

Be a good neighbor to fellow anglers and the environment

by
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The footprints left by fellow surf fisherman can sometimes leave a negative impact on our environment effecting our beaches, our waters and even our streets and parking lots. In short, how we fish can impact our neighborhoods in general.

As an avid angler who finds solitude in surfcasting, it is a top priority for me to leave the beach, bank or jetty as I found it, and I for one believe it is imperative that fellow anglers leave their favorite fishing spots better than the condition they found it. How do you put that into action?

See trash? Take it with you and dispose of it properly when you leave. Think ahead, always carry an extra-large trash bags with you when you head to the beach, and fill it up on your way to and from the water. I have gotten in the habit of tying one to the dune fence at my favorite County Park, hoping that people will be inspired to use it. Such a simple gesture can make a difference.

What you take in, make sure to take out. This is a simple concept but it seems to get lost in translation. It should be like breathing- effortless. Every container, every cooler that once were filled with meals,

beverages, snacks and so on, are now much lighter at the end of the outing.

Every wrapper, bottle, can, etc. can easily be placed back into the cooler after draining the ice. It doesn't get much easier, so there should be no excuses.



Finished fishing? Be sure to dispose of your old fishing line and leader material properly. Leaving it on our beautiful beaches will present a harmful situation to our local shore birds, as well as other marine wildlife- not to mention children playing in the sand. By choosing to leave these items behind, birds and wildlife run the risk of becoming tangled in this material. Even more important than the wildlife, imagine your son or daughter getting cut by a rusty hook or having a rusty treble lodged in the foot.

Be mindful of your surroundings. There are environmentally sensitive areas posted on beaches along the coastline. If there are signs and fences

put in place, there is a reason. One such reason in my area is the protection of such wildlife as the Piping Plovers. Please do not enter these protected areas. These areas



are often protected because of their importance as breeding and nesting habitat. Damage done to this type of environment could not only impact bird and other wildlife populations, it could be the impetus of legislation to totally limit access to large sections of Northeast beaches during the fishing season. Therefore, we must protect these sensitive areas.

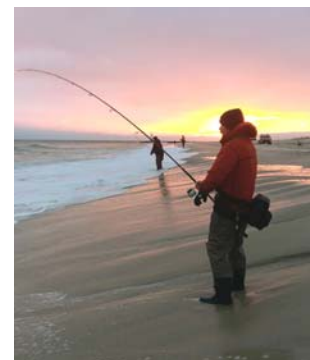
We are all humans- we are a partner, a steward of the ecosystem, not its master. Be a good steward. The same is true when it comes to being a good "neighbor" when fishing. Every angler wants the same thing- to experience an enjoyable day on the water. The stress of a negative experience is exactly what we are trying to escape by fishing. We were all fishing novices at one time. Remember the first line you threw? Remember the first time you needed some help or advice? It is easy for a new comer, or even a more experienced angler, to make a mistake. So if you see someone in need of assistance, remember when you were in that situation. Help them out. The beginner will remember, and thank you for it, and, most likely, they will pay it forward when the time comes.

When going to the beach to relax, we all appreciate breathing space. One of the best things you can do when it comes to etiquette is **give other anglers breathing space**. There is no



need to set up directly adjacent to a fisherman who is already fishing. This is true even when you are tempted by the fact that they seem to be catching all the fish.

When approaching a long stretch of available beach space, it is unnecessary to put yourself in their "back-pocket". Likewise, when witnessing an angler on a bite avoid running over and casting over their shoulder. Simply put, it is a very bad idea. In most cases, a little distance to the left or right of a fellow surfcaster will not make a difference. The fish tend to move about along the beach and up and down the inlets. However, some fish will remain in a certain area and etiquette dictates the beach as a first come first fish place. It is up to the discretion of the angler who was there first if they want to share the wealth. My philosophy is that if we all catch and release, why not share the wealth?



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