2017

Asian Australian Cultures of Recreational Fishing

Collette Fontaine
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Asian Australian Cultures of Recreational Fishing

Abstract
Overfishing has become a global management issue. In recent years, government and academic attention has turned to the impacts of recreational fishing, which has been estimated to contribute to 12% of global fish harvest and declines in fish species (Forbes et al. 2015). However, little research attention has been paid to the recreational fishing practices and knowledge of ethnic minorities. Therefore, the overarching aim of this research is to better understand the recreational fishing cultures of Asian-Australians to provide insights into ocean sustainability. The aim is underpinned by three research questions: 1) What are the ideas, skills and materials that sustain the fishing practices of Asian recreational fishers? 2) What is the relationship between Asian recreational fishers and fish? 3) What implications arise for fisheries management from better understanding the fishing practices of Asian recreational fishers? A mixed methods qualitative approach was utilised, combining semi-structured interviews, 'go-alongs', and a research journal. The research found that fishing practices changed post migration particularly through learning about the practice of catch-and-release. Furthermore, the practice of catch-and-release was rooted in specific ideas around sustainability, and its performance was understood to provide care for the fish and recreational fishers. Moreover, sustainability, performed through catch-and-release, was linked to understandings of white Australian citizenship. The implications of these findings are that fisheries management should be alert to the ways in which recreational fisheries remain a racialized terrain by the speech and actions of some white-men-who fish. Fisheries management could help break down stereotypes of Asian fishers by celebrating their commitment to environmental sustainability.

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Asian-Australian cultures of recreational fishing

Oliver holding the Blackfish Colette caught at Woolwich ferry wharf. “It’s an activity I love, some would say obsessed with, I just love the act of fishing, I love fishing solo, I love fishing with my mates, I love fishing in wild areas, I just love fishing” (Oliver). Photograph taken 14 June 2017.

Colette Fontaine

A thesis submitted in part fulfilment of the requirement of the Honours Degree of Bachelor of Science in the School of Geography and Sustainable Communities 2017.
With my silken line and delicate hook
I wander into a myriad of ripples
And find – freedom.

- Li Yu, *Fisherman’s song*
Abstract

Overfishing has become a global management issue. In recent years, government and academic attention has turned to the impacts of recreational fishing, which has been estimated to contribute to 12% of global fish harvest and declines in fish species (Forbes et al. 2015). However, little research attention has been paid to the recreational fishing practices and knowledge of ethnic minorities. Therefore, the overarching aim of this research is to better understand the recreational fishing cultures of Asian-Australians to provide insights into ocean sustainability. The aim is underpinned by three research questions: 1) What are the ideas, skills and materials that sustain the fishing practices of Asian recreational fishers? 2) What is the relationship between Asian recreational fishers and fish? 3) What implications arise for fisheries management from better understanding the fishing practices of Asian recreational fishers? A mixed methods qualitative approach was utilised, combining semi-structured interviews, ‘go-alongs’, and a research journal. The research found that fishing practices changed post migration particularly through learning about the practice of catch-and-release. Furthermore, the practice of catch-and-release was rooted in specific ideas around sustainability, and its performance was understood to provide care for the fish and recreational fishers. Moreover, sustainability, performed through catch-and-release, was linked to understandings of white Australian citizenship. The implications of these findings are that fisheries management should be alert to the ways in which recreational fisheries remain a racialized terrain by the speech and actions of some white-men-who fish. Fisheries management could help break down stereotypes of Asian fishers by celebrating their commitment to environmental sustainability.
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I would like to thank each of the 15 participants who generously donated their time to participate in this study, without you, this thesis would not have been possible. Before this study, I knew nothing about how to fish. Now, I know how to find, bait, hook, reel, land and safely release one. Thank you for sharing your stories and imparting on me this knowledge.

I would also like to thank Mrs Fishraider for letting me post on the Fishraider forum and encouraging people to participate, and Bernard, the cultural liaison in this study, for assisting with recruitment and providing translation when I needed it.

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# Table of Contents

Chapter 1 Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1
  1.1 Background .......................................................................................................................... 2
  1.2 Thesis structure .................................................................................................................... 3

Chapter 2 Literature Review ......................................................................................................... 4
  2.1 Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 5
    2.1.1 Social practice theory .................................................................................................... 6
  2.2 Recreational fishing in the environmental sciences ............................................................ 7
  2.3 Recreational fishing in the environmental social sciences .................................................. 9
    2.3.1 What motivates recreational fishers? ............................................................................ 9
    2.3.2 Classification of fishers ............................................................................................... 9
    2.3.3 The silence around ethnicity ..................................................................................... 11
    2.3.4 Ethnicity in the environmental social science literature ......................................... 11
  2.4 Recreational fishing in the environmental humanities ....................................................... 13
    2.4.1 Cultures of nature ...................................................................................................... 15
  2.5 Conclusion ........................................................................................................................... 16

Chapter 3 Methodology ................................................................................................................ 18
  3.1 Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 19
  3.2 Recruitment and sampling of recreational fishers from metropolitan Sydney .................. 19
    3.2.1 Research context ......................................................................................................... 19
    3.2.2 Recruitment and Sampling Strategies ......................................................................... 20
    3.2.3 Cultural liaison assistant ............................................................................................ 21
    3.2.4 Targeted sampling ...................................................................................................... 22
  3.3 Participant Attributes .......................................................................................................... 26
  3.4 Mixed-method approach: in-depth semi-structured interviews and fishing ‘go-alongs’ ..... 29
    3.4.1 Audio-recorded in-depth semi-structured interviews .................................................... 29
    3.4.2 Fishing ‘go-alongs’ and research diary ....................................................................... 31
  3.5 Ethics and positionality ........................................................................................................ 34
    3.5.1 “Procedural Ethics” and the Formal Ethics Application .............................................. 34
    3.5.2 Researcher positioning ............................................................................................... 35
  3.6 Challenges of conducting qualitative research ................................................................. 36
  3.7 Thematic analysis ................................................................................................................ 37
  3.8 Conclusion ........................................................................................................................... 38

Chapter 4 “A rod is where the feel comes in”: Asian recreational fishing practices ............... 40
List of Figures

Figure 1: Key authors from the environmental sciences, environmental social sciences and environmental humanities.................................................................5
Figure 2: The three key elements of social practices.................................................................6
Figure 3: Counter-clockwise from top left: recreational fish landings in the 1950s, 1980s and 2000s in Key West, Florida. Photograph: Monroe County (Hickman 2012) .................................................8
Figure 4: Map of study location, Wollongong and Sydney coast, from Google Maps. ..................20
Figure 5: Man made boulders found along Wollongong harbour pier where people perch to fish. Photograph taken 27 May 2017.................................................................21
Figure 6: Bill Brown 2013 ........................................................................................................24
Figure 7: A sign, by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and NSW Recreational Fishing Trusts (see emblems in top left corner) at a Windang fishing spot, written in various Asian languages. Photograph taken 3 June 2017.................................................................25
Figure 8: Bell curve of interviewing, Docker 2017 ..................................................................30
Figure 9: Ben (left picture) points to a spot (right picture) near the boats across the river, and recalls that he and Oliver had a very successful kayak fishing trip there previously. Photograph taken 14 June 2017 ........................................................................................................................................32
Figure 10: Left: Pictures from Bryant’s fishing trips, displayed in his home. Right: A graphite etching of a memorable fish Bryant caught. Photographs taken 24 June 2017 .................................................................42
Figure 11: One of Bryant’s Iso rods. Photographs taken 24 June 2017 ........................................42
Figure 12: One of Bryant’s fishing toolboxes, filled with round floats in the top right corner. Photograph taken 24 June 2017 ........................................................................................................43
Figure 13: Two Blackfish, caught at Woolwich ferry wharf, were photographed with the researcher’s shoe to demonstrate their size. Photographed 14 June 2017.................................................................45
Figure 14: Oliver and Ben use the go-along as an opportunity to catch up, ‘talk fish’ about the Shin Shin Fishing Tackle Store and expensive gear, and also talk about their personal lives. Photograph taken 14 June 2017 ........................................................................................................47
Figure 15: Yellowtail Kingfish, ((3) NSW Government Department of Primary Industries 2017) ....52
Figure 16: Oliver setting up his gear. Photographs taken 14 June 2017 ......................................53
Figure 17: Oliver’s fishing toolbox. Photograph taken 14 June 2017 .......................................54
Figure 18: Oliver using the ‘good stick’ to scrape cabbage from the side of Woolwich ferry wharf. Photographs taken 14 June 2017 ........................................................................................................54
Figure 19: Left: Oliver cutting up the collected cabbage. Right: Oliver mixing cabbage, weed and sand to make burley. Photographs taken 14 June 2017 ........................................................................................................55
Figure 20: Oliver demonstrating how to put sea cabbage on a hook. Photographs taken 14 June. ..........................56
Figure 21: Left: float at level of natural buoyancy. Right: float lower than level of natural buoyancy. Photographs taken 14 June. ..........................56
Figure 22: Blue Marlin, ((1) NSW Government Department of Primary Industries 2017) ..........................57
Figure 23: Oliver used a net to help me land a Blackfish. Photograph taken 14 June 2017 ..........................63
Figure 24: Oliver using a keeper net for the Blackfish. Photographs taken 14 June 2017 ..........................64
Figure 25: Harry’s equipment, pictured left to right: pliers, fish grip, knife. Photograph taken 9 June 2017. ..................................................................................................................64
Figure 26: Colette holding the Blackfish she caught for a photograph. Photograph taken by Oliver on 14 June 2016. ..................................................................................................................67
Figure 27: Male Blue Grouper, ((4) NSW Government Department of Primary Industries 2017) ..........................70
Figure 28: Left and right, a pufferfish Trevor caught. Trevor recalled that he had seen a pufferfish get run over by a car and still be able to swim when placed back in water. Photographs taken 25 May 2017. ..................................................................................................................71
Figure 29: Yellowtail caught in Wollongong Harbour to be used as bait. Photograph taken 27 May 2017. ..................................................................................................................72
Figure 30: Bryant demonstrating the flexibility of an Iso fishing rod, an essential quality for the rod to rebound. Photograph taken 24 June 2017. ..................................................................................................................112
Figure 31: Rock blackfish (Drummer), ((2) NSW Government Department of Primary Industries 2017) ..........................114

List of Tables
Table 1: Recruitment strategy and participant numbers.........................................................................................23
Table 2: Key participant attributes ........................................................................................................................26
Table 3: Strategies for thematic coding (Vaughn & Turner 2016) .........................................................................37

List of Boxes
Box 1 Research diary excerpt 17 May 2017.............................................................................................................20
Box 2: Research diary 3 June 2017 ........................................................................................................................23
Box 3: Positionality Statement 10 May 2017............................................................................................................35
Box 4: Research Diary 8 June 2017 ........................................................................................................................37
Box 5: Research diary 14 June 2017 ........................................................................................................................53
Box 6: Research diary 14 June 2017 ........................................................................................................................63
Box 7: Positionality Statement 20 September 2017 ..............................................................................................85
Chapter 1 Introduction

The view of Sydney Harbour from Pier 2 at 7.20 am. “It’s really nice just to be able to get out there, and sometimes there aren’t a lot of other people around so you know the environment’s fantastic, the views are stunning, especially you go when it’s really peaceful, we might go often, obviously before it even gets light, so its great scenery, it’s really great to be able to see some parts of Sydney that other people don’t see or pass asleep basically” (Jeff). Photograph taken 22 June 2017.
1.1 Background

Overfishing has become a global management issue, with recreational and commercial fishers contributing to the harvest of fish in marine and inland waters (Pauly et al. 2003). Initially, academic and fisheries management attention focused on large scale commercial fisheries (Lewin et al. 2006). However, in recent years, government and academic attention has turned to the impacts of recreational fishing (West et al. 2016). Research by van Putten et al. (2017) has found that globally, around 11% of the population participate in the sporting and social aspects of recreational fishing, which has been estimated to contribute to 12% of global fish harvest and declines in fish species (Forbes et al. 2015). In Australia alone, over 3.4 million people take part in recreational fishing each year, and approximately 30,000 tonnes of ocean fish are now caught annually from recreational fishing in Australia (van Putten et al. 2017). For some species in NSW, the catch from recreational fishers exceeds the commercial catch (West et al. 2016).

It is clear that recreational fishing has the potential to have a significant impact on broader fisheries and ecosystem sustainability. Yet as a user group, recreational fishers are poorly understood and seldom researched. Understanding and managing the impacts of this group is in many ways more complex than managing commercial fisheries, given the large number of recreational fishers and the diversity of their backgrounds, practices and impacts. While strict regulatory and licensing conditions are in place for commercial fishers, recreational fishing is largely ‘open access’. For example, not all fishers require licences and fishers are under no obligation to report catches (Voyer et al., 2017). This means that there is a greater reliance on education and voluntary compliance with guidelines and regulations around sustainable fishing practices. This requires a greater understanding of the behaviour and motivations of recreational fishers.

The growing and urgent sustainability challenges posed by recreational fishers led to a body of research from scholars across the environmental social sciences. The bulk of this work has been conducted by scholars who classify themselves as ‘human dimensions’ researchers, and use survey methods. These surveys aim to understand the attitudes, knowledge and motivations of recreational fishers, including the ideas, skills and materials that shape fishing practices. One of the limitations of large scale survey work of this nature is that it is unable to detect or explain where and why difference occurs within a community, including within and between ethnic minorities.

In this context of the depletion of the Earth’s resources, Klocker and Head (2013) called for research that explores the environmental knowledge of ethnic minorities. They argue that Anglo-European Australian understandings of nature and environmentalism are culturally specific, and tensions can arise when ethnic differences in environmental attitude or practice come into contact. Furthermore,
Klocker and Head (2013) argue that sustainability research should consider ethnically diverse Australians as they bring with them exposure to different forms of environmental knowledge. Previous research into NSW recreational fishing has indicated some underlying tensions between Anglo-European Australian fishers and Asian fishers, based around sustainability concerns (McIlgorm et al., 2016). Therefore, exploring the recreational fishing cultures of Asian Australians may offer new insights to better manage ocean resources sustainably.

Three inter-related research questions underpin the aim of this project:

- What are the ideas, skills and materials that sustain the fishing practices of Asian recreational fishers?
- What is the relationship between Asian recreational fishers and fish?
- What implications arise for fisheries management from better understanding the fishing practices of Asian recreational fishers?

1.2 Thesis structure

To address the aim and research questions this thesis is structured into the following chapters: 1) Introduction; 2) Literature Review; 3) Methods; 4) Asian recreational fishing practices; 5) Asian recreational fishing practices and the politics of care; 6) Ethnicity, racism, citizenship and sustainability; and 7) Conclusion.
Chapter 2 Literature Review

Inside the Shin Shin Fishing Tackle Shop, Eastwood, the largest Iso Fishing, Shore Jigging and Eging (squid fishing) retailer in Australia. “Iso fishing ... that’s a style of fishing that me and X have introduced to the Australian public” (Jim). Photograph taken 22 June 2017.
2.1 Introduction

Fish, fisheries and fishers are topics receiving considerable attention across the humanities, social sciences and sciences. Much of this literature focuses on commercial fisheries (see Brown 2016; Abbott 2015; Myers & Worm 2005; Allan et al. 2005; Jackson et al. 2001; and Kearney 2001). This chapter presents a review of the current perspectives on recreational fishers and the consideration given to ethnicity. To do so, the chapter engages with literature categorised into three broad disciplinary strands: ‘environmental sciences’, ‘environmental humanities’, and ‘environmental social sciences’. Each of these strands offers a specific approach to better understand recreational fishers and tackle questions surrounding environmental management. Environment sciences provide crucial insights to the impact of recreational fishers on fish and fisheries. Environmental social sciences offer insights to recreational fishers, specifically their motivations, behaviours and attitudes. The environmental humanities discuss the cultures of recreational fishers, in relationship to gender and settler colonialism. However, consideration of ethnicity was largely missing from all three. By engaging with social practice theory, attention is given to how ethnicity in recreational fishing is conceived as entangled in ‘meanings’, ‘competencies’ and ‘materials’. In doing so, this theoretical framework helps provide a tentative step to address a gap in the critical recreational fishing literature.

Figure 1 summaries some the key authors in each of these strands, and specific consideration of ethnicity was largely absent from all three.
2.1.1 Social practice theory

Shove et al. (2012) argues that the patterning of daily lives are an outcome of the coordination and synchronisation of social practices which persist over time and space, and which are reproduced and transformed by those who ‘carry’ them, and so are not a single behaviour. Furthermore, Reckwitz (2002) argues that practices consist ‘of several elements, interconnected to one other... “things” and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge’ (2002, p. 249). That is to say, practices depend on the continual integration of at least three key elements: materials, competencies and meanings (see Figure 2).

![Figure 2: The three key elements of social practices.](image)

As Blue et al. (2016) demonstrate:

Smoking on a regular basis depends on an integration of materials: not only, cigarettes, matches and lighters; but also tobacco crops, factories, transport systems, retail infrastructures, an economy and so on; competence: to know where, when and how to smoke, for example, not only how to light a cigarette and inhale, but how to smoke in the ‘correct’ fashion for a given social situation (e.g. smoking in a beer garden is clearly different to smoking during a break at work) and meaning: understanding smoking as a normal and socially acceptable thing to do, variously associated with relaxation, sociability, masculinity, glamour and toughness (Blue et al. 2016)
It is difficult to perform ‘smoking’ if one or more of these elements are missing. For example, if there is no lighter, no notion of smoking as a normal thing to do, or no embodied knowledge of how to smoke. As social practices are constituted by their elements, they change when these elements are reconfigured. This is also the case with recreational fishing practices, which are contingent on the continual integration of the materials, competencies and meanings of recreational fishing.

2.2 Recreational fishing in the environmental sciences

Scholars within the environmental sciences have focused their research attention on recreational fisheries management. They utilised positivist conceptual frameworks to understand the sustainability implications of recreational fishing, and the effects of recreational fishing on ecosystems and fish stocks. Fishers and their recreational fishing activities were reduced to numbers. For example, research by van Putten et al. (2017) found that globally, around 11% of the population participate in the sporting and social aspects of recreational fishing, which has been estimated to contribute to 12% of global fish harvest and declines in fish species (Forbes et al. 2015). In Australia alone, over 3.4 million people take part in recreational fishing each year, and approximately 30,000 tonnes of ocean fish are now caught annually from recreational fishing in Australia (van Putten et al. 2017). For some species in NSW, the catch from recreational fishers exceeds the commercial catch (West et al. 2016). In many countries of the Global North, including Australia, professional fishing has become increasingly regulated and strictly controlled. In contrast, recreational fishing remains largely open access with the primary means of managing catch limited to size and bag limits on individual fishers (Voyer et al. 2017).

Scientific research has found that the environmental repercussions of overfishing include impacts occurring directly on the exploited species, e.g. loss of genetic variability, truncation of age and size structure, and evolutionary changes (Lewin et al. 2006). Furthermore, broader environmental impacts occur on the aquatic ecosystem, such as the alteration of the food web, with possible trophic cascades through the removal of higher order carnivores. Moreover, impacts related to the fishing activity per se include habitat modification; impacts from introduced and translocated species to support recreational fisheries; direct impacts on sea birds and marine mammals and fisher generated pollution (McPhee, et al. 2002).

Recreational fishery management aims to prevent species decline and provide sustainable fisheries. Management strategies that are thought to assist recovery efforts include the closure of commercial fisheries, recreational harvest restrictions, re-stocking programs, habitat restoration, restoration of fish passages, and closures to protect fish during the breeding season (Forbes et al. 2015).
Whilst focused on the ecological impacts of fishing, this body of scientific evidence points to the ways in which the choices and agency of individual fishers can determine the nature and extent of these impacts. Whilst fishers may indicate concern for the health of fish stocks, perceptions of threats can be influenced by the slow temporal shifts in species composition. For example, the phrase ‘shifting baselines’ has been applied to the tendency amongst recreational fishers to believe that the size and number of fish they directly experience over their lifetime is the normal ‘baseline’ for fish. However, historical scientific evidence points to a decline in fish size and abundance (Roberts 2013) (see Figure 3).

![Figure 3: Counter-clockwise from top left: recreational fish landings in the 1950s, 1980s and 2000s in Key West, Florida. Photograph: Monroe County (Hickman 2012)](image)

Research by Lewin et al. (2006) found that recreational fishers prefer particular species either because they are considered to be of high culinary value, or because they offer great fishing challenges, or because they are generally of greater appeal to the fisher than other species. Recreational fishers are also size-selective and target larger, and often older, fish. The size selectivity is mainly attributed to trophy fishing, but also to minimum length regulations which induce selective removal of the largest/oldest fish in the population. Therefore, the choices made by individual fishers – including target species, gear selection, and size preferences – directly intersects with the characteristics of fish species, including morphology, behaviour and habitat preferences to determine the vulnerability of fish to recreational fishing. Understanding the characteristics of both fishers and the fish they target is therefore essential for effective fisheries management.
2.3 Recreational fishing in the environmental social sciences

The growing and urgent sustainability challenges posed by recreational fishers led to a large body of research from scholars across the environmental social sciences. The aim of this research was to better understand the human dimensions of recreational fishers, specifically their attitudes, knowledge and motivations. The literature falls broadly into three main categories:

1. Fisher motivations
2. Classification of fishers
3. Satisfaction studies

2.3.1 What motivates recreational fishers?

Motivation in the social science fisheries literature is understood as psychological ‘needs’ that are sought (or expected) to be fulfilled by participating in recreational fishing (Arlinghaus et al. 2015). In recreational fisheries, the constructs of fisher motivation and satisfaction are key human dimensions that have been suggested to shape the level of participation and thus effort and catch (Fedler and Ditton 1994). Recreational fishing motivations are generally grouped into ‘catch’ and ‘non catch’ related categories, with non-catch related motivations including relaxation, escaping work and life demands, being with nature, learning new skills and socialization (McIlgorm 2016 plus a whole bunch of others). Catch related motivations relate to the importance of catching fish, the size of the fish and the number of fish.

