

# handling YOUR CATCH

Releasing part of your catch has become synonymous with fisheries conservation. This practice has certainly benefited the sustainability of the resource but alone does not guarantee the future of angling. Knowing when and how to properly release fish will make this management tool much more effective. The following tips below will improve fish survival and reduce stress on fish.

- Match tackle to the fish you are trying to catch. Using light tackle often results in a longer time to land the fish thereby increasing stress levels and related mortality.
- Whenever possible, release the fish while it is still in the water by simply grasping the shank of the hook with pliers and reversing it.
- Never lift fish by the lower jaw or hold them in a vertical position. Hold fish horizontally with support on their underside.
- Use wet hands when handling fish. This reduces damage to the fish's protective coating.
- Do not squeeze a fish or touch the eyes or gills when handling it.
- When releasing a fish, place it gently into the water and hold it upright until it is revived.
- If a deeply hooked fish must be released, cut the line off as close as possible to the hook. When regulations allow, always keep badly injured or deeply hooked fish.