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# WELCOME TO ANGLING

Unlike many sports which rely on specialist skills, such as an eye for a ball or a good sense of timing, anybody can fish. You can fish all the year round. In fact, it's one of the joys of angling because with each season there are different fish to catch.

Angling is an ageless pastime. In how many other sports can a child take part on equal terms with their granddad? And it's not limited by number - you can fish alone, with friends or in an organised group.

There is fishing to suit everybody's taste and location: casting a fly in spring to a wild brown trout, stalking a huge carp on a balmy summer evening or casting beyond the surf, when the cod are close to the shore in the autumn.

Angling is for all, young and old, male and female, the able and the disabled. Everyone can enjoy this wonderful sport. Welcome to the world of fish and fishing. Read on and enjoy - for it doesn't matter how old you are or where you live - there will be exciting fish to catch somewhere nearby.



# COARSE ANGLING - IT'S EASY!

There has never been a better time to begin coarse fishing – the branch of the sport involving the capture of most freshwater fish other than members of the trout and salmon family. Good equipment is reasonably priced, there are plenty of waters where you can catch fish and there is no shortage of willing ‘teachers’.

You can set yourself up with basic kit and be fishing for less than £20. All you need is a reel-less rod or ‘whip’ (one about four metres in length will do), ready tied rigs or line, a few small hooks, weights and floats, a plastic disgorger and a quantity of bait – maggots perhaps – and you are in business. Of course, you can spend a lot more if you so wish on other types of tackle, but this simple kit will enable you to begin straight away. Your local tackle dealer should be able to advise you on where to go, preferably somewhere where there are lots of easy to catch fish.

Once you have experienced the thrill of seeing a float go under, felt a fish fight, taken pride in carefully unhooking your catch and watched it swim away, unharmed, to grow larger – you will know why the sport is so popular. And you can only experience this by giving angling a go.

At commercial stillwater fisheries and club day ticket waters, you may pay anything between £2 and £8 for a day’s fishing. But the owner or bailiff will be only too happy to show you what to do and pass on tips about good baits and productive spots. At many such fisheries there will be a small cafe where you will meet and get to know other visiting anglers.

**You need a licence to go coarse fishing if you are aged 12 and over.**

Generally, coarse fish are caught for sport only and then returned alive to the water to grow larger. Some are streamlined in shape, their bodies adapted to living in fast flowing water. They include: the large-mouthed chub, which has been caught to 8 pounds or more and will take a huge variety of baits; and the torpedo-shaped barbel, which can reach double the weight of the chub and is renowned for its powerful fight when hooked.

Slow-flowing rivers and stillwaters are the more usual haunts of deep bodied fish, including: the rudd, characterised by its upturned mouth which allows it to feed at the surface; and common carp, once rare but now present in many fisheries where they can grow to 30 or 40 pounds and – in exceptional cases – more than 50 pounds. Some fish occur in most types of fresh water. For example, the first fish caught by many coarse anglers is the perch, a handsome species with distinctively striped flanks and spiked dorsal fin.

*Barbel*



*Bleak*



*Bream*



*Common Carp*



*Crucian Carp*



*Chub*



*Dace*



*Eel*



*Gudgeon*



*Perch*



*Pike*



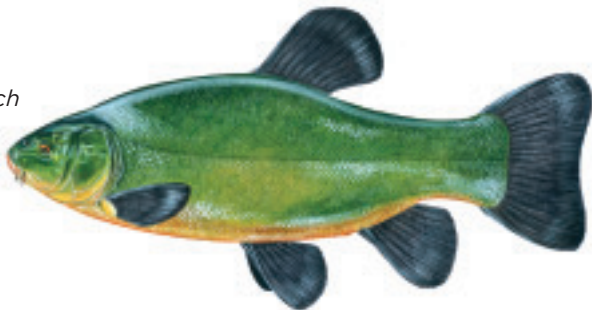
*Roach*



*Rudd*



*Tench*



# FLY-FISHING - THE ART OF ANGLING

Near to where you live will be a lake, a river or reservoir that will be teeming with hard fighting game fish. Indeed there are few places where our native trout - the brown trout - will not be ambushing natural flies. Some of these streams are often found in and around busy towns.

