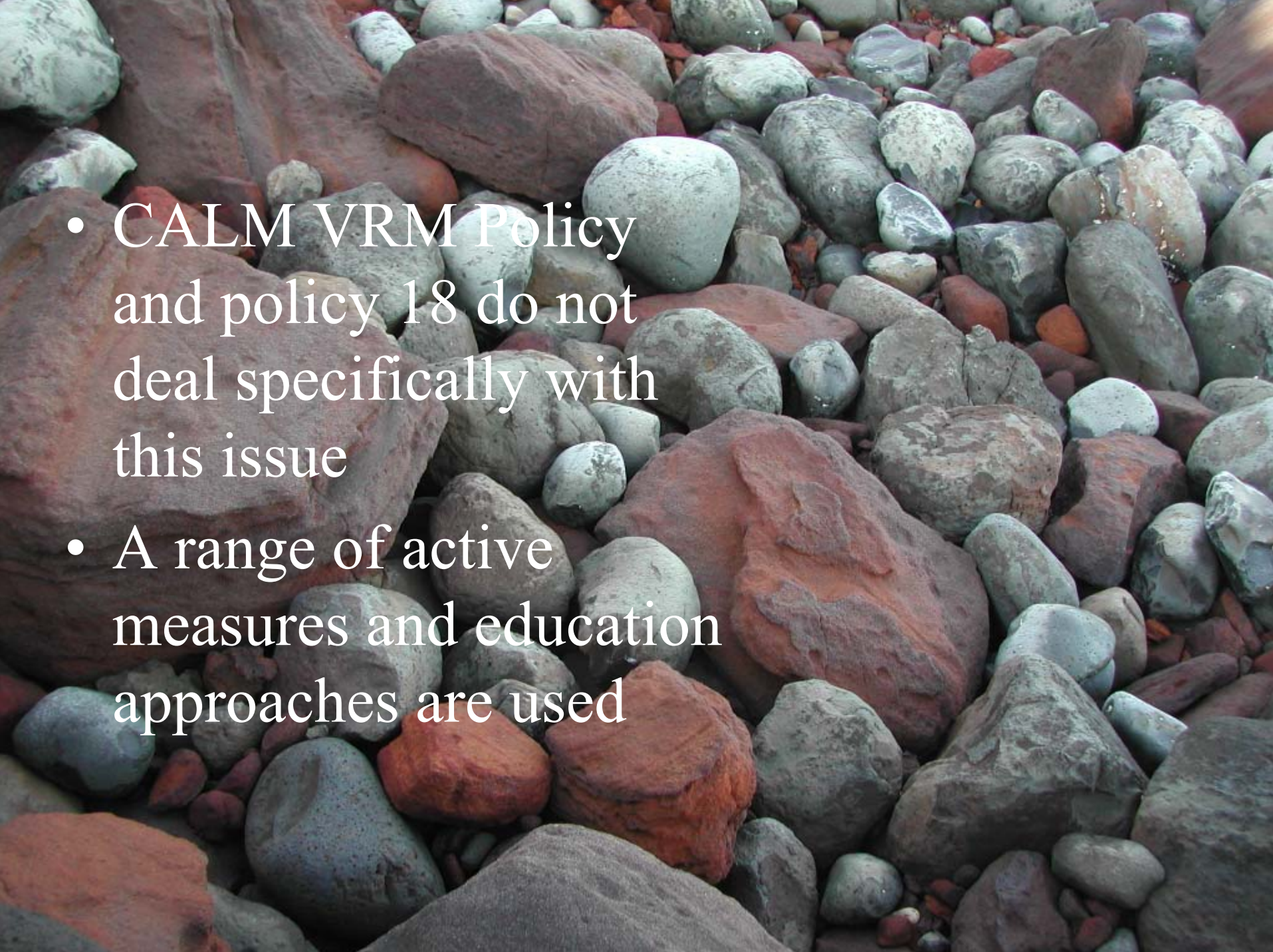


Rock Fishing and Coastal Risks

- Continuing deaths and near miss accidents

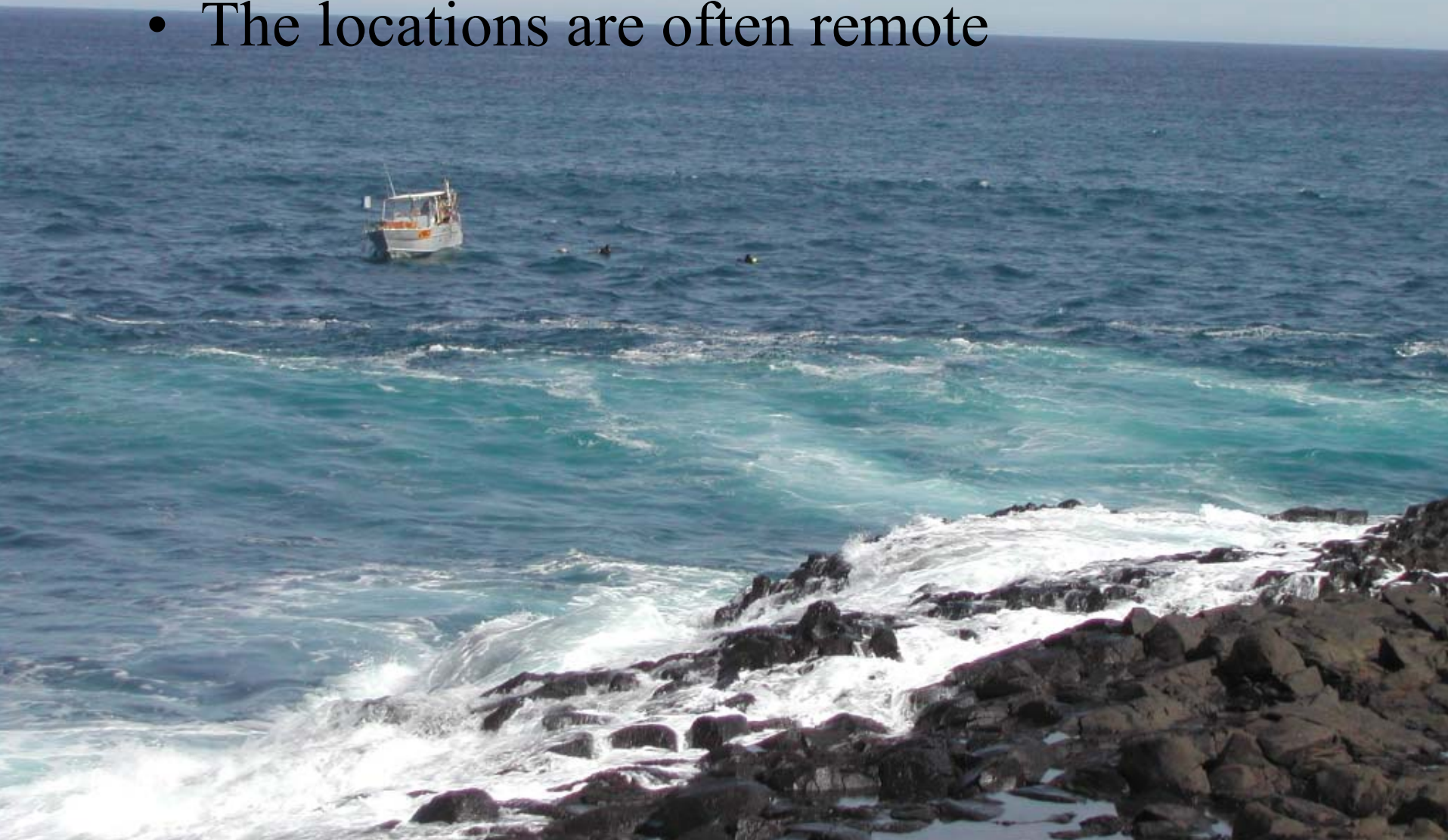


- 
- CALM VRM Policy and policy 18 do not deal specifically with this issue
 - A range of active measures and education approaches are used

