



THE VOICE OF ANGLING

CODE OF
CONDUCT FOR
COARSE ANGLERS

Endorsed by



Environment
Agency

Sixth Edition Winter 2010

Introduction

We can do no better than to quote Professor David Bellamy, who said about this booklet; “A giant leap in the right direction, a Code of Conduct for the fishers that puts the Environment first. Great news for the fish and for the waters of Britain.” David Bellamy.

We hope we can live up to this! The Code was originally designed to guide specialist coarse anglers through the pitfalls of suitable conduct and the methods employed in our sport, and was published through the old SACG. Now angling has taken a new step into the twentyfirst century with the formation of Angling Trust, a single body to represent all anglers in England, and this Code now includes all aspects of coarse angling.

The Code is a detailed document intended to offer guidance to individuals and groups, and also as a basis in whole or part for club rule-books. We do recognise however that it covers a lot of detail, too much in fact for newcomers to fishing! So, for a “quick guide” to the basics we have also reproduced the Environment Agency leaflet “Angling & Wildlife Golden Rules”, to which we contributed and which we endorsed, plus some additions of our own. If you need a simplified version please simply turn to the “Newcomers Guide-Starting Angling” section at the front of this booklet.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Environment Agency, both for the considerable help we have received in compiling this Code, and for their huge financial backing which has allowed us once again to achieve widespread distribution of this document. To quote the EA;

This code is designed to complement the existing legislative framework and provides a common-sense guide to values and behaviour to which anglers should aspire. The Environment Agency supports angling and fully endorses this Code of Conduct.

Above all though, remember that this Code is designed to allow us to interact sympathetically with the environment and with the other conservationists who share our waters, and to protect our quarry. Rules are best kept to a minimum, but are necessary to ensure we adhere to the highest standards. Above all, enjoy the sport, look after the fish and respect other wildlife along with the environment as a whole!

Angling Trust

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ST. JAMES'S PALACE

I could not be more pleased to support this Code of Conduct. Never has it been of greater importance for all those involved in angling and conservation bodies to work together to ensure the highest standards of behaviour by all those who take part in this sport. It is enormously encouraging that so much effort has gone into creating this unity and all those involved deserve every possible congratulation. The result is an excellent document which will improve etiquette and make anglers even more responsible by advising them how their actions could impact upon the environment in which they fish and how to avoid any adverse affects on flora and fauna. It will also be a most useful guide to best practice for fishery owners and managers.

Although I have never done a great deal of coarse fishing myself, I do know how much pleasure it brings to millions of people, and so I hope that this Guide will enhance that pleasure and ensure that angling remains a vibrant and healthy sport.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles", with a long, wavy horizontal line underneath it.

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Supporters of this Code

The Carp Society
Pike Anglers' Club of Great Britain
British Carp Study Group
Catfish Conservation Group
English Carp Heritage Group
Chub Study Group
National Anguilla Club
Glevum Carpers
Manchester Carp Group
Tenchfishers
Pike Fly Fishing Association
Telford Anglers Specialist Group
Barbel Catchers
Osprey Anglers
Everington Conservation
Anglers Net
The Tackle Box
Gold Label Tackle
Alresford Angling Association
Angling Publications Ltd
Clapham Angling Preservation Soc'
Roche Angling Club
Shell Club Corringham Ltd.
Shotgate Angling Club 1994
Sparsholt College
The Nunnery Lake Syndicate
West Stow lake Syndicate
Salmon & Trout Association
Environment Agency
Natural England
British Trust For Ornithology
The National Swan Sanctuary
Institute Of Fisheries Management

The Angling Foundation
London Anglers' Association
The Thames Angling Preservation Society
Angling Projects
The Wildlife Trusts
Professional Anglers Association
Rodbaston College
The Inland Waterways Association
The British Disabled Angling Association
Countryside Council for Wales
The Wildlife & Wetlands Trust
RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds)
British Waterways
EFTTA (European Fishing Tackle Trade Association)
Recreational Fishing Alliance, USA
HRH The Prince Of Wales
Professor David Bellamy, Conservationist & Broadcaster
Lord Mason of Barnsley
Dr. Bruno Broughton, Fisheries Management Consultant
Chris Tarrant, Broadcaster
Bob James Journalist, Author & Broadcaster
Des Taylor, Author & Journalist
Martin James Journalist, Author & Broadcaster
Julian Cundiff Journalist, Author & Broadcaster
Jim Gibbinson Journalist, Author & Broadcaster
Matt Hayes Journalist, Author & Broadcaster
Tim Paisley Author & Publisher
Bernice Brewster, Aquatic Consultancy
Ian Heaps, Former England World Champion
Bob Nudd MBE, Three times World Champion
Dick Clegg CBE Former England Manager
Brian Clarke, Fishing correspondent for The Times

The Way Forward for Angling-from the Environment Agency

The Government's response to the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Review in early 2001 restated the Government's support for angling.

