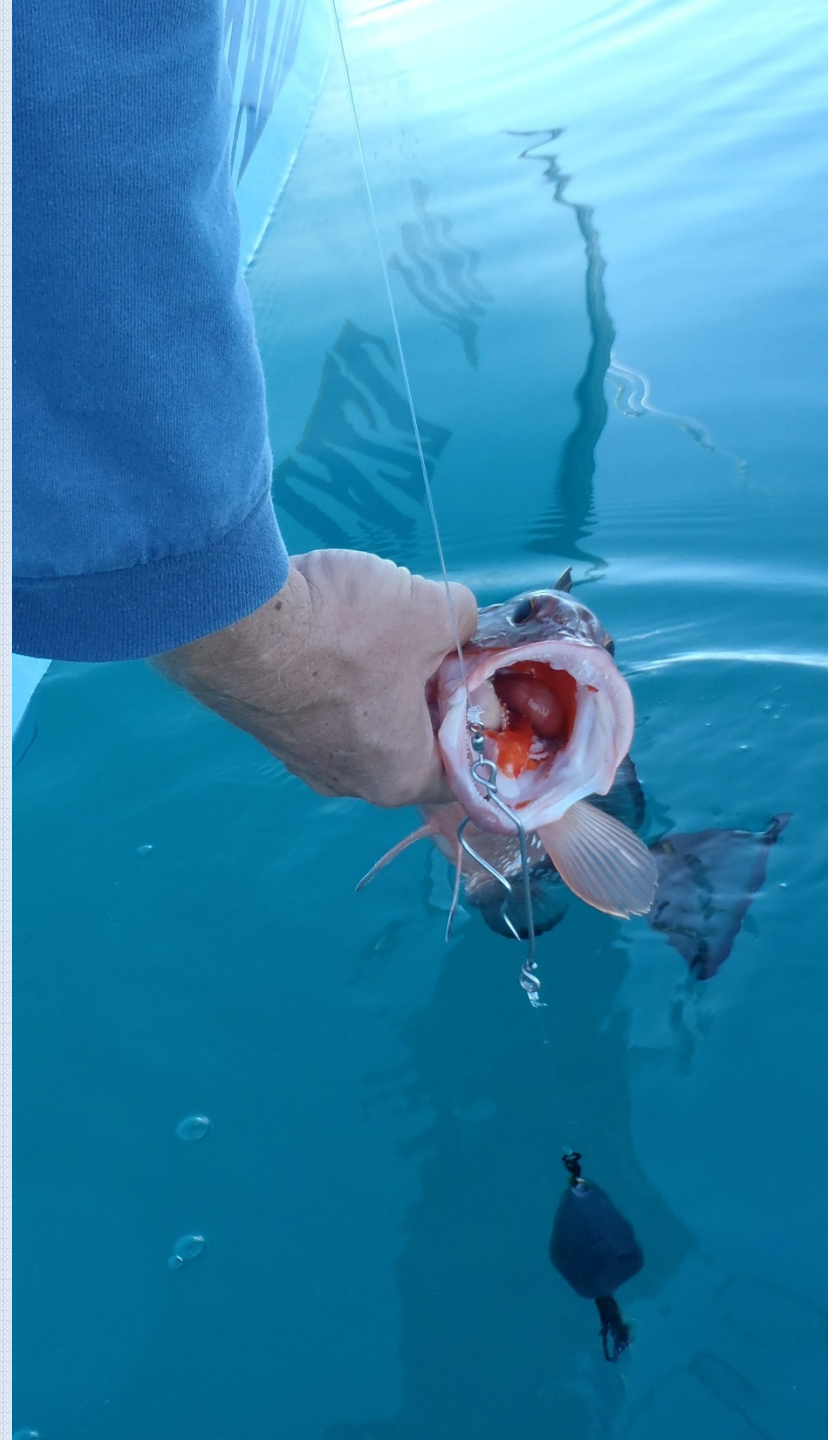


Practical Evaluation of Fish Recompression Tools

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Project Objectives:

- Involve anglers in evaluating practicality of recompression tools.
- Train a cadre of Florida Sea Grant Extension Agents in the use of recompression gear and strategies designed to improve survival of deep water released fish.