According to Young et al (2016) the uneven gendered participation of men in recreational fishing can be ascribed to motivations. In Young et al.’s (2016) research into recreational fisher motivations in Australia and the Solomon Islands, 44% of Australian recreational fishers in the study described an instinctual hunter-gatherer motivation to fish. The hunter gatherer motivation was not articulated in the Solomon Islands. Young et al (2016) argued this was because this instinct is satisfied on a regular basis. Young et al (2016) point to the gendered participation in fishing in both Australia and the Solomon Islands. They argue that recreational fishing satisfied an innate urge to assume the role of provider, where male fishers caught fish to feed families. According to senior fishers in both countries, demonstrations of masculinity and ego were most prevalent in young male fishers. They suggested that some of the younger men were eager to earn respect through large and impressive catches and had a tendency to take risks and fish excessively (Young et al. 2016).

2.3.2 Classification of fishers

A significant body of human dimensions literature relating to recreational fishing involves classifying fishers according to a range of variables, including their level of involvement in fishing. Recreation
specialization theory, for example, has been used to classify fishers into a hierarchical category of least to most specialised (Bryan, 1977; Ditton et al. 1992; Voyer et al. 2014). It has been argued that, as recreational fishing specialization and commitment levels change, so do other characteristics of recreationists including: (a) motives for participation, (b) harvesting desires, (c) setting and environmental preferences, (d) knowledge and ecological understanding, and (e) preferences for management policies and compliance with rules (Gray et al. 2015). In this model, highly specialised fishers are fishers with well-developed fishing skills, large investments in fishing equipment, fish more frequently and are more committed to fishing. These fishers are less likely to identify another outdoor activity that would provide them with the same satisfaction or enjoyment they received from fishing (Voyer et al. 2014).

Generally, research utilising recreational specialisation theory has relied on grouping recreationists based on three main dimensions. Firstly, affective psychological commitment, such as the extent to which fishing is considered central to a fisher’s lifestyle. Secondly, cognitive development, including acquiring skills or knowledge. Thirdly, behavioural involvement, as revealed by indicators such as frequency of participation (Beardmore et al. 2013). The ‘centrality to lifestyle’ scale has been used in a range of research to differentiate the needs and characteristics of different fishers. For example, research by Li et al. (2010) found that fishers’ knowledge level, interest in accessing scientific information and was positively correlated with centrality of fishing to the fishers’ lifestyle. Indeed, highly avid fishers were receptive to scientific communication efforts and interested in using that information to engage in the fishery management process (Bryan 1977). However, a number of studies have found that highly avid fishers are less likely to be supportive of restricted fishing areas such as MPAs (Voyer et al. 2014). Furthermore, low and medium avidity fishers were less likely than highly avid fishers to be interested in engaging in the fishery management process. Therefore, this imbalance in engagement level across avidity groups, combined with low engagement by recreational fishers overall, introduces bias into information gathered from the recreational fishing community (Li et al. 2010).

Classification of fishers has also occurred according to motivations. For example, Beardmore (2011) and McIlgorm et al 2016 used motivations to classify fishers and found that motivational preferences can influence attitudes and behaviours in relation to fishing practices. Beardmore et al. (2011) found that different fish species were targeted by different recreational fisher groups, and their motivations were influenced by the biological characteristics of the target species. For example, abundant and easy-to-catch species were targeted and retained by social and nature-oriented recreational fishers, while larger, harder to catch species were targeted by trophy and challenge-
oriented fishers. Therefore, classification studies have indicated that specific species can fulfil very specific expectations and recreational opportunities for particular groups of recreational fishers (Beardmore et al. 2011).

### 2.3.3 The silence around ethnicity

The concept of ethnicity has been widely discussed within the field of social science (Clammer 2015 & 2017, Louie 2014, Sullivan 2012). For some, the concept of ethnicity is conceived as biological and assigned at birth. This static understanding of ethnicity leaves no possibility for the processes of transformation, deconstruction and reconstruction, resistance or revisioning of identity (Clammer 2015).

Others understand the concepts of ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’ as socially constructed. In this light, ethnicity and race do not refer to any objective underlying genetic or visible phenotypical characteristics, but are social understandings of biological factors, such as skin colour, hair colour and facial traits. Furthermore, identities are situational, historically varied and unstable. Recent work on the sociology of the body flags ethnicity as one of the most obviously ‘embodied’ aspects of identity, and points to the many ways in which dress, hairstyles, postures, accents, and other cultural constructs are used to draw attention to, modify or deny a particular ascribed ethnicity (Clammer 2017). Similarly, the works of feminist scholars, such as Judith Butler (1988), argue gender identity is performed and constituted in the process of doing. However, it is also performed within the constraints of social expectations and pre-existing structural factors. Therefore, ethnicity is an aspect of ‘performed’ behaviour: it is not a given but is reproduced, contested, acted out, and expressed through many cultural devices from clothing to music to jokes (Clammer 2015).

Extending the notion of ethnicity as performative is the recent attention to the agency of materials. For these scholars, performance is essentially an entanglement of the material and social, to create, present, and affirm an identity. As Clammer (2017) argues, materials are ‘an active ingredient in the maintenance, negotiation, or possible change of social and cultural norms’ (Clammer 2017). In regard to this study, within the recreational fishing scene, catch-and-release has emerged through an entanglement of material and social relations. However, within recreational fishing research, there is silence surrounding the link between sustainability and ethnicity. Silence which this study intends to address.

### 2.3.4 Ethnicity in the environmental social science literature

There is limited information within the environmental social science literature which actively investigates the influence of ethnicity on fisher characteristics. Ethnicity is largely considered as one
of a range of variables within the broader, survey based research which dominates this literature. These studies have, however, indicated some differences in motivation and participation based on ethnicity. Floyd et al. (2006) reported that less-affluent African-American and Latino cultures were fishing for consumptive purposes more than recreational fishers from Anglo-European ancestries. This was attributed to differences in socioeconomic status and historical and contemporary racial discrimination against ethnic minority groups (Floyd et al. 2006). Schuett et al. (2010) also suggested that ethnic and racial differences in leisure participation are a function of minority groups’ subordinate socioeconomic status stemming from historical discrimination. Furthermore, Floyd et al. (2006) hypothesised that ethnic and racial differences in leisure participation stem from a culturally based value system, norms, and leisure socialization patterns. It has been assumed that Anglos view national parks as places for refuge and escape from urban stressors, while ethnic minorities do not value natural parks and wilderness. However, in a study of how sociodemographic factors influence the motivations and behaviours of recreational fishers in Texas, Schuett et al. (2010) found that Hispanic recreational fishers place greater importance on escaping individual stressors and being in the natural environment than non-Hispanic recreational fishers. Finally, perceived discrimination and interracial interactions also have been analysed as factors that affect leisure participation for ethnic and racial minorities (Floyd et al. 2006). For example, Gobster and Delgado (1993) found that 10% of minority group users of an urban park stated that they had been victims of discrimination either by other users of the park or by the police. This was assumed to exert a negative effect on visitation among racial and ethnic minorities (Floyd et al. 2006).

In 2016, the Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security (ANCORS) conducted a study into the motivations and attitudes of recreational fishers in NSW. One finding from the study was that within the recreational fishing sector, there is concern about the fishing practices of ethnic minorities, in particular Asian fishers. It demonstrated that some recreational fishers believe that fishers of Asian ancestral heritage do not abide by some fishing regulations. During the study, fishers from Asian ancestral heritages acknowledged the cultural factors that influenced these behaviours, as voiced in one account below (McIlgrom et al. 2016).

If you go to Asia from Vietnam, Taiwan, Hong Kong, you travel around those places, you go to market, have a look, they tend to sell small ones and everyone says the small one it’s good for soup and they are fresh, they are tasty. So it’s the cultural thing, people already accustomed to keeping small ones. It's not good. It's not protective of the environment, but that's the way it's been done over the years. (Research participant in McIlgrom et al. 2016, p. 46)
An important aspect of managing the environmental impacts of recreational fishing involves building an understanding of the motivation, attitudes and behaviours of fishers, including the ideas, skills and materials that shape fishing practices. While there has been some work in this area to date (as outlined in the Literature review), there is a gap in the research, in that the perspectives of ethnic minorities in recreational fishing are rarely voiced. McIlgorm et al. (2016) argued that additional research attention should be directed towards understanding the cultural factors that influence the way in which people respond to fishing regulations. This would help to build broader cultural awareness and tolerance amongst fishers, whilst developing programs and strategies which build support for environmental objectives (McIlgorm et al. 2016).

2.4 Recreational fishing in the environmental humanities

The environmental humanities discuss cultures of recreational fishers, which includes fishing and hunting (Adams 2013 & 2017; Kelly & Rule 2013); fishing and masculinity (Young et al. 2016; Sobal 2005); and fishing and women (Gaynor et al. 2016; Carini & Weber 2017).

Fishing, like shooting, is a form of hunting. As Adams (2016) has argued modern hunting traditions are often marginalised, controversial and contested (Adams 2017). A combination of the historic division between an inherited right to hunt and poaching; hunters’ resistance to regulation and a ‘socialised’ hunt; and many hunters’ political tendency to advocate the US model of gun control – all frame hunting as a marginal and dangerous activity (Adams 2017). Only occasionally do researchers write about the particular knowledge of contemporary Western hunters, including fishers. Like Adams (2013) this thesis is underpinned by the argument that the situated knowledges and activities of hunters should be taken seriously in modern ecosystem management (Adams 2013). In Australia it is illegal to hunt native species for food on the land, but the hunting of invasive species is permitted. However, fishing for native species is permitted in the oceans.

What do we know about the relationship between hunters and hunted? Kelly & Rule (2013) have argued that hunters regard prey using two contradictory paradigms: Love and Kill. Following this, respect for life, admiration for nature and animals, and a sense of kinship between hunter and prey (Love) was intertwined with the conquest, objectification, and violence (Kill) of hunting. This view has been supported by Adams (2013 & 2017), who argued that Australians have become progressively estranged from their connection to nature and the visceral knowledge of hunting that served our ancestors. Hunting embeds hunters in the more-than-human world, as Adams (2017) explains of the first-hand encounter:
Intellectually we observe, share, discuss and analyse; viscerally, we listen watch, shiver, feel our adrenaline and calm our breathing. Bodily learning takes place: our feet find paths across dark uneven ground, our eyes quickly find focus through rifle sight, our breathing adjusts as we squeeze the trigger. We learn the individual habits and home of a particular animal in a particular place at a particular time and build our knowledge of larger seasonal and diurnal time cycles and spatial patterns. A whole lot of our learning is probably not even conscious – muscle memory, patterns in the landscape. (Adams 2017)

This first-hand knowledge, the product of first-hand encounter, is very time consuming to acquire and teaches humility and fallibility. Furthermore, by killing the animals themselves, hunters take personal moral responsibility over their death (Adams 2013). This deliberate and conscious choice, paradoxically positions them with groups such as vegans or vegetarians who also make deliberate ethical choices about their food. Moreover, hunting overlaps with the ‘locavore’ concept. A locavore hunter engages in alternative food economies; achieves health benefits both from exercise and nutrition; increases wellbeing from contact with nature; and participates in local ecosystem management (Adams 2017).

Gender is another important dimension of recreational fishing, as recreational fishing is dominated by men. However, the role of gender in recreational fishing participation and practice is poorly understood (Gaynor et al. 2016). An estimated 849,249 NSW/ACT residents aged five years and older fished at least once in Australian waters in the twelve months prior to June 2013. Of the highest participating recreational fishers (20.7%), 6.6% were women (West et al. 2016). Furthermore, a survey of recreational fishers in the United States has found that approximately 27% of anglers are female (Carini & Weber 2017). Research by Gaynor et al. (2016) and Carini & Weber (2017) have demonstrated that media representations of recreational fishing often reinforce a hegemonic masculinity. This is done by consistently connecting positive qualities such as skill, competence, independence and strength with male fishers. However, female recreational fishers are often positioned as dependent, marginal, incompetent and sexualised. Furthermore, Gaynor et al.’s (2016) research shed light on the relationship between mass media and the production of gender identities and power relations in recreational fisheries. Likewise, in Western societies, a particularly gendered connection exists between men and meat. Meat is symbolically grounded in images of men engaging in the masculine activity of hunting. Men demonstrate their power by dominating other species in nature, and acting as carnivores who engage in aggressive acts to bring home food as providers for their families (Sobal 2005).
Likewise, how the performative dimensions of ethnicity shape and reshape fishing practices is poorly understood. That said, cultures of fishing is an emerging environmental humanities strand (see Goodall et al. 2006; Cadzow et al. 2006; and Young et al. 2016). For example, Goodall et al. (2006) explain that Vietnamese songs, poems and waterways are filled with boats and fishermen, and that relationships between people and the environment are valued. Knowing nature through productive uses, such as fishing, rather than abstract admiration is a powerful cultural means of relating to nature. However, many city-based Vietnamese migrants didn’t fish before coming to Australia, apart from when they were children. Once in Australia, migrants were motivated to fish to explore a different environment, as well as perform a ‘productive’ form of leisure (Cadzow et al. 2006). Furthermore, practices like fishing in Australian parks were a way for Vietnamese migrants to socialise across ethnic groups, and make new memories in Australia. Goodall et al. (2006) have argued that building positive shared memories makes new places become significant for people. Indeed, fishing provides Vietnamese Australians with a way of engaging with the environment and being Vietnamese in Australia.

Ethnicity is thus an important theme in work better understanding the cultures of fishing. Indeed, in 1996, NSW Fisheries identified a particular need for educational programs conveying information to the Vietnamese community about bag limits, minimum catch size, environmentally protected zones, shellfish collection and other regulations (Thomas 2001). Therefore, they appointed a Vietnamese Community Liaison Officer. The Vietnamese community was targeted because of its extensive involvement in both recreational and commercial fishing. There was a perception that the State’s fisheries were being endangered because of this community’s unfamiliarity with the regulations.

2.4.1 Cultures of nature

Whilst environmental humanities research into ethnicity and recreational fishing is limited, insights can be offered through related studies on the influence of ethnicity in human-nature relationships. In the early 2000s, the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Services ran a series of studies on ‘Multicultural landscapes’. These studies, undertaken by researchers from history (Thomas 2001) and anthropology (Thomas 2002), examined the ways in which Vietnamese and Macedonian migrants perceive and use the Royal National Park in Australia. These studies focused on how places (national parks) are imbued with meanings specific to different cultures. Thomas (2002) argued that nature and natural parks are created and viewed through a predominantly colonial, western lens, and therefore, a certain form of environmental knowledge is already privileged in the natural landscape alone.
Foraging is another theme that has shed light on the environmental knowledge of ethnic minorities. For example, research by Poe et al. (2014) utilised a political ecology conceptual framework, to examine how foraging practices in cities are linked to relationships with species, spaces, and ecologies. The research explored hierarchies in foraging knowledge. It found that migrant knowledge was positioned as second to that of western knowledge by Anglo-European participants. The study also explored the notion of ‘cultural edibility’, and found that the edibility of foraged food was strongly marked by observed cultural differences. Migrants could utilise the knowledge specific to their culture, e.g. unique methods of cooking and processing, that would make some species worth harvesting for one group and not another.

Research by Hall (2013) examined the social and cultural benefits of foraging, which included fishing, and found that cultural identities can be sustained through foraging. Indeed, three key themes were identified. Firstly, feelings of nostalgia were important for many of the people who went fishing, especially as they had often fished the same locations for many years. For some fishers there was also a social dimension to the experience, as even if one had gone fishing by oneself there was usually the opportunity to ‘meet the regulars’. Furthermore, for many people, regardless of what they gather, the act of foraging is significant in terms of identity, memory, links to place and senses of collective cultural heritage. Therefore, the way in which food is gathered reinforces migrant identity and heritage. However, tensions exist, as Poe et al. (2014) and Hall (2013) both uncovered negative attitudes towards Asian foragers, who were viewed by Anglo-European foragers as ‘over-fishers’.

2.5 Conclusion

The chapter aim was to review current perspectives into recreational fishers and the consideration given to ethnicity. Research on recreational fishing is largely concentrated within the positivist paradigms of environmental sciences and social sciences. The environment science literature demonstrates the human impact of recreational fishers on different fish species. The environmental social science literature accounts for the difference in motivation, which includes attention to difference along the axes of ethnicity and gender. While conceptualising ethnicity as fixed at birth, this research draws attention to how uneven participation in recreational fishing is embedded in settler histories, racism and socio-economic opportunities. Research findings convey that in Australia, understandings of Asian fishers among Anglo-recreational fishers are dominated by negative associations relating to sustainability practices. Recreational fishers have received less attention within the environmental humanities. This is surprising given the popularity of recreational fishing in Australia, and how recreational fishers have been proactive in maintaining access to
fisheries through advocating for catch-and-release. Recreational fishing research may benefit from a holistic understanding offered by social practice theory, which understands fishing practices and ethnicity as configured at the intersection between materials, meanings and competencies. The next chapter outlines the methods to better understand the fishing practices of Asian recreational fishers through this performative lens.
Chapter 3 Methodology

William, a regular fisher at Pier 2, arrives at 4.30am to fish for bait to catch Kingfish. “Most of the time I start fishing before dawn because you expect to catch baitfish before your target species show up, so you try to catch as many squids as possible before dawn, and Kingfish, most likely they’ll show up around dawn” (William). Photograph taken 22 June 2017.
3.1 Introduction

This thesis seeks to address the gap in recreational fishing research, by analysing Asian recreational fishers’ accounts of fishing. This thesis also forms part of a wider study on environmental knowledge of ethnic minorities in Australia. Academic writing and fisheries policy have not yet adequately addressed the recreational fishing practices of Asian fishers who help negotiate, cultivate and maintain fishing spots. This study has three principal aims centred on coastal Asian recreational fishers: first, to better understand their fishing practices; second to examine their relationship with fish; and, third to engage with the sustainability dimensions of fishing. Empirical data to address these aims is understood as an alternative means to inform fisheries policy about recreational Asian fishing practices when conceptualised at the intersection of ‘meanings’, ‘competencies’ and ‘materials’. This chapter outlines how rigour was achieved in the gathering and interpretation of the empirical data to address these aims. The chapter has four sections. First, attention turns to the rationale for recruitment of Asian recreational fishers from metropolitan Sydney and the sampling strategies. Second, an explanation is offered for the mixed-method approach that combined audio-recorded in-depth semi-structured interviews, with ‘go-along’ fishing trips recorded in a research diary. Third, attention is given to the ethics of the research design and the positionality of the researcher, acknowledging how the empirical data was shaped by the reciprocal relationships between participants and the researcher. Finally, a rationale for the thematic analysis is provided, whereby transcripts of semi-structured interviews and research diary notes were coded to better understand the discursive, material and embodied dimensions of recreational fishing practices. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how rigour was achieved in the project design.

3.2 Recruitment and sampling of recreational fishers from metropolitan Sydney

3.2.1 Research context

Metropolitan Sydney, defined in this study as including the coastal cities of Wollongong and Sydney (see Figure 4), is the research location for this study. The justification was threefold. First, Sydney is home to the largest Asian population in Australia. Indeed, in the 2011 census, migrants born in China were the second largest overseas-born population group in Sydney, at 4% of the total population of Sydney (147,000 people) (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2014). Second, the concentration and diversity of recreational fishers in metropolitan Sydney positions it as site of potential conflicts around ocean use. Finally, metropolitan Sydney was geographically accessible to a researcher who is based in Wollongong and does not have her own means of travel.
3.2.2 Recruitment and Sampling Strategies

Recruitment of ethnic minorities is notoriously challenging in the conduct of social science research. Given the research aim and objectives, selection criteria in this project was that participants must identify as being of Asian ancestral heritage; are 18 years of age or over; and fish recreationally in coastal metropolitan Sydney. None of the researchers involved in this project had a social network amongst Asian recreational fishers. Hence, the recruitment of Asian recreational fishers required multiple strategies, including a cultural liaison assistant, face-to-face invitations at fishing spots/shops and online social networks sites. The next sections explore each in more detail.

Box 1 Research diary excerpt 17 May 2017

I received a message from Trevor telling me that the best time to find fishers is before sunrise or before sunset, because that is when fish are most active and feeding, so at 4.20 pm I checked the time the sun sets in Wollongong (4.55 pm in winter), and quickly got my participant information sheets together to catch the bus down to Wollongong harbour.

I headed for the little lighthouse as the light from the sun was starting to fade. I was nervous, I felt as if I was walking into a space that was not meant for me, indeed, were it not for this research, I wouldn’t be anywhere near a pier at sunset. I started getting nervous and wondered about how I would approach people.

The biting winds whipped my face as I walked to the very end of Wollongong harbour pier. Along the railing and up in nooks among the man made boulders (see Figure 5), people were perched, with a fishing rod in their hands. As I zipped my jumper higher against the wind, I focused on one person: the only woman there, aside from me. She was standing, up on the man-made boulders next to a man, and gazing out into the ocean. Another man was with them, and his friendly face made me feel
comfortable approaching him. I asked him if they had caught anything, and he told me they hadn’t, then I told him about my research on Chinese fishers, and asked him where he was from. He told me that he and the other two were Burmese, and then pointed out the various nationalities gathered on the pier: the Koreans were situated on the boulders at the very end, next to the Italians, there were Vietnamese and Japanese, and behind where I was standing, was a group of Chinese, lined up at the railing with their fishing rods. I thanked him and turned to approach them.

