- **Use heavy gear** to reduce fight time when surface water temps > 70° F.
- **Land and return fish quickly;** try to keep combined fight and handling time < 2.5 minutes, but do not exceed 4.5 minutes.
- **Keep Striped Bass in water to unhook** unless it takes longer than netting and unhooking. Netting does allow for a "torpedo" type release.
- **Use rubber or rubber coated nets** to reduce removal of fish's protective slime.
- **Wet hands** before handling Striped Bass.
- **Use in-line circle hooks** when live-bait fishing.
- **Remove one of the three treble hooks** from plugs and stick baits.

- **Harvest Striped Bass if:**
  - Hooked in gills, throat, or stomach
  - Displays moderate to heavy bleeding
  - Does not quickly submerge (floats long enough to net again)
  - Caught on shallow or topwater treble hook baits when water temps > 80° F

Thank You for Using Summer Catch & Release Best Practices!

VIRGINIA DWR

SMITH MOUNTAIN STRIPER CLUB

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