Image credit: Bryan Fluech, FSG

Important: *Need permission to not use venting tools in Gulf.*

Comments from Anglers

- What, more new regulations?
- Are you know telling us venting is no good?
- Will we get more fish?
- What is this going to cost?

But.....

- “Floater” are not a pretty sight!
- They would like to be involved in the evaluation process



Venting and Recompressing

Three important things to remember:

1.Option of last resort

2.Option of last resort

3.Option of last resort



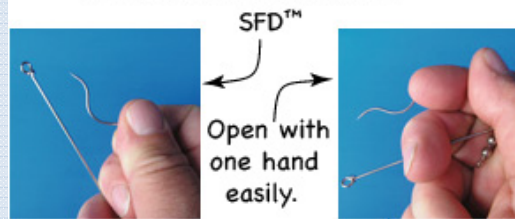
Image credit: Bryan Fluech, FSG

*There are always unintended consequences –
Increased handling*

Shelton Fish Descender

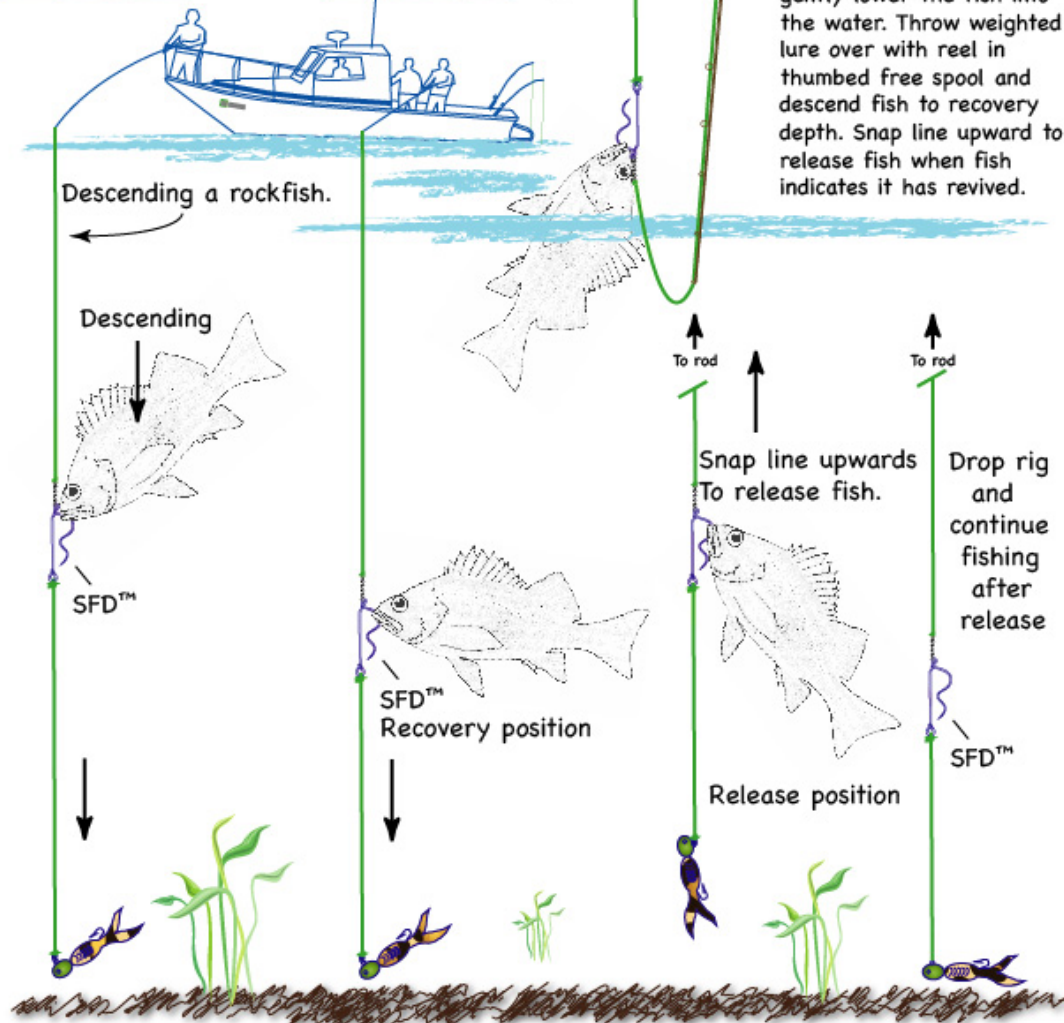


(Shelton Fish Descender™)



