

# Fish Waste

The disposal of fish waste material at sea may result in adverse effects on marine ecology and the wider marine environment. Although considered to be relatively innocuous, fish waste dumped at sea has been known to cause oxygen depletion and smothering when large amounts are dumped in small and /or shallow areas with poor water exchange.



The amount of fish waste disposed into a small-enclosed basin can exceed what would exist naturally in the water. In small quantities, this fish waste is fed upon by scavenging fish and is not a problem. However, in large amounts where water circulation is restricted, decomposition of this fish waste can deplete the water of dissolved oxygen, leading to water quality degradation and fish kills. This is a problem in marinas with poor flushing. "Fish feeding" with bait or cleaned fish similarly load basins with nutrients, but can also disrupt the feeding behavior of wild animals and spread diseases among them.

## Clean & Green Solutions:

- Dispose of unwanted bait well offshore
- Eviscerate (gut) fish and dispose of contents at sea
- Consider alternative use of the fish waste such as grinding up and freezing as burley
- Compost the fish waste at home
- Bury fish waste in the garden
- Alternatively land disposal should be considered, ensure the waste is double bagged
- Take particular care to properly dispose of fishing lines. Fishing lines in the water can entangle fish, wildlife, swimmers, and boat propellers

\*Composting fish waste is a relatively new, practical and an environmentally sound alternative to disposing of fish waste. It is economical, fairly odorless and a biologically beneficial practice for seafood operations. A commitment to proper management of the compost bin is the key to successful composting.

Note: Fisherman must adhere to the rules regarding size and limit of catches, where fish species have minimum legal length limits, these fish may be gutted but must be landed whole.