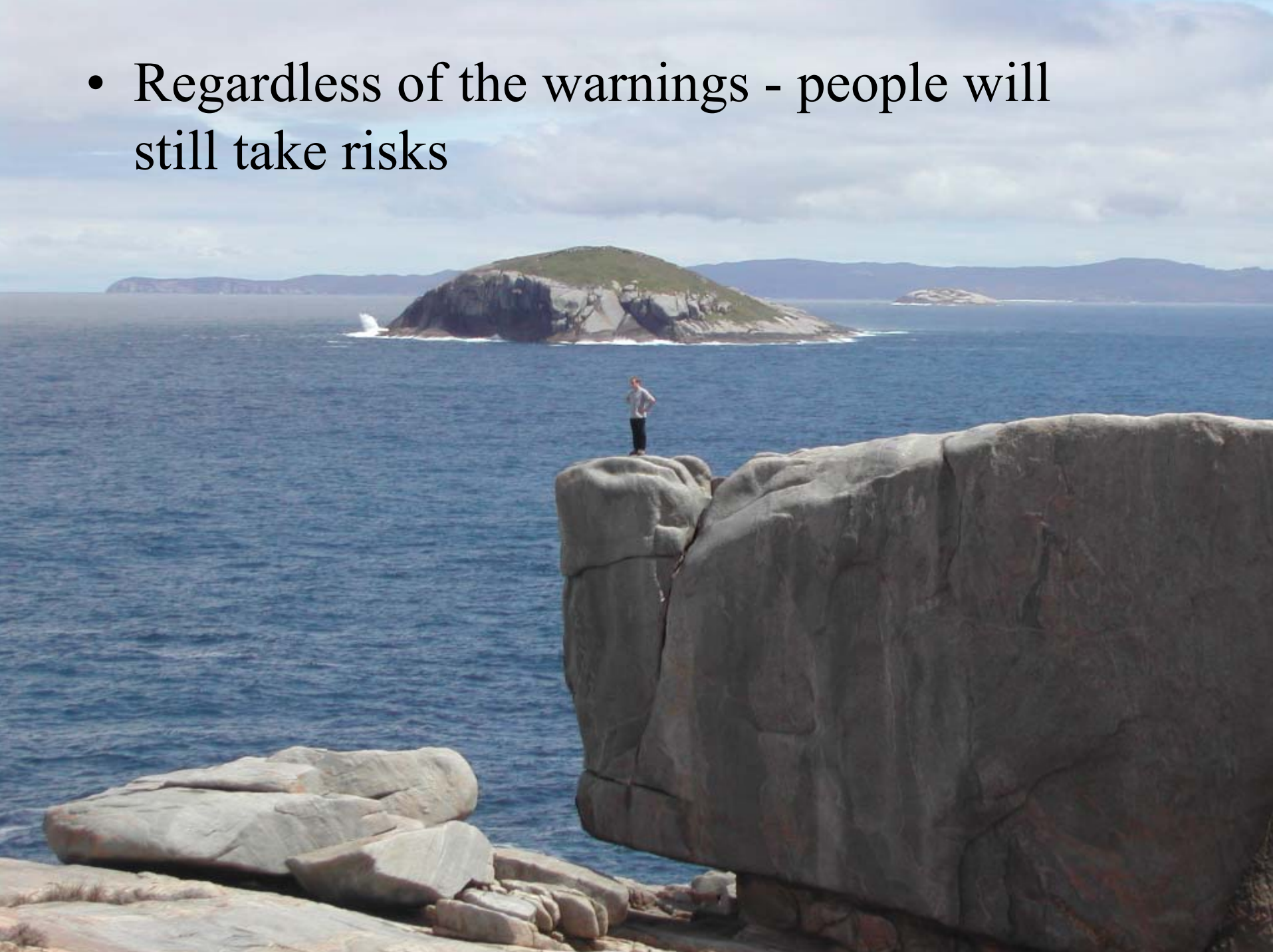
- Many people who are lost are locals or those who feel that they “know” the conditions
- Risks are taken when playing or landing fish or recovering gear



