

# Case Scenario Template

**Case author:** Janice Lloyd

**Scenario Theme:** Aquatic Animals (Animals used for work, sport, recreation or display)

**Scenario Topic:** Euthanasia of fish caught recreationally

**Name of client:** James Dory

**Age, sex, species/breed of patient(s):** Finfish caught for eating.

**Patient's problem(s):** Potential for a stressful and inhumane death.

**Case ILO objectives:** A1.1; A1.4; B1.3; B1.8; C1.2; C1.15.

**AW / Ethical challenges:** Humane killing of fish (angling)

# Scenario

A client, James Dory, arrives at your practice to pick up some medications for his pet. On waiting to speak to the veterinarian, James notices some information pamphlets at the reception desk on fish welfare.

After discussing his pet's medication with you, James mentions that he is taking his 10 year old son fishing for the first time this weekend.

James expresses concern that his son is very “welfare-friendly” as his son has just completed a project at school on how meat ends up on the dinner plate.

James asks you if you can offer any advice on killing any finfish he and his son may catch.

# Background Information

Fish are sentient animals capable of experiencing pain and suffering, however, they are not protected uniformly under State and Territory animal welfare legislation. All fish that are caught for eating must be handled carefully to reduce stress and be humanely killed as soon as possible after capture. Humane killing requires that fish are stunned (rendered instantaneously insensible) before being bled out. Humane dispatch of finfish also improves the eating qualities of the catch.



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murray\\_cod#mediaviewer/File:Sizeable\\_Murray\\_cod.JPG](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murray_cod#mediaviewer/File:Sizeable_Murray_cod.JPG)

# Background Information

'Iki jime' (also known as pithing or spiking) is a method of rapidly killing a fish to maximise its eating qualities and welfare. The technique originated in Japan, but is now in widespread use. It involves the insertion of a spike quickly and directly into the brain, thereby causing immediate brain death.

# Instructions to students

## **Task:**

Describe how you would advise your client on the most humane way to kill a finfish intended for eating. Include in your answer how fish should be stunned, and what killing methods are unsuitable.

To help you in your task, you should watch the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy video (8 minutes) entitled 'How to care for your catch'. This can be viewed at: [www.ikijime.com](http://www.ikijime.com)

## **Assessment:**

You will receive a mark out of **xx** for your answer.

# Model Answer

- Time:

Fish should be killed quickly – ideally within a minute of being caught. Allowing a fish to thrash around and die slowly in a bucket of water, ice, or in the air, is unacceptable (see below). A slow death also reduces the eating quality and shortens the storage life of the flesh.

- Tools/Technique:

Fish should remain in water until immediately prior to stunning. There are two methods that can be used to stun fish caught by hand: percussive stunning and spiking (also known as pithing or iki jime).

Basic tools are required to kill fish humanely. The iki jime technique can be performed with a sharp knife, ice-pick or a sharpened screw-driver. Some tackle shops sell specially designed iki jime tools. For percussive stunning - fish can be knocked on the head with a wooden club or a 'priest' (baton with a metal head).

Percussive stunning involves a forceful and accurate blow to the head with a blunt instrument. The force required depends on the size of the fish. The blow should be aimed just above the eyes to impact on the brain. The effectiveness of the stun should be checked and another blow applied if the fish is still conscious.

Spiking involves driving a sharp spike (such as an ice pick or a sharpened screwdriver) into the brain of the fish. The spike should be placed in a position to penetrate the brain of the fish and then pushed quickly and firmly into the skull. The impact of the spike should produce immediate unconsciousness. The spike should then be moved from side to side to destroy the brain.

Note: information on where specific popular fish species brains are anatomically located is available from [www.ikijime.com](http://www.ikijime.com) and can be supplied to clients.

After stunning, the fish should be bled out by cutting the gill rakers or, with larger fish, a main artery.

- The following methods are not suitable for killing fish as they do not result in a rapid or humane death:
  - Chilling with ice in holding water
  - Carbon dioxide in holding water
  - Chilling with ice and carbon dioxide in holding water
  - Salt or ammonia baths
  - Asphyxiation by removal from water
  - Bleeding out without stunning.