



## *CATCH & RELEASE FISHING TIPS FROM LOKI NETS*

There isn't a sport fisherman alive who doesn't get a thrill from hooking a powerful gamefish, fighting him on sporting tackle and — if good fortune is on his side — landing the fish. Today, more and more anglers are increasing this thrill through one final, generous act — watching their hard-earned trophy swim away, to live and fight another day.

Catch and release fishing is spreading across the country and growing in popularity in streams, rivers, lakes, bays and the open ocean. Anglers are realizing that to preserve the sport they love for future generations they must limit their take — not take their limit — on every trip. And specially managed “trophy fish” waters have proven the long-term effectiveness of quickly landing, unhooking and releasing fish in healthy condition.

American manufacturer Loki Nets has built a reputation on products designed with one purpose in mind — helping anglers catch more fish and release them safely. The experts at Loki Nets offer the following advice for anglers who want to become better fishermen and better stewards of our resource:

**Avoid “Buck Fever”** — Anglers can get nervous when a big trophy comes into view, and nervous anglers make mistakes. Take a deep breath and keep your mind on what you have to do. If you have a partner doing the netting, communicate with each other as the fish gets close.

**Easy Does It** — Big fish often make a frantic run right at the end, and after a long fight your connection to the fish is at its most tenuous. The hook may have worked loose, or your line could have nicks or abrasions. With only a few feet of line between you and the fish, weak links will be magnified. Keep your rod high and be prepared to lower the rod to absorb the force of any last-ditch efforts. Anglers who get impatient often see their line — and their hearts — broken right next to the boat.

**Remove Hazards** — Fish are very good at finding things in the water to cause you trouble. On a boat, remove other lines, stringers, dangling oars and other obstacles. Also, keep the net out of the water until you're ready to slide it under the fish. This way, fish can't be spooked by the net and can't rub your line across the bow or the handle.

**Wait Until He's Ready** — Wait until the fish is tired (usually indicated when he's swimming on his side). Don't "flail" at a fish that's still hot. Lead the fish into the net headfirst — so he can't swim out of the net. When drift fishing in a strong river, however, net tail first — so the current will push the fish into the net — not out — if the hook comes out or the line breaks at the last moment. When the time is right, don't hesitate — be decisive.

**Leave Fish in the Net** — The best way to handle a fish with minimal damage is to leave it in the net, preferably in the water. With Loki Nets' knotless, Tangle-Less™ netting, special Catch & Release nets cradle and support the fish during unhooking. Use a forceps or other device to remove the hooks on artificial lures and flies.

**Act Quickly** — Don't dally when unhooking a fish for release. Barbless hooks on your artificial lures will make removing the hooks much easier (and are required on many catch-and-release waters). It is not generally recommended to release fish caught on bait (unless the hook is clearly visible such as when circle hooks are used). If the fish is bleeding or showing signs of serious injury, it should be kept if legal and permitted.

**Handle With Care** — Handle fish as little as possible. Contact with human skin removes a fish's protective slime coat, causing infections. Likewise, flopping around on the bottom of a boat or on the ground can injure fish. If you must touch a fish, wet your hands first and try to keep contact to a minimum. If you want to take a quick photo, lift the fish from the net by the lower jaw (using a glove if needed) while supporting the body with your other hand. Never stick your fingers under a fish's gill plate or grab it with a towel if you plan to let it go.

**Gently Revive** — Support the fish's body in the water until it feels strong enough to swim away on its own power. Gently moving the fish fore and aft helps revive it by moving oxygenated water across its gills. When it feels ready to swim, gently guide it from the net or from your cradled grip.