

At the beginning of the year I explored many possible topics, but decided on the implementation of catch and release fishing practices in the United States. I decided to use three of the most prominent and impactful fishermen throughout history to explain the progression of catch and release. I chose Lee Wulff, Ray Scott, and Bill Dance. Through my research I have seen catch and release fishing successfully introduced in the United States and across the world. I found that catch and release fishing practices broke barriers and had a positive impact on professional organizations like the Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (B.A.S.S.) and the recreational fishing industry. Although there is much debate about catch and release fishing from organizations like PETA, these practices and techniques continue to evolve to ensure fish health and recreational opportunities.

I began my research online, in fishing journals, periodicals, professional studies and at university libraries to learn more about the history of catch and release. I then conducted an interview with Zach Beard, Native Trout and Chub Coordinator at the Arizona Game and Fish Department. This interview was extremely useful as he gave me an abundance of peer reviewed studies and scientific articles about catch and release. I was also able to get in touch and conduct an interview with renowned fisherman Joan Wulff, Lee Wulff's wife; also known as "The First Lady of Fly Fishing". In order to present both sides, I also reached out numerous times to People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) with no response.

I chose the category of an individual website as I am familiar with it and have previously qualified for the national competition twice. Although, adapting to the new website platform was challenging. By choosing to do a website I was also able to add a variety of multimedia to

expand on certain areas of importance such as the early history, the impact on today, and relation to the theme of “Breaking Barriers”.

My topic relates to the theme of “Breaking Barriers” because the implementation of catch and release fishing in the late 1950s, and 1960s, completely broke the social norm barriers that had existed for hundreds, if not thousands of years. Practicing catch and release was difficult for anglers to adopt until public perception changed in the 1970s and 80s, and the importance of the preservation of this resource was realized. This continues to hold true today in the way it has affected how millions of anglers fish. The knowledge and availability of information on proper catch and release techniques continues to get better and is transitioning to more people doing their part to help preserve this amazing resource.