



Choices

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Welcome to the Sexyloops Friday homepage where I've gone on record with some of my opinions on angling ethics expressed to Paul while fishing the river Ribnik in Bosnia this week.

Angling ethics should not be limited to just the sporting and social aspects of fishing. I believe we have the responsibility to shape fishery management policy by letting governmental agencies, fishing clubs and organizations know our needs and opinions. For example, anglers should have the right to ask for the protection and restoration of native species and using moderation where stocking is necessary.

Many inexperienced anglers have been introduced to trout fishing in "fishing preserves" containing oversized, overpopulated non-native species and accept it as the norm. The result of these misguided management practices can lead to a diseased, ruined fishery.

If anglers just fish for size and numbers, they will never appreciate the challenge and beauty of native fish. Trout Unlimited in the US, after years of cultivating members thrilled with big non-native browns and rainbows, has recently changed its policy regarding stocking. This organization which spends over \$20M USD annually, has ordered its chapters and councils to stop stocking non-native salmonids over viable native species habitat. This change was brought about by the ethical conscience of its leadership and sound fisheries science. Anglers also have a direct impact on angling quality.

Just because anglers develop expertise in catching large numbers of fish, it doesn't mean they always should. Fighting for survival stresses fish and can cause fish to lose weight and show signs of physical damage from hooks and nets. The less fish are hooked played and handled, the healthier they will be. If

you hook a nice trout in a popular stream and it just doesn't fight well, it's probably just surrendering because it's recently been caught. When Lee Wulff said, "A good gamefish is too valuable to be caught only once.", he didn't intend for it to be caught twice every day.

Although a minority, some anglers limit their catch and stop fishing when they know they've had enough and are perfectly satisfied. Sometimes it feels like an act of mercy. I know I can catch fish throughout the average day with subsurface fly presentations, but I choose not to stress and educate that many fish. Instead, I concentrate on surface activity, which I enjoy best, and take it easy on the fish. Conversely, if my passion was nymphing, I might go home long before the spinners fall. – John Field