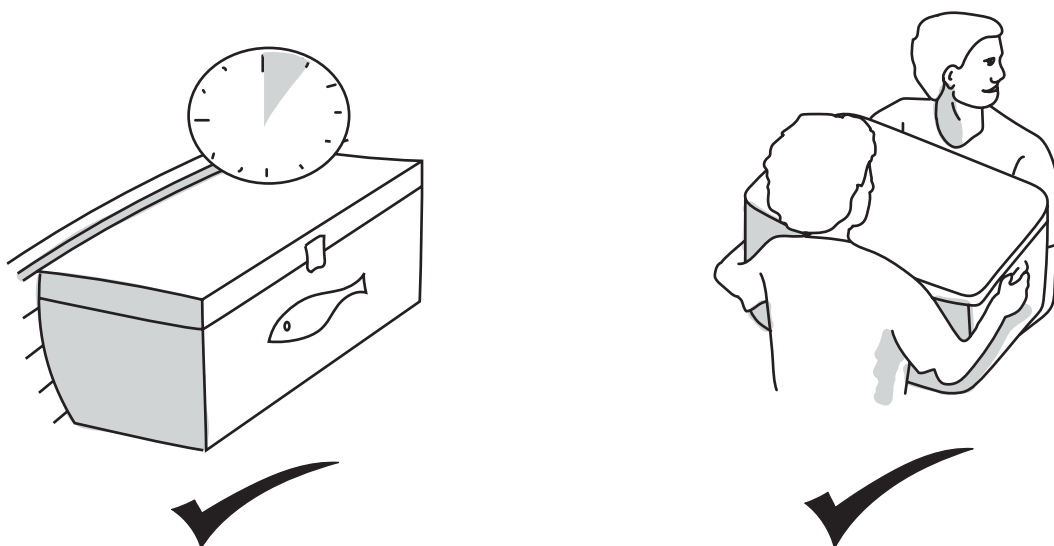


Best Practices

Landing should only commence once all the equipment and people are ready.



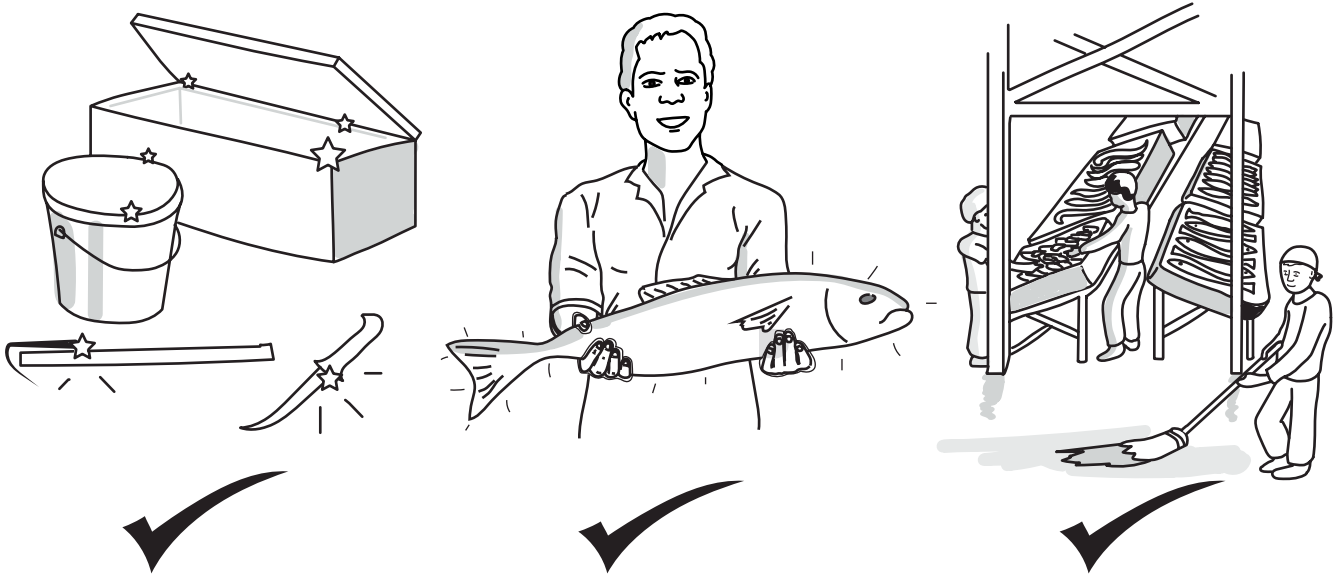
Unload the catch quickly to avoid the fish sitting out in the heat.
Avoid the hottest part of the day.



