

## Fishing Ethics

I am prompted to write this again by an experience on the stream yesterday and earlier in the week. Fishing outside the trout parks is not the same as fishing inside the trout parks of Missouri or anywhere else I have fished. Respecting the water that someone else is fishing is important enough to the MDC that they have published a pamphlet on the very subject. They don't give specifics on distances but the general rule of thumb is about 20 yards. IF you are not familiar with respecting the water someone else is fishing then you are saying to yourself what the hell is he talking about. IF you know, then you don't need to read on, but for those of you that are wondering, PLEASE continue and PLEASE absorb. Fishing inside a trout park and fishing outside a trout park is completely different. IF you use the same rule of thumb of 20 yards inside a trout park you may never be able to fish, because there are very few times that you have 20 yards between fishermen. However outside the trout parks you have miles of stream to fish with a low density of fishermen so there is no reason to CROWD someone that is fishing a stretch of the stream. That is the purpose of the MDC pamphlet, to teach fishermen good fishing ethics by respecting the water someone else is fishing.

In the winter it is a common sight to see fishermen, that are moving up or downstream, get out of the water and walk around someone that is fishing a stretch of the stream. Respecting the water that someone is fishing is much more common during the winter months when the average angler is at home watching a football or basketball game. The serious fishermen know how upsetting it can be to have someone walk in on them. IF you have been fishing for a particular "big one" for an hour or so and trying very hard not to spook it and someone walks in on you and scares it off then you know why it is important not to do the same to someone else. IF you are fishing and someone walks in on you from upstream then you know how frustrating it can be to put up with all the moss, leaves and debris that they stir up that gets caught up on your line... don't do the same to someone else. I have a friend in Montana that will row his drift boat

out of the way of someone that is fishing 100 yards away. I would do the same with my boat, but here in Missouri sometimes you can't see 100 yards downstream because of all the twists and turns of our streams. I will move over as soon as I see someone and if there isn't enough room to avoid the water where they are fishing I will get as close to them as possible so as not to go over the water where they are fishing. It is all about respecting and get respect for the water that is being fished.

“A Bad Day Fishing Is Still A Great Day”

### **Hard Winter on the little creeks.**

The dry winter was pretty tough on some of the trout in the little creeks. Several were caught that should have weighed more than they did. Big heads and big broad tails with a skinny body could mean illness, disease or lack of nutrition. As low as the creeks got, my opinion is lack of food caused most of the skinny trout to be this way. When the body of water decreases, so do the micro invertebrates. Lack of habitat reduces crawfish, minnows and bugs and crowds fish into smaller areas where there is more competition for food. “A Bad Day Fishing Is Still A Great Day”



This is an excellent example of a fish that is not getting enough to eat. Notice how the head is much larger, in proportion, to the body. The good news is that since this photo was taken and the article written the stream has recovered and the fish have grown.