

## Why a Mixed Bag?

Targeting a variety of fish spreads out fishing pressure, supports reef balance, and helps control invasive species like **Ta’ape** and **To’au**. By taking different species, you help **mālama (care for) the reef** while enjoying diverse and delicious catches.

| Fish     | English Name         | Regulation     | Notes                                                        |
|----------|----------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ta’ape   | Bluestripe           | No limits      | Invasive – harvest encouraged                                |
| To’au    | Blacktail Snapper    | No limits      | Invasive – harvest encouraged                                |
| Po’opa’a | Hawkfish             | No limits      | Beginner friendly                                            |
| Nenue    | Chub                 | No limits      | Great for practicing calling                                 |
| Hagi     | Triggerfish          | No limits      | Chicken of the Sea                                           |
| Na’ena’e | Surgeonfish          | No limits      | Starter mid-water fish                                       |
| Kūpīpī   | Damselfish           | No limits      | Common near rocky reefs                                      |
| Mamo     | Sergeant Major       | No limits      | Small reef schooling fish                                    |
| Manini   | Convict Tang         | 6-inch minimum | Abundant reef fish                                           |
| Kole     | Goldring Surgeonfish | 5-inch minimum | Take a few from each pile, never take heavily from one group |

## Freediving Safety Rules to Keep You Safe

- **Always Dive with a Buddy**
  - > One dives, one watches to be safety.
  - > Never hold your breath alone!
- **Wait Before You Dive**
  - > Let your buddy rest 30 seconds after surfacing before starting your dive.
- **Don’t Use Too Much Weight**
  - > You should float safely at the surface.
- **Take Out Your Snorkel**
  - > No snorkel in your mouth when underwater!
- **Use a Dive Flag**
  - > Make sure people can see you!
- **Have a Shore Buddy**
  - > Someone on land knows where you + your buddy are and when you will return.
- **Learn Hawaii Fishing Regulations**
  - > Protect our native fish stocks
  - > Ta’ape are ono delicious and invasive!

## About Us

FreediveSafe! Hawai’i is a community-led 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded in 2020 to keep our spearfishing community safe. According to the State of Hawai’i Department of Health, “freediving and spearfishing is the second leading cause of Hawai’i resident ocean drownings.” By sharing safety knowledge proven to save lives—along with cultural traditions, hands-on training, and practices that promote the sustainability of our nearshore reefs—we work together to protect our community and ensure a safe, sustainable future for the next generation of divers.

## Contact Us

- **808-900-3331**
- **[www.freedivesafe.org](http://www.freedivesafe.org)**
- **[info@freedivesafe.org](mailto:info@freedivesafe.org)**
- **[@freedivesafehawaii](https://www.instagram.com/freedivesafehawaii)**

Mahalo to our partner



Together, we can keep our divers safe.



# Hawai’i Spearfishing Guide – Beginner’s Catch

## A Mixed Bag is a Great Bag – Take Different Fish to Mālama Your Reef!

In Hawai’i, the ocean is our home. When we dive, we’re not just looking for food – we’re learning the reef, listening to the water, and showing aloha ‘āina (love and respect for the land and sea). Spearfishing teaches us kuleana (responsibility): to take only what we need, to know which fish to let swim by, and to always dive safe. If we care for the ocean like family, the ocean will care for us, and this way of life will stay strong for our keiki and the generations to come.