Years ago fly-fishing was seen as the preserve of the wealthy, but this is not so any more. The opening of reservoirs for fly-fishing and the introduction of rainbow trout into this country over a hundred years ago has changed all that and now the rainbow is one of our more common species. It provides sport to both the newcomer and expert in a variety of lakes and larger waters.

Of course, fly-fishing is the preferred method for most, but not the only one: trout, the mighty salmon and secretive sea trout (sea-running brown trout) are often taken using bait or spinners, where permitted.

But the attraction of fly-fishing is the challenge and skill in casting a fly line and then matching the food of trout with artificial flies that are no more than wisps of feather, fur, tinsel and hackle. You may have to observe your quarry at short range grazing in crystal waters, cast your fly into the distance of a huge reservoir or into the swirling currents of a majestic salmon or sea trout river.

Fly-fishing is all about variety. And the species that you are fishing for are great to eat: but always limit your catch, not catch your limit - leave some for others to enjoy. You can fly fish in salt water for bass, pollock, mullet and a host of other species. Coarse fish like pike, perch, rudd and zander, all take artificial 'flies'.

**You need a licence to go fishing for trout and salmon if you are aged 12 and over.**

*Brown Trout*



*Rainbow Trout*



*Salmon*



*Grayling*



# SEA ANGLING - THE GREAT ADVENTURE

Every trip to a shore, rock, or boat mark is a true adventure. Why? Because the sea angler is never sure what species of fish will bite next. It may be a small flatfish, or pouting, but it could be a huge bass, cod or conger eel. It's this excitement and uncertainty which appeals to people of all ages.

Shore fishing from estuaries, beaches and rocks puts you in a fascinating world of white-water surfs and dramatic scenery. You'll be fishing for flounders, dabs, dogfish, bass, huss, cod, conger and many more species. Even the hard-fighting, fast-swimming tope – a streamlined predator of the shark family – occasionally comes within reach of the shore caster, and they can grow to weights topping 50 pounds. The choice of baits and techniques is equally large, ranging from fish and worm baits used on the sea bed to spinners, plugs and plastic imitation fish, cast and retrieved through mid-water.

Boat fishing adds an extra dimension. The element of the unexpected is heightened further, but there's also the thrill of the boat underway and the expectation of a great day afloat. Bottom fishing on the sea bed with fish baits can bring rays, ling and colourful gurnards. Very popular are the long-range trips to sunken wrecks in deep water, the haunts of some huge, hard-fighting fish.

There's no closed season, nature's seasons govern the fish you'll catch. Spring and summer brings plaice, rays, bass, turbot, wrasse and mullet among others. The cooling winds of approaching winter drive these species offshore to be replaced by whiting, dabs and the ever-hungry cod.

There's always something to be caught and many of them make a fine supper.

**You don't need a rod licence for sea fishing.**

It would be impossible to summarise the huge variety of sea fish which swim around the coasts of the British Isles - more than 350 species have been recorded. They include flatfish, a term which covers small fish (such as flounders, dabs and soles) which reach only a few pounds, and giants like halibut, which can weigh several hundred pounds.

The cod family are round-bodied fish which include whiting, haddock, coalfish, pollack and, of course, cod. Some are small but others grow large - ling and cod of more than 50 lb have been caught on rod and line. Some of the sharks can grow to hundreds of pounds.



# FISHING LOG

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# HELP IS AT HAND

You should never be short of advice or further information to help you catch fish. Nationwide, there are hundreds of trained angling coaches who are experts in passing on their knowledge. Every coach will know the best places to fish nearby, the tackle to use and how to catch the fish that live there. Coaches have been trained in bankside safety and first aid, and they are all insured.

Your local tackle shop is also a good source of local information and many sell a huge range of books and DVD's aimed at new anglers. Schools, youth clubs and angling clubs often organise talks, training sessions and taster sessions for inexperienced anglers.

There are a wide range of angling newspapers and monthly magazines, most of them for sale in high-street newsagents. And each year there are huge tackle shows around the country where you can see and handle just about every item of fishing tackle, listen to angling talks and meet the experts.



