

Blue Fish Sustainable Ice Fishing Tips

1. USE ROD AND LINE SIZED APPROPRIATE FOR EACH FISH SPECIES

Using the right strength rod and line for each fish species ensures fish are captured without causing undue fatigue. Properly matched hook strength and size increases your hook-to-landing ratio and helps ensure fish go back healthy. The use of leaders when targeting toothy fish prevents their breaking off with your tackle in tow.

2. KEEP HOOK CUTTERS AND REMOVER HANDY

Needle-nose pliers and hook removers make hook removal efficient and safe by keeping hands away from the mouths of toothy fish and hook points. When hooks are difficult to remove, hook cutters can quickly and safely separate fish from lures.

3. AVOID REMOVAL OF FISH-PROTECTING SLIME

Bacteria found in fish slime serve as a protective coating. Make sure your hands are wet and hold fish away from clothing. Do not put fish you intend to return on dry ice or snow to avoid removing slime.

4. SUPPORT THE BELLIES OF LARGE FISH USING YOUR HANDS

Fish are anatomically designed to move through water with minimal resistance and live in a constant state of neutral buoyancy. They do not possess the stomach muscles required to support internal organs when out of the water and subjected to gravity.

5. MINIMIZE THE TIME FISH SPEND OUT OF WATER

Avoid subjecting fish to extreme cold or wind that can cause frostbite or damage to their eyes. Remove fish-hooks quickly and minimize the amount of time a fish will spend out of the water.

6. HARVEST FISH LOWER ON THE FOOD CHAIN

Alpha predator fish are similar to lions; they claim territory and live solitary lives. By targeting fish considered by apex predators as prey, you are harvesting fish that grow quicker and in greater numbers.

7. HARVEST FROM PUT-AND-TAKE FISHERIES AND SUPPORT FISH STOCK REBUILDING EFFORTS

Some ecosystems are routinely planted to ensure adequate supplies of adult fish for harvest. Other ecosystems may have experienced a significant decline, and efforts are underway to rebuild their stocks to self-sustaining levels. Put-and-take fisheries are intended for harvesting individual limits. Fish stocks at below sustainable levels should be treated as catch-and-release only.

8. HARVEST FISH SPECIES IN PLENTIFUL SUPPLY

Each unique ecosystem experiences yearly fluctuations in fish species abundance. Local anglers generally know which bodies of water are supporting an abundance of fish, and which fish species are at low numbers. Set harvesting goals by consulting local anglers familiar with the water you intend to fish.

9. LIMIT HARVESTS TO ONE MEAL OF FRESH FISH

Just because you can doesn't mean you should fill your daily fish harvesting limit each time you go fishing. Many regulations include maximum numbers of fish you possess including what's in your freezer. Frozen fish lose up to 30% of their flavor and can suffer freezer burn after six months. Fresh is always best!

10. EXERCISE RESTRAINT WHEN HARVESTING FISH NEAR URBAN CENTRES

Fishing locations situated near-by highly popular ice fishing locations experience higher fishing pressure than do more remote less-frequented locations. Not all fish harvesting regulations consider proximity to urban populations. Limit your harvest or practice catch-and-release when fishing popular waters.