![Figure 5: Man made boulders found along Wollongong harbour pier where people perch to fish. Photograph taken 27 May 2017.](image)

### 3.2.3 Cultural liaison assistant

A cultural liaison assistant was recruited through the professional network at The Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security (ANCORS). The role of the cultural liaison assistant was twofold:

1. To help with recruitment of recreational fishers through their networks;
2. Where English was not the first language of the participant, it was envisaged that the cultural liaison would be able to assist in facilitating informed consent and translation of interviews.

Initially, responsibility for recruitment was that of the cultural liaison assistant. However, this strategy resulted in the recruitment of only one participant. The cultural liaison assistant network was too limited. Therefore, various targeted sampling strategies were undertaken to compensate for this.
3.2.4 Targeted sampling

Targeted sampling enabled the aims and objectives of the project to be achieved by recruiting participants with knowledge of coastal recreational fishing from a specific cultural background. The targeted sampling included emailing 5 Asian cultural groups, 10 fishing clubs, posting notices about the study on fishing Facebook group pages and an online fishing forum, and face-to-face recruitment. Snowball sampling then occurred through the recreational fishers recruited from the fishing forum and fishing-tackle store.

Recruitment occurred as follows:

1. **Face to face:** on 7 separate occasions, between May – June 2017, 17 recreational fishers were invited to participate at fishing spots; including Wollongong Harbour (7) Port Kembla (4) and Pier 2 (6). The researcher would ask potential participants if they were interested in participating in the study about Asian recreational fishers and outline the project background, aims and objectives, as well as providing them with a Participant Information Sheet. The researcher would then leave the participant to contact the researcher if they were interested in participating. In the case of recruiting a group of participants who required translation, the researcher consensually obtained the emails of the potential participants. The cultural liaison then translated an email and the Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix I) into the required language (see Appendix II). They were then sent to all of the participants who gave their email.

2. **Online:** notices (see Appendix III) detailing the project background, aims and objectives were circulated online alongside the Participant Information Sheet. Specifically, project details were sent in emails to a fishing forum, Facebook fishing community groups and many cultural groups and fishing clubs. If a potential participant expressed an interest in the project, they were asked for their preferred mode of contact for the project, and sent a Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form by email (see Appendix IV). At this time, potential participants were invited to provide convenient times to participate in a semi-structured interview. Personal phone numbers were not used by the researcher for this project, and a new mobile number was activated for the sole purpose of this study.

Table 1 illustrates where participants were recruited and how many. For a full table of the groups contacted and the dates of contact, (see Appendix V).
Table 1: Recruitment strategy and participant numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recruitment Strategy</th>
<th>Participants Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fishing places (Wollongong Harbour Pier, Pier 2 Sydney)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online fishing forums (Fishraider)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowballing from forum and Shin Shin Fishing Tackle shop, Eastwood</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural liaison</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recruitment began on 26 April 2017, and interviews began on 25 May 2017. Interviews were held until 29 June 2017. A challenge of conducting qualitative research, is distinguishing between individual and collective experience. Therefore, recruitment was undertaken until qualitative data saturation was reached and the participants were no longer providing new information.

**Box 2: Research diary 3 June 2017**

The face-to-face recruitment was quite interesting, on 7 separate occasions I went out to fishing spots to try and find fishers. The first three times I got it completely wrong. The first time was on a Sunday, at around midday, I went to all of the points from Towradgi to Bellambi, i.e. Sandon Point, Bells Point, etc. and found absolutely no one. I chose these locations because I assumed that as these points were closest to the sea, there would be fishers there. I had also assumed that the best time of day to go fishing would be when it’s nice and sunny during the middle of the day, because when I think of fishers, I have a mental image of them lined up on a wharf in bright daylight (see Figure 6, the image I used in my poster presentation).
The other two times I left home as early as the winter temperature permitted me to, around 8 am on the weekend, to go to Port Kembla and Windang. Again there was no one at port Kembla, and while there were fishers down at Windang, none of them were Asian. So that day I sought help from the first fisher I recruited from the Fishraider forum, Trevor. Trevor told me that while Windang was once a very popular spot with Asian fishers, it was no longer an Asian fishing spot because of the territoriality of Windang locals and because the numbers of Bream, a fish popular with Asian recreational fishers, had greatly decreased there.

So the best places to find Asian fishers were Wollongong harbour and Port Kembla, but either before sunrise or around sunset, because that’s when fish are most active, their breakfast and dinner time. So, indeed on my first trip to Wollongong harbour at sunset I was successful at recruiting a group of Asian students.

So, it became interesting in that I was trying to think like an Asian fisher to figure out how to catch them, who in turn were trying to think like fish. Thus the process of becoming an Asian fisher was required for the recruitment process. In this process I also became alert to the territorialisation of the coast – that some places had been designated ‘Asian fishing spots’, where Asian fishers were more likely to be found. Processes behind this territorialisation include the placement of signs written in Asian languages (see Figure 7).
Figure 7: A sign, by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and NSW Recreational Fishing Trusts (see emblems in top left corner) at a Windang fishing spot, written in various Asian languages. Photograph taken 3 June 2017.
### 3.3 Participant Attributes

**Table 2: Key participant attributes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (all names are pseudonyms, with one exception)</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ancestral heritage</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Where recruited</th>
<th>Fishing experience</th>
<th>Fishing experience in Australia (at time of interview)</th>
<th>Urban or Rural fishing</th>
<th>Fish they target</th>
<th>Style of fishing</th>
<th>Why they fish?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alan</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Wollongong harbour</td>
<td>18 years</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Big fish</td>
<td>Basic rod and reel, harbour, fresh bait</td>
<td>Fun, enjoy outdoors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Born in Sydney, Chinese heritage</td>
<td>Part time property investor</td>
<td>Snowball sampling</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Australian Bass, Bream, Flathead, Salmon, and Jewfish (‘bread and butter species’)</td>
<td>Kayak, lures</td>
<td>Enjoy outdoors, challenge, relaxation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryant</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Chinese (Hong Kong)</td>
<td>Café owner</td>
<td>Shin Shin Fishing Tackle shop</td>
<td>23 years</td>
<td>17 years</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Bream, Drummer</td>
<td>Iso, on rocks, fresh bait</td>
<td>Thrill of catch, learning about fish, Personal Bests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Born in Sydney, Chinese heritage</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Pier 2 Sydney</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Big fish</td>
<td>Basic rod and reel, pier 2, fresh bait</td>
<td>Thrill of catch, earning fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Born in Sydney, Chinese</td>
<td>Optometrist</td>
<td>Fishraider Forum</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Anything, Flathead, Trevally, Wharves</td>
<td>Lures and bait; Wharves</td>
<td>Fun, catch up with friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Heritage</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Fish Target</td>
<td>Fishing Equipment</td>
<td>Reasons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Born in New Zealand, Chinese heritage</td>
<td>Optometrist</td>
<td>Snowball sampling Over 20 years (estimated)</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Australian Bass, Trevally, Flathead (wants to catch Kingfish or Jewfish)</td>
<td>Kayak, lures</td>
<td>Kayak, lures, Enjoy outdoors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Born in Sydney, Korean heritage</td>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>Shin Shin Fishing Tackle shop 15 years</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Drummer, Jewfish</td>
<td>Iso, on rocks, fresh bait</td>
<td>Relaxation, Convenience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keyser</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Born in Melbourne, Vietnamese heritage</td>
<td>IT support engineer</td>
<td>Fishraider Forum 6 -7 years</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Big fish, Kingfish</td>
<td>Boat, ocean, live bait</td>
<td>Thrill of catch, relaxation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Wollongong harbour 10 years</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Big fish</td>
<td>Basic rod and reel, harbour, fresh bait</td>
<td>Killing time, get outdoors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lloyd</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Chinese (Hong Kong)</td>
<td>Electronic computer engineer</td>
<td>Cultural liaison 43 years</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Big fish</td>
<td>Boat and land based, fresh bait</td>
<td>Relaxation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oliver</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Malaysian</td>
<td>Food technologist</td>
<td>Fishraider forum Over 50 years</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Australian Bass, Murray Cod, Bream, Flathead, Trevally, Blackfish</td>
<td>Kayak, lures, Blackfishing – cabbage</td>
<td>Loves fishing, Enjoy outdoors, Personal Bests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Wollongong harbour Over 7 years</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Bream</td>
<td>Basic rod and reel, harbour,</td>
<td>Feeling of achievement, relaxation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The participants in the sample were all male and from a range of ages – the youngest being 19, and the oldest 63. They were mostly educated professionals or students, and from high income backgrounds. Furthermore, the participants were from a range of Asian ancestral heritages, therefore the results obtained from this study are not generalizable for any specific Asian heritage. Moreover, most of the participants who give up their time to participate in study were more interested in the ‘thrill of the catch’ aspect of recreational fishing than any other, and therefore would be classed as ‘highly avid’ fishers (Ditton & Sutton 2004). Thus, the results are also not generalizable to recreational fishers who are less avid.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Heritage</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Fishing Experience</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Fishing Preferences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steven</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>5 and ½ years</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Drummer</td>
<td>Iso, on rocks, fresh bait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shin Shin Fishing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fun, thrill of catch, enjoy outdoors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tackle shop</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trevor</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>Sydney trains</td>
<td>36 years</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td></td>
<td>Anything, challenging fish, Squid, Tuna, Kingfish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>worker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kayak, anywhere on land, lures, fresh bait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fishraider forum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Relaxation, fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Catering</td>
<td>Over 5 years</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Kingfish</td>
<td>Pier and rocks, fresh bait and lures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pier 2 Sydney</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Killing time, challenge, thrill of catch, relationships</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Steven, 24 Chinese, Student, Shin Shin Fishing Tackle shop, 5 and ½ years, Urban, Drummer, Iso, on rocks, fresh bait, Fun, thrill of catch, enjoy outdoors.
3.4 Mixed-method approach: in-depth semi-structured interviews and fishing ‘go-alongs’

This section is divided into two parts, each corresponding with one of two stages of empirical data collection. The sections below describe the merits and limitations of each method and how each was employed in this project.

3.4.1 Audio-recorded in-depth semi-structured interviews

At Stage I of the research, participants were invited to take part in a semi-structured interview about recreational fishing. The purpose of this stage was to gain insight into the participants’ recreational fishing practices, motivations and experiences.

Across the social sciences, advocates for the semi-structured interview are numerous (Kvale 1983; Shurmer-Smith 2002; Myers & Newman 2007; Madill 2011; Anyan 2013; Zhou & Nunes 2013; Rossetto 2014; Barnham 2015; Yates & Leggett 2016; Dowling et al. 2016; Kallio et al. 2016). Rossetto (2014, p, 483) describes semi-structured interviews as a way of “gathering information and facts, eliciting stories, and learning about meanings, emotions, experiences, and relationships that cannot easily be observed”. Furthermore, Dowling et al. (2016) suggest that verbal accounts can expose key underlying social structures, and give voice to opinions that are rarely heard, like Asian recreational fishers. Indeed, the semi-structured interview was appropriate for this project as it is a method of data collection that enables individuals to think and to talk about their predicaments, needs, expectations, experiences, and understandings of fish, fishers and fishing (Anyan 2013).

Semi-structured interviews are based on an interview questions list (see Appendix VIII for question list), which is predesigned but incomplete. Therefore, the interviewer has sufficient flexibility to add or remove interview questions during the interview processes as and when appropriate (Zhou & Nunes 2013). However, when designing and implementing a semi-structured interview, it was important to be mindful of keeping questions concise and to avoid lumping two questions into one. Leading questions were avoided, as were closed-questions and those with a strong positive or negative association, for example: “Where don’t you like to fish”. Open-ended questions were prioritised to gain a full understanding of participants fishing experiences (Shurmer-Smith 2002).

The semi-structured interview was designed around answering questions relating to seven key dimensions of recreational fishing.

1. Questions about their ‘fishing story’, to gain insights into the personal history of Asian fishers, explore their knowledge and learn how and by whom they acquired their knowledge of fishing.
Motivations, to learn about why they go fishing.
Equipment, to learn about the equipment used in their fishing practices.
Sociality, to find out about how fishing creates and sustains relationships.
Places, to gain an insight into the embodied experiences of fishers through how they feel places e.g. through sight, smell, touch.
Regulations, to gain an understanding of Asian recreational fishers’ awareness of fishing regulations and their attitudes towards officials.
Ancestry, to gain an insight into how the ancestry of Asian recreational fishers affects their interactions with non-Asian recreational fishers, and fishing practices.

The semi-structured interview was piloted with the cultural liaison. After piloting the semi-structured interview and attending a lecture on conducting interviews, the question order was changed to reflect a 'bell curve' of interviewing, whereby the most intense questions occurred during the middle of the interview (Docker 2017) (See Figure 8). Indeed, ‘light’ or easier questions to answer were asked first around fishing history and motivations. Furthermore, many participants were keen to tell their fishing histories. Their enthusiasm to share their fishing histories served as an icebreaker for the interview questions to come. Following this, ‘deep’ questions on fishing regulations and ancestry are asked.’ Deep’ questions relate to more sensitive subject matter which may be difficult to discuss. Indeed, some participants were hesitant to talk about how they had been treated by non-Asian recreational fishers and fishing officials. Finally, the interview finished with ‘light’ questions on the sociality of recreational fishers. This was to end the interview on a light note and to ensure that participants were not left with the emotions triggered from the ‘deep’ questions.

The interviews took approximately 1 hour, and were audio-recorded, with permission, and later transcribed for analysis.

![Figure 8: Bell curve of interviewing, Docker 2017](image-url)
3.4.2 Fishing ‘go-alongs’ and research diary

Go-along/participant observation

The go-along is an in-depth mobile qualitative method that draws from two qualitative methods: participant observation and interviewing (Carpiano 2009). During a go-along, a researcher conducts an interview, while accompanying a participant on an outing in a space selected by the participant (Porta et al. 2017). The go-along provides an opportunity to increase participant ownership and direction over the data collection experience (Carpiano 2009). Participants act as “tour guides” by leading the researcher, while providing information on their familiar surroundings (Bergeron et al. 2014). Therefore, the go-along helps to change the power dynamics that exist between the researcher and participant (Bergeron et al. 2014).

The go-along method has been championed and used widely in ethnographic studies, including work conducted by geographers (Latham 2003; McMorran 2012; Harada & Waitt 2013), social scientists (Kusenbach 2003; Carpio 2009; Bergeron et al. 2014; Colley et al. 2016) and health scientists (Porta et al. 2017). Indeed, Latham (2003) has stated that human geographers suffer from ‘methodological conservatism’, and rely heavily on interviews. Interviews may be useful for answering research questions about lived experiences and perceptions of fishing. However, they remove people from their settings, and thus de-couple the subject of study (fisher) from its context (fishing places). Sociologist Margarethe Kusenbach (2003) identified five themes for which the go along is well suited for exploring: 1) perception (i.e. a participants’ knowledge and values that guide their experiences of their everyday social and physical environments); 2) spatial practices (i.e. the ways in which people engage their environment); 3) linkages between biography and place; 4) the social architecture of natural settings (i.e. the various types of relationships between people and how participants situate themselves within this social setting); and 5) social realms (i.e. interaction patterns and how place shapes the nature of interaction). Yet, to date, the go-along has not been deployed in fisheries research, making this study the first of its kind to utilise the go-along within a fisheries research context. Therefore, this research may provide a platform for which future research, utilising go-alongs for fisheries and other related industries, may be undertaken.

The go-along method was chosen for this research, for its potential to generate place-bound fishing narratives, reveal landscape values and local knowledge (Bergeron et al. 2014). Indeed, the go-along method facilitates contextualized understanding, as researchers observe participants firsthand, and ask interview questions while being in and moving within participant selected places (Porta et al. 2017). Furthermore, participants are prompted to reveal information, inspired by visual cues (see Figure 9), as they navigate through places while responding to questions (Carpiano 2009). Bergeron
et al. (2014) argue that, in contrast to traditional sit-down interviews, the act of moving along routes encourages participants to express place-bound meanings and values of places. Such expressions are made possible by visual triggers, and might not be described in a traditional interview format confined to a concrete space (Porta et al. 2017). Indeed, participants who took part in a go-along were able to point out physical items, such as sea cabbage, a prized form of bait, which they might not have thought about without walking by. Therefore, the go-along is well suited to capturing the embodied aspects of place experiences (Colley et al. 2016).

Figure 9: Ben (left picture) points to a spot (right picture) near the boats across the river, and recalls that he and Oliver had a very successful kayak fishing trip there previously. Photograph taken 14 June 2017.

In this project, participants assumed the role as ‘tour guide’, thus making them active in the creation of data (Carpiano 2009). The go-along was beneficial in many respects, particularly as a white, non-fisher, female student conducting research about Asian, primarily male, recreational fishers. Furthermore, by taking an interest in participants, they opened up and welcomed the opportunity to share their stories and to be listened to (Carpiano 2009). Indeed, this was consistent with the idea that most people enjoy telling their story to someone who is interested in listening (Agar 1996). Most of the fishers seemed to take pride in telling their fishing stories and showing their fishing spots.

The go-along also addresses concerns of researcher positionality as a non-fisher. The go-along allowed the researcher to demonstrate their interest, respect, and willingness to listen to participants and immerse themselves in participants’ worlds. These are all features identified as important for establishing rapport (Agar, 1996). Furthermore, it was important to establish rapport to gain acceptance with recreational fishing community members. In turn, the members of fishing
communities became supportive of this research, and would endorse it, which lead to the recruitment of more participants (Carpiano 2009).

Finally, in a workplace study, McMorran (2012) argues that in order to study bodies at work, researchers need to conduct more ‘working’ participant observation, to address concerns with situated knowledge, the body and mobilities, and their intersections. Moreover, participant observation enables researchers to witness the embodied and emotional practices as they are experienced and performed by participants, and experience the same embodied practices themselves (McMorran 2012). Experiences like learning new ways of fishing, negotiating one’s way through the politics of fishing, and sharing the emotional and physical stresses and joys of catching fish all provide place-based insights into fishers’ attitudes, behaviours and meanings that would otherwise be difficult to learn.

The techniques employed to record the go-along consisted of the researcher’s phone, which included audio and video recording capabilities and a camera. The phone was chosen because it is a multipurpose and discrete device, unlike the audio recorder utilised for the semi-structured interviews. The presence of the phone, an everyday item, during the fishing-go along assisted in constructing the go-along as ‘natural’ to participants as possible. In contrast, the prominent audio recorder utilised for the semi-structured interviews aided in creating an atmosphere of formality.

Participants had a wide variety of reactions to the semi-structured interview and go-along. A number of participants wanted to do both the semi-structured interview and go-along at the same time; some even wanted to do group go-alongs. In total, 9 of the 15 fishers recruited consented to a go along. Of the 9, 5 were recruited face-to-face. This included students who were using the invitation to participate in research as an opportunity to get together with their friends and fish. Indeed, on one occasion, three interviews were conducted after arriving at Wollongong harbour with the expectation of meeting only one participant. Likewise at Pier 2 in Sydney, having just finished interviewing one participant, another recreational fisher on the pier consented to the interview and go-along right there because it was convenient. Furthermore, as some of the participants had professional careers and were taking time out of their busy work schedules, it made sense to combine the interview and go along. Some fishers were most enthusiastic in teaching fishing. Indeed, one fisher assumed a mentor role during the go-along and taught the researcher the intricacies of Blackfishing, a very specialised form of fishing (see Box 3 in Chapter Four, Asian recreational fishing practices).
The challenges of the go-along include physical restrictions to certain fishing areas, including rock platforms and boat fishing, due to managing risk. Indeed, while boat fishing and rockfishing are very popular forms of fishing among the recreational fishers recruited and Asian recreational fishers in general, they were beyond the scope of this project. Therefore, some of the recreational fishers may have been altering their normal fishing practices to accommodate the researcher. However, the go-along was a very useful tool for addressing the research questions, because it enabled the researcher to observe, absorb and understand the materials, skills and lived experiences of recreational fishers. Furthermore, without the go along, it would not have been possible to fully understand the rush of emotions fishers experience when fighting a fish and how, as one of the recreational fishers put it, you could “become addicted to fishing” (William). Therefore, this approach is highly recommend for potential researchers within fisheries research.

Research diary

A research diary was employed to fulfil a number of role tasks including: 1) documenting observations while on go-alongs; 2) recording the changing positionality of the researcher and 3) critically reflecting on the social power relationships between researcher and participants. In this project, the role of the research diary was to acknowledge that knowledge is always a co-production between the researcher and participants. Indeed, scholars, such as Koch (1994), recommend the use of a field-diary to help in establishing rigour in qualitative research and with creative and critical thinking. Furthermore, Clarke (2009) recommends keeping a research diary to help researchers clarify their thoughts and feelings, record people’s reactions, and aid memories of how interviews went. The benefits from the use of research diary are outlined by Clarke (2009): research transparency, learning and personal perspective. Firstly, from the perspective of research transparency, it allows readers of this thesis to follow the thought processes involved through the analysis stage of the research process. Secondly, from the perspective of learning, the research diary facilitated reflection upon the skills developed. Finally, from a personal perspective, the research diary provided a space for thoughts and feelings to be captured and reflected upon providing personal insights. Examples of the research diary are woven through the thesis (see Boxes 1 to 7).

