

# SELF TAKES & FISH CARE

Sometimes you can be fishing on your own, on a lake or pond with no anglers to be seen. In this situation if you catch a specimen fish it can be photographed only on the mat, but there is an alternative which is easy & safe if done correctly.

When you arrive in your favoured swim the thing to do is check the depth of water in front of swim. If you have a nice deep margin 2ft plus you have no problems, if the water is shallower, like a water I fish regular its inches deep till you get 20 yards out then you have enough depth to put a bank stick. Using a rod butt grip you can leave the net locked in the grip for easy use when landing a fish. Which will keep the fish in plenty of water till your ready to get her on the bank to unhook etc. I have seen anglers turn up with just trainers on to fish these shallow banks? When they get a fish they beach it then the fish can damage it self. This is not good angling wear, waders where needed.

Now to the important bit!

There are 2 ways do this set your camera gear up & leave set up or like myself set up when you have caught a lump. Always have your mat & net set out ready for action. Always check your battery life on camera before you set out to fish & just before you take fish out of water. Also carry spare batteries in case you get a real lump! Again I have seen anglers messing about with batteries whilst fish is flapping on the mat. When you have landed your prize fish leave the fish in deep margin water, still in the net. If you don't have a deep margin, leave the rod in the butt grip with the fish in deeper water further out. Next job is to set your camera up, place camera on tripod or bank stick. I use camera with flip screen which you can turn round so that you can see exactly what frame you have and positioning of picture. The camera I use is a Canon power shot a 640. There are a few different models, which I will list below. There are 2 ways of taking self takes effectively self-timer or using a bulb release with a universal adaptor which you can buy from Jessops camera stores.

With the bulb release system you feed the lead from the camera under the mat & which works by kneeling on the bulb when you're ready to take the picture. I have used this method but do prefer the self-timer. On my camera there is a custom setting to which I can set 10 second delay then it takes 10 continuous shots. The beauty of digital cameras is you can check in seconds if the pictures are good or not. If you haven't got a flip screen you can take practise shots to make sure your right in the frame. Before taking the fish out of the water take a couple of practise shots to make sure you're in the frame properly.



Now you have to get things ready before taking the real pictures. Have a pan or bucket full of lake water at the side of unhooking mat to keep the fish wet. Wet the mat & weigh sling and zero the scales with the weigh sling attached. What I do is open up the weigh sling & lay it out on the mat ready for the easy transfer of the fish from the net.

Go & get the fish and make sure that before you pick it up in the net that all its fins are not stuck out! Then unattach the arms of the net, roll up the net & move the fish onto mat. Unhook her using forceps then you can slide the net carefully from underneath the fish. Then the fish is ready in the weigh sling. Zip up each side and make sure the fish is in the centre of sling & all of its fins are in so you don't snap them off, and then weigh the fish. Once you're happy with the weight of the fish. Place the fish back on the mat & pour some lake water over the fish, which will calm the fish down a little, then you are ready for the pictures to be taken. If you're wearing a t-shirt, remove watch & bracelets, which could damage the fish. Cover the fish up with retaining flap or use the weigh sling while you press the self-timer button on the camera. Then lift your prize catch & take the pictures.

Never stand up with fish in your hands they are very slippery beasts. The best way is to kneel & hold the fish with your fingers between the anal fin & pectoral fin. Then you have a good grip, so if the fish flaps you can roll the fish back towards your chest & onto the mat.



When you're happy with the pictures, and you have checked them. Before you return your capture apply klin-ik to the wound where the hook had been. Then place the fish back into the sling or mat. Some mats have sides or retaining flap to carry the fish back to water. Make sure the fish swims off safely. Sometimes you will have to hold them there till they are ready for the off. Never carry a fish without aid of sling or mat.

Never leave a fish unattended out of water.



- Equipment needed:
- large unhooking mat
  - Pan or bucket lake water
  - Forceps
  - Tripod or camera adaptor
  - Weigh sling
  - Scales & camera
  - Bulb & bracket if needed
  - Klin-ik or Korda carp care

- Camera suggestions:
- Canon A640 or A650
  - Canon G5, G6 & G8
  - Nikon D5000

There are other models & newer versions, which have, flip screen & remotes.



Weighing & taking the pics should only takes minutes, the fish can be returned fast & safe.

***Tight lines***  
***Mick wood***