



A high survival rate of released fish is critical in fisheries for species under strict management with minimum and/or maximum size limits. Typically, these fish species are classified as overfished or are heavily fished species being intensively managed to prevent overfishing.

Circle hooks offer other advantages. When properly used, catch rates are much higher than with J-shaped hooks. They are safer, with no exposed point to hook a fellow fisherman. Circle hooks are also much less likely to snag bottom or debris. Also, fish with sharp teeth are less likely to cut the line as they are hooked in the corner of the mouth. Less fish are lost and fishermen often can use lighter leaders which may improve catch rates. After the fish is landed, the hook can be removed with a simple twist using needle nose pliers or with a dehooking device.

While commercial fishermen have been using circle hooks for some time, first-time recreational users will need re-education not to set the hook. Jerking the rod in response to a bite will pull the hook from the mouth of the fish nearly every time. The fish must be allowed to hook itself when it swims away. Fishermen who have difficulty breaking the habit of setting the hook may want to try putting the rod in a holder and fishing "dead stick". Another minor problem is that determining the right size circle hook can be difficult because hook sizes currently are not standard among manufacturers. This lack of standardization makes ordering circle hooks from a catalog a little difficult.