NOAA Fisheries Service conserves, protects and manages living marine resources

NOAA Fisheries Service is an agency within the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the earth's environment and conserve and manage coastal and marine resources to meet our nation's economic, social and environmental needs. The NOAA Fisheries Service provides world class science, service and stewardship.

We value your interest, questions, and comments.
Please feel free to contact us.

www.nmfs.noaa.gov

Partnerships & Communications (301) 713-2379

NOAA Fisheries Service
1315 East West Highway
SSMC 3, F/SF8
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Science, Service, Stewardship

Are You An Ethical Angler?

NOAA FISHERIES SERVICE

U.S. Department of Commerce | National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service

Releasing an undersized Lingcod

The History of the Code

NOAA Fisheries Service adopted a code of angling ethics in support of the public education strategy under the NOAA Recreational Fisheries Strategic Plan. The code was developed in cooperation with a wide range of constituent groups. The code was approved in February 1999, and published in the Federal Register. The importance of an angler code has been recognized and adopted by many other countries and organizations throughout the world.

Let's Work Together to Preserve Our Sport

Anglers have been leaders of the conservation movement in this Country for over 100 years. Today, it is more important than ever for us to increase our conservation efforts. When we practice ethical angling, we influence other anglers and increase public awareness of the important role we all play. Responsible anglers must be viewed as part of the solution for sustainable resource management.

The Ethical Angler

- Promotes ethical behavior in the use of aquatic resources.
- Values and respects the aquatic environment and all living things in it.
- Avoids spilling, and never dumps any pollutants on land or in the water.
- Disposes of all trash, including worn-out lines, leaders, and hooks and helps to keep fishing sites litter-free.
- Takes all precautionary measures necessary to prevent the spread of exotic plants and animals, including live baitfish, into non-native habitats.
- Learns and obeys angling and boating regulations treating other anglers, boaters, and property owners with courtesy and respect.
- Respects property rights, and never trespasses on private lands or waters.
- Keeps no more fish than needed for consumption, and never wastefully discards fish that are retained.
- Carefully handles and releases all fish that are unwanted or prohibited by regulation, as well as other animals that are accidentally hooked.
- Uses tackle and techniques which minimize harm to fish when engaging in catch-and-release angling.

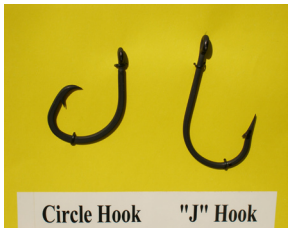
NOAA Fisheries Service

Partnerships & Communication Division

http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov

Art work © 2000 Ray Troll & Terry Pyles

Ethical Angling



Circle hooks reduce gut hooking and hooking mortality by increasing mouth hooks.

An ethical angler pays attention to restrictions on fish sizes, fishing seasons and other reasons for releasing a fish. Catch-and-release methods vary depending on fish species, water depth, and other factors. To help a fish survive, plan your release in advance by having appropriate release tools (dehooker, long-nose pliers, fish decender, etc.). Circle and barbless hooks help reduce injury to fish and landing it quickly will minimize exhaustion. The fish should be kept in the water if possible during hook removal. The less a fish is handled and the quicker it is released, the better chance it will have for survival.

Ethical anglers minimize the hooking of seabirds and treat hooked birds with care to avoid injury to the angler and the bird. Anglers also recognize that cutting or breaking the line may result in entanglement and starvation of the bird and therefore remove all hooks and line prior to release.

Ethical anglers should never harm marine mammals even when they attempt to steal anglers' bait or catch. The law allows people to deter marine mammals to avoid damage to private property, including gear and catch, so long as the deterrence is safe and marine mammals are not killed or seriously injured. NOAA Fisheries Service has identified some deterrent techniques on its website that may be used to deter problem seals and sea lions, these include firecrackers, horns, whistles, and sling shots.

Finally, an ethical angler knows that part of the angling experience is to be in tune with nature - this means treating all wildlife with care and respect. Feeding wildlife may harm an animal, be illegal and could change the animal's behavior.

Get Copies of the Ethical Angler Code

Copies of the code are provided on the NOAA Fisheries Service website under Recreational Fisheries.

http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov