

# REEL TALK



November 2021

## Funeral Service for Eric Parker



17 November 1949 – 20 September 2021

*It is with great sadness that the Club received news that our long serving Life Member Eric Parker had passed away.*

Please be advised that the funeral service for Ric Parker, Life Member of S C A C, will be held at Pinnaroo Cemetery at 10:30AM on Wednesday 10th of November 2021.

As a suggestion, could club members attending wear their club shirts.



## **Surf Casting and Angling Club of WA (Inc.)**

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# **Club Committee for 2020-21**

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*Chris Stickells*

## **Recorder**

*Peet Wessels*

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## **Website Coordinator**

*Peet Wessels*



## **SCAC Life Members**

*George Holman, Ian Cook, Bob Henderson, Terry Fuller, Mal Head, Peter Osborne*

## **Deceased life members:**

*Vic Davis, Doug Edward, Lloyd Dunn, Dudley Brown, Noel Knight, Les Shand, Ron Kildahl, Bob Klein, Jim Strong, Eric Parker*





## **President's Report - November 2021**

Thinking back over the last few months it seems the conditions have been against us, the swells and storms this year have changed the beach a lot and the seaweed has made fishing your favourite spot much harder. Let's hope with summer on the way the beaches clear up and the fish are easier to find.

Dry casting is now going to be on Mondays for the next few months, please contact Ron if you have any questions.

Our last meeting had a few new members attend and fill in a membership form to join the club, if you see some new faces, please say hello and make them feel welcome.

*Martin Wearmouth; President*

### **Field day venues for 2021/2022**

Dates	Venue	Boundaries
13 - 14 November 2021	Cervantes to Leeman Lines down 9am Saturday Lines up 9am Sunday	Cervantes to Leeman and local as below at bottom of page
11 - 12 December 2021	Lancelin to Jurien Bay Lines down 9am Saturday Lines up 9am Sunday	Lancelin to Greenhead and local as below at bottom of page
15 - 16 January 2022	Open Lines down 9am Saturday Lines up 9am Sunday	Open anywhere in WA
12 - 13 February 2022	Dunsborough to White Hills Lines down 9am Saturday Lines up 9am Sunday	Dunsborough to White Hills and local as below at bottom of page
5 - 7 March 2022 Long Weekend	Bremer Bay area and Open We plan to fish Bremer Bay area Lines down 6am Saturday Lines up 9am Monday	Open anywhere in WA
16 April - 18 April 2022 Easter Long weekend	Bluff Creek area and Open Lines down 6am Saturday Lines up 9am Monday	Open anywhere in WA

**Local boundaries are from Lancelin in the North to Preston Beach in the South**

Lines Down on Standard weekends - Saturday 9.00am

Lines up on Standard weekends - Sunday 9.00am

Lines Down for long weekends and Rottnest - Saturday 6.00am

Lines up for long weekends and Rottnest - Monday 9.00am

**Sign-on / Weigh-in times, possible fish together spots and locations to be decided at the general meeting prior to the Field Day**

## **November General Meeting**

**Wednesday 10th**

**Croatian Club in Wishart Street Gwelup**

**Meal at 7.00pm with meeting at 8.00pm**

**Come along and enjoy a great meal and take part in the meeting.**

## DRY CASTING RESULTS – 10<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2021

October dry casting day was almost a perfect day with a light tail wind for the best part of the morning, but for some reason or other we just cannot seem to get the distances that we know we can get. My wife believes it is old age, I am not so sure. I keep thinking about something someone said to me a few years back regarding the condition of the ground on which we cast. If the ground is damp, it makes the air heavy and you will not cast long distances. If my memory serves me correctly it was Peter Pekaar, but I may be wrong, but either way the ground where we cast always seems to be damp to me, but I have been known to be wrong at times. We will find out in a month or two when the ground dries out.

Enough of the dribble, let's get down to the nitty gritty. Six members and one visitor turned up for the day, which is encouraging, but not great. Barry cast for the second time and I think he has improved some over that time, so Barry keep at it because the casting by us has not happened over night, it has taken many years of practice.

The longest casts for the day were 56gr 145.27m, art bait 125.51m, 112g 157.57m.

We all had our ups and downs for the day except for Mal who cast well in the distances with no outs or break offs, he was the only one. I took out the honours in the SHA with 28, not at all great but good enough to win. I am only guessing here but I think Gary's national record for DHA is 176 or close to it.

On Sunday Gary's casts were as follows, 22,23,23,24 which is 92. If he could have kept up that scoring he would have beaten that record by about 6 or 8 points, but it was not to be, but 159 is still a good score.

Ron Thomas  
DCO

SURF CASTING & ANGLING CLUB														
Dry casting results - 10th October 2021														
	56 gram					Artificial Bait					112gram			
	Cast	Cast	Total			Cast	Cast	Total			Cast	Cast	Total	
VETERANS	1	2		%		1	2		%		1	2		%
GARY GILDERSLEEVES	B/O	94.39	94.39	33.86		116.45	114.04	230.49	92.25		128.50	127.56	256.06	81.66
BOB HENDERSON	139.29	139.47	278.76	100.00		118.05	115.37	233.42	93.42		126.76	OUT	126.76	40.42
MAL HEAD	101.66	98.10	199.76	71.66		88.60	90.39	178.99	71.64		104.50	102.05	206.55	65.77
KLAUS SCHONWOLF	104.61	102.75	207.36	74.39		97.45	99.47	196.92	78.82		OUT	B/O	0.00	0.00
RON THOMAS	OUT	145.27	145.27	52.11		125.51	124.34	249.85	100.00		157.57	156.01	313.58	100.00
MENS														
MARK HANSEN	111.48	B/O	111.48	100.00		86.55	84.12	170.67	100.00		108.84	104.43	213.27	100.00
VISITORS														
BARRY	72.14	77.64				61.35	OUT				OUT	59.80		