# GETTING STARTED

As with any sport, you can spend a considerable sum of money on equipment, but this is unnecessary when you begin angling. For a few pounds you can buy a single kit to enable you to catch small fish, and for somewhere between £20 to £60 you should be able to buy a set of equipment which will enable you to catch most types of fish. The most important features of your tackle are that the rod allows you to cast, the reel works properly, the line doesn't break and the hooks don't bend or snap!

Whilst fishing in the sea is free, in freshwater you need the permission of the fishery owners, which is usually gained by buying a day or season ticket or by joining an angling club. Young anglers and disabled people are usually charged reduced prices.



# WHEN CAN I GO FISHING?

In the SEA you can fish at any time. Some species of fish spend all their lives near the shore, by piers, harbours or among the rocks. Others only come near the shore at certain times of year, and some spend all their time in deep waters and can only be caught from a boat.

You'll learn the best times for different fish by asking and watching other anglers. Take particular care not to get caught by changing tides. Tell someone responsible where you plan to go and, roughly, what time to expect you back.

There is a legal closed season for coarse fishing between mid March and mid June in England and Wales on all FRESHWATER rivers and streams when you're not allowed to go fishing because the fish may be spawning (breeding).

On stillwaters — lakes, ponds and reservoirs — the legal close season has been abolished, but some clubs and landowners still operate their own. If the details are not on their permit or any notice boards around the fishery, ask at the local tackle shop.

The closed season for salmon varies in different parts of Britain; for brown trout the closed season is generally during



the winter, but this differs by region. There is no legal closed season for rainbow trout in lakes and ponds because those fish don't normally breed in such waters. Again, if you don't know for sure — ask at the tackle shop.

# KEEP WARM AND SAFE

It is difficult to enjoy fishing if you're not comfortable, so always wear suitable clothing. In most cases that means a waterproof jacket (with plenty of pockets), stout shoes or rubber boots and warm layers.

Wearing different layers enables you to remove or replace items as required to keep yourself at a comfortable temperature. Hats are also useful to shade your head and eyes from the summer sun and to keep you warm and dry in cold or wet weather.

Unless you are planning only a short trip, remember to take some hot or cold drinks and some food: you won't enjoy yourself if you're cold or hungry!

It should be obvious that, potentially, all water is dangerous. Always remember that when fishing. Look around at the banks or the shoreline where you hope to fish and make sure that it

is safe; **never fish underneath or near overhead electricity cables; avoid fishing near locks and weirs**; and do not go out in a boat unless you are wearing a **proper life jacket**.



When you first start fishing it is best to go along with a reliable adult and let someone know exactly where you are going.

# SAFEGUARDING WILDLIFE

Good anglers are natural conservationists and help safeguard the water they fish and the plants and animals – including fish – that live there.



## Things to remember

- Lead weights are illegal in most sizes and non-toxic weights are now widely available. Lead weights of size No.8 or less, or of more than 1oz, may still be used.
- Take great care when fishing surface baits such as bread or 'floaters' as they may attract water birds.
- Use barbless or micro barb hooks where possible. Hooked or entangled birds are more likely to be able to rid themselves of the hook, and in the event of being rescued, removal of the hook will be much easier.
- Never leave rods on the bank with hooks still baited as these food items could be picked up by birds or animals.
- Check your line regularly for flaws caused by wear and damage. Remove and carefully dispose of any damaged line and replace your reel line regularly.
- **Never, ever leave litter – take it home for safe disposal.**



# WHAT ARE THE RULES?

Angling is one of the largest sports in the country with millions of people taking part, and one in which you can thoroughly enjoy yourself without having to be part of a team or an organised event if that is your wish.

It is also one of the most self disciplined, with the majority keeping as a matter of personal pride to the rules and guidelines of various recognised codes of behaviour and practice.

They are based on a few sensible principles intended to benefit everybody and everything which uses or lives by, on or in, the water.

- The most obvious is not to leave litter, especially nylon line. At best, it looks a mess; at worst, it can kill or injure wildlife and farm animals. There's absolutely no excuse for not taking it home and disposing of it safely in the dustbin, having first cut it into short sections.
- Every effort should be made to cause the minimum of stress to the fish you catch. Handle the fish gently and return them carefully to the water as soon as possible unless you are going to keep them to eat.
- Don't cause a nuisance to other people. Your pleasure shouldn't spoil that of others.

