CATCH & RELEASE WORKS

Catch and release is a valuable tool in protecting important fisheries resources worldwide from excessive harvest.

PHOTO TIPS

» Have both camera and photographer ready to take the picture before the fish is handled.

» Wet your hands before holding the fish.

» Hold the 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.

DOCUMENTED FISH SURVIVAL SUPPORTS CATCH & RELEASE

The above chart of survival rates reflects handling by anglers involved in scientific studies. Chart courtesy of Virginia Sea Grant.

“A GOOD GAME FISH IS TOO VALUABLE A RESOURCE TO BE CAUGHT ONLY ONCE.”

— FFI FOUNDER, LEE WULFF

TIPS FOR SALTMWATER CATCH & RELEASE
GEAR

» Use gear and line strong enough to bring fish in quickly.
» Use flies. Fish caught on flies are more likely to survive than fish caught with bait.
» Consider using circle hooks. The number of fish killed as a result of being deeply hooked is greatly reduced.
» 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.

REMOVING THE HOOK

» Use long nosed pliers to back the hook out of its entrance hole.
» If possible, remove the hook quickly and gently while keeping the fish in the water.
» When a fish is hooked deeply, cut the line near the hook.

HANDLING YOUR CATCH

» Minimize the time the fish is out of water.
» Keep fingers away from gills and eyes.
» Wet your hands before handling the fish.
» Never squeeze the fish; vital organs may be injured.
» Measure and photograph the fish while it is in the water.
» Never toss a fish back into the water. Gently support the fish in the water until it swims from your hands.

REVIVING YOUR CATCH

» If the fish appears lethargic, you may need to revive it.
» Move the fish gently back and forth underwater until it swims free.
» Revive a large fish by supporting it in the water and slowly idling the boat forward, forcing water over the gills until the fish recovers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT FLYFISHERSINTERNATIONAL.ORG

DID YOU KNOW?

» 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 a wet cloth or wearing a wet glove helps grip the fish and reduces injury from movement.
» Keeping the fish in the water greatly increases its survival chances.