SURF CASTING & ANGLING CLUB																					
Dry casting results - 10th October 2021																					
	Double Handed Accuracy										Single Handed Accuracy							Total	Attendance	Total	
	Target number										Target distance								D/Casting	Points	
VETERANS	3	3	1	1	4	4	2	2	Total	%		1st	2nd	1st	2nd	Total	%		%		
GARY GILDERSLEEVES	22	23	23	24	19	16	16	16	159	100.00		2	6	4	8	20	71.43		379.20	10	389.20
BOB HENDERSON	5	21	12	24	0	4	14	13	93	58.50		6	5	6	2	19	67.85		360.19	10	370.19
MAL HEAD	18	10	4	18	19	20	20	21	130	81.76		5	0	4	9	18	64.28		355.11	10	365.11
KLAUS SCHONWOLF	4	21	20	0	0	0	0	0	45	28.30		2	5	0	4	11	39.28		220.79	10	230.79
RON THOMAS	15	13	20	18	12	9	21	20	128	80.50		6	6	9	7	28	100.00		432.61	10	442.61
MENS																					
MARK HANSEN	15	14	19	0	17	12	4	18	99	100.00		5	8	2	8	23	100.00		500.00	10	510.00
VISITORS																					
BARRY	16	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	31			1	0	0	0	1					

<b>VETERANS BEST CASTS FOR THE YEAR 2021 - 2022</b>													
LONGEST 56 GRAM									157.57			RON THOMAS	
LONGEST ARTIFICIAL BAIT									134.92			RON THOMAS	
LONGEST 112GRAM									157.57			RON THOMAS	
HIGHEST DOUBLE HANDED ACCURACY									166			GARY GILDERSLEEVE	
HIGHEST SINGLE HANDED ACCURACY									34			BOB HENDERSON	
<b>SENIORS BEST CASTS FOR THE YEAR 2021 - 2022</b>													
LONGEST 56 GRAM									114.18			MARK HANSEN	
LONGEST ARTIFICIAL BAIT									96.20			MARK HANSEN	
LONGEST 112G									120.19			MARK HANSEN	
HIGHEST DOUBLE HANDED ACCURACY									163			MARK HANSEN	
HIGHEST SINGLE HANDED ACCURACY									29			MARK HANSEN	

## Surf Casters Quobba Station safari July 2022

- Check In Date Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2022
- Check Out Date Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> July 2022
- Number Of Nights 8

Staying at The Long Cottage – **Contact Martin if you are interested in going ASAP**

The Long Cottage sleeps 8 people, with one double bed, six singles. It consists of a self-contained kitchen covered veranda, shower and toilet facilities (donkey hot water system - you have to light a fire under 'donkey' to heat water for shower), 24-hour power to lights and fridge (10-hour power to power points and BBQ facilities). This cottage is ideal for larger groups or the budget minded family.

\*Bed linen/towels/pillows NOT supplied.

\*\*Firewood collection is not allowed on the station so please bring your own supply for the Donkey hot water system, otherwise wood can be purchased at the office.





The day started as 3 cars met at 7am in the Preston car park, winds were light and the sun was shining, it was a great morning to be heading onto the beach. After deflating our tyres we drove onto the beach and headed north. We did not see too many people and the sand was not too soft so the driving was easy, we found a spot 10km north that had a good area to set up camp so we unpacked the cars and set up a Gazebo. The beach here is normally quite wide but this time only a couple of cars wide at high tide, the winter storms have moved a lot of sand away again.

I started fishing about 8.30am and was getting a lot of small bites that turned out to be small tarwhine, most only 10-15cm long the largest I got was 23cm, they seemed to be thick and stripped the baits in no time. About 9.30am I had a better bite and in came a small 32cm Salmon, so at least I was on the board with a fish for the weigh in, I released the fish and away it swam, over the next hour I caught 2 more salmon at 33cm and 35cm.

Just before 11am Rob caught a 39cm Tailor and 5 minutes later I too had a similar size Tailor, I was surprised to see the tailor on the bite in the middle of the day, we had a slight westerly wind but nothing that strong. Over the next 2 hours Rob caught 3 Tailor and I caught 2, then the action slowed a lot.

Around lunch some seaweed moved in and Gary arrived at 12pm just as the fishing slowed, the seaweed was mainly on the shore so you needed a good cast and to keep the line up over the wave break. Alan arrived about 2pm and the seaweed was getting worse so we went for a drive north for about 6km only to find more sea weed and very similar conditions all up the beach.

When we got back to our spot the weed had cleared and we got back to fishing. Peet and Sandra arrived about 3pm and set up next to us, for the rest of the day only the small tarwhine seemed to be here, but I did get a couple of Trumpeter and Dom caught one. Just as the sun was going down the seaweed returned, Peet and Sandra decided to move back closer to the car park, but we stayed hoping the sea weed would clear. Gary left to go home about 5.30pm and Alan left about 6.30pm, the rest of us camped overnight, the sea weed did clear after dark but no more fish got caught as the baits came back untouched.





We stopped fishing and set up a fire and again had a good night keeping warm by the fire and enjoying the outdoors, we chatted and recycled some fishing stories till the wood was gone then all went off to sleep, the night was not cold and no rain came in but it was overcast when we woke up.

I started fishing about 5.30am and again got a few small tarwhine, the weed had gone and the water was nice and clear but not much action, we had a school of dolphins out in front of us for 10 minutes, we had some light rain early morning but not much as we enjoyed the calm morning, only Rob managed a small Salmon that morning, with not much happening we packed up about 8am and headed back to the car park.



Ron fished at Wilbinga and with a lot of seaweed was not able to fish his preferred spot, he found a spot that was fishable and managed 15 sand whiting.

Mark fished at Fremantle but was not able to find any fish.

Thanks to all those that fished, I hope to see you all at the next November field day.





ANGLER		Species Tailor	Species Salmon Western Australian	Species Whiting	Species Trumpeter - Grunter striped	Species Trumpeter Sea	Total weight	No. of Species	No. of fish	F.D. points	Attendance		Total points
											Field Day	General Meeting	
Martin Wearmouth	Number	2	4		2		3.10	3	8	69.0	1	1	89.0
	Total weight	0.80	2.00		0.30								
	Weight of best												
Robert Wilding	Number	3	1	1			2.05	3	5	55.5	1		65.5
	Total weight	1.45	0.50	0.10									
	Weight of best												
Ron Thomas	Number			15			1.52	1	15	40.2	1	1	60.2
	Total weight			1.52									
	Weight of best												
Peet Wessels	Number	1		1			0.55	2	2	27.5	1	1	47.5
	Total weight	0.45		0.10									
	Weight of best												
Sandra Wessels	Number					3	0.60	1	3	19.0	1	1	39.0
	Total weight					0.60							
	Weight of best												
Dom (visitor)	Number				1		0.15	1	1	12.5	1		22.5
	Total weight				0.15								
	Weight of best												
Mark Hansen	Number										1	1	20.0
	Total weight												
	Weight of best												
Gary Parkinson	Number										1	1	20.0
	Total weight												
	Weight of best												
Alan Green	Number										1		10.0
	Total weight												
	Weight of best												
David Wilding	Number										1		10.0
	Total weight												
	Weight of best												

