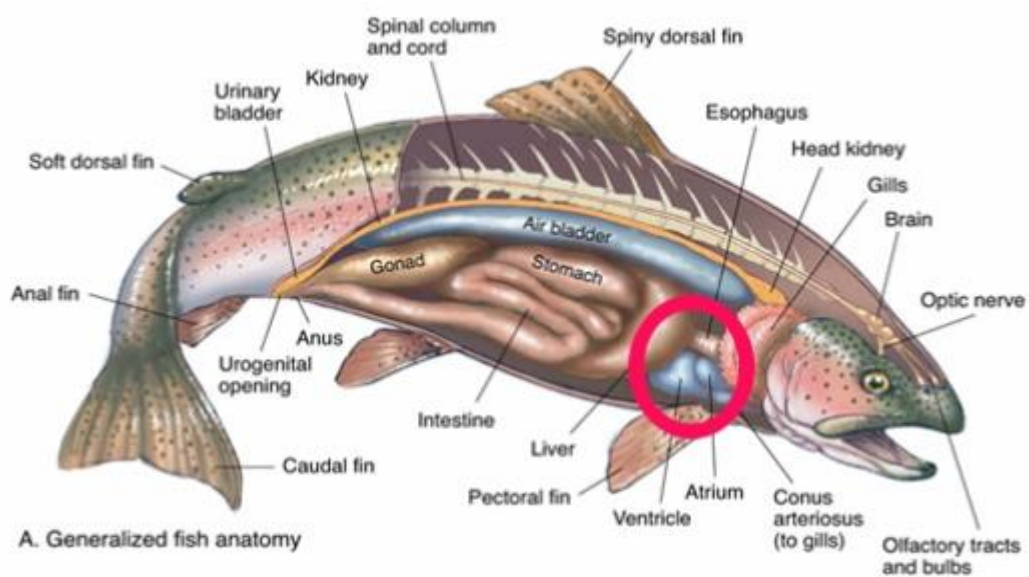


Fish Handling

With current trends leaning towards catch and release instead of catch and deceased there is more information coming out about the correct handling of fish. This isn't just about releasing fish so they have a better chance of survival it also covers the correct procedure for despatching fish humanly and quickly. Most media today has regular articles on cruelty to animals and a lot of the procedures are linked to either old fashioned ideas or religion as the cases coming out of some Middle Eastern countries. Some nationalities believe that a fish left in a bucket with a little water in it for a number of hours is the best way to keep a fish fresh. This is usually a slow agonising death either choking in its own blood slowly suffocating in a stressed state. This picture does nothing to enhance our sport or obsession in some cases, but this scene is repeated every day especially on weekends throughout our country. You don't have to be Einstein to work out what will eventually become a headline on our nightly news

Recent research shows there is a common problem in the UK and some people are referring to this as the UK grip or the death grip. When you look at a lot of photos from these areas you can clearly see the problem and it's all about showing off the fish with no concern for damage done to it, so fish are dying for the sake of bragging rights from a photo. There are some great sites to view this with some detailed anatomical drawings showing the reason why fish are damaged by griping and squeezing in the wrong areas. Basically some vital organs in a trout are just above the pectoral fins they are the heart and liver. The heart is between and under the gills and liver and these three organs are easily damaged by squeezing and pressure. You can imagine the damage done by dropping fish especially landing in these areas. They may swim away but a large percentage will be injured or die. Remember fish are supported in water.



The right way to hold a fish especially large fish is to cradle them and the best way to have control is a good grip on the tail, you don't require excessive force to do this. You should only need pressure top and bottom not on the sides. To settle fish down quickly simply place your hand over their eyes, many animals settle this way. The best practice for removing a hook if you have to take a fish out of water is to turn them belly up. This is the practice we use at the kids come n try day. There are many good descriptions on handle ling fish correctly and the sites below cover this and more.

<http://www.bishfish.co.nz/articles/fresh/grip-and-kill.htm>

<http://www.bishfish.co.nz/articles/general/releaserules.htm>