Clubs and fishery owners often have their own local rules which should be printed on the permit. They usually relate to specific methods and baits, or times for angling (such as no night fishing) and should be observed.

**Again, if you're not sure...ask!**

# PERMISSIONS

If you are aged 12 and over and fish in freshwater in England and Wales you will need a rod licence no matter where you fish. Licences are issued by the Environment Agency and can be bought from your local post office or online at [www.environment-agency.gov.uk/fish](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/fish). Depending on how much you pay, they cover you for a day, an eight day period, or a full 12 months starting from April 1 each year. You don't need a rod licence if you're fishing in Scotland.

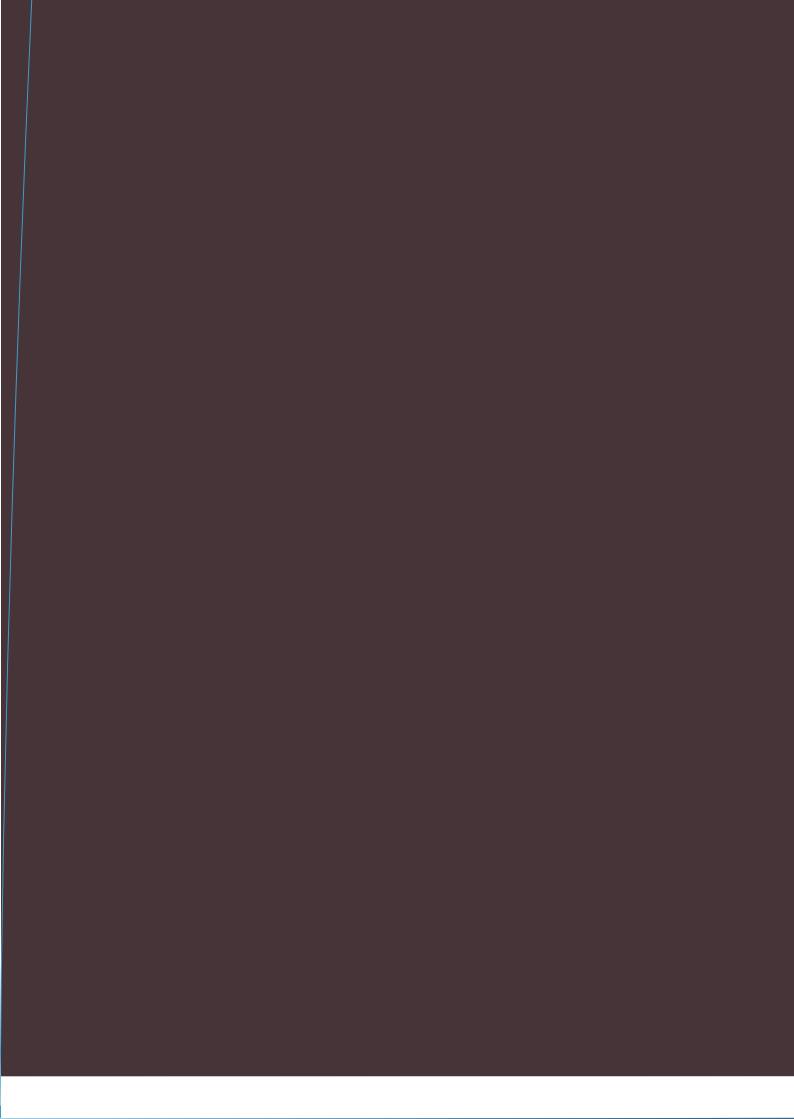
If you're aged from 12 to 16 you can buy a junior 12 month licence, which costs just £5.00. Reduced cost licences are available for those aged 65 or over and for registered disabled people.

## Permits or day tickets

In most fresh waters, anglers will usually need a permit from the angling club or landowner controlling the water. Sometimes you can buy a day ticket which allows you to fish for that day only; more frequently, you can buy a season permit which lasts for a year between set dates.

Make sure you have it (and your rod licence) with you when you go fishing, or find out in advance if you can buy one on the bank. In a few places you may be able to fish without charge, and some clubs allow those too young to need a rod licence to fish for free as long as they're with a responsible adult. Ask for details in your local tackle shop. You don't need any licence or permit to fish in the sea.