Top scores up to October		
Rank	Angler	Total points
1	Martin Wearmouth	1282.3
2	Peet Wessels	1094.3
3	Ron Thomas	1045.9
4	Mark Hansen	777.8
5	Sandra Wessels	700.7
6	Vince Tomazin	661.3
7	Gary Parkinson	371.1
8	Sabby Pizzolante	361.7
9	Tino Baiardo	355.8
10	Justin Rose	349.2
11	Chris Stickells	298.7
12	Alan Green	165.3
13	Brad Zaknich (visitor)	148.0
14	George Matrakis	138.6
15	Stuart Waterman	130.1
16	Theo Van Niekerk	109.2
17	Oliver Wessels	75.5
18	Robert Wilding	75.5
19	David Wilding	57.2
20	Helen Carnell	56.1
21	Ian Taggart	55.0
22	Dom (visitor)	22.5

Field Day Sections up to and including October				
Section		Angler	Species	Weight
1A	Best scale fish (1st six months)	0	0	0.00
1B	Best scale fish (2nd six months)	0	0	0.00
2	Most meritorious fish	0	0	0.00
3	Best shark (4.5kg min)	Gary Parkinson	Dirk Hartog July 2021	5.76
4	Best mullet (2kg min)	Ron Thomas	Wilbinga Sept 2021	13.23
5	Best tailor (1kg min)	Sandra Wessels	Lucky Bay Sept 2021	2.71
6	Best salmon (3kg min)	Alan Green	Yallingup June 2021	4.91
7	Best skipjack trevally (0.5 kg min)	Sabby Pizzolante	Rottnest August 2021	2.07
8	Best mackerel (2kg min)	Justin Rose	Dirk Hartog July 2021	9.54
9	Best yellowtail kingfish, samson or amberjack (4kg min)	0	0	0.00
10	Best scale fish (Other than above)	0	0	0.00
11	Best bag of scale fish	Martin Wearmouth	Yallingup June 2021	27.82
12	Best bag of mullet (2 fish min)	0	0	0.00
13	Best bag of tailor (2 fish min)	Ron Thomas	Wilbinga Sept 2021	9.56
14	Best fish on single handed rod (max 4kg line)	Mark Hansen	Salmon Bluff Cr Sept 2021	0.70
15	Best fish caught on fly rod	0	0	0.00
16	Best fish on single handed rod, soft plastic lure (max 4kg line)	Mark Hansen	Salmon Bluff Cr Sept 2021	0.70
17	Best fish on single handed rod, hard body lure (max 4kg line)	0	0	0.00
18	Best fish caught using a drone	0	0	0.00



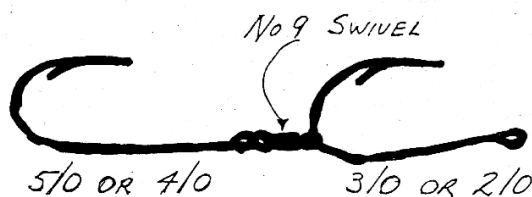
## **Open fishing competition 2021/22**

The Open Competition is for fish caught between 1 May 2020 and 30 April 2021, other than on Club gazetted Field days, but not in any other AAA affiliated club event on the same dates. Entries for the Open competition close **30 days after capture**. See Competition Rules Section 4.

Section	For	Minimum weight	Entry
1	Most meritorious capture	None	To be awarded by Committee
2	Best shark	4.5 kg	
3	Best mullet	5 kg	
4	Best salmon	3.5kg	
5	Best flathead	0.5 kg	
6	Best tailor	1.5 kg	
7	Best samson fish	5 kg	
8	Best fish on single handed rod maximum 4kg line class (Bait)	Legal size	
9	Best pink snapper	2 kg	3.4 kg George Matrakis, Dirk Hartog Island 17/7/21
10	Best tarwhine	0.5 kg	
11	Best mackerel	4 kg	22.6 kg Martin Wearmouth, Dirk Hartog Island 22/7/21
12	Best skipjack trevally (southern)	1 kg	
13	Best trevally (northern)	2 kg	3kg Vince Tomazin, Dirk Hartog Island 23/7/21
14	Best snook or pike	0.5 kg	
15	Best black or yellow finned bream	0.6 kg	
16	Best scale fish other than sections 3-15	2 kg	3.5kg Spangled Emperor, Justin Rose, Dirk Hartog island 22/7/21
17	Best fish caught on fly rod.	Legal size	
18	Best fish caught using a soft plastic or hard body lure on a single handed rod (4kg line max.)	Legal size	



## HALF MULIE RIG



Suitable hook patterns are O'Shaughnessy, Tarpon, Limerick or Kendall Kirby.

### How to Set up:

Open the eye of both hooks and place the black rolling swivel in the eye of the larger hook and crimp the eye closed.

Tip: use the smallest possible sized rolling swivel. **DO NOT** use brass swivels as they will break and you will lose your fish.

Slip the other ring of the swivel onto the smaller hook and then close the eye of the hook ensuring that it closes fully.

### How to rig:

Remove the tail from a mulie (pilchard) and cut it in half.

Place the larger section (middle of the bait of bait) on the larger hook and the thinner section of the bait (head of mulie or tail) on the smaller hook.

Rig the head section on the smaller hook and thread the larger hook through the middle section of the bait. This rig will catch herring, salmon, tailor, King George whiting skipper and mullet.

It is not restricted to these species.

It will double the number of baits available if you are getting low on bait.

On a light outfit can be cast a reasonable distance with some outstanding results.

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## **Is your battery weighing you down??**

If your 4x4 is set up for camping or touring, chances are you've got a lot of equipment coming with you. From fridges to tables, sleeping gear to cooking setups, and of course the battery to keep it all going – if you're planning to get out for a while, you're probably bringing everything AND the kitchen sink with you. All this gear is going to come in handy while you're out but it's also going to take up space and maybe even more importantly, add to the weight of your vehicle. And all this extra weight can cause some challenges along the way.