Be Quick and Keep Cool

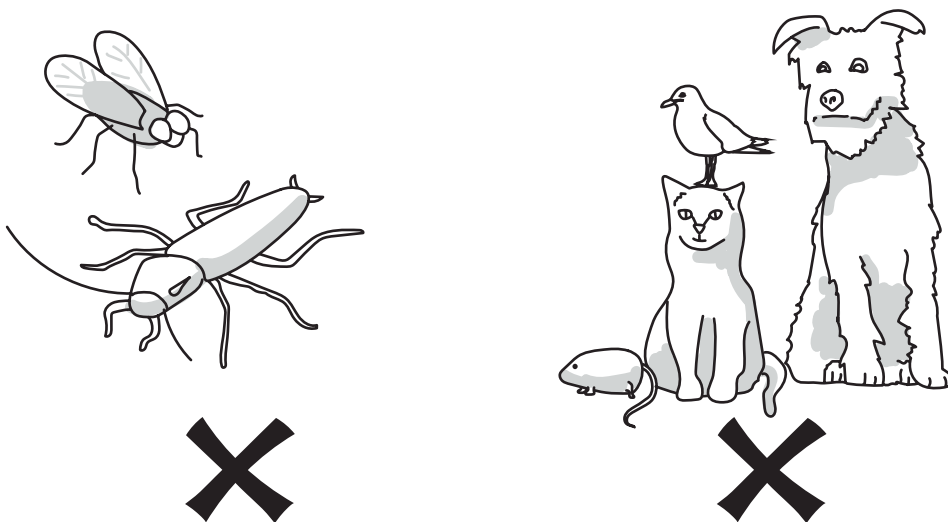
Don't leave your fish in the onboard storage any longer than necessary. If you need to leave it longer, check it regularly and add more ice if needed. Unload the fish box and then transfer the fish later into the next iced place

Here is where you depart from your hard caught fish, so make sure that the people receiving it respect the 4 rules



Be Gentle and Keep it Clean

Good cleaning of everything, including fish boxes is vital after use. Rinse, scrub with detergent/disinfectant and rinse well with fresh water before adding fish or ice.

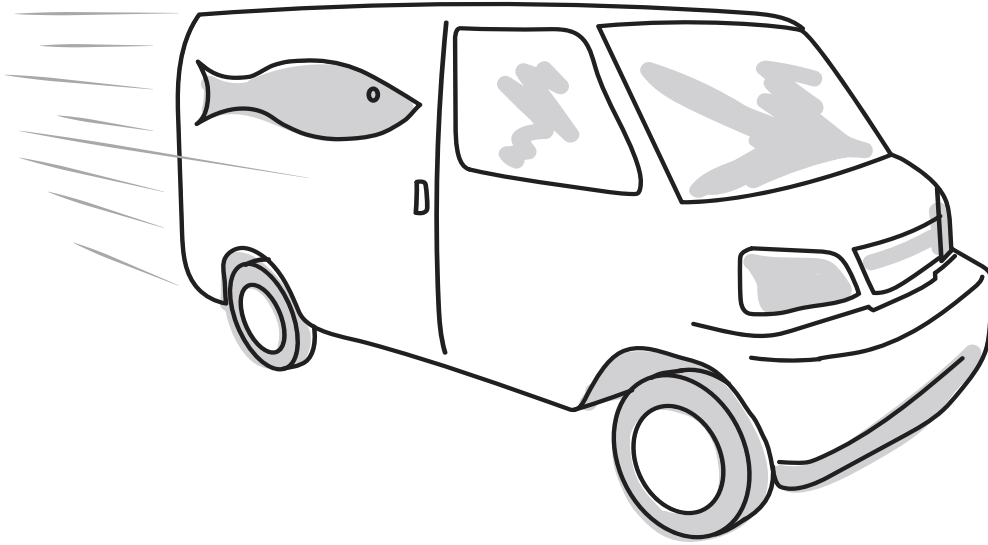


Keep it Clean

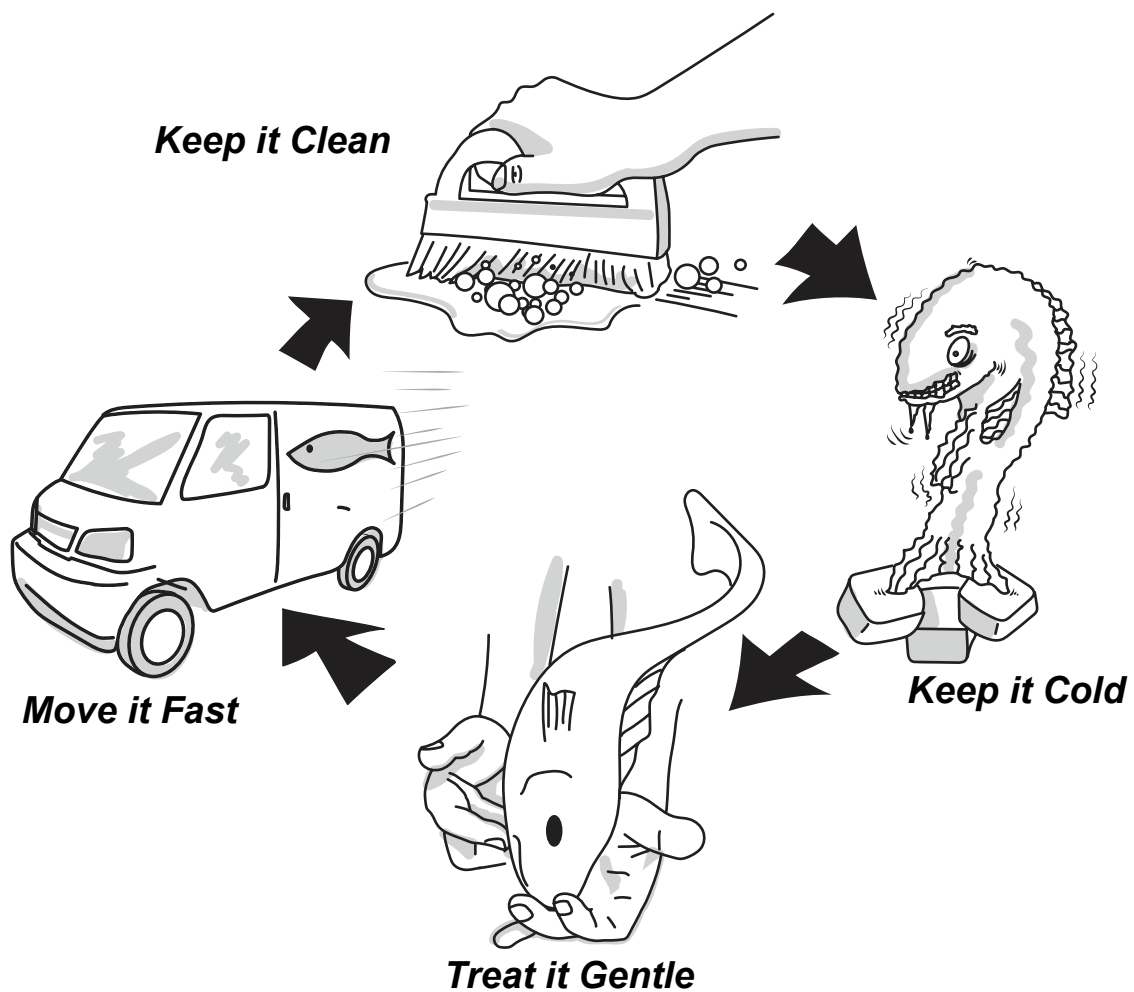
Ensure that there are no insects, pests, domestic animals in the landing site. And if they are, make sure that they don't get to the fish or come to the boat

