

## Catch and Release and The Law.

In our modern times it has become popular to think of the practice of catch and release as the “responsible” way to play at the various games involving our beloved dogs. This idea, of course, is nonsense at its core and flatly illegal.

To understand these two facts one must study a bit of history without injecting their own 'warm-n-fuzzy' ideas into the matter. Catch and release became popular with anglers, those who engage in fishing just for the fun of it. These guys quickly saw that a good trout stream could be “fished out” in short order once it became known as a productive place for their activity. Once it caught on, catch and release of fish meant a productive fishing location might remain so indefinitely. There are many “catch and release only” fishing locations around the world as a direct result of this proven ideology being put into practice.

The ideology is proven with fish, not so with animals that roam the earth. Terrestrial animals are entirely different from fish and the concept of catch and release, while popular to promote, is actually loaded with more potential harm than good. This is where and why the law got involved long ago. In nearly every state in America the law regarding wild animals that have been reduced to “possession”, (an important legal term,) carefully states that the animal cannot be released alive nor removed from their place of capture before dispatching (killing) them. The only exceptions are licenses for animal control “technicians.” In many states these licenses are known generically as Animal Damage Control Licenses, (“ADC License”) and permit the licensee to remove the captured animal from his place of capture to some other location where it can be, “... dispatched without spectacle.” This means you are now permitted to take the captured animal out of public view and then kill it...not release it. The purpose here is to keep the public from having to face some of the more unpleasant facts of life. No one really likes to watch anything being dispassionately killed. It somehow bothers our sense of decency.

Inhabitants of modern industrialized countries like America have lived for generations without having to face some of the scarier facts of life regarding wild animals. This has fostered all sorts of nonsensical ideas regarding the supposed “nobility” of the beast in question. Without exception such ideas are fabricated out of emotionalism that springs from impressions one generates

while watching wild animals, the viewer being far removed from any type of reality regarding the animal in question. Civilized folk seldom get to see wild animals and the natural tendency is to think there are not many around. This idea ignores the fact that we don't see the animals because they go to considerable effort to remain unseen. Wild animals execute the bulk of their activities under the cover of darkness. When you see them during daylight hours it usually means something is amiss. It often means there are so many of them around that they must venture out into the daylight just to find food. This necessarily means there are probably enough of them around to place the health of the entire local population in question. A dense population of nearly any species, (or several kinds all at the same time,) usually comes with a higher incidence of disease. Some of those diseases pose a threat to man and / or his livestock and that is where the laws got involved quite awhile ago.

There are a couple of basic elements that legislative bodies all understood when they enacted these laws. Without exception the local populations of small animals had to be maintained at low enough levels to force the incidence of the feared diseases into obscurity. These wise men also understood that such law posed no threat to the populations of small animals in question, (the known vector group of the diseases most feared.) The proof for this simple truth is that man has periodically attempted to completely eradicate various species from their locale and without exception have failed to do so. The best that man's efforts have ever been able to achieve is to keep a local population to low enough numbers that the animal in question was rarely seen under any circumstance. Naturally, there is an attendant reduction in the incidence of the feared diseases when the animal population is low. This single phenomenon substantiates the reason for such law. It has always been and continues to be a public health issue. As such, these laws are here to stay.

Whether or not you agree with the laws on this subject, it is still the law and you should be aware of it no matter what you intend to do.

Catch and release of small animals, particularly those that we pursue with our dogs is illegal. You should at least be aware of it whether or not you intend to obey the law. Remember, ignorance of the law is not an excuse. You'll need a better explanation if you end up having to explain yourself to the authorities.

It is something everyone should keep in mind.