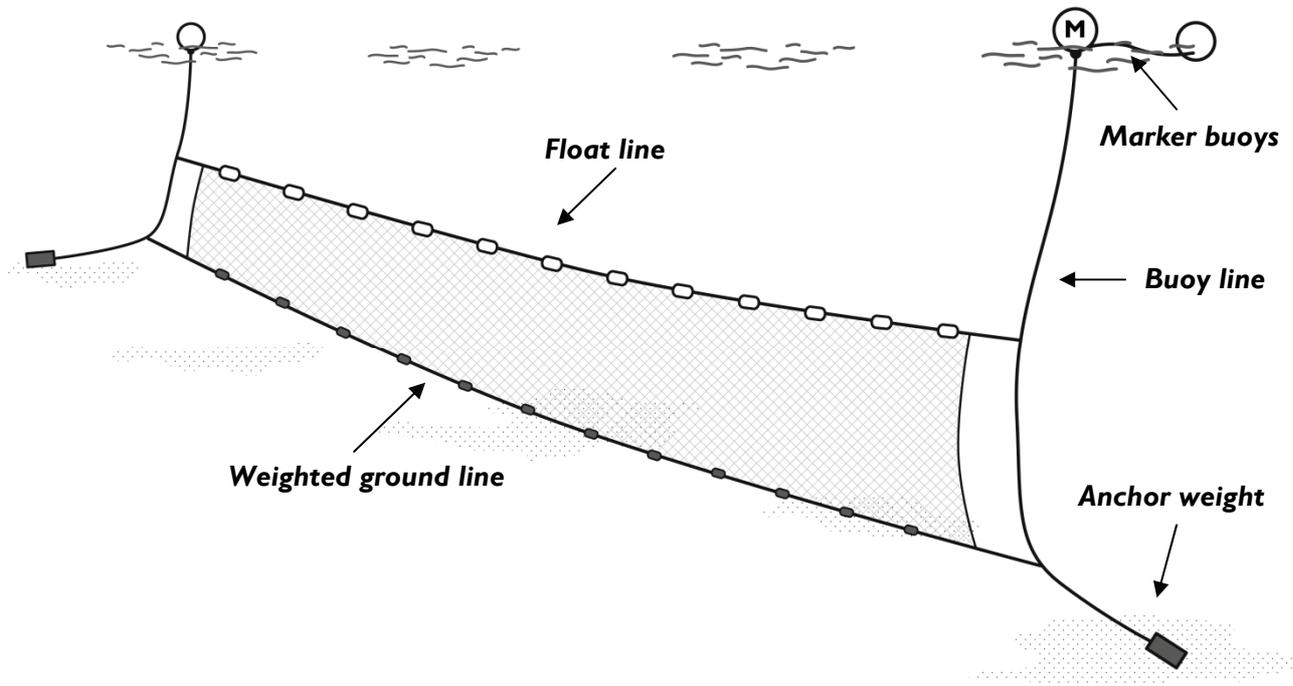


RECREATIONAL FISHING GEAR

Gillnet – Mullet Net



Gear Description

Mullet nets are a gillnet made of a panel of **mesh** attached to a **floating line** (head line) constructed of small floats threaded on a rope at the top and a **sinking line** (ground line) constructed of weights attached to a rope on the bottom. The mesh is attached to the head and ground lines in such a way that the panel of netting hangs in the water in curtain-like folds.

The net can be 25 metres or less in length with a mesh size of between 60-70 mm in width. The **mesh size** is the distance between the inside surface of diagonally opposite knots of the mesh when the mesh is **held taut**.

The netting is a weave of square shaped meshes, usually made of a **monofilament**, single strand synthetic thread. Nets come in various colours from clear, grey, green to brown. The fish's ability to detect the net depends on water clarity, net colour and location.

Buoy lines and surface **marker buoys** at each end help the fisher to locate and retrieve the mullet net. Additional buoys, large floats, or a dhan pole and flag can be attached to improve the visibility of the gear. Required weights must be attached to the ground line to prevent the net from drifting. A GPS fix also assists locating gear.

How it works

The curtain of netting sits on the sea floor where it is held in place by the weighted **ground line** and the **anchor weights** at either end of the net.

Larger fish become trapped as they swim through deliberately sized mesh openings and are unable to swim backwards. In all fish species, the scales, gill plates, spines and fins point

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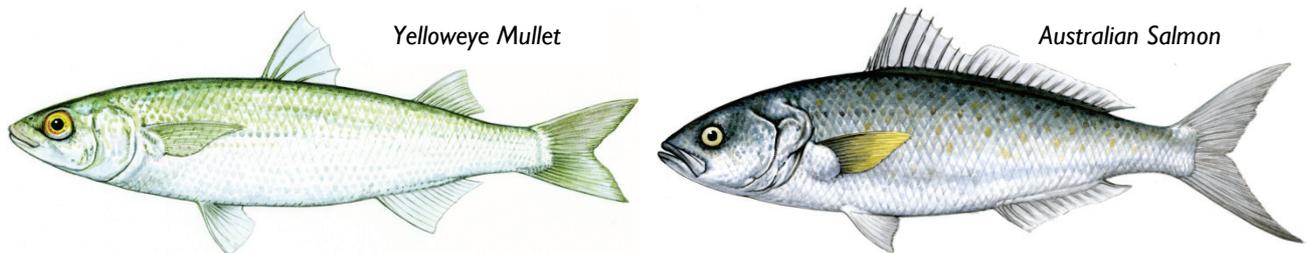
Mullet Net

backwards down the fish to decrease the resistance to swimming forwards. This physical characteristic increases the likelihood of becoming entangled by the net.

The size of the mesh is important when **selectively fishing** for different fish sizes and species. Smaller fish can swim through the net while the larger fish may bounce off.

Target Fish

Mullet nets are used to target mullet, pike, Australian salmon and some whiting species on sandy, muddy or soft sea floor, along reef edges and sea grass beds.



Responsible Fishing Tips

- Remain close to or **in attendance** to the mullet net whenever possible.
- Regularly retrieve and check the net.
- Lower your soak times to increase the **survival** of released fish – remember: fresh is best.
- Check the weather so the net can be safely retrieved.
- Release unwanted fish by cutting the mesh, instead of pulling them from the net and damaging fish scales, gills or fins.
- Check the weather and don't set your net in **rough weather** as lost mullet nets can continue to 'ghost fish' in the marine environment. Don't set your mullet net on rocky reef.
- Mullet nets should only be set to target specific fish. Indiscriminant use leads to the risk of fouling your gear and catching of non target and undersize fish.
- The **weights attached** on each end of the mainline should be at least 2 kilograms or a total of 4 kilograms to prevent the graball net from dragging in strong tides. Make sure the buoy is large enough to stay afloat in strong currents and not be pulled under by the weight.
- Use a lightweight line on the **anchor weights** so that the weights can be sacrificed and the net recovered if they become snagged.
- Avoid interactions with marine mammals by not having **excess loose line** on the surface which may cause a hazard to wildlife or other boats. Don't set lines if seals or migrating whales are in the area.
- Avoid setting nets where seabirds are active such as rookeries.

For net specifications, licensing and area rules, get a copy of the *Recreational Sea Fishing Guide*.

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Tasmania

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