

# Fishing Code Of Ethics

*by: Denny Sands*

Recently on our "Fish Tails" message board at [www.shabbonalake.com](http://www.shabbonalake.com), we had a lengthy discussion about fishing ethics, or more specifically the lack thereof. This prompted me to ask the visitors to our web site to send in one sentence they would like to see added to a Fishing Code Of Ethics. The responses were fantastic.

Many of us were brought up in a generation where things were just understood. No one had to write a Code Of Ethics to tell us how to behave. We were taught from childhood through Boy Scouts, Religious Training or by Family Values to:

- 1.) Leave a place cleaner, then when you arrived,
- 2.) Do unto others only what you would like them to do unto you, and
- 3.) Think of others first, yourself second.

But times have changed. Families are not the same extended families that they used to be. Before, if your mom or dad could not get through to you, an uncle, aunt or grand parent would. Today many children do not see either parent for a very long time, because both are working to pay for everything we have in today's world. An aunt, an uncle, a grand parent or an extended family member is not around either.

Now this is not excusing behavior we are noticing out on our fishable waters, it is merely an observation.

Please, read what our site visitors had to say. Feel free to cut this out and make copies. Perhaps a lot of new anglers just do not know the "Rules Of The Water". If we all can get through to a few, then perhaps we will leave this fishing world a better place, then we arrived. We will have others do unto us, only good things. We will instill in people the desire to think of others first, themselves second.

Fishing Code Of Ethics :

1. Practice CPR (catch, photo and release), not CKR (catch, kill and release).
2. Take only what you need. This is called selective harvest. People should realize that just because it's legal, it doesn't have to go home. Keep no more fish than needed for consumption, never wastefully discard fish that are retained.
3. Think of the fish first. If you plan on not keeping the fish, give it time to recover, by gently holding the fish in the water, until it is able to swim away. Do not just toss it back into the water.

4. Respect those fishing around you.
5. The line starts in the parking lot, not at the bottom of the boat ramp.
6. Take a kid fishing !
7. Be nice or go home!
8. Please clean up after yourself. Dispose of all trash, including worn lines, leaders and hooks in appropriate containers. Keep fishing sites litter free. Litter can kill fish and wildlife that eat or get tangled up in the litter.
9. Cell phones and pagers are forbidden on the water.
10. If you can not be nice to your neighbors, don't go fishing on the weekends.
11. Avoid spilling, and never dump any pollutants, such as gasoline and oil, into the aquatic environment. Take all precautionary measures to prevent the spread of exotic plants and animals, including bait fish, into non-native habitats.
12. Respect property rights, and never trespass on private property.
13. Prepare your boat & trailer before you get on the boat ramp, so that you can launch quickly.
14. Do not keep undersize fish. Know the size & creel limits before you catch fish. Release some medium size fish, so they can grow larger and be caught in the future.
15. When fishing from a boat, honor the bank fisherman's area.
16. When you observe someone catch a fish, leave them alone. Find your own area.
17. When navigating a lake, try avoiding running your boat near an anchored or stationary boat.
18. Be observant of markers. Never run your boat between a marker and an anchored boat.
19. Never run your boat between an anchored boat and a nearby shoreline.
20. Use tackle & techniques that minimize harm to fish when engaging in catch & release angling.