How to descend a rockfish

Catch fish and open SFD™ with one hand. Hook fish through lower lip. Remove lure that you caught fish with. Lower fish into the water using the fishing weight to gently lower the fish into the water. Throw weighted lure over with reel in thumbed free spool and descend fish to recovery depth. Snap line upward to release fish when fish indicates it has revived.



Copyright 2004 Shelton Products Protected under USA patents D469502 and 5884428

RockLees



Image credit: Bryan Fluech, FSG

<http://ecoleeser.com/product.html>



Two at a time

Image credit: John Stevely, FSG

Modified Cabela's Fish Gripper



- Not designed for this purpose
- Perhaps could be redesigned



Image credit: Bryan Fluech, FSG

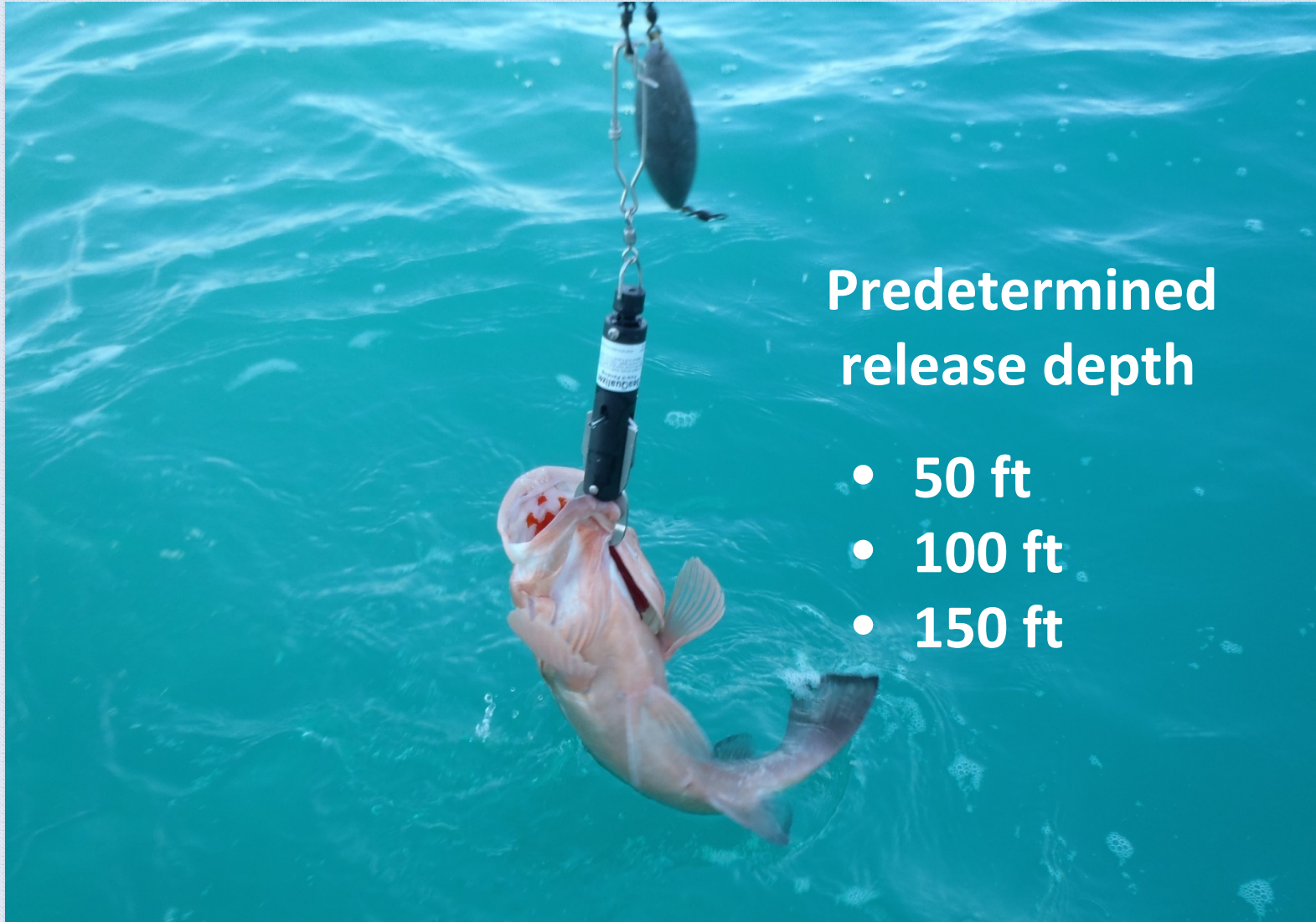
Ace Calloway Fish Descender (Blacktip)



