

# ANGLING TRUST RECOMMENDED VOLUNTARY CODE OF CONDUCT FOR BAIT DIGGING

## Eight Golden Rules!

1. **Observe local byelaws, regulations and access arrangements which affect the use of the coast, or access to permanently and seasonally closed areas**
2. **Collect bait sustainably**
3. **Back fill holes for safety, and to maintain the intertidal habitat**
4. **Be aware of local hazards and conditions**
5. **Avoid disturbing wildlife wherever possible**
6. **Replace all rocks and stones as you found them, seaweed side up**
7. **Don't dig around moorings, slipways and sea walls**
8. **Take all your litter home**



See Overleaf For The Full Code

# The Bait Digging Code In Detail...

## 1. Observe local byelaws, regulations and access arrangements which affect the use of the coast, or access to permanently and seasonally closed areas.

- Check the local situation before collecting bait in unfamiliar areas, ignorance of the law is no excuse.
- Contact your local IFCA for details of byelaws and regulations.
- Keep to paths, agreed access routes, remember to close gates and respect other coast users at all times – always remember that others judge bait collecting by your behaviour.

## 2. Collect bait sustainably.

- Collect only what you need for personal use by yourself, family or friends – but not for sale.
- Do not dig-out an area – leave adult organisms to repopulate the area.
- Avoid damaging other animals in the sediment or under rocks/tiles
- Store your bait correctly to reduce wastage
- Do not take green spawning ragworm or king ragworm less than 100mm.
- Return any live, unused bait to the habitat from which you collected it.

## 3. Back fill holes for safety, and to maintain the intertidal habitat.

- Backfilling ensures the foreshore recovers more quickly and prevents organisms from suffocating under spoil mounds
- Backfilling reduces the evidence of bait digging and leaves the habitat looking in a more natural condition.
- Backfilling also prevents accidents and injury to yourself, other bait collectors and other foreshore users.
- Backfilling prevents hazardous and toxic substances being released that may have been trapped in the sediment.
- Backfilling helps to protect other marine life that has been disturbed from being eaten by birds.
- The use of a bait pump, where the ground permits, can reduce the disturbance to habitats and species and removes the need for backfilling.

## 4. Be aware of local hazards and conditions.

- Tell someone where you intend to dig.
- Strong tidal currents, deep sand or mud and unfamiliar surroundings can cause difficulties – always carry a mobile phone and compass for emergencies.
- Tell someone what time you intend to return and contact them if you are delayed – it could save a call to the emergency services.

## 5. Avoid disturbing wildlife wherever possible.

- Disturbing over-wintering birds can prevent them from feeding and roosting and can waste the energy they need for migration.
- Ground nesting birds may lose their eggs if they are disturbed.
- Avoid disturbing seals in their haul-outs.
- Avoid trampling on plants and or breeding animals and birds.
- Do not dig in sea (eel) grass beds. Sea grass beds are considered to be of significant importance as a habitat for a number of species and are designated for protection within a number of proposed marine conservation zones.

## 6. Replace rocks and as you found them, seaweed side up.

- Take care not to crush wildlife when turning boulders over.
- Many intertidal animals and plants are specially adapted to living under rocks and boulders. Make sure you return boulders as you found them so that these organisms can survive.

## 7. Do not dig around moorings, slipways and sea walls.

- Existing harbour byelaws often prohibit digging for health and safety reasons.
- The combined effects of tides, waves and digging may undermine walls and allow moorings to shift.
- Digging around fixed structures can often cause conflict with other shore users, property owners and harbour authorities.

## 8. Take all your litter home.

- Litter causes damage to the marine environment. Synthetic materials degrade slowly and threaten marine life for decades.
- Litter is an eyesore that spoils the coast for everyone.
- Wherever possible, be a responsible angler and collect and remove any angling debris, such as discarded fishing line.

## Did You Know...?

- No legal right exists to gather bait for sale or reward.
- Commercial bait digging requires consent from any agencies and the landowner's permission.
- Anyone who recklessly damaged or destroys a site of special scientific interest of European Marine site can be fined up to £20,000.

## For More Information Contact:

Angling Trust:  
[www.anglingtrust.net](http://www.anglingtrust.net)

Natural England:  
[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

Marine Management Organisation:  
[www.marinemangement.org.uk](http://www.marinemangement.org.uk)

Inshore Fishery and Conservation Authorities:

<http://www.marinemangement.org.uk/about/ifcas/index.htm>

Also available online at  
[www.anglingtrust.net](http://www.anglingtrust.net) !

