

Sam Potter / [TightLine Fly Fishing](#)

Authorized Guide with the National Park Service for the Upper Current River and the National Forest Service for Mill Creek, Spring Creek, Little Piney and the Eleven Point River

Fishermen Can Be Dangerous To Your Health

If you live near the water, or better yet fly over the water you are at risk. Your health is at risk, your safety is at risk and potentially your life is at risk. There have been traps set everywhere that could mean the end to you or a family member. The traps may have more traps attached to them, thereby increasing the odds of your capture. Sometimes the attached traps can be multiple traps and increasing the odds of your capture even better. Be cautious, your life depends on you avoiding all the traps. Some of them are camouflaged so well you won't know you are in them until it is too late. Struggling can make matters worse, but unless you struggle to get free, your only other hope is to have help. IF, by chance, you are caught in one of these traps and can't escape, pray that someone finds you before it is too late. Death will be very slow and painful. The elements usually help move the process along, but it will still be a slow death.

I have found victims in these traps. For some it was too late for the others they were lucky I came along when I did. They owe their life to me. I just wonder sometimes what ever happened to them. I'm sure they were relieved if they even knew what was going on in their state of mind at the time.

Yesterday I decided to do my part, for the second time this year. By walking the riverbank and removing all the traps I could find. Regrettably I will need to return to the same riverbank and remove more traps as soon as I can. I was overwhelmed by the number of traps I found and brought home. I just couldn't find space to collect anymore yesterday.



I have no idea how many of these traps I found yesterday, but as you can see they filled up a large tote. Every single twig and limb in this tote had fishing line tangled on it. After I took the photos, I decided to burn it all.



The above photo was hanging from one limb and tangled into one big blob of hooks and line

No telling how many birds and mammals get caught in this stuff every year. Most of us are not around to know, see and hear the life leaving these poor critters.



King Fisher



Bat

We most often think about birds getting caught in fishing line, but sometimes mammals, like this bat get caught in the line as well.

Unfortunately for the Kingfisher it was too late. However, for the bat I was able to remove the line and set it free on a nearby tree, where it climbed up about 10 feet and stayed there. I have found more birds in fishing line and all of them were dead. A friend of mine and I rescued a wood duck that had a hook through its bill. The fly was caught on a tree limb where it broke off. The tree, after a few years, fell into the stream and the fly apparently was close enough to the water for the duck to think it was food.

It isn't only smaller birds like the Kingfisher that get caught in fishing line. Sometimes even the big birds like this Great Blue Heron get caught in fishing line. This one had the line wrapped around the tip of a wing and it was strong enough line on a limber tree limb that allowed the limb to bend, but not break. As soon as I cut the line, it took the pressure off of the line on the wing and the line fell off.



How many birds and mammals die from fishing line, lures and terminal tackle is unknown, but one innocent critter is too many. We as fishermen and as outdoorsmen need to make every effort we can to remove our lines, flies and lures and those of others that we find left there by someone else from the trees and bushes. If we don't who will? The creatures that we share the woods and streams with should not have to suffer because of our negligence or the negligence of others. Please make every effort possible to keep our streams clean of fishing line, lures and terminal tackle.



This mess hanging in a tree is inexcusable.