



Ethical angling combines respecting our fisheries and natural environment, as well as our fellow anglers, to ensure quality fishing for future generations (*ethicalangler.com*).

Etiquette refers to the custom of exhibiting polite behavior in society or among members of a particular profession or group such as anglers.

Recreational anglers can follow certain guidelines to ensure that they are fishing and boating with proper etiquette to promote sportsmanship, respect, and environmentally conscious practices.



ANGLER ETHICS & ETIQUETTE

Reel Anglers Show Respect



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texasseagrant.org

All photos by Seth Patterson



RESPECT OTHER ANGLERS

Ethical anglers respect the rights of others to use the same areas, fish the same waters, and interact with the same resources. Others have just as much of a right to occupy public areas as you do.

Respect others by:

- Respecting other anglers' rights to utilize public waters, shorelines, piers, docks, and launch sites.
- Respecting the rights of non-anglers, such as boaters, birdwatchers, kayakers, hikers, and others, to use or interact with the same resources.
- Respecting private property and not trespassing over private lands to access a fishing spot.
- Assisting other anglers or boaters who need help if you are able to offer assistance.
- Being aware of other anglers' gear in the water.
- Not crowding fishing spots, disturbing others, or pushing anglers out of your way.
- Reducing your boat wake around waders and kayakers.
- Following safe boating practices to ensure your safety and others'.
- Not blocking boat ramps while loading or unloading.

RESPECT THE RESOURCE

All anglers can take some simple steps to help preserve fisheries for future generations while having a successful and enjoyable experience.

Respect natural resources by:

- Following all state and federal fishing and boating regulations. Consult apps like **Fish Rules** or **Outdoor Annual** to get familiar with regulations, including:
 - Purchasing a fishing license. See the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's website to buy your Texas fishing license.
 - Not exceeding legal bag and size limits.
 - Following all other fishing regulations for your area and season.
- Keeping only the fish that you intend to eat.
- Practicing catch and release fishing and properly handling fish while releasing them.
- Having and using proper tools to increase survivability of released fish.



RESPECT THE ENVIRONMENT

In addition to respecting fisheries resources, ethical anglers commit to maintaining and improving the natural environment surrounding them.

Respect the environment by:

- Never littering or leaving fishing line behind.
- Picking up any trash you see.
- Helping to maintain cleanliness at shorelines, boat ramps, marinas, and fish cleaning stations.
- Collecting only the amount of bait you need.
- Never releasing bait into the water, especially if you are using non-native bait species, to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.
 -  Never use any illegal non-native species for bait. For example, shrimp that are not native to the Gulf of Mexico, such as Pacific white shrimp, can introduce viruses to native Gulf shrimp, crayfish, and crab populations. **It is illegal to introduce imported/non-native shrimp to the aquatic environment in Texas, regardless of whether it is alive or dead, whole or in pieces.**
- Being respectful of wildlife, plants, and habitats.
- Avoiding anchoring on seagrass or reefs.
- Avoiding boating in shallow seagrass areas to prevent creating cuts in seagrass habitat.
- If using an airboat, avoid taking shortcuts over dry land or over sheet water with vegetation, and avoid running long distances along the shore.

EXPANDING AND SHARING YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Take your involvement to the next level by broadening your knowledge, training young anglers, and participating in fisheries management and cooperative research studies!

Expand your knowledge by:

- Being more knowledgeable about your sport.
- Becoming knowledgeable about your environment and its flora and fauna.
- Seeking to improve your angling skills.
- Getting involved with fisheries management to become more knowledgeable about how policy decisions and regulations are made. Consider attending meetings of local, state, and federal management agencies, such as Texas Parks and Wildlife Department or the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council.

Share your knowledge, expertise, and perspective by:

- Promoting ethical angling practices and good stewardship of natural resources.
- Briefing customers and guests on environmental principles, habitats, and wildlife you may see.
- Briefing customers and guests on fish handling practices.
- Helping to teach others, especially less experienced anglers and younger generations.
- Joining a local fishing association in your area.
- Participating in cooperative research and citizen science studies such as fish tagging projects, water quality monitoring, reporting your recreational catch using available apps or logbooks, or reporting sea turtle or marine mammal sightings.
- Participating in dockside interviews or surveys when requested by management agencies or researchers.
- Providing feedback to management agencies during public comment periods or at meetings, webinars, via social media, phone calls, or email.



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