### **Vehicle handling**

Whether braking, taking a corner or heading out into uneven terrain, any extra weight will contribute to how well the handling on your vehicle performs.

If you're loaded up with too much gear this could mean having to take it slower in tougher environments or in the worst-case scenario, it has the potential to contribute to an accident.

### **Warranty and insurance**

If you do find yourself in the unfortunate circumstance of an accident or if something breaks, carrying above the manufacturer's Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM) or Gross Combination Mass (GCM) can void both your warranty and your insurance.

### **Fines**

Carrying over your vehicle's GVM or GCM is illegal and can result in fines. Last year we reported on [police crack downs on overweight towing](#).

Check with your local roads and transport authority to find out what the fines are in your state.

### **Shedding the weight**

While you might be able to Marie Kondo out some gear from your vehicle or camper, one thing you're probably going to want to keep with you is your battery. But that doesn't mean you can't shave some weight off it.

Switching from an AGM battery to lithium can easily save you 60kg along with some extra space.

*Article from Unsealed 4x4*

## **THE LIGHT TACKLE OPTION**

As a rod builder / repairer I get to see a lot of broken and damaged rods. More often than not it is because a lot of anglers are using a line where the breaking strain is far in excess of that which the rod was designed for.

Modern technology and materials are allowing manufacturers to produce rods that are thinner lighter and stronger than they were some five years ago. This in turn is encouraging 'average' anglers to push their gear and tackle to the limit by using inappropriate line classes for the species sought.

Rod manufacturer's also have a tendency rate the line class of their rods over a wider range of line, often with a line class rating capacity higher than it is capable of handling. Yes, most rods will handle lines up to those breaking strains suggested, but at the higher end of its capacity, it will really limit the anglers ability to cast and restrict the distances they can reach.

In the hands of a skilled angler there isn't a problem but for a novice who doesn't understand the tackle and what it is saying - trouble looms. It is a similar story with weight ratings. Manufacturers will rate a rod at 28 - 170 g (1 oz - 6 oz in the old scale). The rod will be able to handle the heavy weight but it can't throw it very far at all. Again in the hands of a novice angler using heavy weights can lead to tackle failure.

I was recently asked to build a 3.5 m rod capable of handling 80 pound braided line and able to cast a 12 ounce sinker. I suggested that the angler should go and find a power pole and knock the cross arms of and use it as a fishing rod.

On further questioning the rod was not to be used for land based game fishing or fishing for sharks and other larger fish from shore based locations, but to chase herring and tailor from the North Mole. This angler had seen others casting long distances and catching these fish and he wasn't able to cast that far or for that matter catch fish.

Generally, there is a growing trend towards the use of lighter tackle when fishing, which I think is a logical development as it complements the many lure types now on offer for land-based and offshore anglers. To achieve maximum efficiency with this tackle requires the use of a more sensitive tackle system. Fishermen who generally use lures (as well as baits) are also realising the advantages and the potential fun possible when fishing with lighter line classes. Add to this the vast improvements in tackle technology in general over the last few years, and using light tackle isn't the high-risk exercise it once was.

There's something undeniably addictive about hooking-up on a good fish on a lighter outfit and feeling the raw, almost unrestrained power on the other end. Going light isn't just about 'the rush' either, as this gear is quite responsive and can create chances with bait or lure that would otherwise go undetected using heavier tackle, and there's considerable scope to put such gear to good use on the variety of species available in W A. This salmon season has been a good example with some excellent salmon being taken on light tackle. Black bream are another classic species that is an excellent fish to chase on light tackle.

On the other side of the coin there is the problem associated with going too light in the choice of tackle. One angling scribe many years ago wrote a piece about '*death by irritation*' where anglers were chasing large fish on ridiculously light tackle and more often than not losing the fish, leaving it with hooks and a rig hanging from its mouth. This is not sport, this is personal ego stroking.

The other argument against the use of light tackle is that after successfully landing a large fish on light gear, following a protracted fight, the fish is released. Research has shown that this is not good for the fish. Following a fight, literally to the death, this fish has built up such high levels of lactic acid in its flesh that it needs an extended time to clear it. If it is released too early, it swims off to fall prey to a predator or just falls to the bottom and dies out of sight out of mind. This to my mind is also not ethical or doing anything to promote recreational angling.

Predators become very smart and learn quickly just ask land based anglers at Steep Point and Quobba who are chasing mackerel. The sharks move in after they have hooked a fish and take it. This way they don't have to expend too much energy in chasing their prey. Just wait and it will be presented to you so it can't escape.

Anglers fishing for barramundi in the Territory have found that if they released a barra after protracted fight it fell prey to sharks which had been attracted to the commotion but waited until the tired fish was released and then they moved in for an easy meal. Anglers there now catch the fish and then 'swim it' some distance (generally a couple of kilometres) away from the fight location prior to release. This allows the fish to have quantities of oxygenated water pass through its gills and allows it a chance of recovery well away from predators.

So, let's be realistic. What I am advocating is that we use tackle appropriate to the fish we are seeking. I once watched a tackle salesman in Perth sell an angler an outfit that comprised of a 4.5 m rod that was akin to a power pole with the cross arms removed, a reel that could winch a 4WD out of a buffalo wallow and held 750 m of 15 kg line. According to the tackle salesman this was an ideal herring outfit.

Some dealers are unscrupulous and have no morals. The purchaser of this 'perfect outfit' probably persisted with it for a period of time and then either gave fishing away or went to someone who gave him some good advice and he went and obtained tackle appropriate for the job.

### **What tackle do you need?**

Before we go looking at the rods and reels, what is the species that you will be chasing. If it is herring and tailor from the metropolitan beaches then we get an outfit that is suitable for that task. Generally we are fishing from the beach and casting into an afternoon sea breeze. Occasionally in the summer months, we are assisted with an easterly wind that will aid casting. The species we are chasing generally weigh between 200 g and 2 kg. Why use 25 kg braid to chase these fish? If you have tackle that is appropriate to the species sought it will handle any fish you are likely to encounter on the beach or from the rocks in the metropolitan area. A rod that is 3.5 - 4 m long and can cast up to 112 g and has quality guides fitted, a reel that holds 250 - 300 m of 6 kg line will suit most metropolitan beach fishing applications.