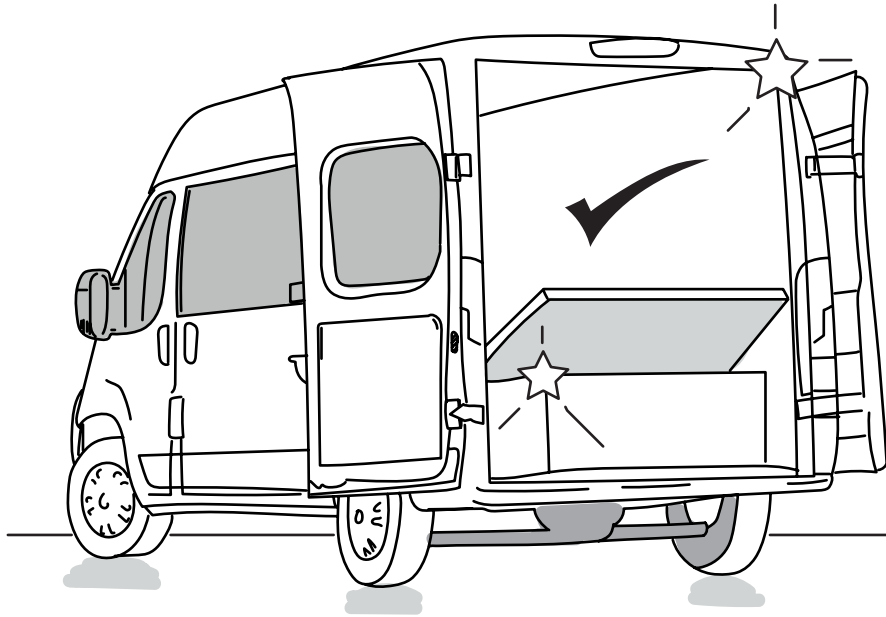
Transporting the Fish

Chapter 4



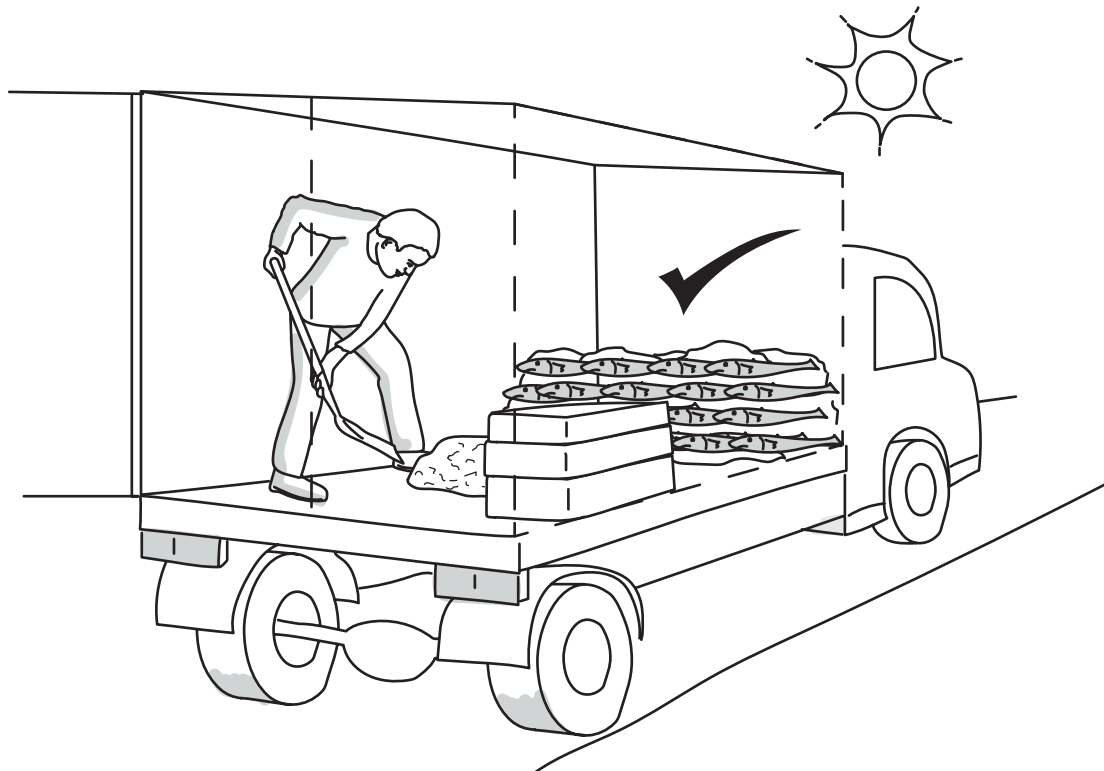
With the transport, you also need to be clean, cold, gentle and fast, just like when catching and landing fish!





