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WELCOME TO COARSE ANGLING

By picking up this booklet you've started on a journey of discovery about the many joys of fishing. Read on and learn how fishing can help you to spend quality time with friends and family or unwind and enjoy your own space. Whether you want to take in the view, take a deep breath, have a laugh or get a little competitive, with your pals, fishing is for you!

Once you have experienced the thrill of seeing your 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.

Going fishing also provides an opportunity to spend time outdoors, away from the pressures of normal life. Spending time near water has been found to have a positive effect on mental wellbeing, increasing happiness and enjoyment of life, as well as reducing anxiety levels.

It's easy to get started, once you have a permit and a licence, if you are old enough to need one. Decent, starter equipment is reasonably priced, there are plenty of waters where you can catch a variety of coarse fish and there is no shortage of free events where licensed coaches are on hand to show you the basics or to teach you more advanced skills.

Intrigued?
This booklet will provide you with all you need to know to get started with enjoying coarse fishing.



COARSE ANGLING: THE BASICS

Coarse Angling refers to fishing for freshwater fish species which are not members of the trout and salmon families, fishing for them is called game fishing.

Who can do it?

Absolutely anyone! Unlike many sports which rely on skills such as good ball control or a good sense of timing everyone can enjoy this wonderful sport, and about a million people do each year! It doesn't matter how old you are, your physical abilities or where you live - there will be some exciting fish for you to catch, big or small, somewhere nearby. You just need permission to catch them and a rod licence. (See the back cover) Your tackle shop can sell you a day ticket for local waters or will be able to tell where you can get one. They will also probably be able to sell you a club book for the year.

Angling is an ageless pastime where children can fish on equals terms with their mum and dad or with their grandparents. You don't need to be part of a team to fish, you can do it on your own or with your mates. You can fish on Saturday morning or go away for a week of camping and fishing.

What do I need?

Once you have a rod licence and a permit, you can set yourself up with some basic tackle and be fishing for less than £75. All you need is a short (four to six metre) take apart elasticated pole, some ready tied rigs with a float, weights and a small hook, a simple disgorger, a small landing net and some bait - pellets, bread or maggots, of various sorts, perhaps - and you can catch fish.



When can I go fishing?

Most of the year in most places. On rivers and streams there is a close season for coarse fish between 15th March and 15th June. So you can't go fishing then because the fish will be spawning. On most stillwaters, canals, lakes, ponds and reservoirs the legal closed season has been abolished. Some clubs and landowners still operate their own close season, so if the details are not on your fishing permit or any notice boards around the fishery, ask at the local tackle shop which will almost certainly know the score on every local water.

Where can I do it?

Your local tackle shop will be able to tell you where to go: ask for their recommendations for waters where there are lots of fish to catch! You probably live within a few miles of a canal, where many people start their angling career, 50% of the population live within five miles of a canal and starting on a slow moving and shallow canal is a good way to master the skills you need to be a lifetime angler.

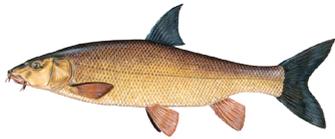
If you are not a club member you will need a day ticket on canals, stillwaters and many rivers. At most commercial stillwater fisheries you will have to pay for a permit to fish. Again your local tackle shop will have the details. Most owners or bailiffs will be only too happy to show you what to do and pass on tips about good baits and productive spots. At many commercial fisheries there will be a small café where you can meet and get to know other visiting anglers.

The Angling Trust and other partners such as Let's Fish run events for all abilities. You can find details on their respective websites:

<https://anglingtrust.net/>

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/fishing/lets-fish>

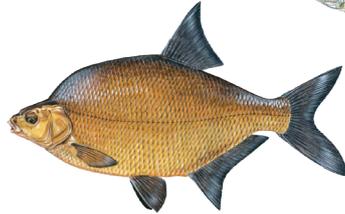




Barbel



Bleak



Bream



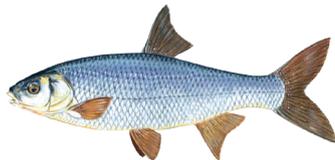
Chub



Common Carp



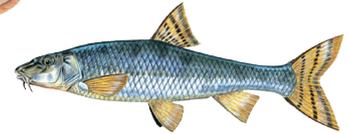
Crucian Carp



Dace



Eel



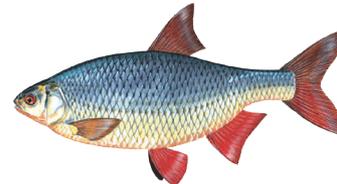
Gudgeon



Perch



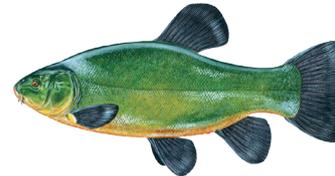
Pike



Roach



Rudd



Tench

Illustrations courtesy of David Hall Publishing Ltd.



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 new and inexperienced anglers.

There are a wide range of angling newspapers and monthly magazines, most of them for sale in high-street newsagents and some aimed at new and inexperienced anglers. 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

For a few pounds you can buy simple tackle to get you started catching small fish, and for somewhere between £50 to £100 you should be able to buy tackle that will enable you to catch most types of coarse 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! Your local tackle dealer will put you right on all of that.

