



To briefly hold a fish before releasing it, follow this angler's example—hold the fish carefully with wet hands.

the fish with your hands to see what it does. If it struggles to keep itself upright, hold the fish around its tail and beneath its belly with its head facing upstream into the current. Move the fish gently back and forth toward and away from the current. You should notice the gills opening and closing due to the rush of water. This is like giving a fish mouth to mouth resuscitation. When the fish has recovered it should swim away on its own.

- ◆ For all native fish and any non-native fish you are intending to release, bring the fish in as quickly as possible. Do not play the fish to exhaustion.
- ◆ Unhook the fish in quiet water such as an eddy or slow spot. Do not drag the fish across land. Use a forceps or small needle-nosed pliers to quickly remove the hook.
- ◆ If you must handle the fish, always make sure your hands are wet. (Fish have a protective mucous film sensitive to dry human hands.)
- ◆ The best way to hold a fish (with wet hands) is one hand around the tail section and the other beneath the belly just behind the pectoral fins. Never grab or hold a fish through the gills unless it is already dead.
- ◆ If you want a photo of the fish, make sure the photographer is ready before you handle the fish. Make it quick.
- ◆ Never just throw a fish back into the water. If a fish becomes passive, it is probably close to exhaustion. Gently remove the hook within calm water, then lightly cradle
- ◆ Hooks and lures typically have barbs when purchased. With small pliers you must pinch down the barbs. Without barbs more skill is required in landing and bringing in fish but hook removal is easier and less traumatic to the fish and perhaps yourself.
- ◆ Spinning lures typically have three hooks called treble hooks. With wire cutters you can snip off one of the hooks or snap one off with pliers; you also must pinch down all the barbs. Two hooks are still effective and easier to remove and less traumatic.
- ◆ If the fish is deeply hooked, cut the line—do not pull out the hook. Most fish survive with hooks left in them.
- ◆ When filling out the Volunteer Angler Report (see at right), you can use your rod to quickly estimate the length of your fish. Just measure and mark (with tape or nail polish) various lengths on your rod. Remember, the less time the fish is handled out of the water the better chance it has of recovering.

Yellowstone Volunteer Flyfishing Program

Since 2002, anglers have been directly assisting Yellowstone's fisheries staff. Using catch-and-release angling to capture fish, they gather biological information on fish populations located throughout the park. Their projects have included:

- ◆ determining the range of hybridized Yellowstone cutthroat trout in the Lamar River and its major tributaries
- ◆ documenting the Pebble Creek and Beula Lake fisheries
- ◆ documenting the status and movement patterns of grayling originating in Grebe and Wolf lakes of the Gibbon River system
- ◆ documenting the status and genetic uniqueness of westslope cutthroat trout in Grayling Creek

Through this program, volunteer anglers experience many fisheries issues first hand, and their biological data increases understanding of the park's fisheries.

The Volunteer Angler Report—Your Chance to Contribute

Since 1973, anglers have been providing valuable fishery information to Yellowstone National Park managers by filling out the Volunteer Angler Report (VAR) card, which is issued with each fishing permit. Managers use this information to estimate angling pressure, landing and creel rates, sizes of fish landed, and angler satisfaction. For many park waters, these reports are the only data available. Help us manage your park's fisheries by completing and returning your VAR card, whether or not you actually fished or caught fish. To obtain a summary of the data, indicate so in the comment section and include your email or postal address.

- ◆ Use established trails and avoid sensitive wetland vegetation such as bogs and seeps. Heavy trail use in these areas causes erosion and loss of habitat essential to many of Yellowstone's wildlife.
- ◆ Anglers must stay on trails in thermal areas and must not cross these areas or approach thermal features.
- ◆ Avoid using the streambed as a pathway. Your footsteps can damage aquatic habitats and kill eggs and/or fry in the gravel.
- ◆ Do not overfish a good fishing area. Fish for a while, and then move on.
- ◆ Do not encroach on another angler's space and keep out of sight of other anglers, if possible.
- ◆ During late July and August, when water temperatures can be high, do most of your fishing early and late in the day. Allow fish to rest during the heat of the day.

Illegal Actions

- ◆ To possess a native cutthroat trout, or any other native fish.
- ◆ To bring into the park any live or dead bait (minnows, leeches, salamanders, etc), with one exception. (See page 6, section 4b.)
- ◆ To transport live fish within the park.
- ◆ To move water, sediment, fish, fish eggs, aquatic invertebrates, or plants from one water body to another.
- ◆ To use parts of trout or any other fish for bait.
- ◆ To put any substance in the water for the purpose of attracting fish (chumming).
- ◆ To leave a fishing line unattended.

If you witness a violation, please report it immediately to a law enforcement ranger, or call 307-344-7381 and press "zero" to immediately reach park dispatch.