Image credit: John Stevely, FSG

<http://git-r-down.com/>

SeaQualizer



**Predetermined
release depth**

- **50 ft**
- **100 ft**
- **150 ft**

Inverted Utility Crate “Fish Elevator”

Releasing four fish on one drop



Image credit: Steve Theberge

Image credit: Bryan Fluech, FSG

Modified Dungeness Crab Hoop Net

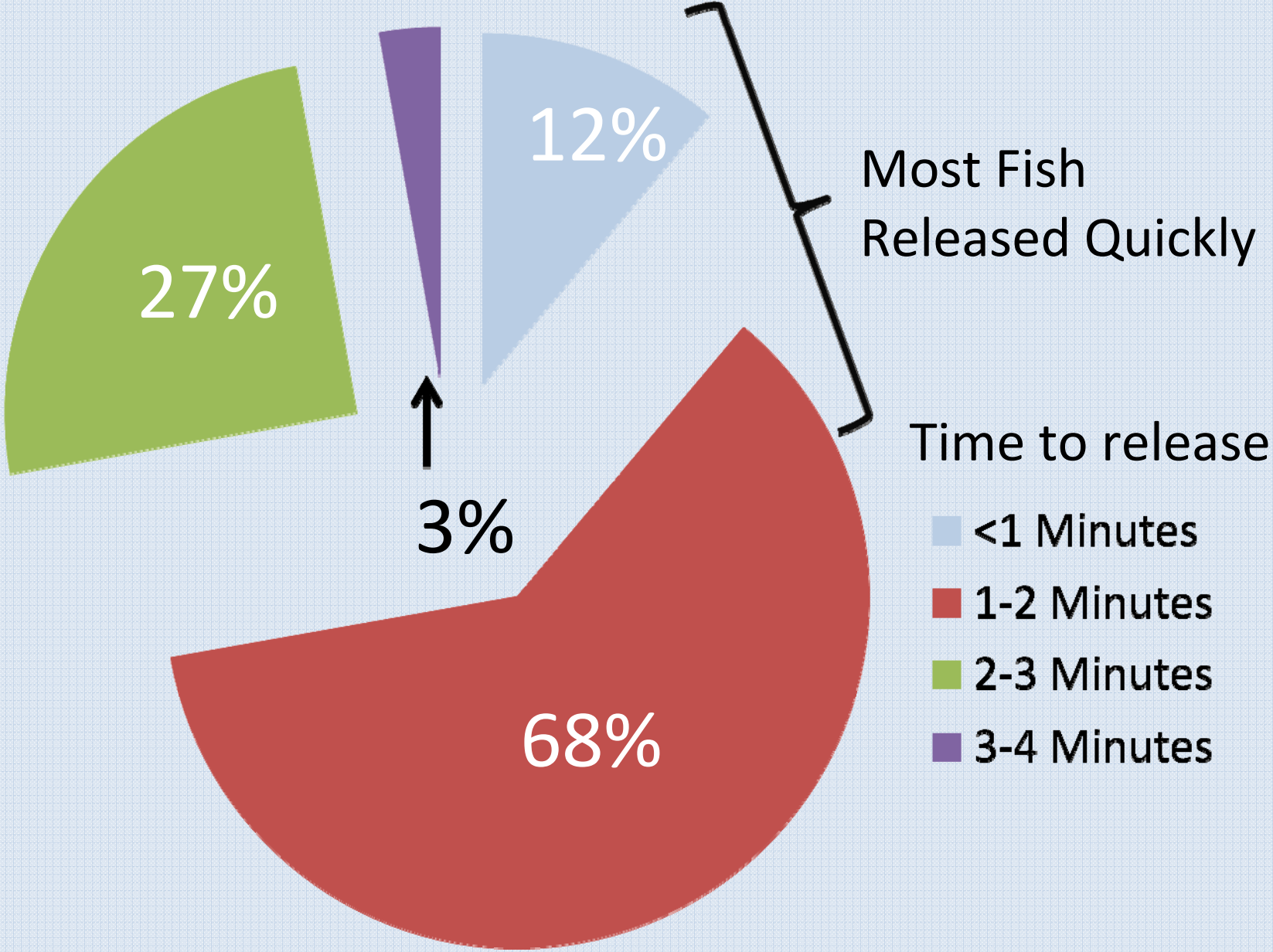


Project Summary to Date

- Six trips: Five in Gulf, One in South Atlantic
- Gulf: fished 65-100 ft., predominant species-red grouper (*out numbered gag 4 to 1*), other species: snappers, porgy, white grunt, triggerfish, hogfish
