



Fish Handling And Photo Taking Etiquette

Ever thought about how we should handle the fish we catch, or have been struggling to capture that once in a life time moment for posterity? Bradford City Angling Association Fly Fishing committee has some pointers and suggestions below.

Now that we have an over-arching Catch and Release policy, the way that we handle fish, in order to protect our wild fish population, should be at the forefront of our minds at all times while we are fishing. The great thing about fly fishing is that we have a better chance of releasing the fish without too much damage so our fish handling and photo taking techniques should follow some golden rules.

Remember **two important things** when handling fish:

- Keep them wet at all times
- Minimise the amount of time that a fish is out of water - **10 seconds** should be the maximum time that a fish is in air.

Catch and Release fish handling tips (see www.keepemwet.com)

The **7 things to consider** are:

1. **Always net your fish** – our rules state you must carry a net at all times. Nets help land fish quicker and in deeper water. Nets also help reduce handling by allowing you to keep fish in the water while unhooking, reviving, and photographing them. Change your net to a rubberised net as opposed to knotted and mesh nets - rubber nets are less abrasive and will not get caught in a fish's gills. Plus, hooks don't snag as much on rubber nets, and they look great in photographs
2. **Bring the fish to the net as quickly as you can.** Try not to play it to exhaustion. You can do this by making sure that your tippet material is not too light, so you can bring the fish to hand quickly.
3. **Always have 'catch and release' at the front of your mind.** Keep the fish's condition paramount; we want each and every one to survive so that it can live to fight another day, and hopefully go on to reproduce.
4. **Use barbless hooks at all times.** Our rules state that you should be using barbless or de-barbed hooks at all times. The former is preferred. Barbless hooks cause less damage to a fish's mouth, but they are also much easier and quicker to remove.
5. **Keep the fish over water at all times – and preferably low to the water, too.** This minimises the risk of the fish touching the bank or other abrasive / dry materials and if it slips out of the net or your hands it will go straight back into the water with minimal damage to its skin.
6. **Hold your fish carefully.** Fish have sensitive internal organs, so hold them lightly without gripping / squeezing. Avoid placing your hand over their mouth and gills as it obstructs breathing. With larger fish, encircle the 'wrist' just in front of the tail and gently support the body under the front (pectoral) fins. If the body is draping over a hand, it is likely there will be pressure on the internal organs; and conversely if it is sagging, then there may be undue pressure on the spine.
7. **Release the fish with care.** If a fish cannot swim away on its own immediately, it may need help reviving. This can be done in a river by submerging the fish and holding its head facing upstream so that the water runs in the mouth and through the gills. In still-water situations, move the fish in a figure-8 pattern (always forward) to simulate this effect. Don't confuse strongly swimming away with a 'flight response' so keep an eye out for your fish if it took a little longer than usual to revive.



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How do you want to remember that fish?

Some people take length & weight measurements and take pictures; others may take one or two of these, and for some, the memory is sufficient. It really is a personal choice.

On our Gargrave beat, we have asked members for catch returns based upon length because it is relatively simple, and we have data which will allow us to estimate the age structure, and also give us a relatively accurate estimate of weight too, derived specifically from Aire fish data.

Measuring length

Whatever you use as a gauge (a stick-on rod scale, whipping marks every 1", a draper's tape measure, marks on the landing net, etc) please measure your fish quickly and preferably without taking the fish out of water unnecessarily. You can always photograph the fish against the measure to record that special fish.

If you do not have a spring or digital balance, you can estimate its weight based on length and condition using the data derived from the Wild Trout Trust; see tables for length to weight conversion for trout and grayling of different 'condition' at the end of this document.

Capturing that memory of a special fish

Irrespective of how the photo is taken, it is best to make sure your fish has recovered from being caught. To do this, let the fish rest in your net but fully submerged in water. It is important that your net is deep enough to allow you to do this. Don't be caught out with a shallow net and a large fish - it doesn't work well! Also, not every fish needs to be photographed and those that are not special should be safely released, quickly.

Please do not take the fish out of the water and lay it on the bank or even on the bank in your net. This will reduce the ability of the fish to recover and possibly survive.

While your fish is recovering in the net in the water, take the time to prepare for your photo. **Remember the 10 second rule and try not to break it.**

Taking a photo for a friend

Get your friend to prepare for the photo. As long as the fish is in water there is no rush. You do not need to "grip" the fish as this damages internal tissue and organs and the fish will die. Try and use two hands if possible with one hand cradling the head and pectoral fins, and the other hand under the fish just in front of the tail – keeping the fish in the water until you are ready.

