

BLUEGILL SUNFISH

Tackle Requirements

Bluegill may be caught on light tackle, employing spin cast or fly rod applications. You need to have a minimum of 8# test line and insure that you line is fairly new. Old line will break and create backlashes, and otherwise could result in poor fishing results.

To fish for bluegill with live bait, rig your line one of two ways:

- 1.) Using a float – Attach (clip or slide on) a small bobber (cork), followed by a clip on weight (round weights that squeeze onto your line), followed by a very small hook. The weight should be at least 4-6" above the hook. It is usually to fish about 2 – 4' deep in the pond.
- 2.) Tightlining (not using a float) – Attach a (clip on weight as above) and hook only. Fish about 2-4' deep in the pond. Watch for movement in the line and when it gets tight you probably have a fish on the line.
- 3.) When fishing with artificials, you can simply attach your artificial lure to the End of your line. If you need to you can clip on a small weight in order to aid in casting your artificial lure.

Bait Requirements

Bluegill bite on live-bait such as worms (nightcrawlers), grasshoppers, crickets or other small insects. In addition, one can use one of the feed pellets (at least 3/8" in diameter) and put it on a small hook and the bluegill will bite this very effectively. They also strike on very small artificial lures such as floating poppers and small jigs.

Fish Handling

A bluegill has a tall dorsal (top fin) that will stick you if you are not careful how you are grabbing the fish. Wet your hand first. Grasp the fish only on the side of the body. Do not squeeze the fish real hard as this will hurt the fish and possibly kill it. Gently remove the "barbless hook" from the fish's mouth.

BLUE CATFISH

Tackle Requirements

Catfish may be caught on light tackle, but heavier tackle is better and highly recommended. You need to have a minimum of 12# test line and insure that you line is new. Catfish will break old line and result in lost fish and then the fish will die in the pond.

To fish for catfish with live bait, rig your line one of several ways:

- 1.) To fish with a float – Rig as follows (from bottom up). Tie a 1-0 or 2-0 catfish hook (single and not trebble) to one end of a monofilament leader. The monofilament leader material can be purchased at any sporting good store. The leader material needs to be at least 15# test and about 12 – 14” in length. Tie a very small swivel to the other end of the leader material. Now slide a 1/8 or ¼ oz. slip sinker (egg shaped barrel weight) onto your fishing line and then tie your fishing line onto the other end of the swivel. This allows the barrel sinker to rest on top of the swivel. Your cork should be positioned about 2-4’ above the barrel weight.
- 2.) Tightlining (not using a float) – When tightlining, you are actually fishing on the bottom. Rig as above and remove your cork. As the catfish takes the bait, the line slips through the barrel weight, the catfish does not sense the resistance of the line or tackle and takes the bait more easily. Watch for movement in the line and when it gets tight you probably have a fish on the line.

Bait Requirements

Catfish bite on live-bait such as worms (nightcrawlers), peeled shrimp, crawfish tails, liver, stink bait, etc. In addition, one can use one of the feed pellets (at least 3/8” in diameter) and put it on a small hook and the catfish will sometimes bit on this, but nearly as effective as the bluegill or hybrid stripers. Catfish do not bite on artificial lures very well.

Fish Handling

A catfish has very sharp dorsal (top fin) and side fins, that will stick you and hurt you if you are not careful how you are grabbing the fish. Wet your hand first. Slip your hand around the catfish head, gradually pushing the top fin down with the bottom side of your hand. Grasp the fish around the head and make sure you have a firm grip on this fish before attempting to remove the hook. Gently remove the “barbless hook” from the fish’s mouth.

Never try to hold this fish by grabbing it by it’s tail, stepping on the fish with your foot to pen it down, or by kicking at it with your foot. This is a sure way to get yourself hurt!

HYBRID STRIPED BASS

Tackle Requirements

Hybrid Stripers must be caught on heavier tackle, as they are very aggressive and hard fighting fish. You need to have a minimum of 12# test line and insure that you line is new. Hybrid Stripers will break old line and result in lost fish and then the fish will die in the pond.

