



Fishery Basics — Fishing Gear

Gear Types

All types of fishing gear, regardless of how it might be used, are designed to lure and capture fish. Fishing gears are defined as tools used to capture marine/aquatic resources, whereas how the gear is used is the **fishing method**. Additionally, a single type of gear may also be used in multiple ways. Different target **species** require different fishing gear to effectively catch the target species.

Fishing gears fall under two general categories, active gear and passive gear. Active gears are designed to chase and capture target species, while passive gears generally sit in one place allowing the target species to approach the capture device. The [United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization \(FAO\)](#) further classifies fishing gear into 11 categories primarily based on how the gear are fished, we have provided detailed information about each category [See Fishing Gear](#). To browse a partial list of fishing methods and marine zones where they might be used [click here](#).

Stupefying Devices

Stupefying devices are a means of stunning fish for easy collection. Explosives, chemicals, and electricity are all forms of stupefying devices. Both the use of explosives and chemicals like cyanide, to take fish are banned in U.S. as well as most parts of the world because of the damage that these methods can do to the surrounding **ecosystem**.

However, [fishing with electricity \(electrofishing\)](#) is a technique that is used by fisheries scientists in order to conduct scientific surveys. Transportable generators or powerful batteries are used as the source of electrical current. Once a fish enters an electrical field it must be retrieved quickly as it begins to sink after being stunned. With the proper electric current applied, a fish is stunned only for a few minutes before it returns to its natural state. The [National Marine Fisheries Service](#) has established a strict set of [guidelines \(pdf\)](#) for using electrofishing when studying **salmonids** along the west coast.

References

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Additional Resources

FAO – [The Use of Technical Measures in Responsible Fisheries: Regulation Of Fishing Gear](#)

Marine Conservation Society – [Fishing Methods](#)