

**Reduce
Catch and Release
Mortality –**

Use Circle Hooks!

- Physical injury and stress increases the chance of mortality for a fish that has been caught and released.
- By using circle hooks, the fish is more likely to be hooked in the mouth rather than a vital organ. This reduces the amount of physical injury and increases its chance of survival.



**How Circle
Hooks Work:**

The point on a circle hook is turned inward, forcing it to hook on an exposed edge (the lip or corner of the jaw). In contrast, the point of a J hook is not turned in, allowing for hooking in the stomach, throat and other vital organs.

“Circle hooks help promote the conservation of recreational fisheries. Please try them!”

– *Tom Fote*
Jersey Coast Anglers Association

– *Dr. Michael P. Weinstein*
New Jersey Marine Sciences Consortium



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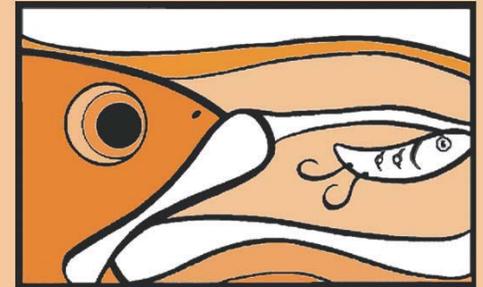
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**CATCH
&
RELEASE**



**A Guide to
Ethical Angling**

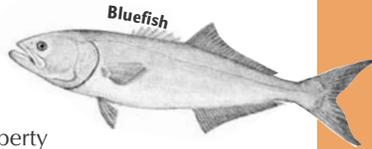


Why Ethical Angling?

The idea of ethical fishing practices originated in response to stricter fishing regulations and concern over reduced fish stocks in recent years.

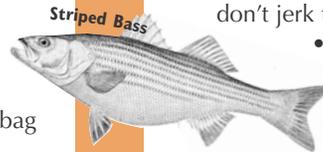
ADVOCATES OF ETHICAL ANGLING:

- know and abide by fishing regulations; encourage the protection of fish stocks and their habitat;
- emphasize fish conservation and environmental stewardship;
- respect private property and the rights of all recreational users of natural resources;
- help manage fish stocks for future generations; and,
- promote the use of catch and release as a way to enhance saltwater fisheries.



Why Catch and Release?

- Done promptly and properly, and with the right equipment, fish sustain minimal injury and stress – and swim away for another day and another fish story.
- Regulations dictate season, size and daily bag limits for nearly all species. The fish don't know the rules, and even the most experienced angler can't predict or control what will "take the bait."
- Several sport fishing tournaments use innovative weight estimates to verify their catches without bringing the fish to the docks.



What Species are Good Candidates?

Sport fishing groups promote catch and release for species such as striped bass, bluefish, summer flounder and weakfish. Catch and release methods work with other species too, including tuna, king mackerel and wahoo.

Catch and Release Practices

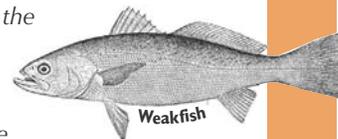
The responsible use of proper catch and release methods helps enhance recreational saltwater fisheries:

- Know and abide by the rules for season, size and daily bag limits for recreational fish species: NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife <http://njregsfishandwildlife.com/njregs.htm>
- Match your gear to the size of the fish. The harder and longer a fish fights, the less chance it has to survive after being released.
- Use circle hooks. Studies show fish are less likely to swallow circle hooks than the traditional J hooks. The circle hook sets in the jaw, not the gut.

Follow these Catch and Release Techniques

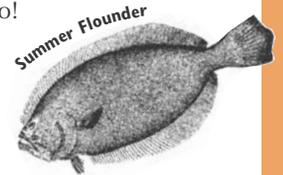
- Once the fish takes the bait with a circle hook, don't jerk the line to set the hook.
 - Circle hooks will slide into the corner of the fish's mouth as it swims away.
 - Point the rod at the fish and reel the line in tightly.
 - Scoop up the fish with a coated landing net to minimize handling.
- Keep the fish immersed in water while gently removing the hook. Use dehooking tools to help reduce stress.
- Keep hands away from the gills.
- Use wet gloves; cradle the fish under its belly and swirl it gently in the water to restore breathing.
- Release the fish to be caught another day.

If the hook is difficult to remove, cut leaders close to the mouth. Release the fish with the hook still embedded. Hooks made of metals other than stainless steel will deteriorate and fall away in time.



Benefits of Catch and Release

- Reduces recreational fishing pressure on stocks;
- Gives undersized or immature fish a second chance to reach sexual maturity;
- Ensures that sexually mature fish will have opportunities to spawn;
- Makes a difference in the conservation and management of fish populations;
- Preserves fish for the future by "limiting kill" instead of "killing the limit;"
- Provides a good conservation model for children;
- Expands economic horizon for charter fishing by targeting catch and release anglers in addition to "subsistence fishers;"
- Extends the fun of each fishing trip beyond the legal "take" limit; and
- It's the right thing to do!



The Next Step: Catch-Tag-Release

Catch-tag-release programs are important for marine fish conservation:

- Gives recreational anglers a chance to contribute to scientific understanding of fisheries stocks;
- Documents growth, longevity, movement and migration patterns of fish;
- Identifies species' dependency on critical habitats or water areas;
- Documents post-release survival of fish;
- Contributes to fisheries management strategies; and
- Gives recognition to model ethical anglers.

For information on volunteer fish tagging programs: Cooperative Tagging Website
<http://fwie.fw.vt.edu/tagging/>