# HANDLE WITH CARE

BEFORE you start fishing, you must know how best to treat the fish you may catch. There are some simple Do's and Don'ts.

- Always handle fish with wet hands.
- Never put fish on a dry dusty bank or lift them high off the ground.
- Be firm and confident while handling fish, rather than indecisive and hasty.
- Use barbless hooks so unhooking is easier and without delay.
- Never try to pull a hook out - use a disgorger or enlist help from another angler.
- Wherever possible always use a landing net, and set it up before you begin fishing!
- If using a keepnet, never tumble the fish down the net - this will damage the fins and scales. Gather them at the front of the net and let the fish swim out of the mouth of the net.



## Remember...

Minimum handling =  
maximum conservation  
of fish

# UNHOOKING FISH

Unhooking and safe treatment of your catch is by far the most important action an angler has to learn.

Firstly, wet your hands before touching the fish. If you have used a landing net to land the fish, unhook it while it's still in the net. If it is a large fish, an unhooking mat is ideal.

Look to see where the hook is located. You can remove the hook if the fish is hooked by the lip by firmly holding the shank of the hook between thumb and finger, then pushing the point of the hook in the opposite direction from which it entered. You should not pull the hook under any circumstances.

The use of a disgorger can greatly help the unhooking of fish as it is a tool specifically designed for removing hooks from fish. Plastic disgorgers are cheap, do not damage your line and hook and will often float if dropped in the water.

Wrap the disgorger around the line so that it stays on the line, then slide it into the fish's mouth.

To remove the hook, push the disgorger in towards the fish - you may have to rock the hook from side to side to release it.



# WHAT ABOUT BAIT?

To catch fish you need some sort of bait to tempt them to 'bite'. For coarse fish that can be bread, cheese, luncheon meat or many of the things you eat yourself. You could also collect worms from your garden, or buy maggots or special 'boilies' or pellets from a tackle shop.

Much game fishing involves the use of artificial flies made from silk, fur, feathers or man-made materials tied to a hook in such a way that, when cast onto or into the water, the 'fly' imitates an insect and tricks the fish into taking it.

For sea fish the range of baits can be divided into artificials - metal lures and plastic plugs which imitate fish - and natural baits such as strips of fish, shellfish, ragworm and lugworm.

In the beginning it is best to try and find what fish you're likely to catch and then use the baits which they prefer. As you become more experienced, you can experiment with different baits and even try your own concoctions.



*Sweetcorn*



*Flies*



*Jellies*



*Maggots*



*Spinner*



*Lures*

# USEFUL CONTACTS AND WEBSITES



Angling Development Board  
[www.anglingdevelopmentboard.org.uk](http://www.anglingdevelopmentboard.org.uk)



Angling Trades Association  
[www.anglingtradesassociation.com](http://www.anglingtradesassociation.com)



Angling Trust  
You can find a coach or find a club here  
[www.anglingtrust.net](http://www.anglingtrust.net)



The British Disabled Angling Association  
[www.bdaa.co.uk](http://www.bdaa.co.uk)



Environment Agency  
[www.environment-agency.gov.uk/fish](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/fish)



Game Angling Instructors Association  
[www.gameanglinginstructors.co.uk](http://www.gameanglinginstructors.co.uk)



Get Hooked on Fishing  
[www.ghof.org.uk](http://www.ghof.org.uk)



National Fishing Month  
[www.nationalfishingmonth.com](http://www.nationalfishingmonth.com)



Professional Anglers Association  
[www.paauk.com](http://www.paauk.com)



Salmon and Trout Association  
[www.salmon-trout.org](http://www.salmon-trout.org)



Environment  
Agency



# going fishing?

## Don't forget your rod licence

- **Under 12?** You can fish without a licence
- **Between 12-16?** A junior licence costs just £5
- **Over 16?** You will need a full licence

### Buy:

- Online at [www.environment-agency.gov.uk/rodlicence](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/rodlicence)
- At any Post Office® in England and Wales
- Or telephone **0844 800 5386**



Lines open 8.30am to 8pm, 7 days a week March to September. Calls charged at local rate.

**Licence applies to those aged 12 years or older fishing for freshwater fish, eels, trout or salmon in England, Wales or the Border Esk in Scotland.**