- South Atlantic: fished 250-450 ft. Different species and conditions. (*snowy grouper, speckled hind, silk/vermillion snapper*)
- Caught 200+ fish.



Release Time Using Recompression Gear

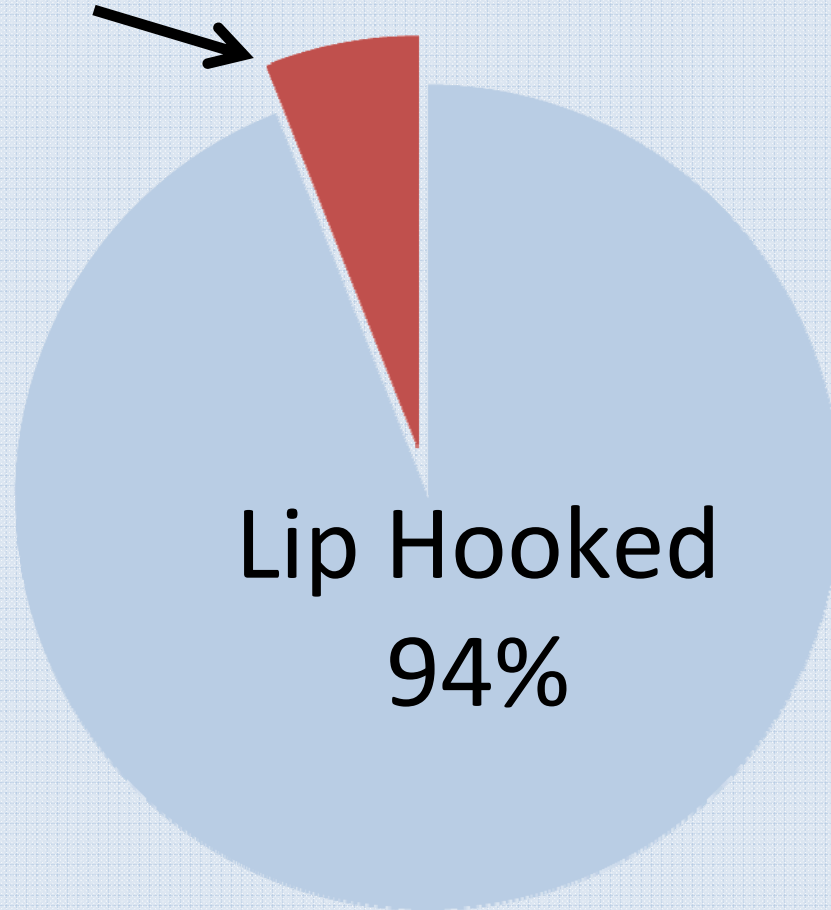


Position of Circle Hook

Gut Hooked 6%



Image credit: Bryan Fluech, FSG



Lip Hooked
94%

Some Observations

- Sometimes difficult to determine if treatment is necessary. See bloating, but some fish can return to bottom. 65-100 ft of water.
 - Gag tend to be better than red grouper in this depth range in terms of getting back down (limited observation).