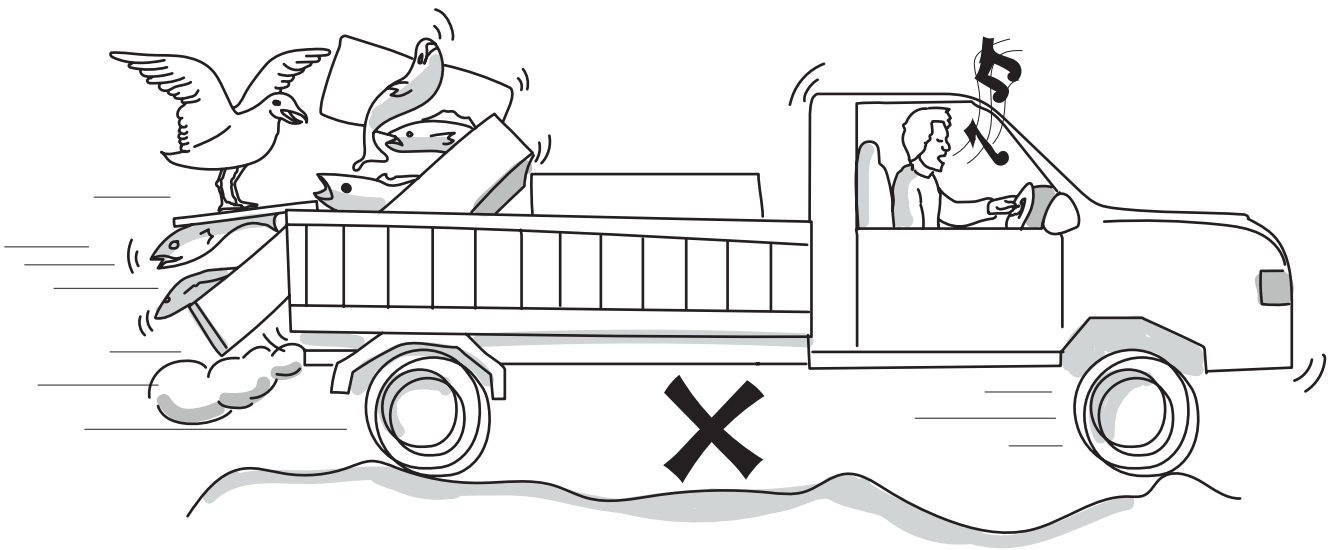
Keep it Clean

Good cleaning of everything that touches the fish is really important. Rinse, scrub with detergent/disinfectant and rinse well with fresh water before loading fish or ice.



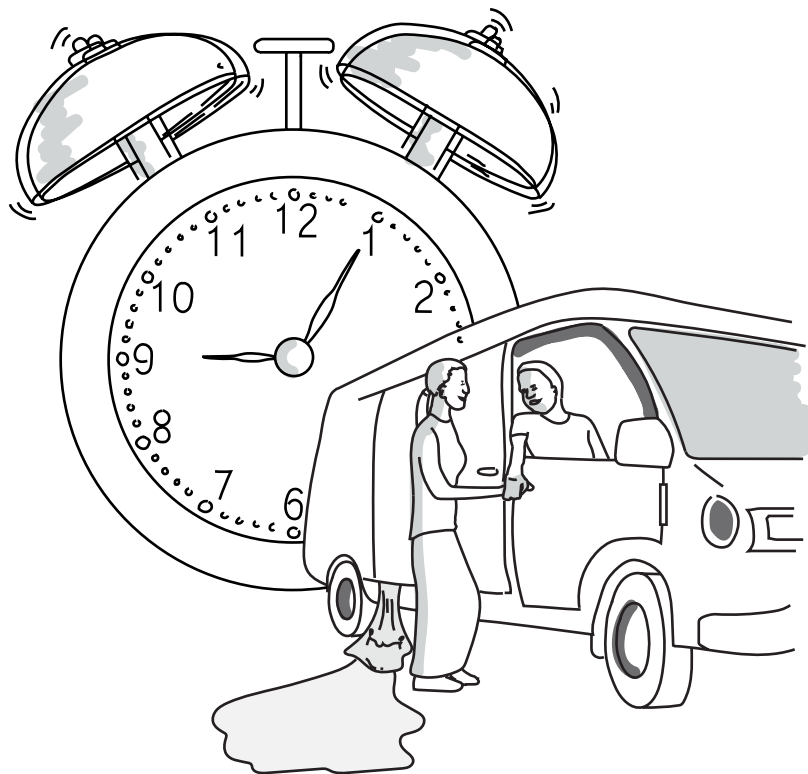
Keep it Cold

Ice the fish like if it was in a boat to avoid temperature fluctuations. This is especially important if the fish is in transport for a long time.