3.5 Ethics and positionality

3.5.1 “Procedural Ethics” and the Formal Ethics Application

Research ethics refer to the conduct of researchers and their responsibilities to research participants (Dowling, 2010). It is important that ethical considerations are taken into account by researchers in order to produce research that is ‘morally right’. In this research, ethics are addressed through
formal ethical guidelines provided by the University of Wollongong (UOW), and critical reflexivity, particularly that associated with cross cultural research. All research conducted at UOW must be accompanied by a formal ethics application to the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The ethics application submitted to the University of Wollongong’s Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) identified possible harms and outlined how the project design would address ethical considerations, specifically confidentiality, privacy and informed consent. Approval from the HREC was received on 12 May 2017 (Ethics number: 2017/204).

3.5.2 Researcher positioning

Positionality is an individual’s sense of who they are and their position in relation to others. Positionality influences an individual’s conception of the world, and thus their epistemologies. Epistemology is a branch of philosophy that deals with knowledge. Questions regarding the nature of knowledge include: what knowledge is, how it is created, how reliable or valid it is and how we can be sure about it, whose knowledge can be trusted and why. These are all the core questions that have concerned philosophers for a long time (Avci 2016). Critical reflexivity is also very important, because a researcher’s positionality shapes all projects. In this case, any prior understandings the researcher may have of Asian migrants and recreational fishing would have influenced the focus, the questions and how they were asked, and responses to answers. Therefore, it is imperative to reflect on the social power relationships and on in-betweeness (insider and outsider knowledge) in research.

Box 3: Positionality Statement 10 May 2017

In order to establish reflexivity, a brief account of my relationship to the project is given here. I would be described as a young white female with Chinese ancestry, and prior to the study, having a lack of knowledge or interest in recreational fishing. However, my concern for the sustainability of food production, the ethical welfare of animals and my personal health, led me to adopt a pescatarian diet – meaning I do not eat any meat except fish. I have never known what it is like to forage, fish or hunt for my food.

I spent the first 20 years of my life living in an apartment, in the inner west Sydney suburb of Balmain. The apartment I grew up in is situated behind a public park, and the only memory I have of fishing was when I was 7 or 8, and a group of Japanese fishers had set up on the wharf. I remember that they were Japanese, because one of my friends from primary school, a Japanese girl, was among them and I went over to join them. I watched them fish, and they even gave me a line, and some of white prawn paste they used for bait. I tried my luck, but after about 5 minutes I recall becoming bored and running off with my friend.
I was never particularly interested in learning about ‘natural’ environments until I turned 19, and even then, I was learning from a scientific positivist approach. I did not grow up feeling the tides and waves; knowing where fish could seek shelter; or when they fed. Such primal knowledge of the environment did not run in my family, who could afford to purchase canned tuna, barramundi fillets and prawns at supermarkets. I never gave much thought to the people and what they would need to know about the environments these creatures occupy to catch the foods I enjoy in ‘the wild’.

Finally, I wanted to learn about how Chinese Australians conceptualise Australia as home, because I wanted to understand more about how my mother, a Chinese migrant, felt about Australia, and how racism affected these feelings. Having Chinese ancestry, but appearing white, I have never experienced racism myself, but have witnessed racial abuse directed towards others in public spaces and studied its effect on people in my university education.

3.6 Challenges of conducting qualitative research

The specific challenges of conducting qualitative research with Asian recreational fishers included recruiting participants, language barriers, lack of knowledge of fishing practices, distinguishing individual from collective experience, fieldwork risks, and the politics of recreational fishing.

Initially, it was intended that the research would focus solely on Chinese recreational fishers. However, options for contacting Chinese cultural groups and trying to recruit Chinese recreational fishers face-to-face were quickly exhausted, and yielded very little participants. Therefore, keeping the tight recruitment timeframe in mind, the selection criteria was expanded to include people that ‘identify as being of Asian ancestral heritage’. This resulted in the researcher recruiting and interviewing all of the participants within the recruitment/interview timeframe: April - June 2017.

Language potentially operated as a research barrier as illustrated in Box 2. This was evident in terms of the technical language of fishing, and language other than English. This is where the Cultural Liaison assisted in the research, given his knowledge of both the technical language of fishing and fluency in Mandarin.

The risks of undertaking fieldwork in fishing areas include dangers from stormy weather, sharp and slippery surfaces and undertaking fieldwork near water. Therefore, a risk assessment form was filled out, and to minimise risk to participants and researcher no fieldwork was conducted at rock-platforms or in extreme weather conditions.
Box 4: Research Diary 8 June 2017

Today I became aware of the politics of recreational fishing and alert to the tensions that exist between Asian recreational fishers and fishery management after one of my initial interviews, my participant told me that:

“When you first put it out (the notice), I sent it to a couple of my Asian fishing friends, and they were immediately suspicious, and I said no way am I participating in this, because it’s either a joke, that is in other words, a study for studies sake - of no appreciable value, sorry, or it could be used in a way. So one of the things that was said to me was ‘Why just Asian fishermen? What’s that got to do with it? Is it because we are perceived to keep undersized fish and drown off the rocks all the time?... It’s what this information could be used for which might worry”

I believe that some of the Asian recreational fishers interviewed may have been worried about how this study could portray Asian recreational fishers to an academic and governmental audience, and that the ability to participate in recreational fishing would subsequently be affected. Following this, I approached the subjects of ancestry and fisheries management during interviews with sensitivity and conducted interviews prepared to justify the research.

3.7 Thematic analysis

A thematic analysis was conducted by the application of a coding frame to transcripts and pages of research diary notes. A coding framework was developed, partly from a priori theoretical and substantive interests, and partly from themes established through close reading of transcripts. Coding along themes and topics helped to highlight priorities and provide focus to the process of analysing qualitative data. In order to identify meaningful themes following the advice of Vaughn & Turner (2016), the data was organised question by question (see Table 3).

Table 3: Strategies for thematic coding (Vaughn & Turner 2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Use to</th>
<th>Ask</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify categories</td>
<td>Move from a qualitative methodology to a quantitative methodology where possible</td>
<td>Are there distinct or inherent categories in the responses that can be used for analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map relationships</td>
<td>Conceptualise themes between responses and existing structures</td>
<td>What other internal structures can we turn to map relationships? A library?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set exclusion criteria</td>
<td>Identify usefulness to the</td>
<td>Are responses generalizable?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
current project

What might we gain by doing analysis of this question?

3.8 Conclusion

Rigour was achieved in the project through credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, the four strategies to assess rigour in qualitative research (Baxter & Eyles 1997) (see the Table of Rigour in Appendix VI). Rigour refers to the “reliability” and “validity” of research, in essence, its trustworthiness (Baxter and Eyles 1997). Rigour is embedded into all aspects of the research process (design, data collection and analysis) and is underpinned by credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. A reflexive methodology was central to this, as rigour can be compromised by the researcher’s role in data collection and interpretation (Baxter and Eyles, 1997). Therefore, the subjectivities of the researcher were detailed in the research diary, and steps were taken to ensure rigour was established to yield research that best reflected participants lived experiences (see Appendix VI).

The centrality of critical reflexivity to rigour was demonstrated through the development of a positionality statement. This positionality statement (see Box 3) reflects on the need to be persistent and flexible to adapt to the preferences of the participant to ensure they feel comfortable in the process. It also highlights the complexity of recruitment and the need to be resilient in the face of setbacks, including a less than expected number of participants from the cultural liaison.

Lay knowledge, is knowledge developed through independent study or personal experience, in contrast to professional knowledge which comes from official training (Crouch 2004). Lay knowledge is subjective, and constructed to explain and assign meaning to events in everyday life. Rather than criticising the accuracy and validity of the lay knowledge that recreational fishers bring to the scientific study of fisheries, this thesis suggests that understanding lay knowledge is an exciting opportunity to explore the characteristics of the situated knowledge, or what Paul Robbins (Robbins 2006) calls “barstool biology”, of recreational fishers (Adams 2013). Indeed, lay knowledge is an inherently embodied process dictated by the intersections of discourse, technology, human bodies, non-human bodies and space. Furthermore, care was taken so as not to demonstrate a knowledge bias by seeking to compare the knowledge of Asian recreational fishers to non-Asian recreational fishers.

Whilst the results are not generalizable in the scientific sense of representative samples, a set of criteria for evaluating qualitative research was followed (see Appendix VII) to ensure validity. Furthermore strategies included source triangulation, and member checks. Source triangulation
refers to the use of more than one report from a data set to corroborate a construct. Through utilizing a mixed methods approach, which included semi-structured interviews, go-alongs and a research diary, rigour was ensured. Moreover, member checks involve checking the adequacy of analytic categories/constructs/hypotheses with participants from the study. Indeed, if any questions were raised in the data analysis, the researcher would contact participants for clarification.
Chapter 4 “A rod is where the feel comes in”: Asian recreational fishing practices

Harry, lure fishing on a sunny, windy morning in Brays Bay Reserve, Rhodes. “Fishraider (forum), they have lures day. They show you how to use lures, they got hundreds of people there, all just using lures and things. I’m more socially aware these days than when I first started” (Harry). Photograph taken 9 June 2017.
4.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the first aim of the thesis: to better understand Asian recreational fishers’ fishing practices. Specifically, the chapter seeks to answer four broad questions: 1) What agency does the environment and fishing equipment have in shaping recreational fishing practices? 2) Why do Asian recreational fishers fish? 3) How did participants learn to become recreational fishers? and 4) What fishing practices (meanings, materials, and skills) do Asian recreational fishers bring to metropolitan Sydney? To answer these questions an interpretation of the empirical data is provided through the lens of social practice theory. The chapter is structured into 5 sections. To acknowledge non-human agency in recreational fishing practices, the first section provides a general discussion of equipment, weather conditions and fishing locations. Attention in the second turns to the overarching sets of ideas or meanings to offer insights to the different aspirations of participants and why they fish. The third section offers general insights to how participants learnt specific competences and skills of recreational fishing. To conclude, the chapter returns to offer insights to the three questions posed at the start of the chapter.

4.2 Materials

4.2.1 Fishing equipment – catching the fish

The materialities of fishing include fishing equipment such as the fishing rod, reel, line, hook, sinker, floater, net, bait, knife, gloves, safety vest, boots, GoPro, cameras, boats and kayaks. The equipment fishers utilised varied from fisher to fisher. Alongside this fishing equipment, the materialities of fishing include sunlight, weather, beaches, rock-platforms and wharves.

The recreational fishers interviewed spoke at length about fishing equipment. Many explained that they gradually became ‘hooked on collecting fishing equipment’, as fishing became increasingly central to organising their leisure time and home places. Indeed, some fishers spoke of setting aside entire rooms devoted to their fishing equipment. Furthermore, others spoke of adorning their homes in fishing related art and photos from their memorable catches (see Figure 10). Moreover, some fishers told of spending over ten thousand dollars on fishing gear. For one fisher, this amount was spent on just a single reel. Participants, when asked what they thought to be the most important piece of fishing equipment, were divided between the rod and reel. Some participants spoke of importance through their embodied knowledge of rods. For example, Oliver said:

The most important part of my fishing equipment is the rod. The rod is an extension of yourself, it has to do what you want it to do. A rod is where the feel comes in and when I do lose and break a rod that I love, it hurts.
Oliver illustrates the concept of practice as relational achievement and the impossibility of separating bodies, identities and rods.

One emerging form of specialised fishing is Iso (pronounced ee-so) fishing, which emerged as an adaptation to declining fish numbers in Japan. The fundamental Iso fishing materialities are the rod, reel, line and float. Iso rods are very long (see Figure 11), ranging from 5 to over 6 metres in length. According to Bryant, the most important aspect of an Iso fishing rod is its ability to rebound from when a fish is hooked (see Appendix IX for full Iso case study).

While the rod and reel are at the core of recreational fishing, some equipment can be purchased specifically to target certain fish species. Indeed, participants spoke of the benefit
arising from specific innovations to facilitate the targeting of particular species. As William explains:

Different species require different kind of sensitivities, and thickness of line is crucial sometimes in terms of species you’re targeting. At the moment I think the most popular line you use as leaders to catch fish is fluorocarbon leaders, supposedly they are less visible in water for fish to see them and therefore for fish to be less alert to the fact that there’s a line tied to the hook on which there is bait. I think the sensitivity of the rod sometimes is very important because if fish bites and they feel the tip, the resistance of the tip, they may be aware and they just release it quickly, and therefore you lose the fish before you can hook it.

William demonstrates how specialist materials and embodied knowledge work together to facilitate catching specific fish. While there was extensive discussion of the materialities associated with capturing fish, there was an absence of any explicit consideration of the sustainability implications of these choices. While care for fish, fish species and the broader environment were considered to be of high importance to the participants (see Chapter 5), the primary consideration in the selection of gear and equipment appeared to relate predominately to embodied knowledge and its effectiveness in catching the targeted species. The role of equipment, such as fishing line, in enacting care for the environment seemed less explicit.

Figure 12: One of Bryant’s fishing toolboxes, filled with round floats in the top right corner. Photograph taken 24 June 2017
Recreational fishing materialities are narrated as a point of difference between ‘Aussie’ and ‘Asian’ fishers. For instance, several fishers spoke about the ‘Aussie’ way of fishing being that of ‘bottom bashing’. This practice involves using a heavy sinker on the end of the fishing line, which drags the line and hook to the bottom of the sea and thus targets the species of fish at the seafloor, such as flathead. In contrast, the majority of Asian fishers interviewed, use a float (see Figure 12 on the previous page), to keep their hook buoyant, and target mid-water fish species, such as Bream. As Trevor demonstrates:

When we first came over, everyone was putting big heavy sinkers on, fishing down the bottom. Whereas my dad’s technique was, back when he was in Vietnam, very light, it just float around the surface of the water and drift down slowly and then you’ll target a bigger fish cause’ then they’ll come out, and he was catching more fish than everybody else was and they were wondering why. Cause’ we didn’t bottom bash, we like mid-range fish, and it was getting more fish, so yeah, we fished the way we were taught how to fish in Vietnam, so we caught more fish this way.

4.2.2 Fishing equipment – capturing the moment

Some of the recreational fishers interviewed spoke about how cameras and GoPro’s were an important part of their fishing practice. Indeed, for some fishers, whose practices had transitioned from catch-and-kill to catch-and-release, photographs became imperative to prove that a fish was caught. In an age of digital media and instantaneous photo sharing, the philosophical thought experiment has been translated from: "If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?” to the 21st century’s mantra of ‘pics or it didn’t happen’ (Silverman 2015). As Trevor demonstrates:

The time I got caught by the damn Hammerhead!...that time I forgot to press record, so (I) got dragged all the way out there and had no proof to show, my missus just laughing and said: ‘Yeah right, it’s just a big Bream wasn’t it?’

As some fishers develop competencies, they may become keen on demonstrating and sharing their skill by making videos of their catch and posting them on YouTube. In addition, they may also take pictures, to post on Facebook, fishing forums and to circulate through their personal fishing networks. As Keyser illustrates:

I’ve got my GoPro and my portable battery for the GoPro, so it’ll last me all day, so I take along a camera and take photos and stuff and I think that’s all the main things, so, I like
to just get all the action on camera so I can watch it back over and over again. So, catching it, bringing it home is not a big deal but getting on camera is a big deal for me.

Trevor and Keyser both demonstrate the importance of securing ‘the action’ of fishing on camera to share with friends and family. Sharing digital images helps sustain the practice of catch-and-release. The video or photograph becomes proof because it is understood to be configured by scientific processes, and therefore as ‘truth’ (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: Two Blackfish, caught at Woolwich ferry wharf, were photographed with the researcher’s shoe to demonstrate their size. Photographed 14 June 2017.

4.2.3 Fishing locations and weather conditions

All fishers are ‘emplaced’ in the environment at wharves, beaches and rock-platforms. They deal with the weather; sunshine, rain, storms and heat. According to the participants, recreational fishing made them extra aware of, and sensitive to, the materiality of fishing environments and changing weather conditions. Indeed, fishers spoke of their heightened awareness of their material surroundings when fishing, specifically, safety hazards such as ocean swells and slippery rock platforms. Places felt as dangerous, such as rock platforms, may offer recreational fishers the possibility to perform hyper sporting masculinity. Furthermore, how they perform may also be contingent on who is also in the fishing space.

All participants were alert to the weather. Indeed, fishing locations were contingent not only on targeted fish species, if fishing alone or with friends, social norms, seasons and time of day, but also weather conditions. The weather was a strong factor in motivating or dissuading fishers from fishing. Indeed, fishers gave accounts of the agency of the weather over their fishing practices and location choice. As Bryant stated “normally I don’t chose the location, it’s what the weather decides for me”.
Bryant’s words confirm the arguments of environmental historians who contend that nature has agency (Nash 2005). Likewise, Jim stated that:

Every spot has its own set of weather patterns and if you’re fishing there at the right time, it will have plenty of fish.

Jim words echo with the argument of the philosopher, anthropologist and sociologist Bruno Latour (Bull 2009), who has maintained that agency is better understood as something that is dispersed among humans and non-humans in what he terms “actor-networks”.

Furthermore, participants were aware of how the weather altered the safety of a location and their chances of catching fish. Overall, fishers preferred fishing on cloudy mornings/evenings over sunny ones, because they reported that fish are more alert when it is sunny than when it is cloudy. Indeed, the process of becoming fish-like is required for recreational fishing, and Ben demonstrates the competency of thinking like a fish:

The theory is that if you are Australian Bass, you sit at those logs, because that’s where the food will come to you, because the logs gets shelter from the current, and then the current will bring the food past, and they can just go and grab it, so they don’t have to waste too much energy, and I thought ‘well, I’ll test it out’, so I cast a lure near it, and I caught my biggest Bass to date.

Different species of fish played a key role in how participants learnt how to fish. Over the course of learning about how to fish, fishers began to think like a specific fish species and gain the competencies to catch them. Indeed, knowledge of where and when the targeted fish species feed, what they like to eat, what spooks them, where they seek shelter and how they fight are required for the fishing process. Therefore, fish have agency and can dictate a recreational fishers fishing practice.

4.3 Meanings

It’s an activity I love, some would say obsessed with, I just love the act of fishing, I love fishing solo, I love fishing with my mates, I love fishing in wild areas, I just love fishing, I love the sports fishing part of it, which I guess I would describe myself as more than just a recreational fisherman. (Oliver)

What motivates fishers to fish? How does the practice make sense to them? As Oliver suggests, Asian recreational fisher motivation must be understood as underpinned by multiple factors that sustain a love of fishing. While some spoke of being motivated by competition, and others,
socialisation, for most of the participants, who are dedicated and relatively affluent recreational fishers, their motivation was the thrill of catching fish and escaping from work. The meaning of catching fish for food hardly registered as a motivation. Indeed, echoing previous research with ‘specialist’ recreational fishers, none of the fishers interviewed spoke about the meaning of fishing as ‘providing food’ – what Anderson et al. (2007) term consumption orientation – for their primary reason to fish. Some participants even stated that if they wanted to eat fish, they could purchase commercially caught fish. As Steven demonstrates:

I’m from a rich family, so I think all the fish can buy from the fish markets.

Echoing previous research (see Hall 2013), socialisation emerged as an important aspect of recreational fishing (see Figure 14). As Harry demonstrates:

Fishing is also about catching up with friends. I go with a friend, talk to a friend, catch up with people, catch up with friends

Likewise William said:

I’m not exactly fishing on my own, because when I come to piers, wharves, I see a lot of familiar faces. I didn’t particularly organise a trip with particular people most of the time, because different people have different priority on particular days and so if I see people around me I see myself as fishing with friends.

For Harry, socialisation was central to his fishing practice. Fishing provided an opportunity to become part of a wider collective.

Figure 14: Oliver and Ben use the go-along as an opportunity to catch up, ‘talk fish’ about the Shin Shin Fishing Tackle Store and expensive gear, and also talk about their personal lives. Photograph taken 14 June 2017.
At the same time, confirming the work of Arlinghaus (2006) Anderson et al. (2007), Hunt & Ditton (2001) and McIlgorm et al. (2016), all participants understood fishing primarily as a way to unwind and get away from their busy lives, the city and stressful work and immerse themselves in a peaceful, ‘natural’ space. Fishing is important to create a different pace to everyday life, especially for recreational fishers who lead busy lives. However, it is also understood as a way to sometimes reconnect with a particular understanding of nature, one that offers the possibility to find inner calm. Indeed, fishing places are constructed as the antitheses of the urban. They are ‘natural outdoor spaces’, and fishing is understood to be an activity conducive to mental well-being. As Ben explains:

I discovered that it wasn’t just the fishing I enjoyed, I also enjoyed being out in nature and paddling around looking at the scenery, and just slowing things down. I got into meditation and Buddhism a bit, and I think fishing is part of that kind of relaxation, awareness process.

Therefore, what Ben illustrates is, rather than the environment being conceived of as a back drop to fishing, the impossibility of separating self from the environment. Ben experiences emotions and a felt state offered by fishing through the felt connection with the environment. This is consistent with studies finding that interacting with natural environments can improve mood and attention, reduce stress levels, and lead to many other healthy and restorative outcomes. Even viewing trees or plants from a window, or images of nature can have measurable positive effects. This suggests that, besides physical factors like the stimulation of exercise and improvement of air quality, psychological mechanisms play an important role in the beneficial effects of nature (Van den Berg et al. 2016).

