

Be An “Upright Angler”

by Keith Sutton



Uncle Guy tilted the outboard motor on the old wooden johnboat. An abandoned trotline was twisted tightly around the propeller.

“You like catfishing, don’t you, boy?” he asked as he began cutting the old line away.

“Yes, sir.”

“Do a little trotlining, too, don’t you?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Let this be a lesson to you then,” he said. “An upright angler doesn’t leave his line where it’ll trouble someone else. When he left, the fellow who was fishing this line could just as easily have cut it and took it out of the way where it wouldn’t have bothered us. Now we’ll spend the next 15 minutes trying to cut it off instead of fishing.”

Uncle Guy talked a lot about “the upright angler,” upright being his synonym for ethical or principled.

“An upright angler wouldn’t leave trash strowed all up and down the river,” he’d say, pointing to garbage floating along the banks.

“An upright angler takes care not to spill gas in the water when he’s topping his outboard motor tank,” he’d note, topping off his own tank.

“An upright angler takes only the fish he needs to eat, and puts the rest back for another day.”

Thing was, Uncle Guy didn't just talk about the upright angler; he was the upright angler. During the years I fished with him before he died, he taught me more about being an honest, ethical fisherman than I've learned in all the years since.

Things would be a lot better if we were all upright anglers. So in memory of Uncle Guy I've put together a list of things we can all do to make fishing more enjoyable for everyone.

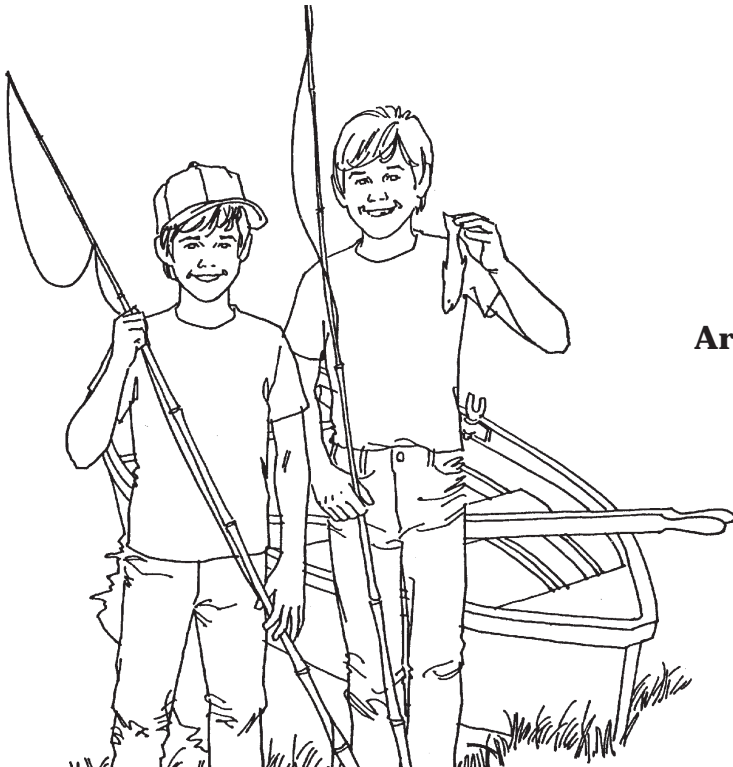
- **Recycle fish. Catch-and-release fishing lessens the ever-increasing demands placed on our fisheries.**
- **Properly dispose of used fishing line. Many animals die each year after becoming entangled in carelessly discarded line. Other trash kills, too including plastic six-pack**

becoming entangled in carelessly discarded line. Other trash kills, too including plastic six-pack rings, plastic bags, bottle caps, and even old fishing lures and cigarette butts. Don't drop any trash in the water, even if it sinks. Save it all for proper disposal on land.

- **If you fish with jugs, trotlines, limblines, nets or yo-yos, take them with you when you leave. These items are a major form of unsightly garbage on Arkansas waters and can be extremely dangerous to boaters, swimmers and wildlife.**



- **When wading, disturb the stream bed as little as possible to protect the delicate habits there.**
- **Avoid purposely introducing non-native fish species or discarding unused live bait in favorite fishing waters. If an unwanted species gains a foothold, it can wreak havoc on natural ecosystems.**
- **Be familiar with creel and length limits, and always follow them. Never take more or smaller fish than allowed by law.**
- **Avoid spilling fuel and oil when filling your motor. These chemicals are deadly to aquatic life.**
- **Join, support and volunteer your time to an organization involved in water or fisheries conservation.**
- **Share the joys of fishing with children. They are the future of fishing. Teach them the feeling of satisfaction that comes from being an upright angler.**
- **Pass this story on to other people. Or just pass on what you've learned. As you inspire friends and family, they'll inspire others. Our ability to have a positive impact will grow proportionately.**



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