



TAKE ME FISHING™

Respecting the Resource

Good anglers respect our country's water resources. These resources need to be protected so others can enjoy them. Follow these guidelines to do your part and communicate them to other anglers and boaters.

- **Never Litter.**
- **Never Waste Fish.**
- **Know and Follow Fishing Regulations.**
- **Report Violators.**
- **Protect the Area Around the Waters.**
- **Continually Seek New Knowledge and Skills.**
- **Share Your Knowledge.**
- **Participate in Resource-Enhancement Projects.**

Never Litter.

Never leave any litter behind. If you walk to a fishing spot, carry out everything you carry in. This includes: food wrappers, old fishing line, bait holders, empty cans or bottles and plastic bags. Pick up litter left behind by others, too. It is easy to carry a small paper bag for this purpose. If you are fishing from a boat, be sure your litter is put into a closed container so it can't blow out of the boat.

If we all do these things our lakes and streams will be much cleaner.

Sinking empty soda cans or bottles is worse than leaving them on shore. You are littering the bottom of the lake. Carry empty containers when you leave your fishing spot and recycle them.

Never Waste Fish.

Good anglers know that fish are food and should never be wasted. Never keep more fish than you can use. If you catch a fish that's too small to eat or one that's under the legal or minimum size, it should be released quickly and carefully.

Releasing a fish and watching it swim away unharmed is a wonderful feeling. If you want to show your fish to others, take a picture before releasing it. The picture will bring you many fond memories and the fish can bring enjoyment to another angler. **Learn more about properly catching and releasing fish.**

Today, some species of fish exist in limited numbers. More and more anglers know this and participate in "catch and release" fishing. Now, many anglers take only what they need for food and release the rest unharmed. This makes it possible for other anglers to enjoy catching them again.

Some fish take longer to become adults and may not spawn (lay their eggs) until they are three to seven years old. Then, they spawn only once a year. You should release many of these fish. They include bass, lake trout, muskellunge, northern pike, sturgeon, walleye, and most large game fish. Catching and then releasing these species is a good practice.

Other fish species mature earlier and spawn more than once a year. For example, bluegill and many other panfish spawn when they are two to three years old.



Until recently, few anglers realized that the populations of certain gamefish in the large oceans could become threatened. However, to increase fish populations, fish hatcheries are raising and stocking fish in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and the Gulf of Mexico. Today, redfish, snook, seatrout, striped bass, and other saltwater fish are being raised for stocking.

Know And Follow Fishing Regulations.

Fishing laws are meant to protect the resource and make sure there is fishing to be shared by everyone. If you fish, it's important that you know the rules and regulations. Ignorance of the law is no excuse. Fishing is a wonderful privilege; obeying fishing regulations is the responsibility that goes with it.

If there are fishing seasons, you must know them. Seasons protect fish during spawning and limit the catch on heavily fished waters. Limits on the number of fish that can be caught are meant to keep anglers from taking too many fish at one time. This makes it possible for more people to share the resource.

Learn about your state's fishing regulations.

Report Violators.

Anglers also have a responsibility to help state agencies protect our natural resources. Today, many states have a special telephone number so individuals can report those who violate fish and game laws.

Protect The Area Around The Waters.

Never destroy the beauty of an area. Do not spray paint or carve words on rocks or trees. Do not drive through streams and riparian areas. Leave wildflowers and other plants growing in the wild. Do not destroy or pick them.

Continually Seek New Knowledge and Skills.

A good angler is always trying to learn more...increasing fishing skills, learning more about the behavior of fish, and learning more about the harmful things people do to the resource. In this way, you can become part of the solution-not part of the problem. You don't have to know it all now; you will learn something each trip.

Share Your Knowledge.

Good anglers share their knowledge with others and introduce their friends to the sport of fishing and the benefits of protecting the environment. **Have you taken the Anglers' Legacy pledge?**



Participate in Resource-Enhancement Projects.

A good angler gets involved in projects to enhance the resource. Some students do it as a class project. Others join or form clubs whose members will work on projects such as improving a stretch of water on a stream, building fish structure in lakes, or just cleaning up the bank around a lake, stream, or river.