Furthermore, as Trevor states, while the connections with the environment are understood as the antitheses of the city and felt as ‘soothing’, the pleasures of catching fish arise from how fishing is felt as ‘a challenge’. This is consistent with a range of research that highlights the importance of intellectual factors, such as mental stimulation, achievement, competence, challenge and competition in fishing (Beard & Ragheb, 1983, Hunt & Ditton 2001; White 2008; Beardmore et al. 2011). In Trevor’s words:

[The] main reason I go fishing is just to get away from everything and relax for a bit, it’s soothing and it’s like a challenge you want to get to, so instead of spending the time in the city, I just go fishing.
Through focusing on the moment and immersing himself in the challenge of fishing, Trevor is provided stress relief. Likewise, Keyser spoke of the pleasures of the felt challenges of fishing as exciting, rather that securing food:

The first couple of years, fishing for me was about catching fish. As time went on, it’s more of a sport, more of a hobby for me. So I don’t go fishing to bring fish home, I go fishing just to catch the fish for that excitement.

For some participants, like Keyser, catching fish is the most important part of fishing, and gives them a sense of thrill. Furthermore, the appeal of Iso fishing, a complex sport requiring a high level of competency and specialised equipment, appears to lie in its ability to fulfil multiple motivations, particularly those related to mastery and skill development (see Appendix IX for full case study). Whereas, Bryant expresses the challenge of catching fish in terms of giving him a sense of hope:

Since I cast a line into the water, the first cast of the day, I have a hope. You don’t cast, you don’t have a hope. You put bait on, you have hope, you don’t know what is coming up, and these make me really happy.

As Bryant describes the hope of catching a fish which makes him happy, feelings are how the body registers moments of relations as they happen. Furthermore, bodies remember certain moments according to the intensity and duration of what was felt. The feelings feed into new moments influencing how they are experienced (Evers 2013). Furthermore, fishing spaces are derived relationally through people’s own preconceived ideas, motivations, their companions, and, above all, the experiences derived from the bodily imperatives of fishing the nonhuman world. Therefore, through the embodied experiences and practices of fishing, fishers generate a situated knowledge or lay geography, and fishing spaces are conceptualised as inherently relational, performative and reflexive (Waitt & Cook 2007).

A common practice among most fishers is to keep a record of ‘personal bests’ or PBs of the largest fish of each species they have caught. Bryant spoke about wanting to beat PBs:

We got our record fish for sure, and we feel very exciting if you break your record or break someone else’s record

The online environment and weight of the fish caught becomes a version of the quantified-self (see Lupton 2017). In this instance, the quantified-self as a successful fisher is measured against the actual physical weight and length of the caught fish. This relates to sports literature about how personal bests create social hierarchies, a particular form of masculinity based on competitiveness.
For example, Wellard (2002) reported that the nature of social play in tennis clubs created a focus on playing ability. Furthermore, the social identity of players within the club was based mainly on playing performance and status was gained from demonstrating it to others. Moreover, there was a ‘pecking order’ in terms of the priority given to those who were deemed good players, and greater status was awarded to the men who played in the ‘A’ team. Therefore, competition was internalised and then externalised through the sharing of ‘personal bests’, and to judge one’s personal best was to compare it to others. According to Wellard (2002), sporting prowess becomes a test of masculinity. Participation in recreational fishing through recording personal bests ‘reinforces and naturalizes’ the notion of sporting masculinity embedded in competition.

Participants spoke of how mobile digital technologies made possible what Lupton (2017) refers to as ‘reflexive self-monitoring’. This is a form of self-surveillance that enables them to access ‘hidden’ dimensions of their recreational fishing practice. Bryant, for example, recorded his fishing trips and played them back to reflect on how to improve his fishing practices:

I like to upload to YouTube, first of all it’s my record, I got to record my history: (titles of recordings) ‘this is very memorable because I using very light gear to catch fish’, ‘I caught a Grouper’. I just want to show everyone: ‘Hey, we can do this, we can use light line to ... try to use it’ and I feel very nice looking at a reel of you fighting a fish, I feel very memorable, whether you got busted off or you got the fish, is you fighting, one on one, no one involved, you and him, even if you win the game or you lose the game you feel good, and then when you record it, you know what to improve, ‘Oh! You shouldn’t go there, there’s a rock there! I was too excited I went to a rock platform, that’s when my line got scratched on it, that’s when the fish got away, oh! There’s a reef there! That’s when the fish went in it’ these things, these little things, improve your personal skills.

Alongside providing proof, positioning himself in recreational fishing social hierarchy, and reliving the thrill of fishing, Bryant’s use of recording devices illustrates the notion of ‘reflexive self-monitoring’. In his words ‘when you record it, you know what to improve’.

4.4 Competencies

This section focuses on how new embodied routines are learnt. How did participants learn to become recreational fishers? How are competencies cultivated? What is the role of fish, fishing equipment and places in this process?
The contention from participants was that the act of fishing should not be entirely focused on the catching of a fish as the most important thing, but the wide range of competencies required to plan the catching of a targeted fish species. For most of the participants, fishing was more than just about catching a fish. Fishing encompassed all of the activities leading up to the act of throwing a baited hook into water. Fishing was the entire day, and even days before, as fishers planned and scoped out locations to mitigate any safety hazards and maximise their chances of fishing ‘success’. Success was largely understood as having caught and released the fish species they intended to target. The fishing trip began in the home, from the time fishers chose to wake-up. They checked the weather conditions in advance and subsequently chose their fishing location to target a particular species. They then packed equipment corresponding to the types of fish species available and the safety conditions at their chosen location. As Jim states:

For me, it’s the whole process of getting to that point where you catch the fish. So, planning the day out, getting the right rigs, getting the right burley on the day to get that one fish you want. So that whole entire process is fun for me.

Fishing requires the bundling together of meanings and materials that necessitate considerable planning competencies. This is especially the case for the participants interviewed, given their emphasis on the mastery of fishing.

Most of the participants narrated the importance of learning to fish from an ‘experienced’ fisher. They develop ‘fishing’ competences by accompanying seasoned fishers on fishing trips. As Ben demonstrates:

I had two uncles when I was younger that really enjoyed fishing, probably their pastime when they weren’t working, and I had an older cousin, who also loved fishing, so I think when I was about 6 years old I used to tag along with them.

This was also evidenced in a cross-cultural exchange of fishing competencies from Asian to Australian recreational fishers when Iso fishing was profiled in Fishing World magazine (Harnwell 2012). Indeed, a number staff from Fishing World magazine, accompanied three Sydney based Iso fishers on a fishing trip, where the Iso fishers transferred their competencies by demonstrating the techniques to the Fishing World staff (see Appendix IX for full Iso fishing case study).

That said, online forums were important for some participants, specifically when targeting a fish species that they had not previously caught. For example Keyser told of the importance of Fishraider, an online fishing forum, when he wanted to learn how to catch Kingfish (see Figure 15).
Kingfish is found in temperate waters worldwide, and commonly grows up to 1m long and weighs 10 to 15kg (NSW Government Department of Primary Industries 2017):

I had a lot of help from the Fishraider forum, where a guy stepped me through how to catch kingfish, and if I didn’t get his help, I wouldn’t have ever been able to do it. To figure out everything is very hard, and I think people are also a little bit hesitant to tell everything, because it took them so many years to get to that stage. The fact that he knew I was trying, he told me more and now we’re good mates.

Figure 15: Yellowtail Kingfish, (NSW Government Department of Primary Industries 2017)

We learn through Keyser’s experience of the limitation of learning by telling, and the importance of experiential learning. Indeed, research has found that experiential learning, defined as “a sense making process involving significant experiences that act as the source of learning” (Beard & Wilson 2013) is essential to preserving practical knowledge such as recreational fishing. Experiential learning occurs when recreational fishers are able to practice fishing in the field with experienced mentors (Hill 2017). Through experiential learning, knowledge is produced through the body doing fishing, through learning places fish will be, and feeling the tide action and weather (Waitt & Cook 2007).

We also learn that knowledge is not open to everyone, and that it is important for friendship to be established between fishers before all the knowledge is shared on-line. This hesitancy is because the knowledge is achieved over a lifetime of experience, and therefore valued by a particular fisher. We learn about who fishers will, and will not, share their knowledge with. Furthermore, it is demonstrated that fishing is understood to be competitive, and that knowledge is what gives recreational fishers an advantage in fishing social hierarchies. Fishing is highly skilled. Recreational fishers’ bodies must learn how to hold rods, cast lines, and land fish, and bodies become attuned to particular recreational fishing equipment and styles.

The other competency is that of the fishers’ bodily skills and ability to use fishing equipment to catch-and-release fish. The process of learning these skills require effort in the beginning, however, once established can become non-conscious. For example, this non-conscious practice was witnessed during the fieldwork when fishers closed the bail on their reel because they feel subtle
tugs on their line as a fish bite. Alternatively, when they see the float drop below its level of natural buoyancy in the water and know that a fish is hooked, they instinctively begin winding the reel handle to bring it in.

Box 5: Research diary 14 June 2017

On an overcast, winter Wednesday morning, I accompanied Oliver on a fishing go-along to Woolwich ferry wharf, where he taught me what he called ‘the dark arts of Blackfishing’. As we pulled up to the wharf, I saw a few people standing under the sheltered terminal waiting for their ferry. Oliver and I walked around the sheltered area and began to set up his fishing gear (see Figure 16).

Oliver’s gear included: three fishing rods, two specifically for Blackfish, and one lighter and thinner for lure fishing, scissors for cutting the line, and a box filled with hooks, lures, sinkers, leaders and floats (see Figure 17).
After unpacking his gear, Oliver crouched low to pull the ‘good stick’, an old palm tree branch with its leaves removed, out from where he kept it hidden. He then lies on the wharf and begins using the good stick to scrape sea cabbage from the sides of the wharf (see Figure 18).

Oliver takes care to only gather green sea cabbage, because the Blackfish won’t eat any other. We then walked to the sand bank opposite the wharf and collected sand. Once back on the wharf he cut up some cabbage and mixed it with sand and pre bought weed to make ‘burley’, which he would throw into the water to attract the Blackfish (see Figure 19).
Oliver had never fished for Blackfish at Woolwich ferry wharf before and was keen to see if he would have any luck. He tells me there are three main skills to Blackfishing. The first, how to set up ones rigs and adjust the drop, how deep the bait is, to where the fish are biting, which he did for me. The second, was drift management. You wanted to let the fishing line out so that the float could drift along, and to do so, you opened the bail on the reel and left it open. If the line began drifting towards you, you needed to wind it up so as not to have too much ‘belly’, which is fishing line in the water. Having too much ‘belly’ made it difficult to strike a fish. However, we did not have to worry about drift management that day, as there was very little drift. The final skill of Blackfishing, is putting sea cabbage for bait on a hook. He pierced a piece of cabbage onto the hook and wound it around a few times to disguise the hook and make it look natural (see Figure 20). The most key point, he told me, was doing a half-hitch to keep it on, but not over the hook. He also told me how to look out for a fish biting – when the float drops below its level of natural buoyancy in the water– and to wait a few seconds before ‘setting the hook’.

Figure 19: Left: Oliver cutting up the collected cabbage. Right: Oliver mixing cabbage, weed and sand to make burley. Photographs taken 14 June 2017.
After dropping my line into the water, Oliver went about setting up his own rod and I settled on a chair Oliver had brought to begin taking notes. It felt like only seconds had passed before I glanced up and saw my float, completely still, and positioned lower than where it was when dropped in the water (see Figure 21).

I felt excitement rising within myself and asked Oliver if I ‘was on’. Seeing the float, he told me I was and to close the bail and begin to reel it in. Oliver stressed the importance of using the net to carefully catch the fish.

When I landed the Blackfish, Oliver told me it was in the mid 30 cm’s, and when asked about how long it would stay alive out of water for, he replied that they were pretty tough. The Blackfish I caught also swallowed the hook and when asked if it could survive, Oliver told me that it depended on where the hook is lodged. He also told me that the hook will rust out in a few weeks, and that the
Blackfish has a better chance of survival with the hook left in there, than for us to ‘butcher it trying to get a 5 cent hook out’ (Oliver’s words).

The term ‘fighting a fish’ came up during the interviews with the recreational fishers. To ‘fight’ is to imply a physical battle, which initially seemed at odds with the researcher’s quiet and tame understanding of recreational fishing. After accompanying some of the recreational fishers on go-alongs, the researcher came to understand that it was a word chosen to aptly describe the physical struggle between the recreational fisher and fish, from the time a fish is hooked. Indeed, ‘fighting a fish’ is kinaesthetically sensed in the joints, muscles, tendons and so on. Landing a large fish may cause bodily pain and fatigue because the bodies of fishers are not immune to strong fish. For example, as Trevor demonstrates in his experience of fishing for Marlin (see Figure 22), a fish that can reach a maximum length of 5 m, and depending on gender, weigh anywhere from 170 kg to over 900 kg ((1) NSW Government Department of Primary Industries 2017):

We were hunting Marlin out of north heads, so up in Sydney, and we finally hooked on a Marlin and it was just a fight and a half. Back breaking, painful, everything was aching like nothing else, you just wanted to give up and you just keep going going going and that was the best time ever.

Trevor demonstrates the physical pain and rewarding pleasure that comes from fishing. Trevor requires energy, physical strength and knowledge of how Marlin behave when hooked in order to fight them. Having invested those qualities into hunting the Marlin, and ‘fighting’ it to a breaking point, demonstrates the value Trevor places on Marlin. Indeed, the qualities required to catch a Marlin, make it a highly desirable ‘trophy fish’ for many recreational fishers. Landing a Marlin is the payoff for having invested such qualities in its capture. Furthermore, Trevor describes fishing for
Marlin as hunting, and like all fishers, he is motivated by the thrill of chasing and catching an animal positioned as prey. The desire to learn from fish to be able to hunt them is seconded by William:

When you start fishing you basically play a cat and mouse game with fish and it’s a game, not in terms of what you understand as game fishing, but it’s a game of you being a predator and the fish being prey, and you learn all the skills trying to catch your prey and you are motivated instantly. I think it’s part of animal nature.

Trevor and William demonstrate that the lay geographies of fishing are facilitated through embodied relations with non-human entities (Waitt & Cook 2007). The disheartening ache of the push and pull of the fish against the muscular condition of the fishing body, the excitement of utilising skills developed to become a predator. According to Kelly & Rule (2013) the sensational experience hunting provides - exertion, sweat and aching muscle - is its greatest motivation and unmatched by other activities such as wildlife viewing. Furthermore, Stedman & Heberlein (1997) argue these physiological underpinnings are the most important aspect of hunting, because such stimulation cannot be achieved by any other means.

4.5 Conclusion
The chapter sought to answer four broad questions through employing social practice theory. First, what agency does the environment and fishing equipment have in shaping recreational fishing practices? The analysis points to the central role of the weather and materials in shaping when, where and how fishing occurs. The practice of fishing is far more than a human achievement; it encompasses the weather, rock platforms, wharfs, beaches alongside specialist rods and reels.

Second, why do Asian recreational fishers fish? The participants in the case study confirmed previous research that points towards the priority of socialisation, escapism and ‘thrill of the chase’, over fishing-for-food. Through the use of digital media, recreational fishing became a way to demonstrate skills, acquire new skills, document personal bests, become part of a collective and attain a position within a social hierarchy of fishers.

Third, how did participants learn to become recreational fishers? Participants offered important insights not only to agency of the material environment and fishing equipment in learning to become a recreational fisher, but also to the role of on-line forums, clubs as well as social encounters.

Fourth, what fishing practices do Asian recreational fishers bring to metropolitan Sydney? The Iso fishing case study demonstrates a cross cultural exchange of knowledge, from Asian recreational fishers to non-Asian recreational fishers. Iso fishing is understood as both a more thrilling and sustainable fishing practice because of the potential dangers of rock-platforms and the skill required to catch-and-release fish. Each of these aims were significant to understanding how the practice of recreational fishing was sustained and transformed by
materials, competencies and meanings. As the practice of recreational fishing is constituted by materials, competencies and meanings, it changes when one or more of these elements are reconfigured.
Chapter 5 “I’ll release everything”: Asian recreational fishing practices and the politics of care

An undersized Bream that Sam catch-and-released from Wollongong Harbour Pier. “(on fishing rules) I think is necessary, because if the fisher catch all kinds of and all size of fish maybe someday the fish will die. I don’t want to see it, I hope” (Sam). Photograph taken 27 May 2017.
5.1 Introduction

Asian recreational fishers are often portrayed by Anglo–Australian fishers as uncaring towards fish (Cadzow et al. 2010). Yet, little is known about the fishing practices of Asian recreational fishers. The aim of this chapter is to address this gap in the literature by presenting an interpretation of the empirical data gathered through the Asian recreational fishing ethnography through the lens of social practice theory. To do so, the chapter is structured into five parts. First, attention turns to the practice of catch-and-release amongst recreational fishers. Background on this practice is essential because catch-and-release is the key technique through which Anglo-Australian recreational fishers were politically mobilised in the 1990s to demonstrate their care for fish. The next three sections provide an interpretation of the practices of the Asian recreational fishers who were interviewed for this study, through the concepts of materials, competences and ‘meanings’. Each section provides insights to how Asian recreational fishers understand how they are practicing care for fish through the purchase of particular fishing gear, learning particular skills and through shared understanding of the attributes of fish and of particular species. This discussion is contextualised by Cooke and Suski’s (2005) five generic factors which influence the successful survival of released fish: (1) minimise angling duration, (2) minimise air exposure, (3) avoid angling during extremes in water temperature, (4) use barbless hooks and artificial lures/flies, and (5) refrain from angling fish during the reproductive period. This recognises the importance of both materials (such as types of hooks) and competencies (such as how the fish is handled throughout the process of catching-and-release) as important aspects of care for the individual fish. To conclude, the chapter will summarise the link between catch-and-release, ideas about sustainability and care for individual fish, and recommend further research be undertaken into the dilemmas of catch-and-release.

5.1.1 Catch-and-release

Catch-and-release is a technique whereby recreational fishers unhook a caught fish and return it to the water, preferably before death or serious injury. Legislation around recreational fishing regulates the size and number of fish that can be retained. Catch-and-release is not a mandated activity, rather a voluntary action. Catch-and-release is a groundswell practice that arose within recreational fishing communities in the 1990s (Frawley, 2015). The normative shift amongst fishers from ‘take all’ to catch-and-release fishing emerged in response to increasing social and political awareness in questions of sustainability. Of particular importance was an increased political influence of recreational fishing lobby groups. These groups campaigned against the increasing designation of ‘no take’ Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), and for the removal of commercial fishing to allow for exclusive recreational use of waterways (Frawley 2015 and Voyer et al. 2017). Both of these campaigns were often championed by the same lobby groups or individuals, such as fisher and
television personality, Rex Hunt. Crucial to their campaigns against MPAs and for commercial fishing restrictions was an argument that recreational fishing is ‘more sustainable’ than commercial fishing, and benign enough to warrant allowing recreational fishing within MPAs (Frawley 2015 and Voyer et al. 2017). Catch-and-release fishing was fundamental to these arguments. Indeed, television personality Rex Hunt was a prominent advocate of catch-and-release fishing, which he promoted in his television programmes, newspaper articles and magazine columns throughout the 1990s (Frawley 2015). Catch-and-release was portrayed as a form of sustainable fishing in response to concerns from marine biologists and ecologists (McPhee, et al. 2002) that the cumulative effect of recreational fishing added substantially to the negative impacts of the commercial catch on aquatic ecosystems. Catch-and-release allowed recreational fishers to represent themselves as environmentally benign and responsible custodians, because, it was argued, it allowed them to continue to fish without restriction and without impacting on fish numbers.

The importance of catch-and-release fishing was reflected amongst the recreational fishers interviewed. Releasing the fish they caught was a key aspect of how most understood themselves as responsible custodians of ecosystems, fish species and individual fish. Indeed, 10 of the 15 recreational fishers interviewed indicated a preference for catch-and-release. As Bryant states:

I’m not a fish person; I don’t eat fish, and my family they don’t really into it. So you’ll normally see on Facebook now, I’ll release everything.

Among some of the recreational fishers interviewed, the transition from keeping-and-killing fish to catch-and-release was facilitated by an awareness of the rules and regulations around recreational fishing and embodied knowledge of declining fish stocks. On which Trevor states:

Windang used to be a great place to catch whiting and Bream, used to pull in a lot, as I said we used to catch, put-in-the-bucket. Now it’s getting harder and harder, a lot of flathead, but Bream numbers have gone down heaps. So yeah there’s been a drop in fish there. And then when I go out in Hill 60 and stuff, the squid and the bonito and all the fish that are targeted out on that way, dropped in numbers as well. They’re not as prevalent as it used to be. Before we just go down for an hour, and buckets, eskies full. Now you’re lucky to catch your limit.

Catch-and-release was the dominant narrative amongst the interview participants as a means through which they cared for self, individual fish and fisheries. The rest of this chapter brings the science of fish survival into conversation with social practice theory to provide insights to the synergies and discrepancies in participants’ practices of care.
5.2 Materials

Box 6: Research diary 14 June 2017

Today, on a fishing go-along, I observed participants practicing catch-and-release. I watched fishers taking care to land fish using nets (see Figure 23) as soon as they were out of water, as opposed to pulling the fish up completely by the reel and line.