To fish for hybrid stripers with live bait, rig your line one of several ways:

- 2.) To fish with a float – Rig as follows (from bottom up). Tie a 1-0 or 2-0 hook (single, not trebble!) to one end of a monofilament leader. The monofilament leader material can be purchased at any sporting good store. The leader material needs to be at least 15# test and about 12 – 14” in length. Tie a very small swivel to the other end of the leader material. Now slide a 1/8 or ¼ oz. slip sinker (egg shaped barrel weight) onto your fishing line and then tie your fishing line onto the other end of the swivel. This allows the barrel sinker to rest on top of the swivel. Your cork should be positioned about 2-4’ above the barrel weight.
- 3.) Tightlining (not using a float) – Use same technique as bluegill.
- 4.) Artificial Lures – Use same technique as bluegill.

Bait Requirements

Hybrid Stripers bite on live-bait such as worms (nightcrawlers), grasshoppers, crickets or other small insects. They will also bite any type of live minnow such as golden shiners or fathead minnows. In addition, one can use one of the feed pellets (at least 3/8” in diameter) and put it on a small hook and the hybrid stripers usually bite this very effectively. They also strike on very small artificial lures like small jigs and jerk baits. They do not strike top water baits very well.

Fish Handling

A hybrid striper is a very hard fish to handle effectively. Under all conditions, it is best to have your barb bent, and if going to “Catch and Release” the fish to fight the fish until it is tired, and then gently bring it up to the edge of the pond and grab the hook and remove the hook without touching the fish.

If you have to touch the fish, pay attention to these precautions: Exercise much caution when attempting to handle a hybrid striper. This fish has a very small mouth compared to the size of its body and is typically very hard to handle by the lips (as when handling a largemouth bass). The hybrid striper has a very sharp operculum (the area around the head), and it will cut your hand! In addition, the dorsal (top fin) is very sharp and will stick you and hurt you. This fish is very strong and will flop out of your hand very easily, so be extremely careful with this

fish when handling. This fish stresses easily, so handling of this fish for an extended time will kill the fish.

Never try to hold this fish by grabbing it by its tail, stepping on the fish with your foot to pen it down, or by kicking at it with your foot. This is a sure way to get yourself hurt!

FISH HANDLING & “CATCH AND RELEASE” INFORMATION

It is important for the angler to understand the fundamentals of fish handling. Fish are a valuable resource and most people want to protect their resource. Proper fish handling can prevent fish from being highly stressed or otherwise dying as a result of improper fish handling. Special Note: If you plan to catch the fish to keep it, then it does not matter how the fish is handled, because the fish will be killed anyway.

In order to maximize survival of the fish, you should take these steps, especially if you are practicing “Catch and Release” of the fish:

Bending the Barb of the hook – It is a misconception that if the barb is bent down, you will catch less fish. Not true. When the barb is bent, the hook is much, much easier to remove from the fish’s mouth. In fact, you can usually remove it without ever touching the fish. Take a pair of pliers or pinchers and mash the barb down even with the shank of the hook, or file the barb off. You can also purchase barbless hooks. In the event you get the hook in your hand, it is easier to get out if the barb is bent down.

Playing the Fish – In most cases, except with hybrid stripers (they are so hard to 36+handle), it is easier on the fish if you will reel the fish in as soon as possible after hooking the fish. Don’t play the fish for a long period of time. This places undue stress on the fish, and sometimes is a large contributing factor of the fish’s death.

Handling the Fish – Always wet your hand before handling the fish. Grasp the fish in a manner so as not to squeeze the fish real hard. Whenever possible, grasp the fish by the lip and never touch the fishes body. Once you have the fish in your possession, remove the hook as soon as possible and place the fish (do not throw or toss it) gently back into the water. Do not keep the fish out of the water for periods to exceed 10 seconds. If you are having difficulty with the fish, continually wet by dipping the fish in the water. Prolonged exposure out of the water dries out the fishes body slime (its protective coating), and this greatly decreases its chances of survival.

Swallowed Hooks – If a fish swallows the hook, make an immediate decision as to whether you intend to keep the fish or not. If you want the fish to live, do not try to remove the swallowed hook from the fish’s stomach.