

# LA PETITE MARTINIERE FISH HANDLING POLICY



With the potential of catching large carp during your stay, we ask that you are correctly prepared at all times to land and handle the fish. Again this may seem ‘obvious’ but on too many occasions now, I have had to intervene and help out with this aspect of the fishing. We all want nice photos for our albums but often, this takes far too long because of not being prepared for handling the fish quickly and safely once it has been landed. The rule here is that a fish should not be out of the water for more than a couple of minutes at a time. Following these guidelines and with the equipment provided, there should be no reason for us to have to worry about our precious stock!

If you are anything like me, the adrenaline still kicks in every time the alarm sounds. As soon as you feel the fish on the end, the excitement begins. ‘What is it? How big is it? Could it be a PB?’ That moment it breaks the surface and you get a glimpse of the prize... It still gives me a buzz. Now the goal is to get it in the net safely.



Whether alone or with help, as soon as the fish is safely in the net, the line must be slackened off to release any tension on the hook hold. An awful lot of mouth damage occurs when the fish is in the net.



Once the fish is safely netted and not under any tension, we ask that you quickly break off at your main line before trying to remove the fish from the water. In my experience, trying to unhook the fish or remove the hooklink from a quick change swivel, can still put undue pressure on the hook hold and cause damage. With spare leaders set up or fresh dry tubing ready to use, it doesn’t take long to set back up and you are here for a week so it doesn’t impact on the time rigs are in the water!

Now this is done, a weigh sling can be placed in the unhooking mat and both can be wetted with FRESH lake water. DO NOT use water that has been left in the bucket. If it is a very hot day, make sure the mat has been washed out with several buckets of fresh lake water to cool it. If necessary, now is the time to zero the scales with the sling wet.





When the fish has recovered in the net for a while, the landing net can be dismantled from the pole and rolled up to lift the fish to the unhooking mat. Care must be taken to ensure the fishes fins are safely tucked under its belly before lifting.

With the fish on the freshly wetted mat, the landing net can be unraveled and if the hook hasn't already come out, it can be removed. The net should be carefully removed from under the fish by sliding it out slowly, from the head to its tail. The hook hold must now be treated with Steri-7 antiseptic spray, along with any wounds or damage caused from playing the fish. The fish must be kept off its stomach as much as possible whilst in the cradle.



Most of our carp are now microchipped. To help us monitor growth and catch rates we ask if you can make a record of the serial number along with the weight (explained a bit later). A quick waft of the scanner over the left side of the fish close to its dorsal fin should find the chip serial number. The quickest way to record this is a photo (or it can be logged after the fish is released using the last number recall function on the scanner).

At this point the fish can be photographed (before being weighed). This reduces the time that the fish is out of the water as you are not doing-up and undoing the sling twice over. Please REMOVE all watches, bracelets or any sharp items of jewellery before handling fish. With the fish in the position shown (back facing you), slide one hand under its front for support just below its pectoral fins, and the other hand under the rear end, around its anal fin. Slowly lift the fish and if it starts to flap, lean over the mat and cradle it close to your chest until it calms down and can be held over the mat safely.



You WILL get WET at this point, but that's tough. If you don't want to get wet, don't fish!



Quickly take some photos. If you do want a video, then go for it but please be prepared in advance and make it quick. Too many times, I see videos on social media where the captor is giving out 'their life story' and has no regard for the fish, which is now actually starting to suffocate from a lack of oxygen that it can only get from being in the water!

Once the photos are done, carefully lower the fish back into the mat and gently pour some fresh lake water over it. Zip up the sling, taking care not to catch any fins, then place the tripod over the unhooking mat and carefully lift the sling on to the hook of the scales. DO NOT carry the fish over to a tripod, the tripod should be moved to the fish, and always over the air cradle.



At this point the fish should go back in the water. It can either be a straight forward release or if you would like to get in for a water shot, then the fish can go in the sling for a few minutes while you prepare. DO NOT leave the fish on the bank while you put on waders and get ready!



Lower the sling into the lake and carefully unzip the ends. Support the fish upright and hold it still until it recovers and you feel them start to move. DO NOT move the fish back and forward in the water. If they seem to be struggling to recover, then take a bucket of fresh water and pour it in front of the fish to help oxygenate the gills.



If you wish to weigh the fish prior to a making a SHORT video (so that the weight can be mentioned) then we ask that once the fish has been unhooked, sprayed and then weighed, it is put back in the water to recover for a few minutes before going back in the unhooking mat to get ready to be lifted.



If you do want to get in for a water shot, the air cradles turned upside down can be used as a flotation mat.



Reminders:

- The Steri-7 antiseptic provided must be used on all hook holds.
- Fish are not to be sacked unless it is for short recovery periods during photos.
- All fish that are lost due to a snap off **MUST** be reported.
- All fish caught that are over 35lb must be reported **IMMEDIATELY**.