Ta’ape (Bluestripe Snapper) – Invasive



**Preferred Gear:**  
Three-prong or Speargun

**Cooking Methods:**  
Fried whole, Grilled, Steamed, Ceviche

**Where to Find:**  
Coral reefs, lagoons—abundant and invasive

**Skill Level:**  
Beginner to experienced—plentiful and encouraged as a sustainable catch

**Size & Bag Limit:**  
No limits (harvest encouraged to reduce reef pressure)

To’au (Blacktail Snapper) – Invasive



**Preferred Gear:**  
Three-prong or Speargun

**Cooking Methods:**  
Fried, Grilled, Soup, Sashimi

**Where to Find:**  
Reef fish (introduced species)

**Skill Level:**  
Beginner-friendly; valued catch for invasive control

**Size & Bag Limit:**  
No limits (harvest encouraged)

Po’opa’a (Hawkfish)



**Preferred Gear:**  
Three-prong (best)

**Cooking Methods:**  
Steam, Bake, Soup

**Where to Find:**  
Shallow rocky areas with wave action

**Skill Level:**  
Beginner-friendly

**Size & Bag Limit:**  
None

Nenue (Chub)



**Preferred Gear:**  
Three-prong or Speargun

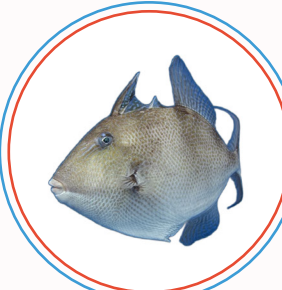
**Cooking Methods:**  
Pan-fried, Ceviche, Poke, Sashimi, Tacos, Baked, Hibachi

**Where to Find:**  
Great for practicing calling

**Skill Level:**  
Beginner-friendly

**Size & Bag Limit:**  
None

Hagi (Triggerfish)



**Preferred Gear:**  
Three-prong or Speargun

**Cooking Methods:**  
Pan-fried, Ceviche, Poke, Sashimi, Baked, Hibachi

**Where to Find:**  
Mid-water and reefs.

**Skill Level:**  
Beginner-friendly

**Size & Bag Limit:**  
None

Na’ena’e (Surgeonfish)



**Preferred Gear:**  
Three-prong or Speargun

**Cooking Methods:**  
Pan-fried, Ceviche, Sashimi, Hibachi

**Where to Find:**  
Mid-water; good starter fish

**Skill Level:**  
Beginner-friendly

**Size & Bag Limit:**  
None

Kūpīpī (Damselfish)



**Preferred Gear:**  
Three-prong or Speargun

**Cooking Methods:**  
Pan-fried, Soup, Baked

**Where to Find:**  
Common around reefs and rocky shores

**Skill Level:**  
Beginner-friendly

**Size & Bag Limit:**  
None

Mamo (Sergeant Major)



**Preferred Gear:**  
Three-prong or Speargun

**Cooking Methods:**  
Pan-fried, Grilled, Soup

**Where to Find:**  
Schooling reef fish in shallow coral areas

**Skill Level:**  
Beginner-friendly

**Size & Bag Limit:**  
None

Manini (Convict Tang)



**Preferred Gear:**  
Three-prong or Speargun

**Cooking Methods:**  
Pan-fried, Soup, Grilled

**Where to Find:**  
Reef flats, abundant in schools

**Skill Level:**  
Beginner-friendly

**Size Limit:**  
Minimum 6 inches statewide

**Bag Limit:**  
None

Kole (Goldring Surgeonfish)



**Preferred Gear:**  
Polespear

**Cooking Methods:**  
Pan-fried

**Where to Find:**  
Shallow reef flats and rocky areas, often grazing in schools

**Size Limit:**  
Minimum 5 inches

**Bag Limit:**  
None

**Notes:**  
Take a few from each pile, never take heavily from one group

**Skill Level:**  
Beginner-friendly

Learn about Hawaii Fishing Regulations and the no-take zones within Marine Life Conservation Districts statewide at [dlnr.hawaii.gov/dar/fishing/fishing-regulations](https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dar/fishing/fishing-regulations)

Practice Kuleana

Be responsible with your catch:

- 1

Kill your fish immediately.
- 2

Honor the life taken and the sustenance it will provide.
- 3

Protect your catch from monk seal and never feed them.
- 4

Preserve the quality of your catch – get it on ice.
- 5

Share your catch with 'ohana and neighbors.
- 6

Take only what you need, leaving the rest for tomorrow.