Treat it Gentle

If the truck is open all the fish should be covered or in boxes and the load tied up.
Drive slowly if the roads are bumpy to avoid damaging the fish

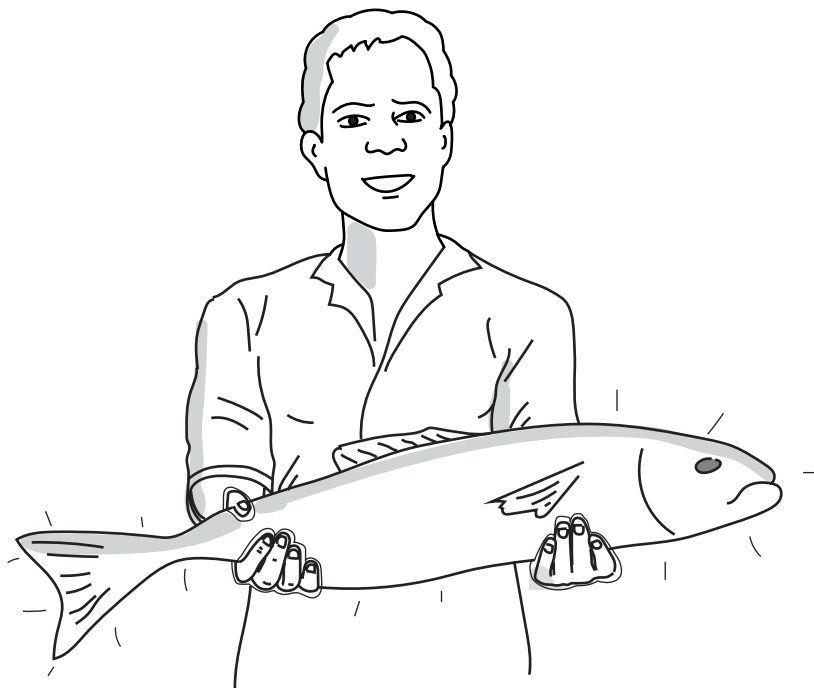


Move it fast

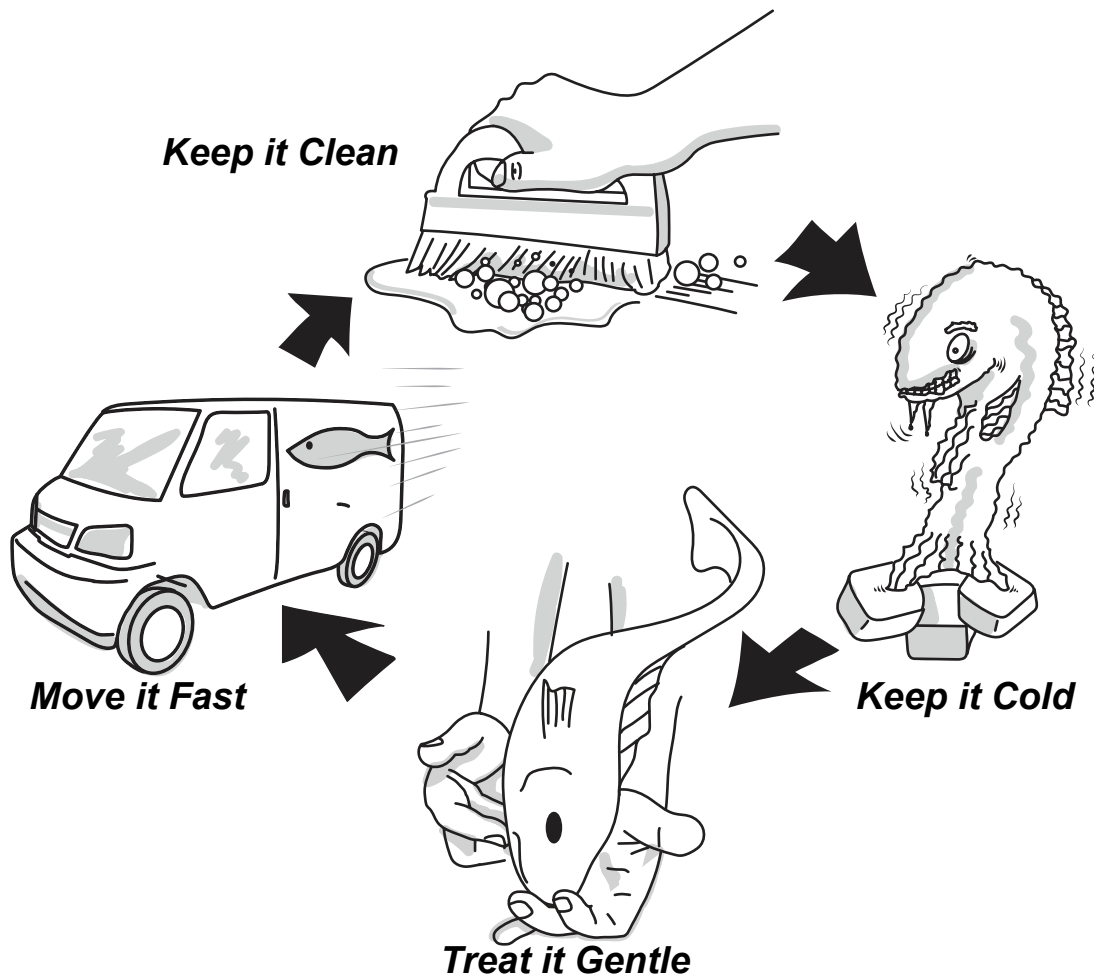
You should not be driving faster than allowed! But don't waste time either!

