



# KEEPEMWET FISHING

*Keepemwet Fishing is about releasing fish in the best condition possible. We believe that recreational anglers are a key component of fish conservation, and that science-based approaches can help create healthier fisheries.*

## Keepemwet® Principles

We have distilled the principles for best practices down to three short phrases that can help anglers remember what to do. Our principles encompass the actions that can create the best outcomes for fish that are caught-and-released.

### 1. Minimize Air Exposure

Fish need oxygen just like us, but they get it from the water not air. Air exposure is more detrimental to bigger fish and at higher water temperatures.

- Ideally, keep fish in the water.
- If you take fish out of the water, try one of these tricks to keep the time short. Hold your breath when you take the fish out of the water; when you need to breathe the fish probably does too.
- Don't drip-dry fish; photos of fish out of the water should be dripping profusely.
- Photograph fish in the water or over the water and dripping wet.

### 2. Eliminate contact with dry and hard surfaces

Fish need their slime the same way we need our skin. Dry, rough, and hard surfaces remove the slime from fish and can also remove scales and damage fins.

- If you use a net make sure it has a soft, rubber bag.
- Hold fish with two clean, wet hands, and don't squeeze or hug.

### 3. Reduce handling time

Handling = time from landing to release, including how the fish is restrained (i.e. in your hands or a net).

Multiple studies have shown that longer handling times can lead to poorer outcomes after release.

- Use barbless hooks.
- If a fish is deeply hooked, cut the line instead of trying to remove the hook.
- Carry a hook removal device. Pliers, hemostats, etc.
- Only revive fish that cannot swim away on their own.

Keepemwet® Principles and Tips only apply to fish that are released.

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