

Lloyd's Flyfishing Society

Catch and Release Guidelines



On an increasing number of fishing waters catch and release is being encouraged. Without the limitation of a bag limit there is a tendency for anglers to catch more fish in the course of their fishing day.

The Society received a complaint from the owner of one of its fisheries concerning a Member's entry in the catch book showing an excessive number of fish caught and released, which subsequently upset the anglers fishing the water on the following days.

It is essential that all Members whilst fishing Society waters show consideration not only for other anglers present but also for those to follow. In practicing catch and release you are asked to pace yourself through the day and after catching several fish to devote your efforts to the more challenging fish or angling methods to avoid excessive catch totals being entered in the catch book.

Some fisheries limit the number of fish that can be caught and released whilst others fisheries operate on a strictly catch and kill basis. It is therefore essential that you and your guest(s) are fully conversant with the Rules of the fishery you are going to and abide by those rules whilst there.

When practicing catch and release,

Only use barbless hooks, (it is a simple matter to crush the barbs flat on flies with fishing pliers).

Anglers must use sufficiently heavy tackle so that the fish can be landed quickly without it becoming exhausted.

Anglers must be careful to minimize their handling of the fish as removing the protective slime and/or scales increases the likelihood of infection and reduces the fish's chance of survival.

Netting the fish should be avoided. However, if netting the fish is unavoidable, a cotton mesh or rubber net should be used, (they are less abrasive than plastic-based material and the use of knotted nets is now illegal).

How to release fish to increase chances of survival:

1. Leave the fish in the water if possible. Do not handle it.
2. Use a hook remover (forceps, Orvis Ketchum Release or equivalent).
3. Do not put fingers in the eyes or gills of the fish.
4. If handling is necessary, wet your hands first and get the fish back into the water as quickly as possible.

5. Do not squeeze the fish (this can cause it internal damage).
6. Hold the fish lightly, facing upstream, allowing the water to flow over its gills. Rock the fish gently backwards and forwards. When the fish has recovered it will swim away. If a fish is bleeding badly, has swallowed the hook or is exhausted beyond recovery, it must be killed as quickly as possible.