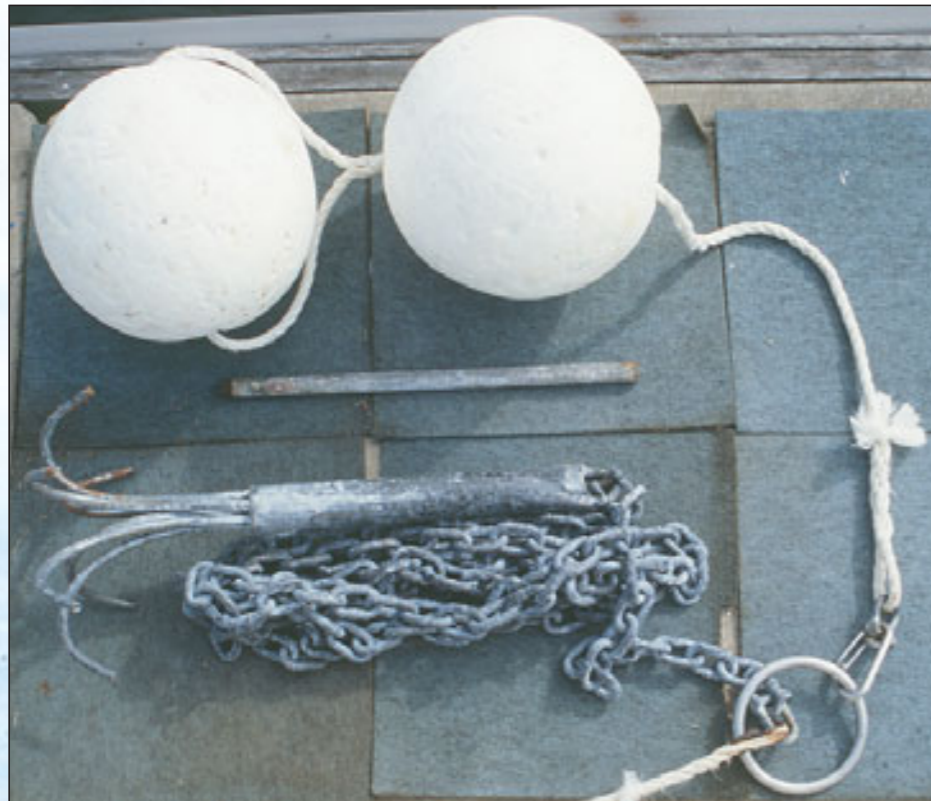


Offshore Anchoring Techniques

Back by popular demand ! First published by F&B in 1997 (#27) this special report and pics by Damon Olsen covers what many fishermen believe is the absolute key to successful offshore reef fishing.



Top Right: Way to go - the anchor lifted right up to the surface using the boat's power, not your back

Above: Typical reef anchor set-up complete with length of gal pipe to keep bending the tynes of the anchor. A lot of fisho's prefer one big poly ball - but it's a lot harder to stow.

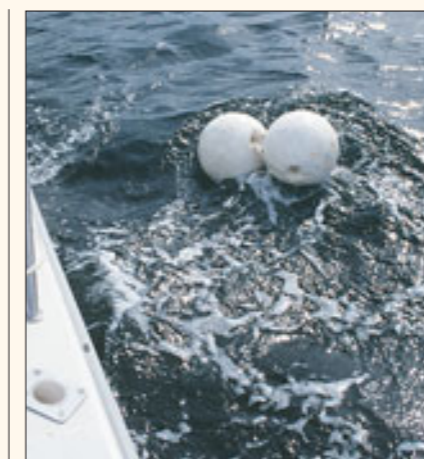
Right: The technique here is simplicity itself - the boat moves forward, pulling the anchor warp (rope) through the ring securing the floats to the warp. The float(s) end up right over the anchor exerting a powerful lifting force directly above the anchor, and finally sliding all the way back down to the anchor tynes. Sure beats trying to heave it up yourself!

PS Make sure you do what John Olsen is doing here - keeping a hand on the anchor warp right through the procedure to keep the rope out of the prop(s) and to 'feel' what is happening down the bottom.

With increased sales of 5.5-7.0m trailerable fishing boats over the last few years, more people are wanting to travel to the far away deepwater reefs in search of the prized reef fish which are becoming all too rare in the closer, shallow reefs and bays.

Many people who, 'once upon a time' could go down to the local estuary in their trusty 12' tinnie and catch a good feed of fish, are now finding this previously simple pleasure very hard to achieve. Some of the people have simply given up, or are now just fishing for the pure pleasure of fishing itself. Others have moved to larger boats, having heard of the fabulous catches of snapper and morwong their offshore mates achieve.

It is definitely true there are far more - and bigger - fish to be had on the deep water offshore reefs compared to the coastal estuaries and bays. But people new to these offshore areas are confronted by the need to master new skills before they can take advantage of



Bigger boats require bigger anchors, and often, two floats are needed to lift them - especially if the anchor stock has been filled with lead to create a lower scope angle for better holding power.

the fishing potential contained in the offshore reefs.

It is widely accepted that anchoring your boat exactly where you want it to

be, in deep water, is far and away the hardest part of offshore reef fishing. Apart from being physically harder to do because of the depths involved, there is a basic fishing truth to deal with: if the boat isn't anchored near the fish, then the fish won't even get the chance to refuse your bait!

It is not easy to get the boat anchored exactly over a 20-25m patch of rock or coral, either. More often than not, to 'miss' the patch by 20-25m (very easy to do) is the reason why so often one boat crew will come home with a big basket of fish, whilst you, fishing almost alongside, scarcely get a bite.

Newcomers to offshore fishing should be far more worried about whether the boat is positioned in a manner that allows the boat to be presented to the fish, rather than worry about the bait, and how it is rigged. When you're anchored properly over the seabed feature being targeted, then you can worry about what to drop over the side.