Modern rods are very light and very strong. Many are very thin and very stiff. Each is designed for a purpose. You do not need to take out a second mortgage to buy a suitable outfit. A good combination outfit shouldn't cost more than \$250 including rod, reel, line and rigs suitable along with some terminal tackle.

Yes, you can pay over \$1 000 for a rod and upwards of \$1500 for a reel then pay \$200 for the braided line to spool it up, but is this really necessary? That gear is not designed for the average angler to catch herring and tailor.

The media, particularly television fishing shows, have a lot to answer for when it comes to anglers buying what I believe to be inappropriate tackle because it is what 'Bill the Butcher' was using on his TV show "Kill More Fish". He is sponsored by the tackle companies to sell their gear and he has a vested interest in pushing their product. Also more often than not the species being sought is well out of the range and location of the average angler.

I believe that you want to put some thought into your tackle prior to purchase. By taking the light approach I'm not talking about using a garfish or bream outfit, but rather putting together an outfit that gives you the thrills and spills and sensations of going light, yet with the realistic chance of coming out on top of a majority of encounters. I think there's part of your brain that accepts you'll lose some contests by scaling back your gear and it's the trade-off for the potential benefits you'll get.

There's so much tackle out there to accommodate those who choose to use lighter tackle. The micro jigging craze, which is just starting in WA, will probably see even more anglers get sporty offshore. Micro jigging has brought with it an influx of tackle to our shores that can be easily used by bait or lure anglers alike, with the small yet remarkably strong rods probably the highlight. While a bulk of these rods only look capable of knocking over a small whiting on face value, many in fact have a PE rating of 1-4 or more (essentially 5 - 20 kg) meaning that they can punch much above their weight class.

On nearly all the fishing charters out of Perth there's a micro jigging setup or two on board with a variety of rods and reels suited to this form of fishing. Existing braided lines, power threadlines and smaller overheads match up well with these rods to give you a lightweight outfit that packs a decent punch.



Outside of micro jigging tackle it's easy to create a combo that will be sporty yet sensible and take on many of the bottom dwellers and pelagics in our waters. One of my favourite species is snapper on soft plastics with a 3 - 6 kg outfit on a 2 m rod with a 4000 thread line and 6 - kg braid. This has taken all manner of reef species, plus tuna, samsonfish, salmon and many other 'manageable' odds and sods that have put in an appearance.

Key factors to consider are firstly having a decent line load to give yourself time to stop any larger fish hooked. I think 180 - 200 m of line is a minimum for this style of fishing and as always the more the merrier. While this gear may look indestructible, and is strong for what it is, don't be tempted to use 80 lb braid on it as it probably won't fish appropriately and you will break tackle and nullify a lot of the 'feel' you'll gain using this tackle.

Overly heavy braid I find doesn't offer the sensitivity of a lighter line class, so while you can push the rod rating somewhat, don't get too carried away and think this gear is totally bulletproof or that going heavy is necessarily going to allow you to catch more fish.

Desirable rod characteristics include a reasonable length and a nice crisp action that loads up well when under pressure. You want to be able to get stuck into fish and feel confident putting the hurt on. Your outfit will likely be an all-rounder fishing baits and lures, so select rods accordingly, with a bit of length great for bite detection and for bringing lures to life.

Reel wise you're open to use whatever you like, with threadlines, baitcasters and small overheads commonly fitted to the smaller rods in use with this fishing, and there's many models to pick from. Ensure it sits well on the rod and doesn't over balance it, and it should look and feel 'right' when fitted. Basically you will get what you pay for. If you scrimp then that will be the weak link in your outfit and it will be where it lets you down at the crucial time. Be prepared to pay what your budget can afford for a good light outfit as you'll be pushing every facet of it to breaking point at some stage and if you have fallen short this is where it will let you down.. The varied sportfishing experience our offshore reefs provide is now clearly recognized, thanks in part to lighter tackle injecting fresh life into species like snapper, skippy, Westralian jewfish, whiting, bight redfish, breaksea cod, baldchin groper, morwong, harlequin and other fish that are willing to snap up a bait or lure and test your skills and abilities as an angler.

Beach anglers also have many species that can afford them a chance to test their prowess with tailor, salmon, skippy, mulloway along with bonito, various tunas and spanish mackerel from the pelagic stable all available at various times of the year.

Even a few kilos of snapper can give you a fair scrap using the gear suggested here and a top way to enjoy even traditional 'table species' that might not burn water on a heavy bottom bashing outfit, but will perform well on the lighter tackle.

I believe that using lighter more stealthy gear on the reefs results in more fish, especially on those species that can be fickle biters like whiting, snapper Westralian Jewfish and others that may be mooching around down there and only half-hearted with their feeding ways at times. Not all reef fish are reckless eating machines and backing off your tackle can improve your results. Going light has proven a day saver on numerous occasions for us, proving it isn't just a party trick to try and explode a few rods or watch your line load get dumped into the ocean.

More and more I find myself reaching for the light stuff when the bite gets hard while bait fishing, or to try and detect more subtle bites. When fishing known deeper waters targeting those King George whiting, you can miss so many chances by staying with heavy gear. What can feel like a tiny tap by a 'rubbish fish' on your heavy outfit can actually be quite an obvious and decent whiting bite on a downsized combo.

Many people treat whiting down deep as by-catch, but by better tailoring your gear to the fish you can increase your catch, and boy do thumper King George go hard on this tackle! Even a sizable snapper down deep can relay little more than the occasional bump and some days this is all you'll have to strike at.

In combination with a lighter outfit I'll be looking to reduce my terminal tackle to further try to fool any tentative fish down there. I don't really see the point in using a light outfit then using super heavy and clumsy terminal gear. Besides getting an impressive looking bend in your rod you're not giving yourself any notable advantages over the guy next to you.

A big part of the 'going light' equation is the use of appropriate terminal tackle. For lighter bait work I recommend the use of medium gauge circle hooks where you can, as they don't need to be forcefully hooked into fish and applying a gradual pressure will see you come up tight on the fish. Depending on how light you're fishing you obviously can't strike with the same power as you would on heavier tackle, so circles are handy for getting solid hook-ups that hold firm all the way to the surface. In fact I recommend that you don't 'strike' when using circle hooks but let the fish swallow the bait and then just hold the line. This will enable the hook to do its job and turn and penetrate in the corner of the fishes mouth.