Selling the Fish

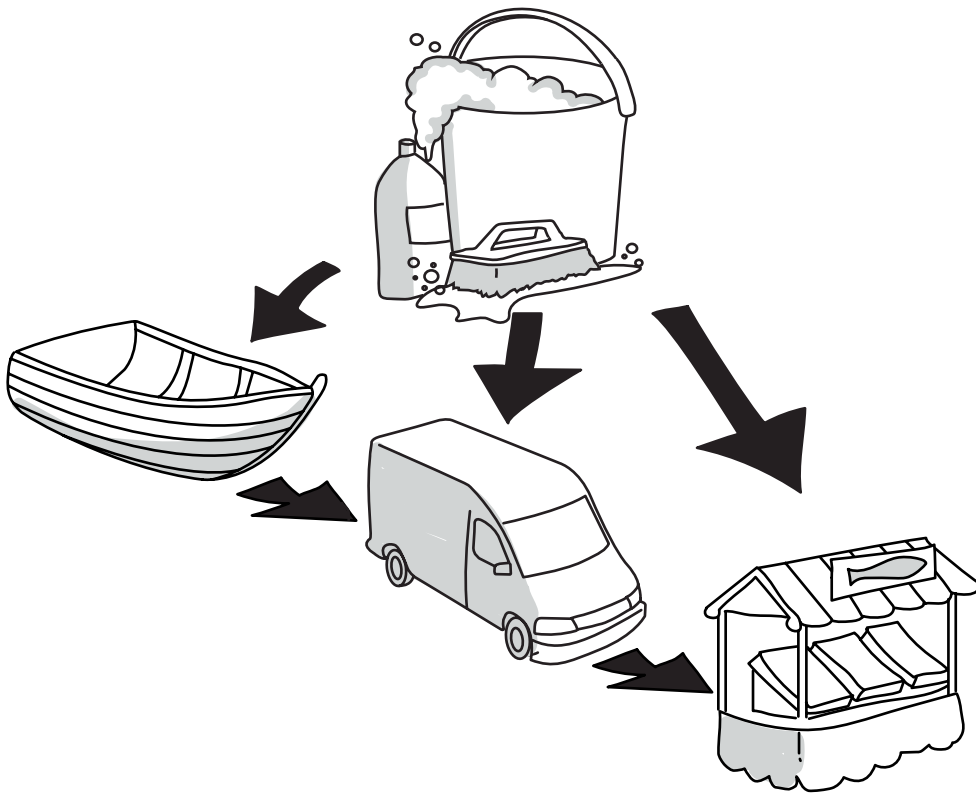
Chapter 5



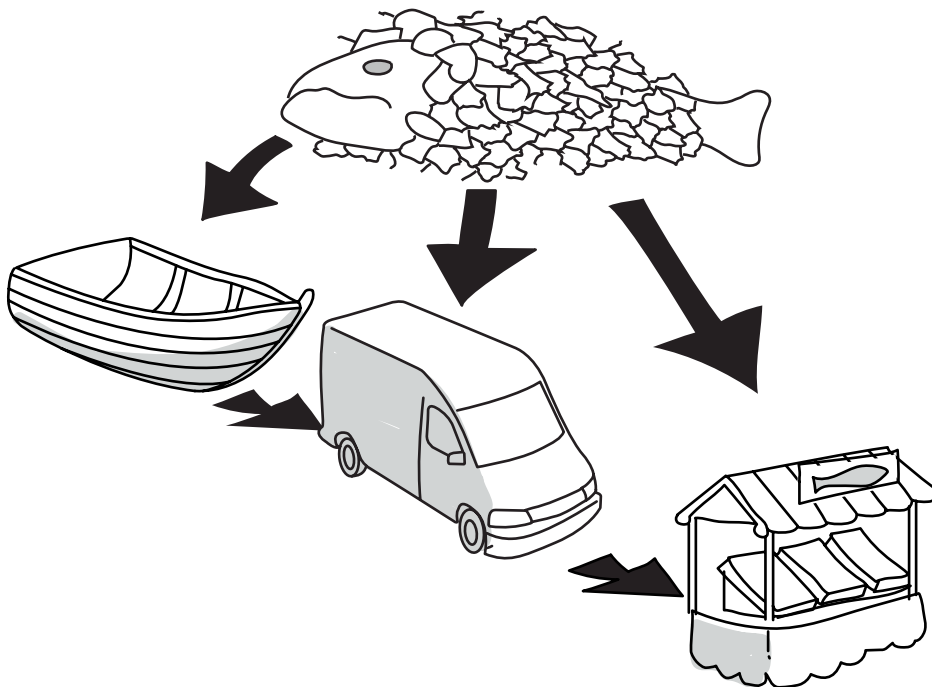
Here is where the effort that you have done so far with the 4 rules will pay back, as you have good fish to sell



