# Ten Commandments of fishing

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FOR THE JOURNAL

Like the Israelites of the Bible, fishermen often struggle because we ignore the simplest rules for life. Though far from biblical, the following list of 10 absolute truths was created to assist and enlighten all anglers, from the novice weekend angler to the seasoned professional.

These principles will help everyone become more successful, which at the end of the day, can be measured by the number of fish in the livewell.

## 1. THOU SHALT USE LIVE BAIT

Many anglers lean in the other direction, using only artificials, viewing live bait as taboo. In truth, using fresh live bait is a more foolproof method for consistently catching fish year-round.

Using live bait precludes the angler from being concerned with what colors of artificial baits to use. It also presents the fish with the same food it is accustomed to eating.

## 2. THOU SHALT BE PATIENT

One problem that many anglers fall prey to is they get in too big a hurry. Many times, if fish don't perform the way the angler expects them to, most anglers start second-guessing themselves. They also end up riding all over the lake, which translates to wasting time that could be spent fishing.

## 3. THOU SHALT USE SOMETHING CHARTREUSE

Of all artificial colors out there, chartreuse seems to be the one many species of fish prefer most. From jig skirts to jig heads to hooks and lures, chartreuse is and always has been a winning color.

## 4. THOU SHALT KEEP YOUR BAITS AT THE LEVEL OF THE FISH

The shape and positioning of a fish's eyes, mouth and body typically dictate where they feed. Crappie always feed in an upward direction and rarely feed down. Striped bass and black bass tend to feed upward but will also eat off the bottom.

Catfish, with their high olfactory sensors and under-slung mouth, tend to feed almost exclusively on the bottom. Pay attention to the level of fish marked on your electronics and fish at or just above that level.

## 5. THOU SHALT BE VERSATILE

An undeniable truth about fishing is that fish will be caught in a manner consistent with how and where they are feeding, which is not always the way the angler wants to catch them.

Fish will tell you what they want. This principle extends from which tactics to use, which baits to tie on, even what areas of a lake to fish.

## 6. THOU SHALT FOLLOW THE BAIT

Stating the obvious, the best way to catch fish is to fish where the fish are. The best way to know where the fish are is to follow the bait.

Know the seasonal patterns of the baitfish on the lake you fish. Know where they are on the lake, what size bait is present in the area you're fishing and do your best to "match the hatch" in that location.

## 7. THOU SHALT FISH SLOWER

One of the most common problems with both weekend and tournament anglers is that they tend to fish an area too fast, especially during the spring after a cold front or anytime fish are not active like during the heat of summer.

## 8. THOU SHALT BELIEVE IN YOUR ABILITY

Time and again, many professional tournament anglers explain that they would have never won the tournaments they have won if they didn't have confidence in what they were doing.

Fishing is typically not a team sport, there are no coaches, no cheerleaders and no fans there to help boost your confidence. It's a mental game and you're the only one playing.

## 9. THOU SHALT LEARN PROPER BOAT CONTROL

It's easy to be right there on op of willing fish and still truggle to catch them beause of poor boat positioning. Vith many fishing tactics, vhere you position the boat ictates whether your baits re in the strike zone, the peed of your presentation nd how realistic your baits ook to the fish.

## 10. THOU SHALT USE GOOD EQUIPMENT

In an equipment-intensive sport like fishing, every component of your set-up can make you or break you.

What good is having a boat, trolling motor, outboard, depth finder, rods and reels if they don't work when you need them to.

When you purchase your equipment, purchase the best quality you can afford and provide proper care and maintenance so it will hold up when it's time to hit the water.

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Anglers will be more successful locating gamefish if they learn and understand the movements of baitfish. Then it's a simple matter of following the bait to the fish.