



SMART

Angler's Notebook

by Carl Richardson

Put 'em Back **ALIVE!**

Many anglers today release trout and other fish they catch. Most anglers do it for conservation reasons, but there are times when regulations require that fish be released. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee a released fish will live. Studies suggest that of 100 caught and released trout, as few as one or as many as 50 or more won't survive. The number that does survive depends on several factors: The length of the fight, where the fish is hooked, water temperature, and how the fish is handled and released. The only one of these factors under the absolute control of the angler is the handling and release. Following correct technique for releasing fish improves the odds of that fish surviving.



A LANDING NET CAN HELP YOU LAND FISH QUICKLY. THE BEST NETS HAVE A SHALLOW BAG MADE OF FINE MESH. IF YOU MUST HANDLE FISH, WET YOUR HANDS FIRST. IT'S BEST FOR THE FISH IF YOU KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF.

PLAY FISH QUICKLY.

IMPORTANT ANYTIME, BUT ESPECIALLY WHEN WATERS WARM. WATER TEMPERATURES OF 70 DEGREES AND WARMER ARE ROUGH ON TROUT.

KEEP FISH IN WATER AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. BEING OUT OF THE WATER IS STRESSFUL FOR FISH.

If the fish is bleeding or there is damage to the gills or eyes, keep the fish for dinner—if regulations allow.

Holding the fish upright underwater, let it swim away under its own power. If necessary, hold the fish out of the current until it revives. Fish that don't recover in a couple of minutes won't. Keep them for the skillet—if regulations allow.

REMOVE HOOKS FROM THE MOUTH QUICKLY.

THIS IS MADE EASIER WITH HEMOSTATS OR LONGNOSE PLIERS. CUT THE LINE IF THE FISH IS HOOKED DEEPLY IN THE MOUTH OR THROAT. REMOVING HOOKS FROM DEEP IN THE MOUTH OR THROAT WILL INJURE FISH, AND TAKE VALUABLE TIME. BARBLESS HOOKS MAY BE EASIER TO GET OUT.