Clean and Cold from the boat to the market

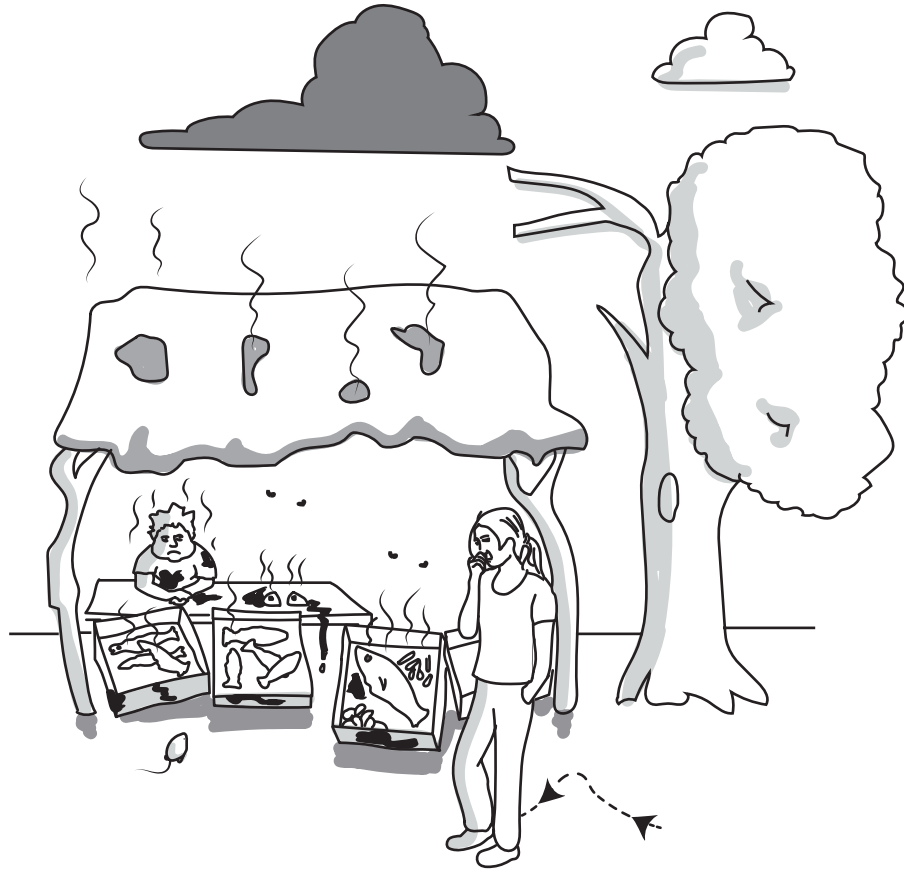


Cleanliness from catching the fish through to selling, avoids unnecessary bacterial contamination and keeps the fish smelling fresher for a better price

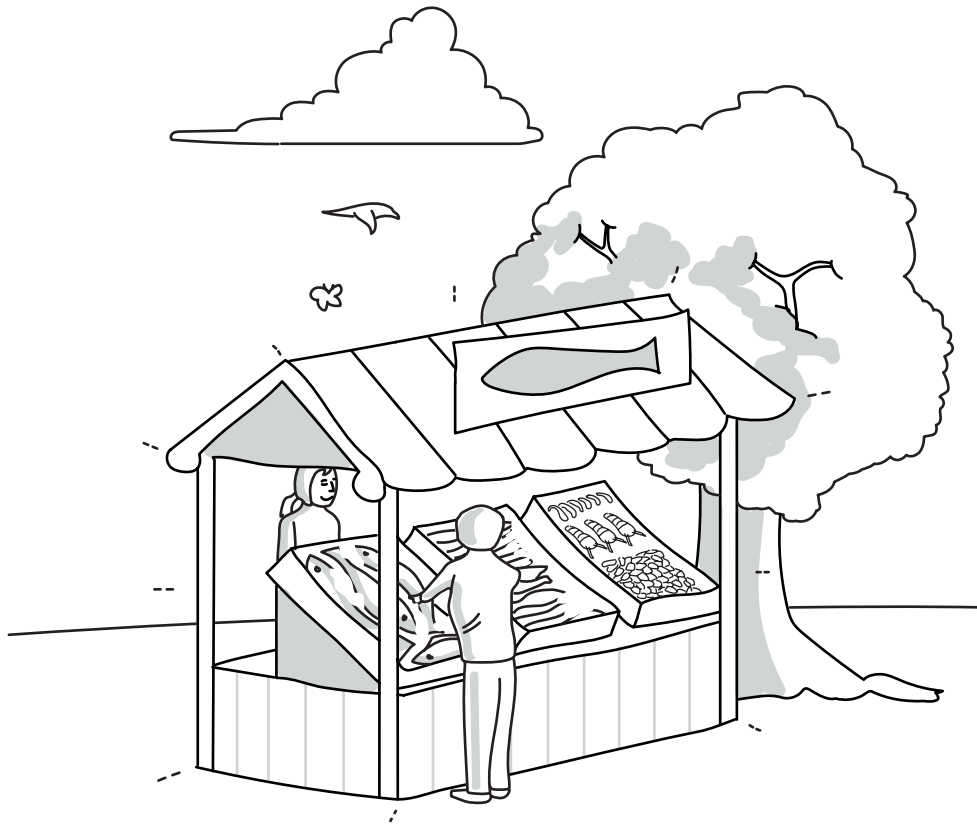


Keeping the fish cold from catching through to selling, slows the bacterial and enzymes activity, keeping the fish fresher for a better price

Clean and Cold in the market



People don't like buying warm fish from messy and smelly fish stalls



People like fresh looking fish from nicely organised fish stalls.