Observations

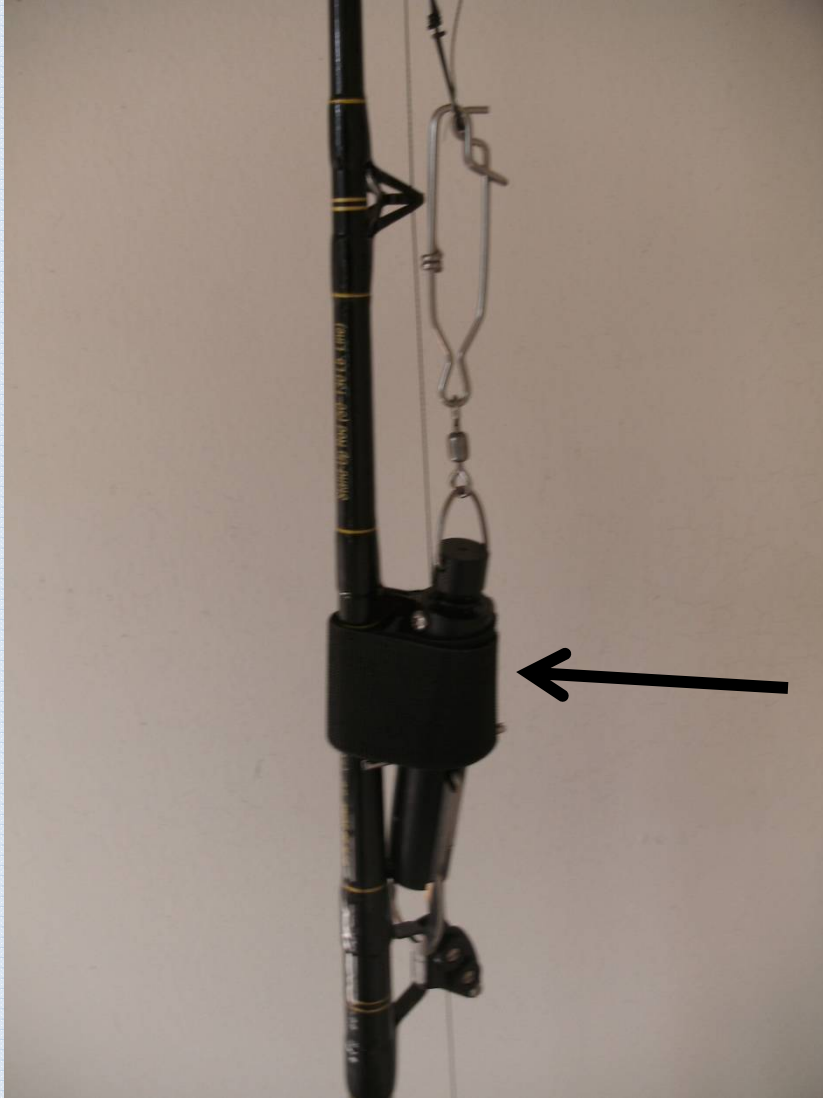
A Variety of Tools is Needed

For Example:

- Inverted utility crate seems to work well on southwest coast (calm days, little current, water depth 65-100 ft.
- Completely impractical in higher current , deeper waters.



Tips



- Weights and devices can reek havoc on gear and gel-coat
 - *Plan accordingly*
- Velcro strap securing decompression device
 - *Rig weights on site*

Conclusions

- *At a minimum*, improved catch and release practices (including venting and recompression) do some fish some good.
- Not at a point yet where we can measure how much good.
- From what we know so far, recompression devices are probably a good tool for anglers to have.
- Angler involvement critical



Thank You!



<http://catchandrelease.org>