

Blowies and pets

Make sure you keep an eye out for washed up blowfish when walking your pets along the shore.

Blowfish contain a highly lethal toxin called tetrodotoxin in their skin, flesh and internal organs, which can be deadly to pets.

To a dog, they may appear to be a smelly or tasty treat, but pets that chew or lick blowfish may vomit soon afterwards, and show signs such as drooling, panting, dullness, and lethargy. This may progress to wobbliness/ weakness, usually starting in the legs.



The toxicity can progress to paralysis and ingestion of blowfish by pets can be life threatening. If you suspect, or notice that your pet has had contact with a blowfish, seek immediate veterinary attention.

The best way to keep your pets safe from blowfish is to:

- be on the lookout for dead blowfish on the beach or shoreline;
- keep your dog on a short lead if dead blowfish are present and don't let them eat them; or
- walk your dog at another location.

Important disclaimer

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Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development

Protect
Grow
Innovate

Blowfish

(*Torquigener pleurogramma*)

Information for fishers
and pet owners

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Western Australia's common blowfish are a vital part of the ecosystems of our estuaries and sheltered coastal waters, keeping them clean by eating scraps, including leftover bait and berley.

Other fish eat young blowfish and they have been found in the stomachs of tuna, snapper, mulloway, tailor, herring and flounder.

Blowfish get their name from their ability to inflate their abdomens. This is a defence mechanism to make them look bigger to warn off potential predators.

Common blowfish can grow up to 22 centimetres long. They are mainly found in the ocean and saline water of estuaries along WA's lower west coast but are sometimes seen as far north as Coral Bay and as far east as Esperance.

They usually prefer shallow water up to four metres deep, but in times of very high abundance, can be found at greater depths.

Their numbers rise and fall in natural cycles and observations of blowie booms go back to the 1930s.

Also known as banded toadfish or weeping toadfish, named for the streaks underneath their eyes, blowfish are poisonous to eat or touch for humans and most animals.



The common blowfish is widely distributed around much of the southern half of Australia.



Blowfish *Torquigener pleurogramma*

Blowies and fishers

If you catch a blowfish, return it immediately to the water. Blowfish play an important role in the ecosystem as scavengers, but if they're caught and left on the shore they pose a life-threatening risk to dogs and other animals that may eat them.

To avoid catching blowfish and to help keep other animals safe:

- try using bigger hooks and less berley;
- reduce your catch of blowies by using plastic lures (they prefer real bait);
- blowfish often gather around common fishing spots, so try moving somewhere else;
- don't dump unused bait into the water;
- don't dump dead blowies on or near jetties, boat ramps or on beaches; and
- if there is no bin available, take your unwanted catch home and dispose of through your rubbish pickup.

For more responsible fishing practices, visit fish.wa.gov.au/catchcare



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