Hook sizes may be reduced as well and if they are rigged on lighter fluorocarbon leader, hopefully sneak under the guard of semi-interested fish. I firmly believe that if you fish practically, and pick leader strengths and hooks you feel are suited for the species expected and the terrain you're working then you will be successful.

As mentioned the increase in the use of lighter gear is somewhat in lockstep with the rise of lures, and it's no surprise that you'll catch more reef species on lures and soft plastics using a light tackle rather than an old heavy fibreglass outfit that is spooled up with mono. The level of 'feel' you get is incomparable, with better setting of the hook and an improved awareness of what the lure is doing all adding to the enjoyment of fishing lighter.

Most lures can be successfully fished on a lighter setup, and once you've sampled the action possible with this tackle, even on fish not noted for pulling your arms off, it's hard to ever reach for that heavy outfit again. The recent rise in the numbers of the various tuna and mackerel species that are in metropolitan waters has seen increased interest in the use of lighter tackle to chase these fish. With the correct approach to schools of fish working a baitfish school on the surface will enable you to get a cast away from a reasonable distance from the school and not spook them and put them down. This will enable you to use a variety of lures such as soft plastics, bibbed minnows, metal slices and jigs to accurately cast to the school and hopefully achieve a hook-up.

One other area that needs specific attention is the tying of good quality, strong knots that will hold up in a fight when using lighter tackle. Be sure to learn how to tie slim knots that will glide through the runners of your rod. There are several options available to anglers including the PR knot, the Slim Beauty and in my opinion the FG knot being the pick of the bunch, especially when used in a casting role. Learn to tie these knots quickly and surely as it will mean the difference between landing and losing a fish.

I have always advocated that boat anglers should troll between spots when bottom fishing. This will allow you to cover more ground and prospect a little. Trolling with light tackle is much easier now thanks to the many low-drag lures you can pick from. Minnows, even of a reasonable size, can be trolled on lighter gear thanks to their narrow bib designs. There are some great bibless minnows out there also, which are light tackle friendly and you don't need your drag screwed up to stop line slippage as you troll.

Skirts are another low resistance option and have little drag through the water and can be fished on any tackle. Be warned, when trolling your line load will be tested, especially if you don't tell the skipper to pull up quickly after you've been nailed by a fish! Also you can't pick the size of the fish you'll hook up on and I've seen some epic battles with fish too big to bully on the light tackle that turned into hour long marathons, of which some were lost and some won.

When chasing big yellowtail kings, samsonfish and other large fish, it's unlikely that reaching for the lighter tackle will be your first thought. When you are offshore you'll encounter smaller versions of these species which are fair game and having a lighter rod rigged up and at the ready to use is a smart move.

Around offshore reefs and structures such as the FAD's there have been some memorable sessions chasing these species. Another that is a great light tackle species and is encountered out on the FAD's is the dolphin fish or dorado, or mahi mahi, whatever name you choose to call this fabulous fighting fish. They are liquid lightning and a real challenge.

There are many species available to anglers that are also a real challenge on lighter tackle both from boat and shore. These include skippy, salmon, mullet, snapper, black bream and a host of others that will keep you working hard and extracting maximum enjoyment from the experience

Getting to know your tackle and using it to its maximum will provide hours of enjoyable fishing with a real challenge in it. After all it is called fishing and not catching. Understanding and knowing your quarry, knowing your gear and equipment, and its limits, will also improve your knowledge and bring benefits to the fishing experience that you have never dreamed of. So whatever motivates you to get out and go fishing, go lighter, get bent, and enjoy the experience.

*By John Curtis*

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## Maximising your catch: Eating the whole fish

By Nathan Brindle | 6 August 2020 Fishing World



THIS article is intended to create awareness about the impact that each one of us has on our local fisheries. Harvesting fish is a right that we all share but harvesting fish in an ethical manner is a responsibility that is often overlooked by many of us.

Sustainability is a word that is often misunderstood and misused throughout fishing and food industries. There is nothing sustainable about harvesting fish, but what we can do, is manage the number of fish we take, limiting the impact on our fisheries.

Both commercial and recreational fisheries are quick to point the finger at each other and take the stance that they are not the ones jeopardising the future of fishing. However, by reflecting on the impact that each

of us has on our local fisheries, we can help to create more practical approaches to fishing including ethical management systems which will help to build a more sustainable future.

The most direct way to achieve this is to limit the number of fish killed. Many people may object to this approach on the basis that they have a family to feed or freezer to fill. The reality is many of these same people are throwing heads, frames and collars to the pelicans or in the water at the filleting tables on the understanding that they are giving back to the ecosystem in a positive manner. However, this could not be further from reality. By thinking twice about reducing the wastage from individual fishing, hopefully we will be able to limit the amount of fish we feel the need to take for the table.

This article we will look at a more holistic approach to utilising kingfish. It is a great species to focus on because it is prized for its table quality and therefore heavily pressured, but it is often misused or wasted with no malice.

## **HANDLING KINGFISH**

Kingfish have a defined anatomy that is similar to other pelagic species like tuna, samson fish, mackerel and cobia. Unfortunately, many of these pelagic species are also under extreme fishing pressure. Therefore, the techniques and methods that I will outline below can be easily adapted to whatever species you are chasing and will hopefully allow you to utilise your catch more effectively.

Before we get to the preparation of fish, there are few key handling points that will improve table quality and storage.

Firstly, always kill and bleed your fish immediately after capture. This is particularly important with pelagic species because of their hard-working nature. Undue stress on the fish will lead to lactic acid quickly flooding the muscle tissue reducing flavour quality. Bleeding fish is also important for storing fish, as residual blood oxidizes quicker than flesh, reducing flavour quality and appearance.

Secondly, storage and transport are also often overlooked. Keeping your cut fish dry is important as fresh water will decrease the flavour and texture. This rule also applies to preparation times as rinsing fish in fresh water when gutting and scaling is not ideal. Instead, use salt water when possible and try to avoid exposing fillets to water at all cost. For this reason, I always like to keep absorbent paper towels available to dry fish cavities and skin, as well as to wrap fillets or prepare fish for storage and transport.

