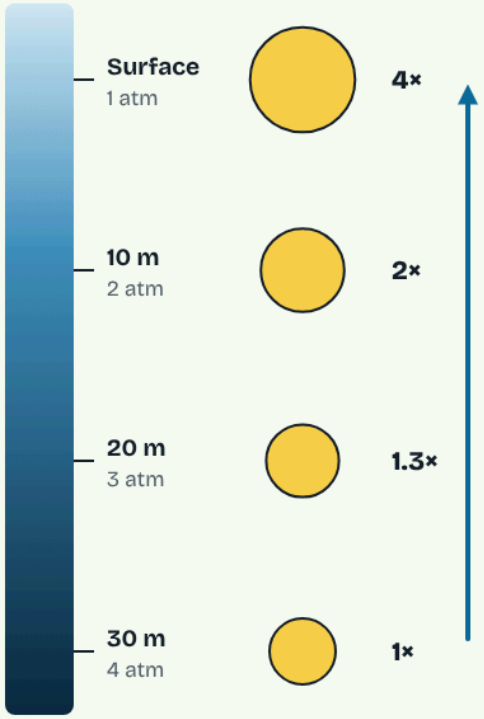
That is why

Why do deep-water fish "explode" when brought up?

They don't explode: the gas in their swim bladder expands as pressure drops. This is called barotrauma.

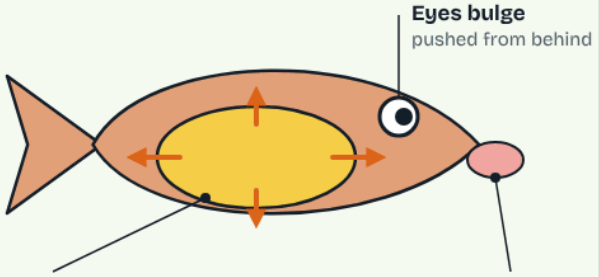
A The gas expands on the way up



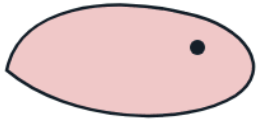
Boyle's law: halve the pressure, double the gas volume. From 30 m, the gas is 4 times bigger at the surface.

B What the expanding gas does

Rockfish reeled up fast from 30 m



Compare: a fish with no swim bladder



Blobfish: no gas to expand, so it sags instead.

Out of water, its jelly-like body loses its support.

C How anglers can help

1 Do not puncture it

The gas is in the swim bladder inside the body, not in the stomach. Piercing adds injury.

2 Send it back down

A descending device lowers the fish quickly to the depth where it was caught.

3 Pressure fixes it

More water pressure squeezes the gas back to size. Many rockfish recover and swim away.

The fix is the same physics that caused the problem.

Nothing explodes: the gas was already there, squeezed small.

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Diagram: https://thatiswhy.com/diagrams/why-deep-sea-fish-explode/ · Full guide: https://thatiswhy.com/why-do-deep-sea-fish-explode-when-brought-up/