

Unhooking a Bird: Do's and Don'ts

DO:

- Get someone to assist you.
- Put on sunglasses or eye protection. (NOTE: If you hook an egret, heron or cormorant, take extra care as they have sharper beaks that can injure you.)
- Reel the bird in slowly and steadily.
- Grasp the bird firmly. Cover its head with a towel or shirt to help calm it. Leave it slightly open so the bird can breathe. (NOTE: If dealing with an egret, heron or cormorant, control the head first. Hold the head behind the eyes.)
- Fold the wings gently and firmly against its body. (NOTE: If dealing with an egret, heron or cormorant, also grab the legs to control the feet and toes.)
- ALWAYS cut the barb off the hook. Carefully push the barb forward to expose it, THEN cut it with wire cutters and back the rest of the hook out.
- Before releasing, check the bird over for additional injuries. If none are found, release immediately. Point the head away from you and step back. Let it fly away on its own.

DON'T:

- Don't try to do it alone. The bird will try to defend itself.
- Don't jerk the line. You will only increase the injury.
- Don't cover the head COMPLETELY with a towel or shirt in an effort to calm it. Leave it slightly open so it can breathe easily.
- Don't try removing the hook without first cutting off the barb.
- Don't release the bird if it has other/serious injuries, is lethargic, or has swallowed the hook.
- In this case, call the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for a list of nearby rehab centers. **888-404-3922**



During work hours: (239) 472-3644

After hours: City of Sanibel Police Department: (239) 472-3111