A third consideration when transporting fish is temperature. Immediately submerging killed fish into an ice slurry is the best way to control this. Following fish preparation, store your paper wrapped fish in zip lock bags submerged back into the ice slurry. This ice slurry helps to keep the flesh firm and helps to reduce bruising and discolouration of the flesh and blood line. This firm flesh also makes preparation a breeze, especially when filleting.

## **RECOMMENDED TOOLS**

In terms of tools, consider buying a good quality filleting knife. This does not necessarily refer to the flexibility of the blade, as a stiffer blade for filleting increases cutting accuracy and allows you to better feel what you are doing. A bread knife is also super handy as it allows you to effectively split heads, as well as saw through large bones for cutlets and collars.

The other tool that I would recommend is a quality pair of scissors. These are good for cutting fins and the smaller bones and will help retain the sharpness of the blade of your filleting knife.

The final consideration is to have a decent chopping board that you can put on a filleting table to create a level and secure surface. Putting wet paper towel under your board will help secure it, as there is nothing more difficult than trying to effectively and precisely prepare fish while it is sliding around on an uneven and slippery surface like your local filleting table.

## **TECHNIQUES FOR HANDLING FISH**

In terms of the many ways to break down fish, I will start with the most obvious methods (including steps that I regularly see are overlooked by anglers at the filleting tables), though I am sure you may have your own. Consideration of these steps will create a platform for your own fish preparation and hopefully inspire you to use a more holistic approach when preparing your own fish in the future.



Firstly, when I cut whole fish I really concentrate on efficiency, which is something that I always refer to when teaching new cooks and chefs. I believe that every time you touch or move the fish that you are preparing, it is deteriorating in quality. This philosophy can be seen in the cuts that I demonstrate in this article. These are by no means the only ways that you can utilise the fish, but I feel like I often see a lot of other preparation techniques that lead to the over-handling of fish.

I start by removing scales from any area that I want the skin left on. I achieve this with either a knife or a scalar. There is no right or wrong way to do this - it really depends on what you prefer. I generally leave the guts in at this point if I intend to fillet the fish, as if you have sufficiently bled the fish, it should not get too messy. Following the removal of scales, I always give my work area and the fish a good wipe over with paper cloth to remove stray scales as well as moisture from the fish and work surface.



In the image above you can see I have made two cross cuts, one at the tail and one behind the head/collar. This is done to completely remove the tail as well as the head/collar of the fish. Use your serrated knife when cutting directly through the back bone. The reason for removing these parts from the fillet is that the fish will remain nice and flat throughout the entire filleting process making your cuts a lot easier to achieve. It also exposes the spinal bone that creates a visual to work along while removing the fillets.



The next image shows the second cut that I usually make. I use my knife to mark the belly down the rib bones, then my scissors to cut the bones. Using scissors allows me to more accurately cut through the bones without penetrating the gut cavity and creating unwanted mess. Once I have made these belly cuts, I remove the belly flap with the entirety of the guts. I always check the gut content to see what the fish has been feeding on as it is interesting to see how this changes seasonally for future bait presentations.



The next step is to split and clean the head by laying the head flat on one side. Using paper towel between the work surface and the head will help to secure the head so it does not slide away. Using the serrated knife, cut the fish at the point between the pectoral fins and continue sawing horizontally through to the top of the head. I support the head with a flat palm firmly pushing down so that the head does not slide away from you. For safety, never put your support hand in front of your working blade. Once the head is cut in half, split it open and remove the blood that congealed around the point that the spine connects to the crown.



The final step is to completely remove the gills by cutting with scissors at the point that where the neural spine bones are with the tip of my knife. The second is to completely expose the fillet down to the vertebrae. You can remove the second (bottom half) of the fillet by repeating these steps from the bottom of the fish or by working over the vertebrae and slicing outwards from the centre. You will also notice the inclusion of scissors in this image. These are great for cutting epipleural (rib bones) at the junction of the vertebra to save your knife's edge and increase safety. Now that you have removed the first fillet, flip the remaining fillet skin side up and repeat the process to remove the second fillet.





In this final image you can see some of the basic cuts that can be utilised in a variety of recipes. The loins of the kingfish are great for pan frying and to achieve a nice crisp skin ensure that the skin is completely dry before carefully putting them into a pan with about 1cm of cooking oil. Preheat the cooking oil to a high temperature and then reduce the heat to medium and cook no further than medium rare.

Alternatively, if you skin the fillets, they are great served raw as sashimi or diced and simmered in curries. The head and tail are also two of my preferred cooking cuts. By cooking them on the bone, the flesh will retain its moisture whilst the natural collagen and connective tissue of these working muscles

will also contain plenty of flavour. For this reason, I always cook these cuts at a medium heat until they are falling away from the bone. They are also great to bake, BBQ, steam or fry. My personal favourite is to roast them on wood fire by brushing them with Japanese bbq sauce and serving with lime wedges, a side of tomato and sweet corn salsa.

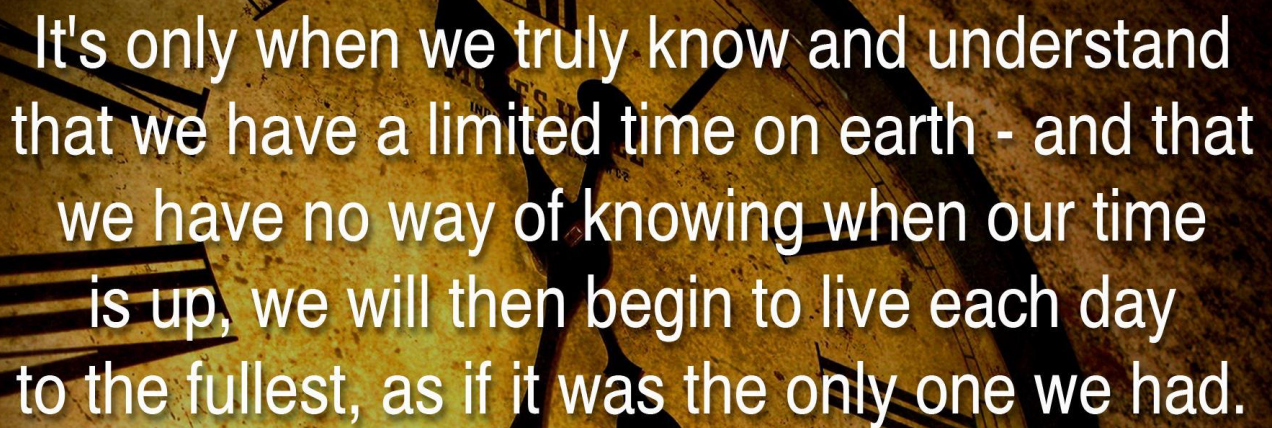
The belly is a personal favourite of mine. Like the collar, once cooked enough it will fall away from the skin providing you with flakey tender flesh. Before cooking the [Which part of the poor fish are you referring to?] remove the membrane that lines the inside of the gut cavity with a sharp knife. Season with salt and pepper and grill skin side down preferably over charcoal as the fat takes on the smokey aroma really well. Finish with salsa verde and fresh cos lettuce. Chips are also always a great addition.

