

Line Pick-up

by Bruce Richards

Most of us put little thought into how we pick up line off the water. If line is picked up carelessly, it can make a big disturbance and can spook fish. Also, picking line up correctly is a lot easier than the method many anglers use.

Some anglers seem to think that brute force is the answer to line pick up. While the line does come off the water, the result is a lot of surface disturbance, and usually a pretty poor backcast. Here's the problem: If there is a fair amount of line on the water it takes quite a bit of force to break the connection between line and water. Here's the solution: Reduce the amount of line on the water before you try to pick it up.

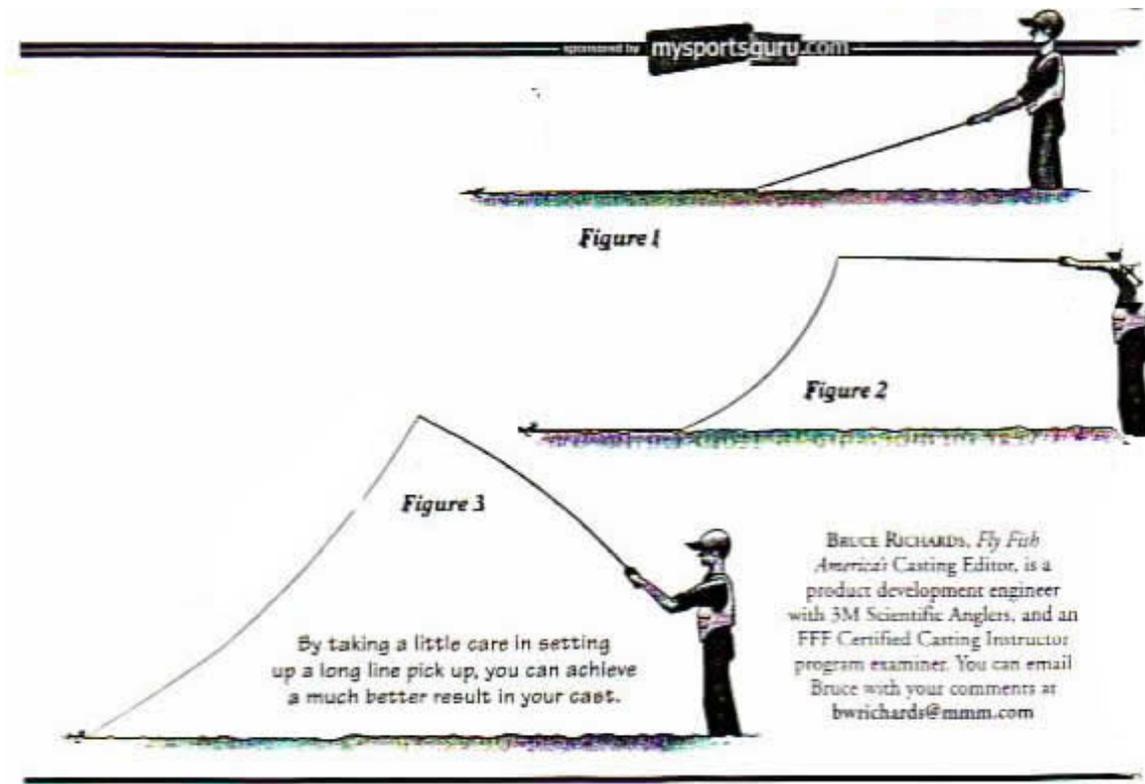
By taking a little care in setting up a long line pick up, a much better result can be had. Imagine yourself with about 40' of fly line on the water. You need to do a couple of things to effect a smooth, easy, low disturbance pick-up.

First, the rod tip needs to be as close to the water as possible, and the line needs to be straight - no slack - as seen in Figure 1. Strip line in as necessary to get the rod tip low and the line straight.

Once the rod tip is low and the line straight, the process of picking the line can begin. The first step is to raise as much of the line off the water as possible before applying power to the rod. This is done by raising the rod arm and rod straight up, keeping both as parallel to the water as possible (see Figure 2). You can see from the illustration that easily half of the line that was on the water is now in the air.

Once you've lifted as much line as possible off the water, you must begin the back cast. If you wait, the line will slide toward you on the water and the advantage gained in having lifted it will be quickly lost.

Figure 3 shows the back cast half completed. You can see that nearly all the line is off the water and a normal back cast can be made. If the line is not lifted from the water before attempting the pick up and backcast, much more power is needed - which usually results in a lot of water disturbance and a poor backcast. By using this pick up technique, you'll find that you



need much less power on this first backcast, and the resulting cast should be much better.

This technique works under all circumstances but is more even more effective when a longer rod is used, since more line can be lifted. When you do make your backcast, using a single haul makes the pick up even more effective. Following this simple pick up procedure will improve you casting and spook less fish.