

Snapping fish selfies - Hook-less fishing with a camera

Uhlmann Sven Sebastian

Drsnapper.com, Stationsstraat 27, 8470 Gistel, Belgium

E-mail: drsnapper@drsnapper.com

The proliferation of consumer-ready underwater camera technology offers a new approach to aquatic observation, surveys, and recreational fishing. It is a very simple idea and technology already exists that allows the consumer to vividly observe fish in their natural environment. The fish themselves actively trigger an underwater camera when attacking a (hook-less) bait. So to speak, the fish snaps a selfie by rigorously pulling on the bait, which then sets the camera to record a fixed video sequence. The angler will feel the nibble and will ultimately be thrilled to find out what has been “caught” on video. This video is then “unhooked” via an app and automatic wifi transmission when surfaced. All video files can be (re)viewed instantly. This exciting method of user-friendly underwater observation may not only appeal to conservation-conscious recreational fishers, or a young gadget-keen generation of outdoor enthusiasts, but also to (citizen) scientists wanting to non-invasively survey aquatic fauna. To give such opportunistic observations a purpose, shared, validated, and geo-tagged images could be used to document range expansions of species on the move, either because of warming waters or their invasiveness potential.

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