- The consequences are often fatal
- Rescue is difficult
- The locations are often remote



- Regardless of the warnings - people will still take risks



Options include


- Warning Signs

UNPREDICTABLE OCEAN SURGES
OCCUR EVEN ON CALM DAYS



Signs and Education


COAST RISK AREA



DANGER

- keep well clear of the sea
- watch for freak waves and swells
- be wary of strong winds and slippery rocks
- please use safety equipment where provided
- do not fish alone

Department of Conservation and Land Management



FISHERIES DEPARTMENT

WARNING -
The southern coastline is dangerous.



Nearly every year a visitor falls or is washed off the coastline of Tomidirup National Park. Most victims drown in the bitterly cold water.

Tourist, backpacker, local fisher, or park neighbour - none of these people ever thought it would happen to them.

The Southern Ocean is very unpredictable.

- ▲ Huge waves and extreme swells can suddenly occur even on mild days.
- ▲ Waves can sweep over rocky headlands.
- ▲ Rocks are slippery when wet.
- ▲ Cliff edges can collapse without warning.
- ▲ Powerful rips and undertows can occur.
- ▲ Weather conditions can change suddenly.

Your safety is our concern, but your responsibility.

- ▲ Keep aware of constant changes in the ocean.
- ▲ Stand back from rocky headlands and cliff edges.
- ▲ Do not climb onto or under the Natural Bridge.
- ▲ Do not walk or stand down slope of the Blowholes.
- ▲ Be prepared for changes in weather.
- ▲ Enter the water at your own risk.
- ▲ Stay on marked pathways

Please heed the warnings shown on signs which display this symbol.



DANGER

1. 2. 1999

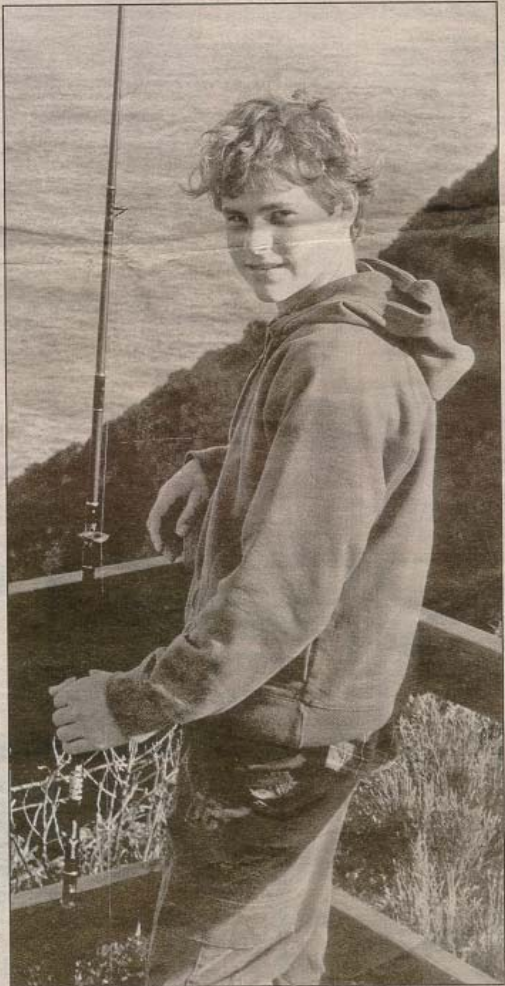
Anchors and Tie Off points



- Life jackets and other flotation devices



Nathan Drew was one of hundreds of kids who went fishing last weekend. All the others came home.



This photo is the last memory Nathan's family have of the 15-year-old fisherman. It was taken by his sister, who used only black and white film in her amateur photography. Nathan's family, who have given *The West Australian* permission to use the picture, have recounted the boy's tragic final seven minutes in an exclusive interview on page 9.



