WHY CATCH & RELEASE?

“A good game fish is too valuable a resource to be caught only once.”
- IFFF founder, Lee Wulff

- Releasing fish is a management tool for the development of high-quality fisheries, particularly for heavily fished species.
- If the fish is undersized, is a protected species, or you have caught your limit, proper release is mandatory.

PHOTO TIPS

- Have both camera and photographer ready to take the picture before the fish is handled.
- Wet your hands before holding fish.
- Hold your fish horizontally and support its weight with both hands; one under the belly and one around the base of the tail.
- Photograph the fish in the water if possible.
- If you take the fish out of water, hold your breath, when you have to breathe it is time to put your fish back.

DID YOU KNOW

- Summer temperatures increase stress on fish and make quick and careful catch and release critical to their survival.
- On high temperature days taking time to revive your fish by gently moving it back and forth underwater until it swims from your hands will increase its survival chances.
- Leaving a fish in the water gives it oxygen for quicker recovery and also supports the fish’s weight, reducing stress on its internal organs and spine.
- Holding wet cloth or wearing a wet glove helps grip the fish and reduces injury from movement.
The time it takes to land and release your fish and the way you handle it is critical to its survival.

**TACKLE**
- Use tackle and line strong enough to bring fish in quickly.
- Use flies or artificial lures. Fish caught on artificial lures are more likely to survive than fish caught with bait.
- Go barbless. Barbless hooks allow for a quicker release and decrease injury to fish. They are also safer for you.

**LANDING YOUR CATCH**
- Land fish quickly before they are played out.
- Use a knotless or rubber mesh net. Nets minimize damage and handling time.
- Never gaff a fish you intend to release.

**HANDLING YOUR CATCH**
- Minimize the time your fish is out of water.
- Wet your hands when handling your fish.
- Measure and photograph the fish with it in the water.
- Never toss a fish back. Gently support the fish facing into the current until it swims from your hands.

**REMOVING THE HOOK**
- If possible, remove the hook quickly and gently while keeping your fish in the water.
- Use a hemostat to back the hook out of its entrance hole.
- If your fish is hooked deeply, cut the line near the hook.

**REVIVING YOUR CATCH**
- If the fish does not swim out of your hands, you may need to revive it.
- Move the fish gently back and forth underwater until it swims free.
- From a boat, revive a fish by leaving it underwater in the landing net with the opening facing into current until the fish swims free.

For more information visit us at www.fedflyfishers.org