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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 children take part on equal terms with their grandfathers? And it's not limited by number or time - you can fish alone, with friends or in an organised group for an hour or two or for a whole day.

There is a type of fishing to suit everyone's taste and location: presenting an artificial 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, and millions of people do!

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 for you to catch somewhere nearby.



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.

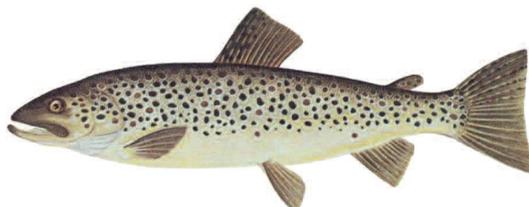
Years ago fly-fishing was seen as the preserve of the wealthy, but this is not so any more. The opening of reservoirs for fly-fishing and the introduction of rainbow trout into this country over a hundred years ago has changed all that, and now the rainbow is one of our more common species. It provides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

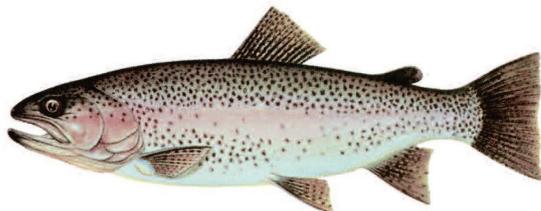
But the attraction of fly-fishing is the challenge and skill in casting a fly line and then matching the food of trout with artificial flies that are no more than wisps of feather, fur, tinsel and hackle. You may have to observe your quarry at short range grazing in crystal waters of a stream; cast your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

Fly-fishing is all about variety. And the species that you are fishing for are great to eat if you so wish and the rules allow it, but always limit your catch, not catch your limit - leave some for others to enjoy. You can also 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', too.

In England and Wales, children under 13 don't need a licence. Licences for children aged between 13 and 16 are free and need to be applied for at www.gov.uk/fishing-licences/buy-a-fishing-licence



Brown Trout



Rainbow Trout



Salmon



Grayling



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

As with any sport, you can spend a considerable sum of money on equipment, but this is unnecessary when you begin angling. For between £30 and £60 you should be able to buy a set of equipment which will enable you to catch trout. 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!

You will need...

- Permission or a permit to fish.
- A valid EA rod licence (England and Wales only) unless you are under 13.
- For lakes, a 9 - 10 foot fly rod, a # 7-8 line and some tapered leaders (6 meters) and tippet in 5, 6 and 8 pounds.
- A fly reel loaded with a minimum 50 meters of backing and a balanced/matched floating fly line (a floating line is the most useful to start with).
- A selection of suitable fly patterns in a variety of sizes for the style you wish to try.
- Eye protection - polarised sunglasses will also help you see through the water when fishing.

Other items

These are items that you will also need to carry:-

- Landing net.
- A priest - to dispatch your quarry humanely if you wish to keep and eat it.
- A bag or multi-pocketed waistcoat/vest to store fly floatant, leader sinkant, fly boxes and your tippets and spare leaders.

WHEN CAN I GO FISHING?

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. This means that you're not allowed to go fishing because the fish may be spawning (breeding).

There is no legal closed season for rainbow trout in lakes and ponds because those fish don't normally breed in such waters.

WHAT ABOUT BAIT?

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.

In the beginning it is best to ask for advice on the best flies to use for the fish you're trying to catch. As you become more experienced, you can experiment with different flies and even try to tie your own designs!



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.



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:

- 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.
- 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!



PERMISSIONS

If you are aged 16 and over and fish in freshwater in England and Wales you will need a fishing licence no matter where you fish.

Licences are issued by the Environment Agency, and online at www.gov.uk/fishing-licences/buy-a-fishing-licence

Depending on how much you pay, they cover you for a day, an eight-day period, or a full 13 months.

You don't need a fishing licence if you're fishing in Scotland. If you're aged between 13 to 16 you can register for a free fishing licence at www.gov.uk/fishing-licences/buy-a-fishinglicence

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

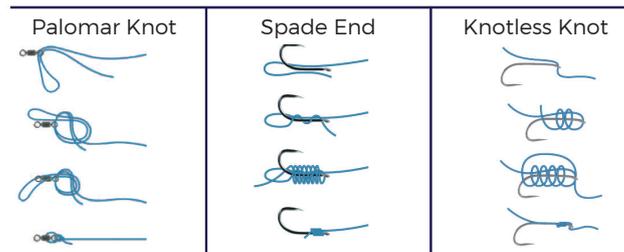
In most fresh waters, anglers will usually need a permit from the angling club or landowner controlling the water. Sometimes you can buy a day ticket which allows you to fish for that day only; more frequently, you can buy a season permit which lasts for a year between set dates.

Make sure you have your permit (and your fishing 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.

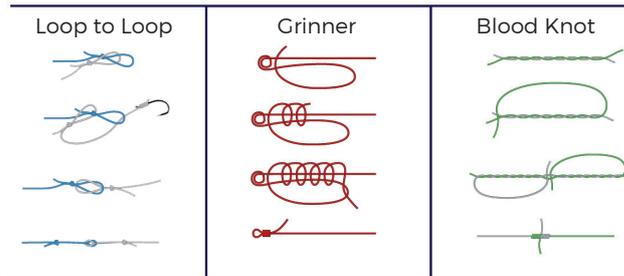


GETTING KNOTTED

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



Overhand Loop



Tucked Half Blood Knot



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.



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