Family project: Graeme Drew, left, and his brother Wayne with the rescue floats they built save people washed off rocks. The device cost them less than \$100 to build. PICTURE: ROD TAYLOR

Tragedy leads to safety float plan

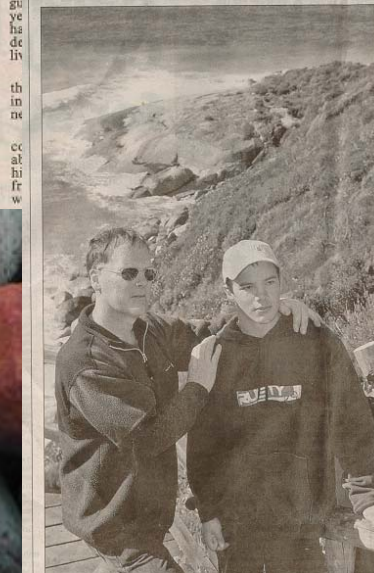
By Eloise Dortch

JUST 10 days after Nathan Drew's body was found floating in the sea

him, Rachel said Nathan was close enough to have had a floatable object thrown to him but nothing was available.

Twelve fatal coastal acci-

fishing floats attached to ropes. They said the floats could be rolled down rocks into the water for people to hold on to while waiting to be rescued. The device cost under



Danger spot: Mervyn Drew and nephew Jonathan at Salmon Holes. Their nephew and cousin, Nathan, slipped off the rocks behind them. PICTURE: LAURE GIBSON

Family vow: Tragic to must end

By Eloise Dortch

THE family of Nathan Drew, 15, presumed drowned after he fell from rocks while fishing near Albany have vowed to halt the death toll on the notorious coastline.

Members of the 50-strong Drew clan, a family of professional fishermen who established Bremer Bay's pilchard industry in 1988, have spent the week camped at the Salmon Holes carpark in Turndirrup National Park, where Nathan was last seen 80m from shore at 5pm last Sunday.

His body has not been found but every day the family's two fishing boats, a friend's chartered plane and friends and family on foot have roared the coastline.

They have plotted the whirlpools, tides and currents of the bay, dropped devices overboard to see where they go and conferred over nightly meetings and by radio and mobile phone during the day.

They plan, with co-operation of the Conservation and Land Management Department, which manages the park and police and emergency services, to install measures which they say might have saved Nathan's life.

Warning signs or managements and devices made of fishing floats and ropes to be thrown to people in the water are ideas they have considered.

Yesterday, the family established a trust fund for coastal safety in Nathan's memory.

Nathan's sister Rachel, 17, of Albany, who took Nathan's photograph minutes before the last boy friend, Bobby Cooper, 18, said

Nathan started fishing last Sunday, said she had no idea the rock at Salmon Holes was so dangerous.

There had been nothing handy and Bobby could throw to Nathan to help him stay afloat or get ashore.

The family believe Nathan, who was conscious and discarded his boots and fishing rod, managed to stay afloat for seven minutes but in that time was whisked out to sea by a rip. He was last seen in deep water on the outside of a reef which borders the beach.

Seven fishermen have died at Salmon Holes and there have been another 12 accidental sea deaths on a 5km stretch to the east.

In April, experienced Albany angler Michael Ball, 24, drowned after falling from the same rock.

There are two small signs warning of freak waves and rips at Salmon Holes but they are easily missed.