![Image](image.jpg)

**Figure 23**: Oliver used a net to help me land a Blackfish. Photograph taken 14 June 2017

The nets enabled support for the body of the fish so that the weight of its body would not be hanging from where it was pierced by the hook. Furthermore, when I got the chance to experience fighting a fish, fishers told me to be careful not to pull up when reeling a fish in, and to direct it over to a lower area where another fisher was waiting with a net to safely land it. Whilst the possibility of catching a fish charged the atmosphere with excitement, the seasoned fishers I accompanied for the go-along maintained their calm and concern for the fish during the fight. Moreover, to minimise the time a fish spends out of water but also be able to keep the fish to take photos later, Oliver used a ‘keeper net’ (see Figure 24).
The keeper net was a simple drawstring net which could be tightened at the top and attached by a long rope to structures such as wharf railings. Fishers placed caught fish in the keeper net and then placed the net back in the water to minimise the time fish spent out of water.

Some fishers spoke of selecting specific materials designed to minimise harm to targeted fish species. These include the ‘keeper net’, pliers and fish grip. For example, Harry explained, during a go-along at Brays Bay Reserve, Rhodes, that he fished for “easy fun”. He always released fish caught west of the Harbour Bridge. He did this because of safety concerns around consuming fish that swam in the “toxins in the harbour”. Harry explained how he used a plastic fish grip to open a fish’s mouth; pliers, to remove a hook, with the intention of minimising damage to the fish; and a knife to kill fish if understood as seriously injured (see Figure 25).
According to trademark website the fish grip was developed as a “safer way to land a fish – safer for the fish AND the angler”. Its trademark slogan is “The Only Fish Grip with a Heart™!” (The Fish Grip 2017). Care for fish is pivotal marketing strategy for this fish grip. Among participants, the keeper net and fish grip, alongside the fishing materials listed by Cooke and Suski (2005) were integral to help maximise the survival rate of released targeted fish.

The fishing line is a connection from the human to non-human world, and discarded fishing lines are a concern among fishers wanting to safeguard the environment. Indeed, an estimated 10 million tonnes of rubbish is dumped into the oceans each year, with an estimated 640,000 tons of discarded plastic fishnets and lines in the ocean (Pyrek 2016). Traditional plastic lines have been documented to contribute to direct ingestion, wildlife entanglement and destruction of corals (Wiegmann 2017). Biodegradable fishing line (Bioline) is available (Seabreeze 2017), but does not appear to be commonly used. None of the participants indicated that they used Bioline and exchanges among recreational fishers in fishing forums have indicated that Bioline is not as strong as traditional plastic lines, and negatively impacts recreational fishing practices.

5.3 Competencies

For all the recreational fishers interviewed, the competencies associated with catch-and-release were spoken about as learnt post-migration to Australia through various fishing social networks. For example, Ben demonstrates the role of fishing clubs in circulating the competencies of catch-and-release of Bass:

   Our (Bass Sydney Club) philosophy is that even though during winter you’re allowed to fish for it and you have to release them, (we’d) rather not fish for them at all, rather not disturb them. So our club ethos is that between 1 June and 1 September, we actually don’t fish for those fish at all, we want to let them be, so they can spawn and have healthy baby Bass.

The prohibition of fishing during breeding periods resonates with Cooke and Suski’s (2005) 5th generic factor which influences the successful survival of released fish, “refrain from angling fish during the reproductive period”. The care taken by the Bass Sydney Club to maximise reproductive survival of Bass, and the future of recreational fishing for Bass, aligns with scientific advice.

Trevor illustrates the role of fathers in circulating the know-how of catch-and-release to his son:

   So, hooked his first whiting and I let it go, and he’s gone: ‘Daaad, why you let it go?’ and I go: ‘Cause’ you catch again later when it gets bigger’. So, yeah it’s good to teach ‘em
how to release fish and not just catch it and put in the bucket like how I was taught when I was younger.

For Trevor, like all first-generation migrant participants, the competencies of catch-and-release were learnt post-migration to Australia. Whereas, previously all the fish he caught in Asia went into a bucket to be cooked and eaten.

Participants spoke of how their competency in catching a fish played a key role in the practice of catch-and-release. Indeed, if Bryant ‘strikes’ a fish too late, that is, he waits too long for the fish to bite his bait and the hook becomes lodged in its throat before he reels it in, he may keep the fish-as-food:

I’ll release everything, everything is 99%, the 1% is unfortunately I strike too late, the hook is in the throat, you dying. So you not going back, so maybe I have that fish, give it to my friend or something.

Bryant seeks to convey that he is a responsible recreational fisher through the practice of catch-and-release. His competency lies in his ability to wait for a fish to swallow his baited hook upon feeling its bite, and strike it before the hook becomes lodged in its throat, all within a small timeframe. For this he requires patience, to wait for the fish to consume the baited hook; and agility, to strike the fish and hook it safely without having the hook lodged in its throat. A hook that is lodged in the throat disrupts his practice of catch-and-release. In striking too late, he kills the fish, and transforms it into a potential food source for a friend. Indeed, for many of the recreational fishers interviewed, a greater test of skill than merely catching a fish is to be able to catch a fish safely and release it without having inflicted any lasting damage.

However, the common practice of taking a photograph revealed a dilemma posed by Cooke and Suski’s (2005) 2nd generic factor: ‘minimise air exposure’. As stated in the previous chapter, for many of the recreational fishers interviewed, the transition from catching-and-killing to catch-and-release was underpinned by taking photos (see Figure 26). Without a photograph there was no evidence of their catch. The dilemma is between the desire to release the targeted fish safely, and keeping it exposed to air long enough to photograph. Furthermore, some of the recreational fishers spoke of using light fishing line, a material that required greater skill from recreational fishers than normal fishing line. Using light line resulted in a greater fight between the fish and fisher, and therefore provided a test for the fishers fishing ability. This is in opposition to Cooke and Suski’s (2005) 1st generic factor: minimise angling duration. Moreover, none of the recreational fishers spoke of
performing Cooke and Suski’s (2005) 3rd generic factor: avoid fishing during extremes in water temperature.

Figure 26: Colette holding the Blackfish she caught for a photograph. Photograph taken by Oliver on 14 June 2016.

5.4 Meanings

The participants had a range of techniques for caring for their targeted fish species in the process of catch-and-release. Yet, their choice to release the fish at all, and their choices of which materials and competencies to adopt in the process of catch-and-release can only be understood in relation to the meanings they ascribe to fishing and fishing practices. Aspirations and ideas play a key role in the practice of catch-and-release. Two aspirations emerged from the participants: (1) self-care and ‘stewardship’ built around the notion of being and becoming a ‘responsible fisher’; and (2) self-care relating to personal enjoyment and fishing, i.e. catch-and-release as a response to regulation limiting catch. These two aspirations interact and, in some cases conflict, in powerful ways to influence the fishing practices associated with catch-and-release.

5.4.1 Self-care and stewardship by being and becoming a ‘responsible fisher’

For the fishers interviewed, the practice of catch-and-release was a demonstration of their self-worth and status as a ‘responsible fisher’. Indeed, they were able to reconcile their aspirations to protect nature and perform environmental stewardship, with their desire to catch specific fish through the practice of catch-and-release. Furthermore, for the fishers interviewed, being a ‘responsible fisher’ required thinking beyond the individual fish to a broader consideration of ‘the environment’, including the ecological role of fish and the importance of individual fish for the health of fish species. For example, Trevor explains how he understood how looking after an individual fish by catch-and-release is a practice of care of fish stocks for future generations:
(On how it feels to return fish) makes me feel good, cause’ then I know my son will have a chance to catch fish when he grows up.

For Trevor, part of the pleasures of fishing arises from how the practice is understood in terms of the conservation of future fish stocks. Similarly, as Jeff explains:

By throwing back the fish or releasing those fish, those fish are going to grow up to be bigger fish and have a better population, so that you can fish more for the future, you know, it’s gotta be sustainable.

Jeff demonstrates that his catch-and-release fishing practice is in line with general concerns that recreational fishers have about over-extraction.

For some of the fishers, there was a clear cultural shift in fishing practices, from take all fishing to catch-and-release, since they had begun fishing in Australia. As Bryant demonstrates:

I won’t kill them all, why I kill them all? They are a living thing. I start to learn these things, deep in my heart I feel sorry to when I was young, ‘oh this nice fish’ I take and share with my mates, and it’s not wrong, but I prefer to release now, I’m more enjoying the release.

For Bryant, catch-and-release is a practice that was learnt upon migrating to Australia.

In particular, some participants take specific care in releasing larger targeted fish species that they understand as potential ‘breeder fish’. As Keyser tells:

I think if they’re too big you should put them back, because usually the big ones are the breeders, especially like flatties. Biggest one I caught was 92 cm, which is huge and I knew it was a female, so it’s sort of to conserve the fish for the next generation so the fish can breed, and if you take them all home then there’s nothing left ever.

Among some of the fishers interviewed, catch-and-release is understood as a performance of environmental stewardship. For example, Steven tells of the importance of releasing a Blue Grouper:

The Blue Grouper, I think this fish is important for the ocean so I will choose to release, cause I think I should contribute a little to the nature, to the environment. For all the illegal size, I return them not just by following the law, cause’ I think the law lets us to help the environment.

Steven goes on to explain that the catch-and-release of even a dead fish is a way to protect ‘nature’.
Whatever the fish is dead or not, if its illegal size or over limit, you have to put it back to the sea, even if dead, cause’ you’re returning his body to the nature, fish will eat them, so not that harmful.

For Steven, stewardship of the ocean requires the release of not only living, but also dead fish, regardless of size, and is understood as a way to care for ‘nature’. Dead fish, if not in compliance with size or bag limit regulations, must be returned to the ocean as the responsible thing to do.

This relationship between care for the individual animal and broader environmental consideration can be seen in the literature around hunting where the prey is a native animal, such as elephant hunting in Africa (Lindsey et al. 2007). In some parts of Africa, elephant populations, along with other animals, have been increasing greatly and threaten to damage the environment. In response to this, hunting quotas, specific to different species and regions, were introduced to keep populations under control. In these cases the morality of killing the individual animal is highly contextual and relates to their role in the ecosystem (Lindsey et al. 2007). Likewise, in recreational fishing the killing of fish is seen as a broader environmental ‘bad’ because the prey is characterised as an important component of broader ecosystem health. However, the killing of invasive fish species, such as Carp, is seen as a positive practice which assists in environmental restoration (Atchison et al. 2017).

The meaning of being a ‘responsible fisher’ also required care for the individual fish, and was often expressed by the participants as a form of respect, or connection, or empathy with the fish. Human-fish connections are underpinned by two sets of ideas about fish; their attributes and anthropomorphism. For example, Ben draws human-fish connections through age. He reasons that large fish are not suitable for catching and eating because of their potential age.

Sometimes a big fish you catch, like a big Bream that’s 40 cm, is about 30 to 40 years old, and I think: ‘Well you live that long, you deserve to live longer’. It’s not worth it just for me to eat something, we don’t need to eat fish, we can buy fish, we can afford it and sometimes I think if you don’t look after it or you want to preserve the fish for later on, you don’t want to kill if you don’t have to.

Ben’s respect for large fish is based on their ability to survive in the ocean, as demonstrated through their size. Catching large fish becomes disrespectful. Furthermore, not releasing a large fish becomes more disrespectful given Ben can purchase fish to eat from a fishmonger. Catch-and-release of particularly large fish is understood by Ben as a mark of respect and a way to continue to fish into the future.
Anthropomorphism also plays a key role in deciding which fish to care for. For example Bryant’s respect for the Blue Grouper was anthropomorphised along the lines of human intelligence:

I think a lot of fish people shouldn’t take Grouper, I heard they have a mind of a baby 3 years old. I see a lot of forums and fishing groups, people showing undersized Grouper, it’s really heartbreaking, and people showing it off! Undersized Grouper, you’re killing a 3 years old baby.

The Blue Grouper is an example of a charismatic species (see Figure 27). A charismatic species has been defined as any species that has popular appeal and is used to focus attention on conservation campaigns (Krause & Robinson 2017). Catch-and-release becomes an imperative for Bryant because he understands an undersized Blue Grouper in terms of 3 year old human baby. Indeed, the species of a fish plays an important role in the decision to kill or release. Charismatic and native fish species, such as the Grouper and Bass, were viewed with respect by many of the recreational fishers interviewed.

![Figure 27: Male Blue Grouper, (© NSW Government Department of Primary Industries 2017)](image-url)

Many of the Bass fishers would never consider killing a Bass but were happy to kill other species, such as Blackfish or Pufferfish. Indeed, the Pufferfish (see Figure 28), was understood to be so prolific that they constituted a pest and therefore killing occurred without any ethical qualms.
Right to life, or the intrinsic value of individual fish, was another set of ideas and aspirations underpinning the practice of catch-and-release, narrated by participants that embedded individual fish in anthropomorphism. As Sam demonstrates:

(On releasing fish) I like do it, because I think every animal has the right to a life, so I let it free.

Sam’s statement, indicating a belief that fish have moral standing, is at odds with his desire to keep fishing. Indeed, for all of the recreational fishers interviewed, the personal benefits they derived from fishing were strong enough for them to continue fishing despite some concerns about the effect this has on the individual fish. However, these concerns were lessened by engaging in practices and a narrative which emphasised a broader care for the species. Concerns over trauma associated with catch-and-release were justified as part of a wider ‘care for species’ narrative whereby the returning of the fish was an important means of reconciling the ‘care for self’ benefits of fishing for the fisher with the ‘care for fish’ imperative.

5.4.2 Self-care relating to personal enjoyment and fishing

One of the essential dilemmas associated with recreational fishing is that the most appropriate response to ‘care for nature’ or ‘care for fish’ is not to fish at all. Despite their best efforts to be ‘responsible’ the fishers interviewed were still aware of the potential trauma associated with their activities. For example, sometimes small fish, such as Yellowtail may be used as live bait for other fish (see Figure 29). Live bait is commonly and effectively used to catch large ocean species such as Kingfish and Squid. However, the action of doing so raised an emotive response from Greg:
It feels a bit wrong stabbing hooks into a fish that’s still alive.

Figure 29: Yellowtail caught in Wollongong Harbour to be used as bait. Photograph taken 27 May 2017.

Here the small fish is not killed, but kept alive to attract larger fish. Greg expresses concern over the trauma inflicted on fish in this process. However, the prospect of catching a large fish outweighs the pain inflicted on small fish to achieve this. This demonstrates the conflicting desires between self-care through fishing for the fisher, and care for the individual fish.

The decision to continue to fish despite this dilemma may be attributed to the personal enjoyment of recreational fishing. Participants conveyed a sense of satisfaction and pride associated with catch-and-release that minimised impacts to the fish and ensured continued opportunities for the sport into the future. One set of ideas around the practice of catch-and-release that enhanced the thrill of fishing are around aspirations that inform the performance of fishing sporting masculinities. For example, Lloyd said:

If you land a small one, course you throw it back, cause let them grow back and next time, we always say: ‘Kiss goodbye and come back next time when you get bigger.’ So this is part of the fun.

As argued by Frawley (2015) this expression of care for smaller fish is configured by understandings of a fishers’ mastery over fish. Indeed, Frawley argues that the kiss signals an unequal relation between human and non-human. Kissing fish, a practice that originated with Rex Hunt, reiterates the dominance of humans over fish because of the fact that the fisher is literally holding the life of the fish in his hands. It is a kiss that can never be returned. The fishing equipment and embodied skills utilised in the catch further entangle the fish in this uneven exchange.
5.5 Conclusion
In conclusion, this chapter examines the fishing practices amongst Asian recreational fishers through social practice theory. Overall, the chapter illustrates that many Asian recreational fishers are motivated by the thrill of catching a targeted species of fish, rather than catching fish-for-food. Participants are particularly well-versed in the practice of catch-and-release. This informal practice learnt post-migration informs their purchase of particular fishing-gear, learning particular skills and through shared understandings of recreational fishers as custodians, fishing sporting masculinity, nature and of particular fish species. Through the materials, skills and ‘meanings’ that sustain the practice of catch-and-release, participants understand themselves as responsible fishers who care for not only target fish species but also ‘nature’/’the environment’. Indeed, there is strong resonance between their practices and those recommended by scientists that enhance the survival rate of caught fish. Yet, there are also dilemmas given that evidence of catching a fish often requires exposing a fish to air to take a photograph. Furthermore, there is an important politics to which fish are worthy of the care of Asian recreational fishers, and these are often those imbued with anthropomorphised meanings. Future research could further examine the dilemmas around catch-and-release. In particular, recreational fishers’ understandings of the resilience of fish post-catch, which in this study, were not in line with that of the scientific communities.
Chapter 6 “Go back to where you belong, stop catching our fish”: Ethnicity, racism, citizenship and sustainability

A sign outside Woolwich ferry wharf, asking fishers to fish ‘responsibly’. “A lot of fishing spots in Sydney have signs up saying the minimum size of fish and then the quantities, so the signs are right in your face and you need to know it because people do get checked by fisheries inspectors and ignorance is no excuse” (Ben). Photograph taken 14 June 2017.
6.1 Introduction

One of the aims of this thesis is to better understand how Asian recreational fishers’ knowledge may help inform fisheries management. In order to address this aim, it is important to first understand where difference occurs between Asian and non-Asian recreational fishers. What does it ‘mean’ to be an Asian fisher, and how are those meanings formed? Furthermore, how does that differ or relate to non-Asian fishers, particularly in relation to the symbolic meanings that tie the notion of Australian citizenship with ideas of sustainability. The first section outlines how recreational fishing is embedded in racial politics of citizenship that positions Asian fishers as plunderers of the ocean. Attention is given to how some Asian recreational fishers negotiate these racialized stereotypes through the use of humour while others deny the existence of racism, so as not to be positioned as ‘difficult’. The second section argues that notions of Australian citizenship are embedded in ideas of sustainability. Many of the Asian recreational fishers interviewed aspired to be positioned as environmentally responsible Australian citizens. This demanded that they adopt practices that are understood as ‘green’; that include bag and catch size limits, alongside the practice of catch-and-release. To conclude, the chapter thinks about the management implications arising from awareness of how recreational fishing is a highly racialized social terrain that is closely aligned to notions of an environmentally responsible Australian citizen.

6.2 Citizenship, race and racism as a form of policing amongst some white-men-who fish for recreation

Participants fishing narratives brought to the fore racialized encounters with some white men-who-fish for recreation. Through these encounters, Asian recreational fishers were made aware that they did not belong at specific fishing locations. It is helpful to think through these spatial encounters in the context of the notion of citizenship. According to Dunn (2003), citizenship is a ‘political identity’, a social construction that determines an individual’s ability to exercise rights and control. The practice of citizenship includes the ability to influence the cultural direction of space. Citizenship necessitates control over space, because it must be embodied and materially exercised. Individuals associated or affiliated with some cultural groups are awarded the ‘rights’ to places, while there are attempts to exclude others from exercising citizenship. Dunn (2003 & 2011) argues that citizenship in Australia is highly uneven and citizen status can be separated into two categories: ‘spatial managers’ and the ‘spatially managed’. The status of spatial manager is in part determined by dominant ideas of ‘Australian-ness’ and it draws upon markers such as physical appearance, name, accent, and clothing. Australians who claim the status of ‘spatial manager’ enjoy a greater degree of belonging and citizenship than the ‘spatially managed’. Spatial managers may, for example, attend
council meetings to speak about the future direction of their towns, and on who and how many migrants should be allowed into the nation. Therefore, the spatial managers make decisions about and constrain the spatially managed. Citizenship requires active participation, yet this is clearly limited for those who are the spatially managed.

How Asian fishers talk about fisheries management reveals insights into the importance of race and racism embedded in sustainability discourses of the dominant white ethnic group. Recreational fishing becomes a site of encounter of ethnic difference, where being and becoming a white Australian (‘Aussie’) is embedded in sustainability discourses. After Dunn (2003), recreational fishing may be conceived as site where a very narrow understanding of Australian citizenship is played out. The critics of Asian recreational fishers claim the mantle of spatial managers, and make judgements about how specific fishing spaces should be directed. Various prohibitions and rules are used to control those who are defined as the spatially managed. Participants tell of how they become aware of their ethnic difference through stories of an ‘Aussie’ way of fishing – which is framed by the spatial managers as ‘sustainable’, in contrast to ‘unsustainable’ Asian fishing practices. Following Dunn (2011), sustainability becomes a key tool in policing of the citizen status of recreational fishers, and is played out through reference to race and racism.

6.3 Evidence of Racism

Participants spoke of how the notion of citizenship, articulated as ‘Aussie’, was deployed by the critics of Asian fishers. These were intended to influence the cultural direction of fishing spaces. Indeed, some recreational fishing places are embedded in racialized social relationships. For example, some of the fishers interviewed spoke about certain places they won’t fish, because of their experiences of racism. Others provided examples of racial harassment when fishing. For example, Trevor said:

> When I go down to rock platforms and you have Aussies down there, most of them are fine, happy going, but then you have ones that are racist and they’re saying ‘Ching, Chong Chinaman’s’ and stuff and; ‘Go back to where you belong, stop catching our fish’

Trevor’s ability to use the fishing space of rock platforms was reduced as a result of the representations of Asian fishers and competing claims to citizenship. In this example the spatial managers claim ownership of the fish and Trevor is reduced to a spatially managed outsider, who has not earned the right to access the fish within that space.

And yet, other participants provided examples of more ambiguous expressions of racism. As William told of his experiences at piers:
Initially, you do experience a slightly different treatment. Sometimes, you do experience, maybe, teasings initially.