In freshwater you need the permission of the owner of the fishery before you fish, and this is usually gained by buying a day or season ticket or by joining an angling club which controls the fishing. Young anglers and disabled people often pay a reduced price.



WHEN CAN I GO FISHING?

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. This means that 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.



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 of clothes.

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.



PERMISSIONS

If you are aged 13 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 (see the outside back cover), and they can be bought online at gov.uk/fishing-licences or over the counter from your local Post Office.

Depending on how much you pay, they cover you for a day, an eight-day period, or a full 12 months. You don't need a rod licence if you're fishing in Scotland, apart from in the Border Esk region.

If you're aged from 13 to 16 you need a junior licence, which is free. Reduced cost licences are available for those aged 65 or over and for registered disabled people. Young people below 13 years old do not need a licence.

Permits or Day Tickets

In most fresh waters, anglers will need a permit from the angling club or landowner controlling the fishing. 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.

Make sure you have your permit and your rod licence with you when you go fishing, or find out in advance if you can buy a permit 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 in your local tackle shop for details of local waters.



SAFEGUARDING WILDLIFE

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

Things to remember:

- Lead split shot 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. You can enjoy yourself without having to be part of a team or an organised event if you so wish.

It is also one of the most self-disciplined, with the vast majority of anglers taking great pride in keeping 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.

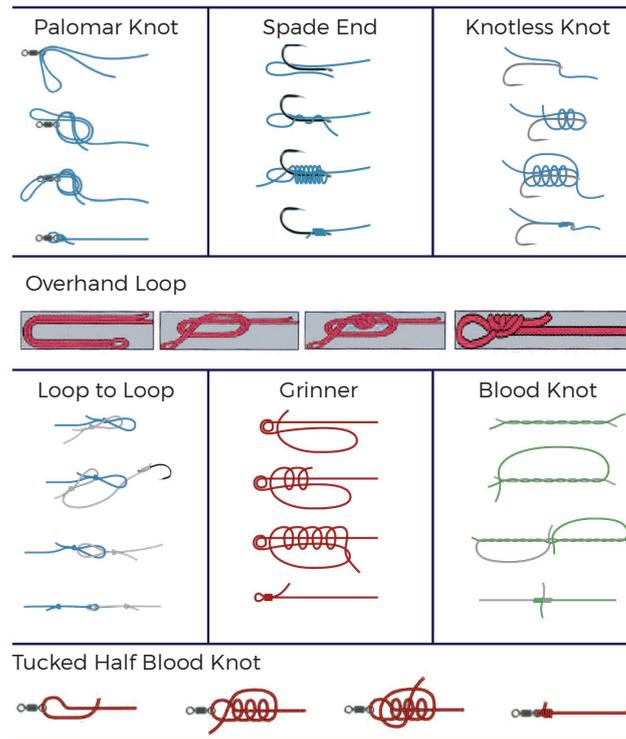
- The most obvious is not to leave litter, especially nylon line. At best, it looks a mess; at worst, it can kill or injure wildlife and farm animals. There's absolutely no excuse for not taking it home and disposing of it safely in the dustbin, having first cut it into short sections.
- Every effort should be made to cause the minimum of stress to the fish you catch. Handle the fish gently, with wet hands, and return them carefully to the water as soon as possible.
- 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 always be observed.

If you're not sure... just ask!



GETTING KNOTTED

These simple knots cover most fishing situations, and with a little practice they are easy to tie.



Always moisten a knot before pulling it tight and trim off any free line ends with scissors or nail clippers.

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.



UNHOOKING FISH

Unhooking and safe treatment of your catch is by far the most important action an angler has to learn. It's simple and safe for the fish as long as you follow some simple guidelines.

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, lay it carefully on a soft surface - a padded 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 upwards on 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 without damage. 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, and then slide it into the fish's mouth so that the end of the disgorger rests on the bend of the hook. 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.

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



Luncheon Meat



Bread



Maggots



Boilies



Earthworms



USEFUL CONTACTS & WEBSITES



Angling Trades Association
www.anglingtradesassociation.com



Angling Coaches Association
<https://www.anglingcoaches.com/>



Angling Cymru
www.anglingcymru.org.uk



Angling Trust
You can find a coach or find a club here:
www.anglingtrust.net



The British Disabled Angling Association
www.bdaa.co.uk



Canal and River Trust Let's Fish
<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/fishing/lets-fish>



Environment Agency
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency>



Get Fishing
<https://anglingtrust.net/getfishing/>



National Fishing Month
www.nationalfishingmonth.com



Salmon & Trout Conservation
www.salmon-trout.org



Take A Friend Fishing
www.takeafriendfishing.co.uk



Wild Trout Trust
www.wildtrout.org



Environment
Agency

A licence to

KEEP YOU ACTIVE



Getting a fishing licence is about much more than just catching a fish. It's a low-cost way to get out in nature and spend more time with those who matter most.

Standard adult licences start from just £30 and juniors go for free.

Give fishing a go. Search 'fishing licence' at gov.uk

A LICENCE TO CHILL



Licence No.
1259091020

12-MONTH FISHING LICENCE