



Ethical Angling

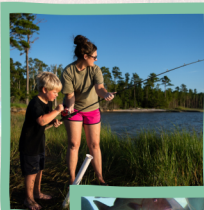
Ethical angling is the responsibility of all anglers! The North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF) encourages anglers to get out and enjoy the beautiful North Carolina coast while practicing ethical angling.



What is ethical angling?

Angling practices that reduce unintentional death of fish not harvested. It is also having a mindset for respecting the fisheries, natural environment, and fellow anglers to ensure conservation of fishing for future generations.

Even if a fish swims away, impacts associated with catch-and-release can extend hours after the initial hooking event and out of sight of the angler.



Does it make a difference?

Yes! The actions of every angler makes a difference. Millions of fishing trips are taken each year by recreational anglers in North Carolina. Improving the survival of even one fish per trip can result in hundreds of thousands of fish remaining to reproduce and live to be caught another day.



Know before you go

- Purchase an NC Saltwater fishing license.
- Understand your target species of fish. Know where, when, and how to fish for your target species.
- Download the Fish Rules application to your smart phone for updated fishing regulations in your area.
- Avoid targeting fish when they are spawning, during extreme weather events, or when the water is extremely warm and depleted of oxygen or extremely cold when fish are susceptible to cold stuns.



Preparing your gear

- Match your gear size to the fish you are targeting.
- Use barbless or compressed barb circle hooks.
- Modify hard plastics with multiple hooks to single hooks.
- Use knotless rubber nets to land fish.
- Have dehooking devices and descending devices out, rigged, and ready for use.



Handling your fish

- If you don't know, let it go!
- Leave fish in the water when possible.
- Wet your hands before handling.
- Avoid contact with dry, hot, or rough surfaces.
- Do NOT hang fish from lip grips or weigh scales.
- Do not hold fish by their gills or operculum.
- Let fish go quickly, minimizing handling.
- Support, move, and release fish horizontally.
- Revive fish that do not swim away by swimming them in a forward motion.



Scan to learn more!

Practicing conservation

- Harvest only what you will consume or use.
- Practice catch-and-release.
- Do not transport live fish. Release fish where they were landed.
- Avoid high-grading or harvesting only the most mature and largest fish within limits.
- Share your catch and trip information with Marine Fisheries staff if asked.
- Report your tagged fish or donate your filleted carcasses to Marine Fisheries for fisheries research.
- Remove all trash and avoid disposing of trash, litter, or pollution into or near the water.