Ambiguous racism is difficult to acknowledge, and requires considerable skills and education to recognise, as well as the confidence to name them as racist (Dunn & Nelson 2011). Each example illustrates how a racialised order is layered over certain fishing locations. Furthermore, research by Cadzow et al. (2010) found that first-generation Vietnamese recreational fishers who fished in the Georges River National Park, Sydney, had experienced violence and abuse from other fishers. Cadzow et al. (2010) noted that the Vietnamese community in Australia has been stigmatized by government agencies and fishing organizations. Vietnamese recreational fishers were accused of overfishing and catching undersized fish, and therefore contributing to species decline. In the 1990s, a federal study of fishing was completed, which recognized that different ideas about fishing were held by some people from Vietnam, where it was often a way of surviving and where it was also completely unregulated. Furthermore, Cadzow et al. (2010) suggested that National Parks in Australia are often managed on western-cultural presumptions of what people value in environments.

### 6.4 Stereotypes around Asian fishers

The policing of the recreational fishing practices of Asian recreational fishers by circulating stereotypes is evident in recreational fishers’ narratives. Most participants’ narratives involve the idea that Asian fishers do not follow environmental or safety regulations. As Ben explains:

> I think there’s a stereotype out there about Asian fishermen; that they fish for everything they can get and they keep everything they can get, and they can’t swim.

These stereotypes foster and reinforce negative attitudes towards Asian recreational fishers as plunderers of the ocean and a liability. They are told when played out in the context of a country where catch-and-release is seen as a practice to ensure the sustainability of fisheries and the ability to swim as inherently Australian. Indeed, they serve to reinforce ideas about Asian-Australian fishers as an ‘Other’. Furthermore, Bryant provides an example of how citizenship is produced in terms of sustainability discourses:

> When I was young, fishing under the harbour bridge, I do see people come say: ‘They are illegal.’ They just make it up you know? They are the green people, they are very protective of the ocean. It’s good; but tell them: ‘Excuse me I’m not doing illegal things, the Bream it’s 25 cm, I got a measurement tape.’ I always got a measurement tape on
my lifejacket right hand side. Yeah, so measure how long is it: ‘So please don’t worry, I’m doing the right thing, the legal thing’.

This quotation illustrates how some white Australian men-who-fish (Aussies) are attempting to exert control over Asian fishers within the fishing space, through sustainability discourses and reducing their ability to keep the fish they catch. According to Bryant, some of the Aussies use sustainability as a justification for policing the practices of Asian recreational fishers. The Aussies position themselves as law abiding citizens whose primary concern is for the sustainability of ocean resources. In contrast, they position Asian recreational fishers as transgressors of the law and this is a link to contemporary racism in Australia, specifically anti-Asian sentiment. Anti-Asian sentiment remains linked to historic constructions of Asian migrants as a key imagined Other to Australian national identity (Dunn 2003). Furthermore, Oliver argues that the construction of the racialised Other within the Australian recreational fishing scene is tied to waves of migrant groups:

(On how Asian fishers are treated by non-Asian fishers) You’re really asking for a modern history of Australia here. In terms of Australia’s immigration trends, they changed in the last 50 years, I mean immediately post war it was Europeans, southern Europeans, Italians, Greeks, and of course back then yeah it was always Italians and Greeks that were not abiding by fishing regulations, then it became Lebanese: ‘now they’re the ones not abiding by fishing regulations’, and then it became the Vietnamese: ‘oh, they’re not abiding by fishing regulations’, ‘now it’s the Chinese and Koreans, oh!’ But if you’re talking about currently, yes, non-Asian recreational fishermen would have a dim view of Asian recreational fishermen. Like I say, that changes, and I’m sure that the next ethnic group that comes here will be the next one.

The participants had a range of approaches to challenging or addressing these stereotypes. These can be grouped into the following broad categories, and are detailed in the sections below:

- Humour
- Becoming ‘Aussie’, and
- Denial of racism

### 6.5 Humour

Some Asian Australian fishers, such as Ben, joke about the stereotypes around Asian Australian fishers:

We joke that because we’re Asian we eat everything. I tell the non-Chinese guys ‘you’re lucky we don’t eat Bass!’ (laughs).
Humour is used by Ben as a nonthreatening way to introduce sensitive racial issues into a conversation. Research by Barnes et al. (2001) has found that this method of introducing the topic of race into a conversation is legitimate because it keeps the atmosphere light-hearted, and portrays Ben’s inferences to race as harmless and playful. An environment is thereby created in the context of the conversation in which Ben’s joke (and subsequent laughter) invites other laughter. Furthermore, humour functions to affirm Ben’s nonracial attitudes to those present. By stating that “because we’re Asian we eat everything,” humour serves to invert a well-known racist stereotype, thereby mocking the stereotype and those who believe it. By expressing this statement, humour functions to make fun of and criticize anyone who may believe it to be true. In doing so, humour has served to distance Ben from racism and racists.

6.6 Becoming ‘Aussies’ through embracing catch-and-release

For some Asian fishers, being Australian is linked to a clear sense of sustainability. For Asians fishers to be recognised as Australian (or able to say they are Australian), they must seemingly take on specific sustainability practices, including catch-and-release. For example, the following quotations illustrate how being and becoming an Australian is embedded in fisheries management policies:

I’ve become Australianised so I don’t keep anything, if it’s under the size then I won’t even touch, won’t keep it – Trevor

In terms of my fishing practice, I have become more localised, catch-and-release is more in my conscience – William

I think as long as you are nice, they will be nice to you, and don’t do some illegal things to them, like taking the little fish – Steven

Some participants spoke of how they were aware of how their fishing practices had changed to mirror Aussies. They understood catch-and-release as way of being and becoming more ‘Australianised’. Rather than breaking environmental regulations, many participants, like William, had a heightened awareness of catch sizes. Indeed, some participants spoke of their desire to police other Asian recreational fishers. As Oliver demonstrates:

(On fishing rules) they should be multi-lingual, they should be much more accessible, and even at fishing spots they should be multi-lingual, and if you’re talking about management, and you’re talking about rules and regulations, the main weakness in Australia is actually enforcement. You can have every damn regulation you want but if you don’t enforce them, and that’s where we’re extremely weak on, nothing ever
happens. Every fisherman will tell you, on a daily basis they see people fishing, keeping undersized fish or exceeding their bag limit. I have, on my phone, a direct line to Fishwatch, which is where you report illegal fishing activities, but you also need to put in the contacts that I think there’s some like 2 or 3 fisheries enforcement officers for the state.

However, none spoke of policing the catches of ‘Aussie’ fishers. This may have to do with ideas about ‘Aussie’ fishers as the original stewards of the ocean. Indeed, the link between recreational fishing and ‘Australianism’ can be explored when considering the Australian Larrikin subculture and the popular fishing celebrity Rex Hunt. The larrikin, a term “used in Australia to characterize youthful rowdyism” (Britannica 2017), is considered to be inherently part of Australian culture (Frawley 2015). Furthermore, Rex Hunt solidified his persona as an Australian larrikin during his popular fishing TV programs, by performing an “exhibition of ocker vernacular and the anti-intellectualism this implies” (Bellanta 2012). That vernacular was demonstrated in the language Hunt used in his interactions with fish, such as “puckering up … to a wrasse” and “smooching up to a sweep”. Such language of larrikinism aided in promoting care for fish through catch-and-release. Moreover, in his 1993 book “Rex Hunt’s Fishing World”, Hunt devoted a chapter to “The Future”. Here, he claimed that by exercising catch-and-release practices, fishers contributed to continuing the capacity to fish into the future. One of the important symbolic meanings attached to the catch-and-release practice was that, by becoming practitioners, fishers contributed to that future in a meaningful way, grounded in an everyday practice. Each fish released was also a symbolic contribution of fisher responsibility to the fish themselves and their environments. By invoking the future, Hunt articulated fishers as more than just present for individual self-interest or the immediate gratification of the death of a fish. Instead, they were positioned as stewards with rights, whose credentials were shaped by their presence alongside fish in river, estuary and oceanic environments (Frawley 2015). Furthermore, larrikinism was taken up by some of the Asian fishers interviewed (see Lloyd’s quote in Chapter 5.4.2).

The participants’ narratives convey the importance of ideas of race and citizenship in becoming a recreational fisher that aligns practices understood as more sustainable with becoming Australian. Participants convey their aspiration to become sustainable Australian citizens. At the same time, they convey how they must negotiate highly racialized discourses that portray Asian recreational fishers as ocean plunderers.
6.7 Denial of racism amongst Asian recreational fishers
Many participants did not speak of race or racism at all. As Dunn (2003) reminds us, silence often surrounds lived experiences of racism. Research by Dunn & Nelson (2011) has found higher rates of denial of racism among residents in Australia born in South Asian countries than respondents born in other parts of the world. They argue that minority groups may be less likely to recognise racism in Australia for at least two reasons. First, they might have an interest in avoiding recognition of racism to avoid being labelled complainers, or avoid the social costs associated with stating that racism exists in Australia. Second, people from minority backgrounds may not recognise racism as a problem in Australia as a self-protective measure, so to avoid the personal costs associated with becoming a victim. According to Dunn (2003), individuals who affiliate with, or who are associated with minority cultural groups endure greater degrees of vilification than do others. This in turn leads to ethnic minorities attempting to align themselves with ‘Aussies’, so as not to be seen as different to the dominant group. An outcome of this is the ‘bystander effect’ (Pedersen et al. 2011), where people are less likely to intervene when others are subjected to racism or abuse, so as not to align themselves with those being policed by the dominant group (Nida 2016). In addition, minority groups may embrace a ‘spatial denial discourse’. This is a set of ideas through which racism in Australia is dismissed as not being as bad as it is in other places in the world. For example, Sam said:

The local is friendly to us. I think Australian is more-friendly than the Americans.

6.8 Conclusion
This chapter has demonstrated how recreational fishing is a highly racialized social terrain that is closely aligned to notions of an environmentally responsible Australian citizen. At least two important insights are offered, which have important implications for fisheries management. First, fisheries managers should be alert to the ways in which recreational fisheries remain a racialized terrain by the speech and actions of some white-men-who fish. Hence, fisheries management should be alert to racism and how Asian recreational fishers may be spatially managed by the dominant cultural group, in terms of where they fish. Action is required in terms of praising the actions of those who share fishing locations regardless of race, and combating racism that continues to operate to exclude Asian recreational fishers from some locations. Second, the practice of linking sustainability with citizenship should be of concern to fisheries managers who aim to encourage and promote voluntary compliance with fishing regulations and ethical fishing practices. The tendency to stereotype Asian fishers as ocean plunderers and a liability has the potential to undermine these efforts in two key ways. Firstly it risks alienating and isolating responsible Asian fishers, many of whom are interested in playing an active role in spreading and promoting sustainability discourses amongst the Asian and non-Asian community. Secondly, it incorrectly assumes that all white ‘Aussie’
men-who-fish adhere to the appropriate rules and practices and are the gatekeepers of ethical and sustainable fishing. Fisheries management could help break down stereotypes of Asian fishers by celebrating their commitment to environmental sustainability.
Chapter 7 Conclusion

Sam fishing alongside a friend on Wollongong harbour pier. “(On why he fishes) for fun (laughs), killing time and it's a pretty healthy hobby, better than playing video games and stuff like that, so I try fishing and it's also kind of sports” (Kim). Photograph taken 27 May 2017.
The thesis offers a review of the recreational fishers’ literature and outlines a theoretical framework that addresses a gap in research to critically engage with fishing practices. The thesis presents interpretations of Asian fishers’ practices when conceived as an entanglement of materials, meanings and competencies. This offers insights to the embodied knowledge alongside social norms in offering an explanation of Asian recreational fishers’ practices. To conclude, this chapter revisits the thesis aims, by summarising the key findings, and outlining agendas for future research.

7.1 Research aims and findings

Chapter 4, ‘Asian recreational fishing practices’, addressed the first aim: to better understand how the fishing practices of Asian Australians change, stop or are maintained through the entanglement of materials, meanings and skills. The recreational fishers that consented to participate in this project were perhaps the most committed to recreational fishing; as evidenced by their equipment, experience and fishing knowledge. The materials of recreational fishing played a central role in determining when, where and how fishing occurred, and included the weather, physical fishing environment, fish and fishing equipment. The participants confirmed previous research that argues that recreational fishing held meaning in its ability to facilitate socialisation with friends, family and other recreational fishers. Furthermore, confirming previous research, recreational fishing was also valued for providing recreational fishers respite from busy lives and careers. Moreover, recreational fishers enjoyed the ‘thrill’ of catching a fish as leisure rather than as a subsistence practice. This was evidenced in the Iso fishing case study. Fishing skills were learnt pre and post-migration through family, friends, and also on-line forums and clubs as well as social encounters. Fishing practices changed post migration particularly through learning about the practice of catch-and-release. Digital media played a key role in recreational fishing. Online social platforms were not only a source of valued information to improve their fishing skills but offered a way to demonstrate and compare their recreational fishing skills.

Chapter 5, ‘Asian recreational fishing practices and the politics of care’, addressed the second aim: to identify the relationship between Asian recreational fishers and fish. Practices of care emerged as the dominant theme when attention turned to the relationships between Asian recreational fishers and fish. These practices were found to be rooted in specific ideas around sustainability, in particular the skills and materials of catch-and-release. Participants’ care for fish contradicted widely held stereotypes of Asian recreational fishers as uncaring of fish and plunderers of the ocean. These results help break stereotypes of Asian fishers as problematic by celebrating their commitment to environmental sustainability. While participants cared-for-fish, this care often presented unresolved dilemmas where the thrill of catching and capturing fish on digital media was prioritised over the
health of the fish. For example, fish were often held in the air for prolonged periods so that they could be photographed. And, none of the fishers interviewed indicated that they fished with biodegradable fishing line.

Finally, Chapter 6, ‘Ethnicity, racism, citizenship and sustainability’, addressed the third aim, to evaluate how the environmental knowledge of Asian-Australians can be used to better manage ocean resources sustainably. Addressing this aim made a significant contribution to knowledge. Indeed, it was found that recreational fishing was a site where a very narrow understanding of Australian citizenship is played out. Sustainability, performed through catch-and-release, was linked to understandings of white Australian citizenship. Furthermore, participants narrated how their fishing practices were policed by some white men-who-fish, under the guise of ‘sustainability’ and care for the ocean. Therefore, fisheries management should be alert to racism and how Asian recreational fishers may be spatially managed by the dominant cultural group. Public campaigns challenging racist behaviour and dominant stereotypes is required to challenge assumptions around Asian fishers.

Box 7: Positionality Statement 20 September 2017

20 September 2017

Having finished the data collection I have decided to reflect on how I have changed over the course of the study. The most notable changes for me have been my knowledge of recreational fishing, and how I was treated by other recreational fishers, and the racialized order in recreational fishing spaces.

How I was treated by Asian fishers: In the beginning, I was positioned by participants as an outsider. Some of the fishers answered interview questions with caution and sometimes I was asked to justify the research aims. However, fishers would immediately loosen up if I told them about my Chinese ancestral heritage. Having this in common, would change my position from that of outsider to being one of them. Furthermore, there were variations depending on the ages of fishers. Younger fishers seemed to want to be my friend, while older fishers were mentor-like and keen to pass on their knowledge of recreational fishing to me.

My knowledge of recreational fishing: Over the course of the research my positionality changed from interviewer to one of the fishers, as my knowledge of recreational fishing increased. The specialised knowledge of fishing is not easily understandable and at the beginning I felt like an outsider when I would ask participants to explain fundamental items, such as the function of rods and reels. However, I believe that my lack of experience in recreational fishing was beneficial, and enabled me
to study recreational fishers without preconceived ideas about my participants. Furthermore, by actively listening to their stories and asking questions, participants saw that I was eager to learn about all of the aspects of their fishing practices, and shared their knowledge with me. By the end of all the interviews and go-alongs, I had a gamut of knowledge to draw upon about recreational fishing. Moreover, when accompanying participants on go-alongs, I was privy to their ‘fish talk’. They also didn’t mind sharing information about their private lives and talking about their jobs, and I felt as if I had joined their inner circle.

*My understanding of fishing/public spaces*: through undertaking this research, I am now conscious of how a racialized order is layered over certain fishing locations and public spaces in general. I am also now aware of the self-protective measures people utilise to deal with being on the receiving end of racism. This has made me consider my citizen status within the spatial manager - spatially managed discourse, and examine my actions and that of others in public spaces to see whether we consciously or subconsciously perpetuate a racialized order.

### 7.2 Future research agenda

By utilising a mixed methods approach, of semi-structured interview and go-along, to explore Asian Australian recreational fishing, this thesis takes a small step to understand the cultures of recreational fishing in Australia. Further research into different ethnic groups who recreationally fish is necessary in order to gain a deeper appreciation of what ethnic diversity can offer in terms of recreational fishing knowledge. Furthermore, areas where conflict occurs between coastal uses and the activities of different ethnic groups may benefit from research of this nature. This may include, for example, the practices of beach foragers, in particular, foragers from Islander and European communities. In addition some of the recreational fishers spoke of the reckless behaviour of Jet Skiers, and how it would disrupt their fishing practice. Indeed, the use of jet skis in recreational fishing areas has recently highlighted the conflicting usage of recreational fishing spaces. Therefore, jet skis in recreational fishing spaces is a topic that warrants further research. The study location was also constrained to the open ocean fishing waters of the coast of greater metropolitan Sydney. Therefore, research would benefit from additional studies into recreational fishers in urban and regional areas; rivers and deep seas; Marine Reserves and different Australian locations. Following this, research into recreational fishing and tourism also holds potential for future research.

Many of the recreational fishers understood catch-and-release as a sustainable practice and that fish were resilient to the effects of being hooked and released. However, further research could be undertaken into the dilemmas around catch-and-release, namely what informs the decision making
behind catch-and-release, how much trauma the fish go through in the process, and what are the survival rates for fish released.

The knowledge and experiences that participants shared in this research was diverse. However, absent from the research were the perspectives from women recreational fishers. Therefore, the knowledge and experiences of the small number of women who recreationally fish is a subject that could be further explored. Finally, the mixed methodology, of semi-structured interview and go-along, utilised in this study was the first of its kind for ethnographic fishing research. Therefore, additional research utilising this method would be beneficial to demonstrate its transferability to other forms of fishery related research.
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PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (VERSION 12 May 2017 – Ethics Approval Number: 2017/204)

TITLE: ‘Asian–Australian cultures of recreational fishing’

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH: To gain an understanding of the environmental knowledge of Asian-Australian recreational fishers.

INVESTIGATORS:
Professor Gordon Waitt, gwaitt@uow.edu.au, 02 42 213684
Dr Michelle Voyer, mvoyer@uow.edu.au, 02 4221 4653
Colette Fontaine (student investigator), Faculty of Social Sciences, cef055@uowmail.edu.au, 0466979203

WHAT YOU WILL BE ASKED TO DO: If you choose to participate you will be invited to talk about fishing at a time and public place convenient to you and/or take the researcher along on one of your recreational fishing trips.

These activities comprise the two stages to this study, and are called ‘Talking fish’ and ‘Gone fishing’. Your involvement is voluntary and depends on how much time you wish to dedicate to the project. You may choose which stages to participate in.

Stage 1: Talking fish – We will ask you to tell us a bit about your household structure and background. We will then ask you questions relating to your fishing practices and experiences. Questions may include: Where did you learn to fish? What tools do you use when fishing? Why do you use these tools? What kinds of fish do you catch? Do you keep everything you catch? Do you think your ethnic background influences the type of fish you fish for and how you fish? Do you think that Asian-Australians generally have different fishing practices to Anglo-Australians? How do you think Asian fishers are viewed and treated by management and other recreational fishers?

Stage 2: Gone fishing - You will be asked if a researcher can accompany you on a fishing trip. Conversations will occur during the fishing trip to further explore your fishing practices.

POSSIBLE RISKS, INCONVIENCES AND DISCOMFORTS: Apart from the time taken to participate in this research, we can foresee no inconvenience for you. We anticipate the Stage 1 interview will be about one hour in duration. The duration of the Stage 2 fishing trip is up to you. You will not be pressured to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable, and your involvement is entirely voluntary. You may halt your participation at any time and
withdraw any data you have provided until that point. You can also withdraw any data you have provided up to the end of July 2017. If you decide not to participate, this will not affect your relationship with the University of Wollongong.

**FUNDING AND BENEFITS:** The honours project is a collaboration between two research centres at the University of Wollongong, The Australian National Centre for Ocean Research and The Australian Centre for Cultural Environmental Research. The project received financial support through The Australian Research Council Discovery Program.

Benefits are envisaged as twofold. First, you will have your chance to have your voice and story heard. This will have secondary benefits for the wider recreational fishing community, including fisheries managers, by improving their understanding of the environmental knowledge that Asian-Australians bring to recreational fisheries. Unlocking ethnically diverse knowledge has been overlooked in coastal management to date.

The research will become the basis of an honours thesis and may be published in academic journal articles, books, and conference papers. The findings may also be discussed in media interviews.

You will be able to choose whether you would prefer to be referred to by your actual name in published materials, or whether you would prefer to use a pseudonym (false name). In accordance with ethical protocol, all data that we obtain from you will be stored for a minimum of 5 years in locked filing cabinets in the School of Geography and Sustainable Communities and on password protected computers. With approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee, the data may continue to be used by the researchers after the 5 year period in related research and publications. Ongoing monitoring of the research is the responsibility of the researchers listed above, and annual progress reports are submitted by the researchers to the UOW Research Ethics Unit.

**ETHICS REVIEW AND COMPLAINTS:** This study was reviewed by the Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee, University of Wollongong. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the way this research has been conducted please contact the UOW Ethics Officer on (02) 4221 3386 or email rso-ethics@uow.edu.au. If you have any questions about this study, please contact the team leaders, Gordon Waitt (02 42 213684) or Michelle Voyer (02 4221 4653). Thank you for your interest in this study.
Appendix II:

Email translated into Chinese:

Hi there

It was nice to meet you on the Wollongong harbour breakwall the other day!