When ready, gently lift the fish out of the water for that magic photo. Be quick about it and then either release the fish into water that is sufficient for it to swim away or back into the net ready for release.



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Solo photo taking

The same applies for handling the fish, as above. Get prepared.

1. *Using a timer and tripod and camera*

A good inexpensive waterproof camera will give you a better picture than a mobile phone and can be used with a mini tripod.

While the fish is in your net AND in the water, get your camera out and set it up on the tripod. Practice will tell you how far away it needs to be. Get used to using the timer so that you can follow the same approach as above.

If you have a back-pack then the camera could already be attached to the tripod with the timer set. You only need to position it and turn the camera on ready for that special shot.

2. *Taking a 'selfie' while holding the fish and the camera*

While the fish is recovering in the net, get your camera or mobile phone out.

As long as you follow the guidelines above your fish will be okay.

Once you have the camera ready, gently cradle the fish with your other hand as far forward towards the heads as possible and preferably with some of the fish still supported in the water, above the net.

Once you have taken the photo, either release the fish immediately, or put it back into your net and water so that you can revive it further after you have put your mobile phone or camera aside.

Innovative photography

With careful handling of the fish you can take some very interesting shots:

- Take an underwater shot with the fish out of the net ready to be released. Have the net under the fish and in the picture for balance.
<http://www.uwphotographyguide.com/fish-photography>
- Point the head of the fish towards the camera. This accentuates the size of the head and gives an interesting perspective of the fish. Keep the fly in the fish to add to the photo. <http://www.grahamowengallery.com/fishing/Fishing.html>



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Trout Length to Weight Table (<http://www.wildtrout.org>)

Length (in/cm.)	Probable weight		
	Good Condition	Fair Condition	Poor Condition
8 / 20	5oz / .14kg	4oz / .11kg	2oz / .06kg
9 / 23	7oz / .20kg	5oz / .14kg	3oz / .09kg
10 / 25	9oz / .25kg	7oz / .20kg	5oz / .14kg
11 / 28	12oz / .34kg	9oz / .25kg	6oz / .17kg
12 / 30	1lb / .45kg	12oz / .34kg	8oz / .23kg
13 / 33	1lb 4oz / .57kg	15oz / .43kg	10oz / .28kg
14 / 35	1lb 10oz / .74kg	1lb 3oz / .53kg	13oz / .37kg
15 / 38	2lb / .91kg	1lb 8oz / .68kg	1lb / .45kg
16 / 41	2lb 6oz / 1.0	1lb 13oz / .82kg	1lb 3oz / .54kg
17 / 43	2lb 14oz / 1.3kg	2lb 3oz / 1.0kg	1lb 7oz / .65kg
18 / 46	3lb 7oz / 1.6kg	2lb 8oz / 1.13kg	1lb 11oz / .77kg
19 / 48	4lb / 1.8kg	3lb / 1.36kg	2lb / .90kg
20 / 51	4lb 11oz / 2.13kg	3lb 8oz / 1.59kg	2lb 5oz / 1.05kg
21 / 53	5lb 7oz / 2.47kg	4lb 1oz / 1.84kg	2lb 11oz / 1.22kg
22 / 56	6lb 4oz / 2.8kg	4lb 11oz / 2.13kg	3lb 2oz / 1.42kg
23 / 58	7lb 2oz / 3.23kg	5lb 5oz / 2.4kg	3lb 8oz / 1.59kg
24 / 61	8lb 1oz / 3.65kg	6lb 1oz / 2.75kg	4lb 1oz / 1.84kg
25 / 64	9lb 2oz / 4.13kg	6lb 14oz / 3.12kg	4lb 9oz / 2.1kg

Grayling Length to Weight Table

Length (in/cm)	Probable weight (good condition)
9 / 23	5oz / .14kg
10 / 25	6oz / .17kg
11 / 28	9oz / .25kg
12 / 30	11oz / .32kg
13 / 33	14oz / .40kg
14 / 35	1lb 1oz / .48kg
15 / 38	1lb 5oz / .60kg
16 / 41	1lb 10oz / .74kg
17 / 43	1lb 15oz / .88kg
18 / 46	2lb 5oz / 1.05kg
19 / 48	2lb 11oz / 1.22kg
20 / 51	3lb 2oz / 1.42kg
21 / 53	3lb 10oz / 1.65kg
22 / 56	4lb 2oz / 1.98kg
23 / 58	4lb 12oz / 2.15kg