

## HOW TO PRACTICE CONSERVATION

Return trophies and larger fish to the lake so they can spawn again. A simple rule of understanding the need to return trophies is this:

"The larger the fish, the greater the amount of spawn."

"The larger the fish, the more likely its genes will produce other trophy fish."

"Female fish choose strong males to be their spawning partner. Stronger, larger female fish often pair with larger stronger males." (Sound familiar?)

Please handle fish to be released with care to insure their survival. Handling fish properly will insure that a released fish will survive to spawn and be caught again. Wet your hands before touching a fish. Lift a fish carefully and lift it horizontally giving support along the length of the fish with two hands. Don't place your fingers in the gills of your fish. Don't lift your fish by its eyes or touch its eyes. Fish placed on a stringer in the water cannot be released, as they are unlikely to survive.

A fish lifted for a picture will likely attempt to jump from your grasp. When lifting a fish use both hands, lift horizontally and over the water. Fish that jump from your hands and fall into the bottom of your boat instead of falling in the water are unlikely to survive for long if released. The protective slime that covers a fish protects it from infection. When slime is removed by rough handling, or from a fall, or from dry hands, the fish is unlikely to survive if released even though it looks healthy and is able to swim away with vigour.

When a fish is caught, limit the time you play the fish. Exhausting your fish before netting it will mean that it is less likely to survive if released. A released fish needs to have some strength left to survive. It must have enough energy to re-oxygenate its own blood. An exhausted fish may swim away only to die a few minutes later, out of sight and out of mind. The longer you keep a fish out of water, the more strength it needs to re-oxygenate its blood when released. You can't go without oxygen for a minute or longer and neither can a fish! Limit the time you keep a fish out of water to a minute or less to insure its safety. Leaving a fish out of the water to expire by suffocation is not humane.

Some day your photographs are going to tell other fisherman how conscientious you are -- or are not! In the excitement we forget to take care. Practice conscientious fish handling rules when taking photographs.