



# SMART Angler's Notebook

by Carl Richardson

## Are You a SMART Angler?

Today's anglers have access to more information about their sport than ever before. We know more about the fish we are after and the places they live. We have at our disposal many different techniques and lures. In short, fishing today can be a complicated sport—if we let it! The letters in the word “SMART” should help you hone in on some basics.

### S

AFETY first.

- Wear your life jacket. *It floats—you don't.*
- Fishing on ice or cold water calls for extra caution. *Cold water kills!*
- If you fish from a boat, take a safe boating course.
- Watch those hooks!



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Good outdoor **M**ANNERS are important.

Anglers need to have good manners toward other people, especially other anglers and landowners. Conservation, or good manners toward the environment, is also important.

#### Good manners toward the environment include:

- Not littering or polluting—while on the stream or not!
- Picking up trash that you find.
- Using the resource wisely.
- Following regulations.
- Tread lightly, leaving only footprints.

#### Good manners toward others include:

- Asking permission from landowners to enter their land to fish.
- Respecting the landowner by not littering and closing gates behind you.
- Giving other anglers plenty of space to fish.



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### A

PPRECIATE clean water.

Without clean water, there are no fish. Learn all you can about the fish you are after and the places they live. This way you will become a better angler. You might also become a better conservationist! Do all you can to protect our water resources.



photo: Charles Meek

Keep only those fish you can eat. **R**ELLEASE the rest of your catch.

- Take care of your catch—whether you are keeping it or releasing it!

Remember that there is nothing wrong with keeping a few fish for a meal. Just don't fill the freezer only to have the fish go to waste. Take care of the fish for the skillet. Don't ruin a good meal because you neglected to take care of the fish.

- If you plan to release your catch:
  1. Land the fish quickly.
  2. Keep the fish in the water as much as possible.
  3. Handle the fish as little as possible.
  4. Quickly remove the hook(s).
  5. Return the fish to the water quickly.
  6. If necessary, revive the fish by gently moving it back and forth in the water.

### T

EACH others to be SMART anglers.



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The future of our sport is in our hands. We need the support of non-anglers and anglers if fishing is to remain a part of our culture. Young and new anglers need to learn these basic ideas. Why not take someone under your “fin” and teach them to be SMART anglers? 