

Hawg Hawlers Bass Club

January 2015



A HOOK from our President....

The Health and Welfare of our Fish

By: Greg Shands

As avid fisherman and women, we all must do our part to protect our resources for future generations to enjoy. A lot of the things we do every trip out on the water can either help or harm our fish and lakes. Things we don't think twice about could be doing real harm to the future of these resources. We all know not to throw a large birdnest of line over the side. But what about when you retie? That short piece of line you just let fall to the bottom of the boat will blow out and could become tangled around a duck's leg causing injury for the duck. Same with our fish. I think we all try very hard to make sure our livewells are working properly. If not you should be...it is a club rule. But what happens once you get back to weigh in? Remember, your fish have been stressed from the moment you set the hook. After a day of sitting in your livewell, they get a bumpy ride back to weigh in, you're going to place them in a crowded bag with not nearly enough water and stand in line to get them weighed. Then, there are pictures to be taken before the fish are returned back to the lake. So, what can we as individual anglers do to protect our fish so they can continue to live a happy life back in the lake?

First off, wash out your livewell at the start of the season and before and after each tournament. Make sure everything is working like it is supposed to. Don't handle the fish any more than you have to. Every fish has a protective coating on their skin and by handling them, you remove that slimy coating. At the least, make sure your hands are wet before you touch them. A wet rag is even better than a wet hand. Try to use your thumb and fore finger to lip the fish when you must handle them. Don't try to pull the hook out if the fish is hooked deep. Just cut the line. I would gladly give up a dollar hook to save a fish from dying. Remember, a dead fish carries a ¼ oz. penalty. If left in, a deeply hooked hook will dissolve over time and the fish will live.

Once the fish are in your livewell, be sure your aerators and/or recirculator pumps are on and functioning properly. If you only have aerators, change out the water before the second day of the tournament begins. If you like to add ice to your livewells, try and remember to use frozen bottles of water and not just ice. The reason is that the ice can have chemicals in it, which can be harmful to the fish. Plus, as the bottles begins to melt, you can drink them.

Use of chemicals for livewells: Like any other product out there, every company's stuff is the best. Regardless which brands you like or don't like, above all else, follow the directions on the use of it. Too much of a good thing can be just as harmful as nothing at all. I have investigated different views on these products and have found some surprising things but I will let you do your own investigating. Google and research chemicals for freshwater fish. Please take the time this winter to review these products before you use them.

Placing fish in your weigh in bag: Handle fish with care and be sure to have enough water in bag to provide enough oxygen for the time the fish will have to sit in your bag. **Starting this year, each Angler will have to have their own bag for their own fish (no more team fish in one bag, not even if they have floats).** Remember, we are trying to provide the fish with a healthier environment than in the past, and with that said, if your team had a double limit (10 fish) you couldn't carry enough water to safely sustain the fish. If you don't already have a weigh in bag and are going to buy one, I would recommend a black bag. This will help keep the fish calmer while you are waiting to weigh in. Make sure you get one with handles.



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While waiting in line: Don't bring your fish up if you see there is a long line; leave your fish in your livewell. Remember, once you get your number turned in, you have plenty of time to get your fish. Once you are in line, try to avoid setting your bags down on the hot asphalt. Black asphalt can reach temperatures of well over 100 degrees on a sunny summer's day. Be ready to present your fish when it's your turn to weigh in. Remember, there is no need for floats to be attached at this point. If you do have a fish you need to bump, use the courtesy board, and do it before you are at the weigh in table.

Side note: If you think a particular fish is going to be close to being legal or not, use the courtesy board. Have another member check the fish for you too. Don't have the member just look briefly, but have them actually measure the fish themselves and see if you both come to the same conclusion. Both the courtesy board and the official boards are the same. We have checked the boards for accuracy. If you do present a fish that doesn't measure on the official board, but did on the courtesy board, the weigh in officers will check it on the courtesy board. If they are still in question about the fish being legal, another officer will be brought in to help make the call. Remember, the penalty for a short fish is, loss of that fish from your creel, a 2 pound team penalty, plus a 3 point penalty for the angler. Please don't present a short fish. Check your own bump board every so often with a tape measure, if not for yourself, for the welfare of the fish's sake.

After weigh in, comes pictures. Again, try to lip each fish, avoid the whole handling thing as much as possible. Last but not least, get the fish back into the water as quickly as possible. Please don't stand and talk while fish are in your bag. Our goal is to get the fish back in the water as healthy and quickly as possible.

Club officers can only do so much to protect our fish and their future, the rest is up to you, the "Angler". Whether you are in a tournament or just out fishing, remember to always keep this treasured resource protected for future generations.

The officers gave up a lot of time during our winter meeting to discuss our opinions on this matter. These new recommendations are the results of our discussion. If you have more to add, feel free to forward those ideas to the officers. Remember, the use of water tanks is not a possibility with the way our club is formatted. So, please keep the fish's health in mind when you come to weigh in and avoid any more time the fish have to stay in the bag than is necessary.

Thanks,

Greg

PS. Next month we'll break it down a little farther and talk about our livewells.

Date	Time	Lake/Location	Special Event
March 21	9:00-3:00	Clearwater Lake / Piedmont Park	One Day Memorial Tourney
April 11/12	6:30-1:30 6:30-12:30	Lake of the Ozarks I / Red Oak Resort	Bonfire / Pitching Contest
April 25/26	6:00-2:00 6:00-12:00	Kentucky Lake / Moors Resort	MAKE RESERVATIONS NOW
May 16/17	6:00-2:00 6:00-12:00	Table Rock / Kings Cove Resort	BBQ
June 6/7	5:30-12:30 5:30-11:30	Pomme de Terre I / State Park / Indian Hills	Swap Meet / Pizza Party
July 11/12	6:00-12:00 6:00-12:00	Wappapello / Sundowner Marina Miller's Motor Lodge	Fish Fry
Aug 15/16	6:00-12:00 6:00-12:00	Mark Twain / U-Ramp / South Fork Resort	Ice Cream Social
Sept 12-13	7:00-2:00 7:00-1:00	Pomme de Terre II / Nemo Resort	Bonfire
Oct 10/11	7:00-2:00	Lake of the Ozarks II / Rock Harbor Resort	Chili Supper
Nov 1		Awards Banquet / Andre's on Telegraph Rd.	