CALM south coast parks and visitor services leader Martin Lloyd said

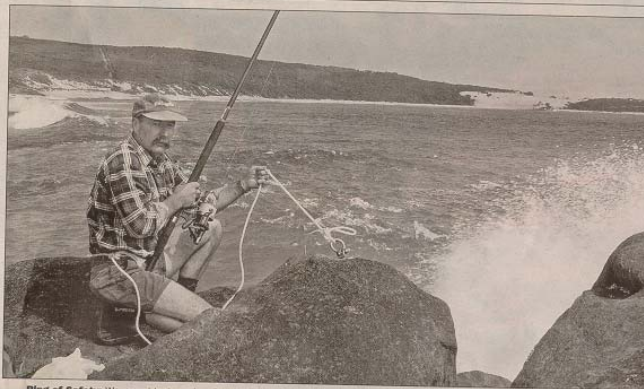
But he was concerned about who would be held legally responsible if safety devices failed to work. He said a committee to address safety on Albany's coast was formed 10 years ago.

Nathan's uncle Mervyn Drew questioned if litigation should be considered before lives.

If our extended family does nothing and someone else goes off the rocks, this tragedy will happen again and again to us," he said.

Contributions to the Nathan Drew Memorial Trust for Coastal Safety can be made to Robbinson solicitors, PO Box 485, Albany, 6511

The West Australian Friday 0



Ring of Safety: Wave-accident survivor Ray Walker ties himself to an angler's anchoring pin at Wyadup Rocks. PICTURE: DEREK POOL

Safety project ropes in SW rock anglers

By Eloise Dortch

AFTER 40 years of safe fishing from along the South-West coast, Ray was knocked off his feet by a wave in March. Only a rope cinched around his waist stopped him tumbling into the sea at Bunker Bay's Rocky Point.

His experience — and that of an angler a week later at the same spot also would have also fallen in but

rope — strengthened Mr Walker's belief in being secured to a rock while fishing.

Mr Walker said, Anglers would be encour-

Extra care needed on coastal rocks

W e all love to go fishing but seldom think of the real dangers that exist at some of the spots we choose to fish.

Recent tragic events on our rocky coastline only highlight the need for greater awareness of the dangers and how to avoid them.

There have been a number of ideas to help save those who have been washed into the water such as a postion for example, which is great but I'm a firm believer in not going into the water in the first place if you can help it.

When going rock fishing wear quality footwear with good grip and take the time to sit and watch the swell for about 15 minutes to get an idea of how the ocean is behaving. Remember if in doubt don't go.

Holly Colgate and I recently went out to The Amphitheatre near The Gap with angling instructor Dave Taylor.

Using a small amount of his specialist equipment he was able to show us how a potentially life-threatening fishing expedition can become one of complete safety.

The first bit of kit we used is called a harness. This consists of seat belt-like material assembled with two loops for your legs joined to a firmly fastened waist belt. A carabiner is used to clip the belt and rope together.

The type of rope you choose is up to you but there's no point in the rest of the gear being top notch and the line stopping you from getting sucked into the deep blue being second rate and prone to breaking.

Static line rope used for abseiling is the way to go. It is a little more expensive but it has a 3000kg breaking strain.

When you think about it, if you're unlucky enough to have a wall of water come up and grab you, the



combination of your weight plus the weight of the water dragging you in will be huge so you need something capable of withstanding the pressure.

The next thing you need is a cam, which is comprised of stainless steel cables and grung-loaded pieces of aluminium with grooves to grip rock.

You push the device into a rock crevice and when you pull back the spring pushes the cams against the rock. The harder you pull the harder the cams dig into the rock.

With your cam and rope securely in place and you fastened to the whole assembly the picture of rock hopping in safety is complete and you're ready for action.

The cost of this gear pales in comparison to the amount you spend on fishing tackle and boating and so on.

If you're keep relative the cost of your life and also but the added benefit of peace of mind knowing that if you are grabbed by the ocean's might you'll have a much greater chance of surviving the ordeal.

If you have any questions about abseiling gear you can email Dave Taylor at dave@inst.net.au. Wet a line and fish safe.



ROPE TRICKS: Careful use of the right equipment can make rock fishing expeditions safer.

What's Happening

• Trial of anchor points being conducted in South West Region

- Working group looking at issues
- Discussion paper and recommendations prepared
- Goes to VRM steering committee and possibly corp exec for approval
- South Coast continuing to work with Police, other Govt Dept and community