I always lie larger fillets skin side down and cut lengthways on either side of the pin bones as this removes the bones and also removes the bloodline at the same time. By splitting the fillets in this fashion it creates loins that are much easier to skin if you intend on serving them as raw slices. Alternatively, leave the skin on and pan fry to medium rare. Both are great accompanied with a chilli soy dressing and fresh cucumbers. Always keep the fish frames and scraps (skin and pin bones) as these are really versatile. I always submerge the scraps in oil and put them on the stove to cook on a medium heat until the flesh is golden. What you will create is a fish oil which is great for dressing pasta and roasting potatoes or other root vegetables.

Another use for the fish frames is to bake them until golden brown as they are an essential ingredient for flavouring any fish stock or soup bases. I hope this encourages you to try some new things. It's far more inspiring when anglers creatively utilise their harvest as opposed to self glorifying by posting mass kill shots on social media with fish that are destined to deteriorate in a freezer. By using the delicious secondary cuts you will immediately decrease the number of fish you need to kill in order to feed yourself and your family.

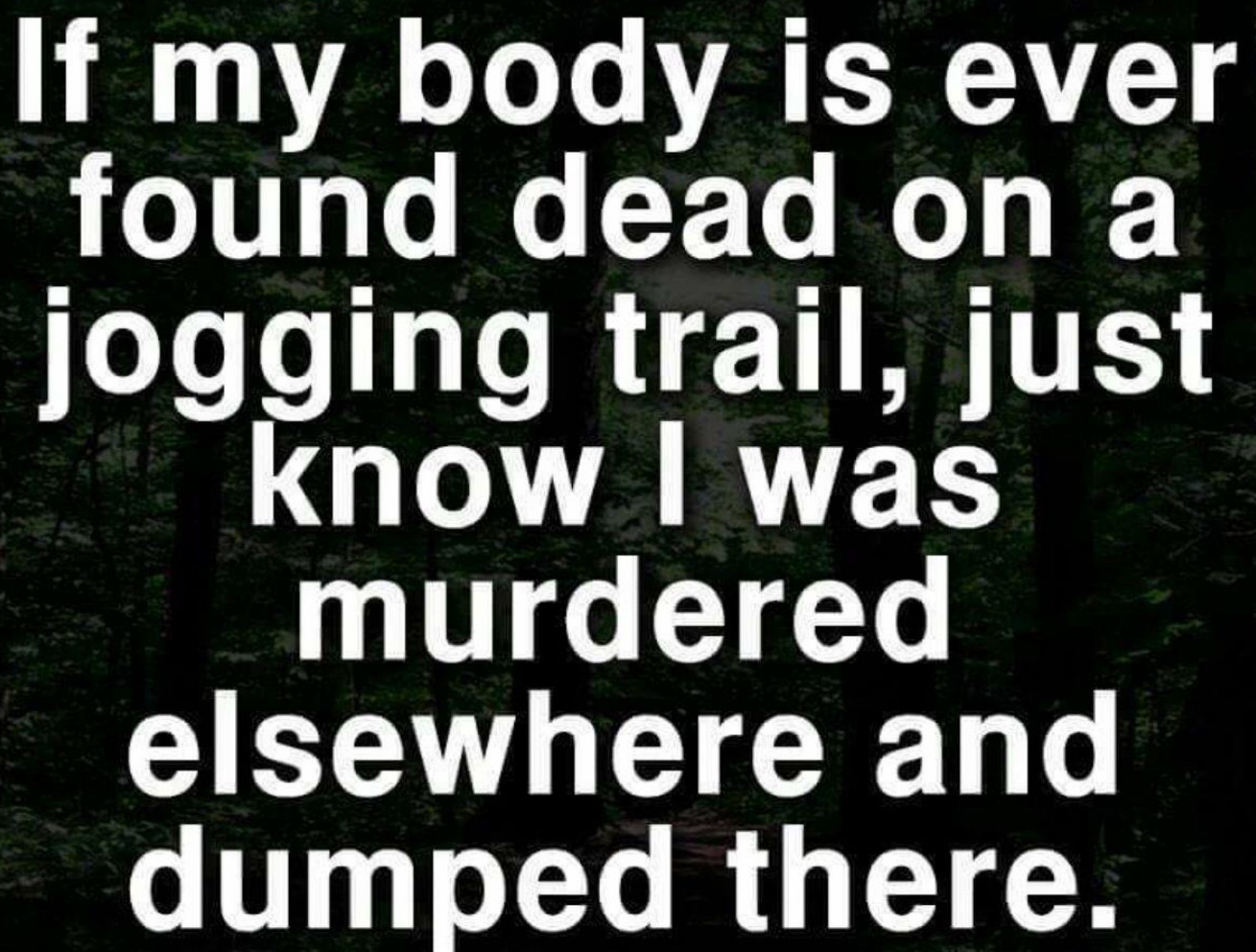
*Nathan Brindle currently runs the kitchen at Ester restaurant in Sydney. As a keen fisho, growing up on the NSW South Coast allowed him to have an oceanic lifestyle that he still maintains. Follow Nathan on Instagram @brindles\_beard.*





It's only when we truly know and understand that we have a limited time on earth - and that we have no way of knowing when our time is up, we will then begin to live each day to the fullest, as if it was the only one we had.

*Elisabeth Kubler-Ross / [www.geckoandfly.com](http://www.geckoandfly.com)*



**If my body is ever  
found dead on a  
jogging trail, just  
know I was  
murdered  
elsewhere and  
dumped there.**