



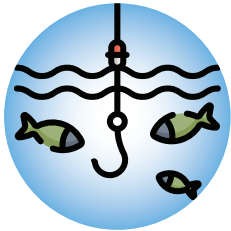
CHESAPEAKE BAY
FOUNDATION

Saving a National Treasure

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Safe Fish Handling

Approximately nine percent of bass released alive die, resulting in millions of dead fish each year. Do your part to increase survival rates by using best practices for catch and release.



Use the appropriate gear.

- Tackle should correspond to the anticipated weight of the fish so it can be landed quickly.
- Use single, barbless hooks or circle hooks whenever possible to reduce injuries to the fish.
- Landing nets should have small mesh made from soft, non-abrasive materials like rubber, and should be large enough so the fish does not bend.



Land the fish quickly.

- Fish that fight too long on the line can become exhausted, making them vulnerable to predators after release.



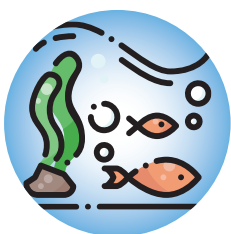
Eliminate or reduce the time the fish is out of the water.

- Fish should ideally remain in the water as they are unhooked and released. This is especially important when air temperature is much warmer than water temperature.



Handle fish carefully.

- Fish should be handled with wet hands to protect their skin.
- Hold fish horizontally by gripping the lower jaw and supporting the belly with the palm of the other hand. Holding fish vertically can displace or stress their internal organs and damage their gills.



Revive fish that are exhausted before releasing.

- Hold the fish headfirst into the current or direction of the seas in the swimming position.
- Gently move fish in a figure-eight pattern so water flows through the mouth and over the gills—always moving forward, not backward—until the fish can swim away on its own.