

My friend Kyle Kimbrough recently sent me a web link to a study which references the effects of handling bonefish with lip gripping devices. The study is somewhat disturbing, because it documents injury to a majority of the bonefish which were held aloft with a lip-gripping device.

Given the information gathered in this study, I'd say it is safe to assume lifting speckled trout in the air to obtain length and weight measurements of the fish while they are attached to a Boga Grip is damaging some of the fish. Some of the damage might be deadly. As the survey states, the damage is more likely to occur and to be severe if the fish thrashes around while suspended by its lip.

For me, this means I (we) should take extra precautions when handling trout using Boga Grips. Probably should refrain from lifting the fish out of the water and suspending them vertically from the device as much as possible. If we choose to do this to obtain an accurate weight measurement, we should attempt to hold the fish steady while making the measurement, and obtain the weight as quickly as possible.

Using a Boga Grip to handle a fish eliminates the need to wrap one's hand around the body of the fish. Wrapping one's hand around a fish scrapes slime off the fish, which is harmful. Lifting a large fish out of the water in one bare hand often causes other injuries to the fish. So, I would say it's still a good idea to use a Boga Grip to handle and release large trout, but lifting them out of the water and suspending them vertically from the device is probably not wise in general.

A better plan would be to use the Boga Grip to steady the fish IN THE WATER while removing the hooks. If pictures are to be taken, the Boga Grip should be removed from the fish's mouth beforehand. An angler posing for pictures with the fish should use both wet hands to support the fish in a way that doesn't cause damage to the fish, while the pictures are taken quickly.

The link to the study: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0165783608001781>