Traceability of the Fish

Chapter 6

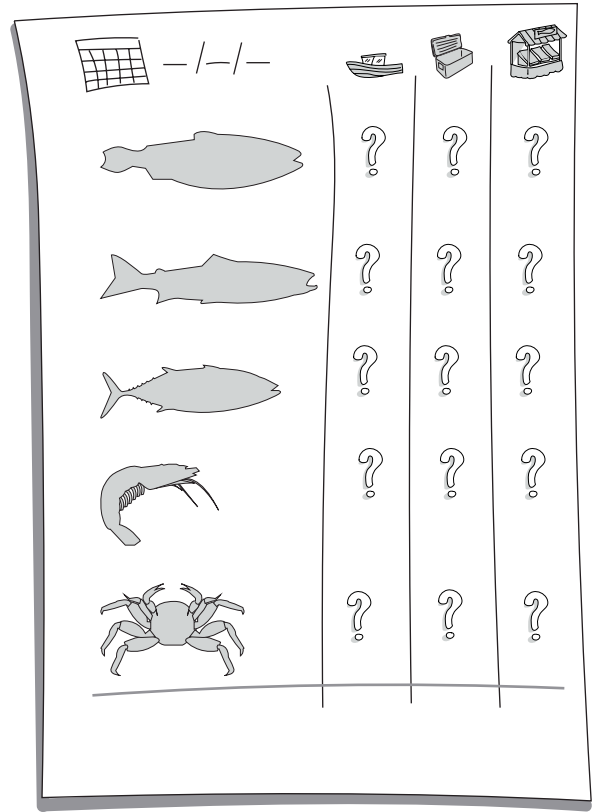
No one really likes paper work...

But is important to keep record of what and how much your caught, to whom you sold it.

Or what fish you brought, from whom, how it was stored and who and when you sold the fish to.

Records could protect you from being short paid. Giving you the ability to identify what fish people brought and who supplied you.

If someone the accuses you of doing something wrong, you can prove you didn't do it.

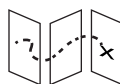


Its good to record the following information

Who caught that fish?



Where it was caught?



When was it caught?



Was iced and how long was it stored?



When and where was it landed?



Quality and temperature when landed?



Who transported it and to where?



Quality and temperature when delivered?



Who bought it and then sold it?

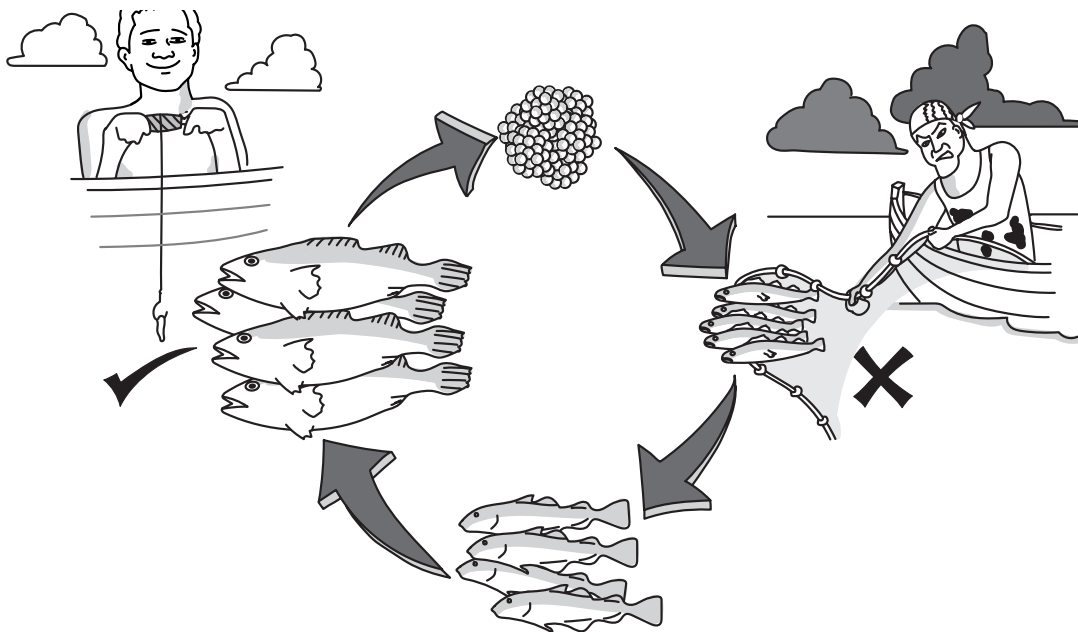


Ecosystem - What fish to catch?

Chapter 7

Is important to understand the life cycles of fish.

We need to ensure that we have fish next year, so we may need to throw the smaller fish back into the water alive, so they can grow up and reproduce. We can keep the big ones that have already reproduced.



If we don't take care, we can get to overfishing, which is a situation where we catch too much fish and such fast pace than they cannot naturally replenish. Otherwise, we take out more fish than the fish can naturally reproduce.

Fishermen want to make a living by catching and selling fish, as do the fish sellers. Consumers want to eat fish, but also want to preserve the ecosystem, which in turn wants to sustain itself.

If everyone takes care only of their interests and ignores everyone else, then no one wins, and we all lose.

Only by knowing the facts about when and how much fish we can take out of the sea and still have enough left to sustain the fish population, we all will have fish in the future for our families.

Notes

Notes

APEC Project: OFWG 01 2015A

Produced by

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APEC Publication Number: APEC#216-OF-03.1