Do you want to share your stories and experiences about coastal recreational fishing in metropolitan Sydney?

If so, I am a fourth-year honours geography student from the University of Wollongong conducting a project to explore the ideas, practices and skills of Asian recreational fishe.

Participation in the project involves two stages; ‘Talking fish’ and ‘Gone fishing’. The first stage, ‘Talking fish’ involves talking to me about why, how, what and where you fish. This conversation will last around an hour and is organised in a public place convenient with you.

The second stage, ‘Gone fishing’, involves you inviting me along on one of your usual fishing trips to a peer, jetty or beach. You can do both or one stage. It is up to you.

If you are interested in participating I can send/give you a Participant Information Sheet.

Sincerely,
Colette Fontaine

你好,

很高 兴几天之前在 Wollongong 港口 认识你！

你有 兴趣分享你在悉尼沿海钓鱼的故事和经历吗？

如果是有兴趣，我是卧龙岗大学四年级的地理系学生， 我的研究 项目是探索中国人对休闲钓鱼的方法和技能。

参与 项目涉及两个阶段；“说鱼” 和 “钓鱼”。 第一阶段，“说鱼” 是我 谈论你为什么，如何，和在哪里钓鱼。
这个讨论将用一个小时，并会在一个方便你的公共地方进行。

第二个阶段是“钓鱼”，是你邀请我跟你一起去你平常钓鱼的码头或海滩。 你可以参与做一个或两个阶段。由你决定。

如果您有兴趣参与，我可以发送/给您一个参与者资料信。

谢谢 你。Thank you.

Colette

ps. please reply in English if possible.
参加者注意事项

研究课题："澳大利亚华人休闲钓鱼文化"

研究目的：了解澳大利亚华人闲钓者的生态知识

研究团队:

Professor Gordon Waitt，gwaitt@uow.edu.au，02 42 213684

Dr Michelle Voyer，mvoyer@uow.edu.au，02 4221 4653

Colette Fontaine（学生访谈员），社会科学院，cef055@uowmail.edu.au，0466979203

需要您协助的事情：如果您选择参加，您会在一个方便的时间和公众场所跟研究
员讨论钓鱼，或/及携同研究员出外钓鱼。

这个研究包括两个阶段，称为“谈鱼”和“出钓”。您的参与是自愿的，取决于您希望投入多少时
间。您亦可选择只参与其中一个阶段。

第一阶段：谈鱼 - 我们首先邀请您略谈您的家庭结构和背景，然后讨论您的闲钓习惯和经验。
问题大致如下：你在哪里学习钓鱼？钓鱼时使用什么工具？为什么使用这些工具？您钓什么种
类的鱼？您会保留所有鱼获吗？种族背景会否影响您的目标鱼种以及钓法？澳大利亚华人跟澳
大利亚白人有不同的闲钓习惯吗？你认为渔业管理者、澳大利亚其他闲钓人士如何看待华人闲
钓者？

第二阶段：出钓 - 研究员将询问可否跟随您钓鱼。钓鱼时将进行交谈，俾使我们深入探索您的
钓鱼经验。

研究可能出现的风险、不便和不快：除了参与本研究的所需时间，我们不会对您构成任何不
便。我们预计第一阶段访谈约需一个小时；第二阶段钓鱼考察的时间多寡完全取决于您。您不
必回答任何令您不快的问题，您的参与完全是自愿性质。您可随时退出研究活动，并收回您至
此提供的任何资料。您亦可于2017年7月底之前，撤回提供的任何资料。如果您决定不参加本
研究，这不会影响您跟卧龙岗大学的关系。

经费和利益：此研究项目源自卧龙岗大学两个研究中心之合作，即澳大利亚国家海洋研究中心
和澳大利亚文化生态学研究中心。本项目经费获得澳大利亚研究委员会探索计划的资助。

参与研究之好处有两个。首先，您有机会发表意见和分享经验。第二，整个闲钓社群、甚至渔
业管理者，也将受惠于澳大利亚华人提供的资料，使他们更深入了解闲钓的生态知识。至今，
澳大利亚海岸管理一直忽略不同文化的传统智慧。

研究成果将成为学位论文的基础，并有机会刊登于学术期刊、专著和会议论文中。调查结果也
可能在传媒访问中谈及。
Appendix III: Notice posted on Fishraider fishing forum

Hi Fishraiders,

I am a honours geography student from the University of Wollongong, conducting research to explore the knowledge, experiences and practices of Chinese recreational fishers.

If you identify as being of Chinese ancestral heritage; are 18 years of age or over; and fish recreationally in coastal metropolitan Sydney (Nowra to Newcastle, inland ok too), I want to hear your story!

Participation in the project involves two stages; ‘Talking fish’ and ‘Gone fishing’. The first stage, ‘Talking fish’ involves talking to me about why, how, what and where you fish. This conversation will last around an hour and is organised in a public place convenient with you.

The second stage, ‘Gone fishing’, involves you inviting me along on one of your usual fishing trips to a peer, jetty or beach. You can do both or one stage. It is up to you.

If you are interested in participating, please read the Participant Information Sheet attached, and contact me by email at cef055@uowmail.edu.au

If you have any other questions concerning this research project you can contact myself: cef055@uowmail.edu.au, or my supervisors: gwaitt@uow.edu.au or mvoyer@uow.edu.au

approved by mrsswordfisherman

Participant Information Sheet.docx

CONSENT FORM (VERSION 12 May 2017 – Ethics Approval Number: 2017/204)

RESEARCH TITLE: Asian–Australian cultures of recreational fishing

RESEARCHERS: Gordon Waitt, Michelle Voyer and Colette Fontaine

Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Wollongong

I have been given information about the project ‘Asian–Australian cultures of recreational fishing’. I have discussed the research project with Colette Fontaine, who is conducting this research as part of a University of Wollongong Honours thesis in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Wollongong.

I have been advised of the potential risks and burdens associated with this research, which is primarily time for conversations. I understand I can participate in either ‘Talking Fish’ or ‘Gone Fishing’ or both.

I understand that my research participation is voluntary, I am free to refuse to participate and I am free to withdraw from the research at any time. If I decide not to participate or withdraw my consent, this will not affect my relationship with the University of Wollongong. I also understand that I can withdraw any data that I have contributed to the project up until the end of July 2017.

If I have any enquires about the research, I can contact Gordon Waitt (gwaitt@uow.edu.au) or Michelle Voyer (02 4221 4653). If I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted, I can contact the Ethics Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee, Office of Research, University of Wollongong on (02) 4298 1331 or email rso-ethics@uow.edu.au By signing below I am indicating my consent to (please tick):

☐ Participate in an interview
☐ Have an audio-recording of the interview made for the purposes of transcription
☐ Having a researcher accompany me on a fishing trip
☐ Have an audio-recording of the fishing trip made for the purposes of analysis
☐ Take photographs of the fishing trip made for the purposes of analysis
I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used for an honours thesis and may be used to write academic journal articles, books and conference papers. I also understand that the data collected may be used when communicating research outcomes to the media. I consent for the data I provide to be used in these ways.

Signed  

Date

……………………………………….                      ….../……./……..

Name (please print)

………………………………………

Witnessed by:

Signed  

Date

……………………………………….                      ….../……./……..

Name (please print)

………………………………………

**Appendix V: Full table of the groups contacted and the dates of contact**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where/who</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>No. approached</th>
<th>No. said yes</th>
<th>No. said no</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emailed 4 Chinese community groups</td>
<td>26 April</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2 (to posting an ad in newsletter)</td>
<td>2 no reply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishraider forum</td>
<td>May 2 (ad posted)</td>
<td>(open forum)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing Lake Illawarra facebook</td>
<td>May 15</td>
<td>(ad posted on facebook)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No reply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Illawarra fishing facebook</td>
<td>May 17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wollongong harbour</td>
<td>May 17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Kembla</td>
<td>May 25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2 (never eventually interviewed)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney pier 2</td>
<td>May 26</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewing in Wollongong harbour (follow up from Wollongong harbour day)</td>
<td>May 27</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishers on YouTube</td>
<td>May 31</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Fishing LOL facebook page</td>
<td>(contacted page admin)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No reply</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windang</td>
<td>June 3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wollongong harbour</td>
<td>June 3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney pier 2</td>
<td>June 5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 (eventually only interviewed 1)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club Ashfield Fishing Club.</td>
<td>6 June</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>No reply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockdale sports fishing tackle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No reply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Metropolitan FCA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No reply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coast Fishing Clubs Association</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No reply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW Rod Fishers’ Society</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No reply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wollongong Game Fishing Club</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No reply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Game Fishing Club</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No reply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiama Game Fishing Club</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (don’t have Asian members)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shellharbour Game Fishing Club Inc</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wollongong Chinese Students &amp; Scholars Association</td>
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<td>1 (passing on info to members)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian National Sportfishing Association</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>No reply</td>
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### Appendix VI: Table of Rigour

Baxter and Eyles’ (1992) criteria for rigour was checked against the research methods employed for each stage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Credibility: Authenticity of the data – will participants recognise the experiences reported?</th>
<th>Transferability: Generate data that is potentially transferrable to other contexts</th>
<th>Dependability: Minimise researcher’s impact in data collection and interpretation</th>
<th>Confirmability: Acknowledging the role of researcher in relationship to interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Reflexivity and production of Positionality Statement</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Targeted Sampling of online fishing groups</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Purposeful Snowball Sampling</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>Semi-Structured Interview</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethics – Participation Information Sheet and Consent Form</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethics – Formal Application</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recording of Interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uniform symbols and verbatim in Interview Transcription</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thematic coding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data Triangulation</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Diary</td>
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107
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Go-along Research Method</th>
<th>X</th>
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<tr>
<td>Peer Debriefing</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular meetings with supervisors</td>
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<tr>
<td>track and check progress; work</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>examined by supervisors</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Member checking</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants invited to request</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>copy of transcripts and photos</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix VII: Table of criteria for evaluating qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba 1985)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Assumptions</th>
<th>Strategies/practices to satisfy criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>Authentic representations of experience</td>
<td>Multiple realities</td>
<td>Purposeful sampling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Causes not distinguishable from effects</td>
<td>Disciplined subjectivity/bracketing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Empathetic researcher</td>
<td>Prolonged engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Researcher as instrument</td>
<td>Persistent observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Emphasis of the research endeavour</td>
<td>Triangulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Peer debriefing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative case analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Referential adequacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Member checking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferability</td>
<td>Fit within contexts outside the study situation</td>
<td>Time and context-bound experiences</td>
<td>Purposeful sampling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not responsibility of ‘sending’ researcher</td>
<td>Thick description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provision of information for ‘receiving’ researcher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependability</td>
<td>Minimization of idiosyncrasies in interpretation</td>
<td>Researcher as instrument</td>
<td>Low-inference descriptors, mechanically recorded data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Variability tracked to identifiable sources</td>
<td>Consistency in interpretation (same phenomena always matched with the same constructs)</td>
<td>Multiple researchers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple realities</td>
<td>Participant researchers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Idiosyncrasy of behaviour and context</td>
<td>Peer examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Triangulation, inquiry audit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmability</td>
<td>Extent to which biases, motivations, interests or perspectives of the</td>
<td>Biases, motivations, interests or perspectives of the inquirer influence</td>
<td>Audit trail products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>inquirer influence interpretations</td>
<td>interpretation</td>
<td>Thick description</td>
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<td>Audit process</td>
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<td>Autobiography</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Journal/notebook</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix VIII: Interview Questions (VERSION 11 April 2017)

Stage 1: ‘Talking Fish’

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this conversation. Our conversation will be structured into seven parts: personal history, motivations, equipment, places, regulations, ancestry and sociality. Each part is to help me better understand your passion for fishing.

Your fishing story (aim: to gain insights into the personal history of Asian fishers, explore their knowledge and learn how and by whom they acquired their knowledge of fishing)

I am interested in learning more about how you got involved in fishing. Can you please tell me your fishing history?

• Who taught you how to fish?
• Where did you learn to fish?
• How were you taught to fish?
• How long have you been fishing?
• What do you catch – fresh or saltwater fish?
• How long have you been fishing in Australia for?
• How did you learn about the fish to catch in Australia?
• How did you learn about the places to go fishing?
• Have any of your fishing practices changed since living in Australia? What were the reasons for these changes?
• Do you have any new practices since living in Australia?
• Have any fishing practices stopped? Why?

Motivation (aim: to learn about why they go fishing and whether their reasons for doing so are to provide food for families and people other than themselves, or to catch trophy fish and show off or affirm their masculinity/hunting prowess)

I am trying to better understand what motivates people to continue to go recreational fishing.

• Why do you fish (what is your motivation for fishing)?
• What brings you the most pleasure?
• Has anything occurred to reduce this pleasure, and made you think about giving-up fishing?
• How often do you go fishing?

The catch

• Is it important to you to catch a fish when you go fishing?
• What kinds of fish do you enjoy catching?
• Why do you enjoy catching these specific fish?
• Tell me a story about one of your most enjoyable experiences of landing a fish.
• What do you do with the fish you catch?
Tell me more about times when you decided to return a fish to the ocean. What informs this decision? How does it make you feel? Or maybe – how you decide which fish you keep and which to throw back?

As a fisher, have you noticed any changes in fish numbers or size?

**Equipment** (aim: to learn about the equipment Asian recreational fishers use)

I know nothing about fishing rods and reels – but understand they are important

- Can you tell me about the importance of fishing rods and reels?
- How many fishing rods do you have?
- Do you have different set ups for different types of fishing?
- How do you know which rods and reels to use for different occasions?
- Do you keep fishing rods – or sell them or throw them out?
- What sort of bait do you use?
- What other specialised things are important when you go fishing?
- Why do you use these tools?
- Do you wear specialised clothing? Shoes? Life jackets?

**Places** (aim: to gain an insight into the embodied experiences of fishers through senses e.g. sight, smell, touch)

As a geographer, I am interested in learning more about the times and places you like to fish

For you, tell me about the attributes of a place that enhance your enjoyment of fishing –

- How do you choose where you will fish and why?
- Something to do with the view
- Something to do with the rocks
- Something to do with the fish
- Something to do with the weather
- Something to do with the other people – presence or absence
- Something to do with the light, sounds
- Something to do with the sea

Sometimes, people can become territorial. Can you tell me about a time when fishers became territorial when you have been fishing in metropolitan Sydney?

Tell me more about your favourite fishing location? What brings your pleasure about this place?

**Fishing regulations** (aim: gain an understanding of participants awareness of fishing regulations and attitudes towards officials)

Living is Australia, there are signs everywhere informing us what we can and cannot do – from when we are catching public transport - to entering a public park.

- Tell me more about how you became aware of the regulations/rules around recreational fishing
• Do you think the regulations/rules are sensible? Are they easy to understand?
• Do you think other people follow the regulations/rules?
• Do you keep everything you catch?
• What insight can you provide about fishing management officials?
• Have you met anyone that works in fisheries? How do you feel about them?

**Ancestry** (aim: to gain an insight into how the ancestry of Asian recreational fishers affects their interactions with others, their foodways and methods of fishing)

Our ancestry is important to how other people think and treat social groups.

- How do you think Asian fishers are viewed and treated by management?
- What about other recreational fishers? Can you share a story about when you think your ancestry results in non-Asian fishers treating you differently?
- Our ancestry is important to the types of food we eat. Do you think your ethnic background influences the type of fish you fish for?
- Our ancestry shapes our knowledge about the way we do things. In what ways do you think your ancestry shapes how you fish? When it comes to fishing, have you noticed that you do things or think about things differently from non-Asian fishers?

**Social** (aim: to find out about how fishing creates and sustains relationships (and the type of relationship sustained? – competitive, mateship, etc)

- Making friends can be an important part of recreational fishing. Who do you go fishing with? Tell more about what it feels like being part of this group? What sorts of things do you talk about?
- For some people, social media is becoming an important way of staying in touch with friends. Tell me about the ways that you use social media to stay in touch with your fishing friends

We’ve talked a lot about fishing: personal history, motivations, equipment, places, regulations, ancestry, sociality, is there anything I’ve forgotten that you would like to add?

It just leaves me to thank you – and ask you

- The year you were born
- Your occupation
- Your commitments i.e. family, children, responsibilities
- Where were you born?
- How long have you lived in Australia?

For fishing videos

- What are you doing in video?
- Talk about the experience of particular moments that you think are important.
- Why make video
- Who sharing with
- Do many fishers make and share videos
Appendix IX: Iso Fishing Case Study

The practice of Iso fishing demonstrates the complex intersection and inter-relationship between materials, competencies and meanings.

Iso (pronounced ee-so) is one emerging specialised form of rock-fishing, a style that originated in Japan. According to the Iso practicing participants, Iso fishing emerged as an adaptation to declining fish numbers in Japan, which they attributed to overfishing. Participants spoke of Iso as an adaptation to environmental changes in fish abundance, and in particular, it’s suitability as a method of catching more elusive mid water species. This skilful practice utilises “very, very thin lines and very, very thin light bait” (Jim) to try and mimic the appearance of bait floating naturally in water, to target species of fish such as drummer, bream, trevally and morwongs.

Materials

The fundamental Iso fishing materialities are the rod, reel, line and float. Iso rods are very long, ranging from 5 to over 6 metres in length. According to Bryant, the most important aspect of an Iso fishing rod is its ability to rebound (see Figure 30 below) from when a fish is hooked, and illustrates how an Iso rod can compensate for bodily fishing competences and knowledge:

The good one is, when you strike the fish, the rod is fighting itself, you don’t even need to use your brain or your experience, this is a good rod. We need something good rebounds back.

Figure 30: Bryant demonstrating the flexibility of an Iso fishing rod, an essential quality for the rod to rebound.
Photograph taken 24 June 2017.

For Iso fishers, the float is also considered essential to make the bait appear ‘natural’ for the targeted fish species. As Bryant demonstrates:
What we need to do is imagine we throw prawns into the water and they do this (natural flowing motion with hand), and it look so natural and the fish want to take it. So if we use a big sinker, can maybe catch a fish, but not as much as I’m targeting for.

Iso fishers were also keenly aware of how the weather affected their fishing gear. Wind, for example, poses challenges for Iso rock-fishers. The materiality of Iso fishing requires stillness. Wind is therefore an annoyance because it disrupts casting and can lead to tangled lines, which takes time away from fishing to untangle, as Jim explains:

Because we’re fishing really lightly weighted rigs, if there’s a little bit of wind, it makes it very difficult, so the weather’s a very important factor.

Rock-fishing practices are played out on a physical surface that is already felt as dangerous - exposed rock platforms. For participants like Jim and Bryant, rock-fishing practices are mediated by potential fear, which promotes a heightened alertness to their surroundings and planning for a potentially life threatening accident. For some, the fear of being washed off rock platforms meant that they planned ahead and wore protective equipment, such as safety vests and rock boots. For example, as Jim said:

I’m as focused as I can be, always keep my eye on the water. There’s so many accidents that can happen, so always being aware of my surroundings, where the slippery parts are, where the waves are coming from. If I do happen to fall in the water, where is the best place to exit out of or should I just keep swimming back out and just wait for the chopper, things like that are always planned before I fish.

Likewise, Bryant said:

Let’s say it’s very big swell, I got no choice, I don’t want to risk my life, I always go estuary.

**Competencies**

Iso fishing has been hailed as the "next big thing" in recreational fishing, and was profiled in Fishing World magazine (Harnwell 2012), with the non-Asian authors indicating that they were “highly impressed with the fishing skills and the gear” used in the practice. They found that “using the Iso tackle requires specialist fish fighting techniques and significant attention to detail with rigging and presentation” (Harnwell 2012). Lloyd demonstrates the competencies involved in landing a fish on rock platforms:
When you land a fish, that usually a drop of probably about 2 metre, but when the tide comes in the water is above the rock, so at that moment you can carry the fish up to the landing on the rock platform before the water recedes again, then you can grab your fish. So that’s the critical moment, so even though you get your fish on the line, you still have to wait for the wave to push the fish above the rock, so effortlessly you can just land the fish that way, otherwise you try to pull it up, 4, 5 kilo fish, you won’t be able to do it, line will snap, even your rod will snap, same time you need to watch your step, even with your safety gear.

**Meanings**

Iso fishing is a complex sport requiring a high level of competency and specialised equipment and involves fishing in often dangerous locations. The appeal of this sport appears to lie in its ability to fulfil multiple motivations, particularly those related to mastery and skill development. This was particularly evident through the discussion of target species in Iso fishing. The Iso fishers interviewed enjoyed catching a variety of fish including Bream, Trevally, Jewfish, Morwongs and Kingfish. However, a reoccurring species of fish that they enjoy targeting is Drummer. For Jim, they are a favoured species because of the challenge they present to catch and their preferred taste:

Drummer ... they’re the kind of fish that you can’t accidentally catch, you have to plan to specifically catch that fish, with the right rigs and the right setup and they also taste nice and they also fight very hard and they give you a good challenge.

Drummers (see Figure 31) have a reputation for being a “tough fighter” ((2) NSW Government Department of Primary Industries 2017). They are prized for their difficulty to catch and are found in turbulent whitewash zones, primarily accessible by rock-fishing. This combination of being a ‘tough fighter’ and residing in a dangerous location makes the drummer a thrilling fish for recreational fishers such as Jim to try and catch.

![Figure 31: Rock blackfish (Drummer), ((2) NSW Government Department of Primary Industries 2017)'](image)