Good fisheries management brings much wider benefits to the water environment and anglers are a powerful voice in the drive for improving fisheries and their associated habitats. Angling also brings important benefits to the economy, particularly in rural areas, and to people's quality of life. Angling should be accessible to all, including the young, the old and the disabled. It provides a unique opportunity for people to enjoy the natural environment in a quiet and unobtrusive way; in turn bringing tremendous social benefits in terms of people's sense of well being.

For these benefits to be realised it is important that angling is carried out in a way that is sustainable in terms of fish stocks and the wider environment. The Agency regulates angling through legislation and byelaws to ensure that fishing is carried out in ways that are sustainable and to protect our fish stocks for future generations of anglers. However, there are many other aspects of angling that are best improved through encouragement and education.

The Agency is keen to work in partnership with others to promote angling and therefore welcomes the opportunity to join with the Angling Trust in the production of this revised Code of Conduct. It is through partnerships such as this project that we will be able to offer better value for money for the income we raise.

All anglers should read the information on their rod licences and should be aware of the laws and byelaws that apply to them when fishing. This code is designed to complement the existing legislative framework and provides a commonsense guide to values and behaviour to which anglers should aspire.

The Environment Agency categorically supports the sport of angling, and through co-operation and collaboration with other interested parties is wholly committed to provide the nation with better fish stocks, better fisheries and better angling.

Dr Dafydd Evans, Head of Fisheries,
Environment Agency

Newcomers Guide Angling & Wildlife- “Golden Rules”



NEWCOMERS GUIDE-ANGLING & WILDLIFE “GOLDEN RULES”

ANGLING AND WILDLIFE

Anglers are natural conservationists. Time spent at the waterside instills appreciation and understanding of the natural environment, particularly in the young. The development and management of our fisheries contributes to the wildlife value of ponds, lakes and rivers. Angling contributes towards our environment and people's enjoyment of nature, but inexperience or thoughtlessness may lead to wildlife being harmed and the good image of angling being tarnished.

“GOLDEN RULES”

ANGLING-RELATED LITTER

- **Never** drop litter or discard tackle and remember that discarded nylon line is particularly hazardous to wildlife. Discarded or damaged line should be taken home and burnt or cut into short lengths before disposal
- **Always** clear up litter before you leave - even if it's not yours. If you see any litter or discarded tackle, pick it up, take it home and bin it.

BREAKAGES AND SNAGGING

- **Remove immediately** rigs caught up in bankside vegetation, branches or underwater snags where it is practicable and safe to do so.
- **Report** lost terminal tackle to club bailiffs or the fishery owner for removal, if you can not recover it.

SWIM CHOICE

- **Choose** your swim with care to reduce the risk of snagging bankside trees, vegetation and obstructions in the water.
- **Take extra care** where people feed waterfowl; the birds may have learned to associate people with food at that site and their expectations will increase the risk of entanglements.

UNATTENDED RODS

- **Never** leave rods unattended while fishing. Not only is it poor angling practice as it may result in a hooked fish becoming snagged but it also increases the risk of birds becoming entangled in the line or taking the bait. If you need to leave your swim, all lines should be retrieved, baits removed, and the hooks secured to the rod.
- **Never** leave rods on the bank with hooks still baited, as these food items could be picked up by birds or animals.
- **Remember** - it is illegal to leave a rod unattended while fishing.

RIGS

- **Use** a hook length of lower breaking strain line than the reel line where possible. **Never** use reel line straight through to the hook without a weaker link. This will ensure that the minimum amount of line is lost in the event of snagging. Leger links should also be of a lower breaking strain to minimise loss of line.
- **Remember** that whatever type of rig you use, weaknesses will occur at the knots where line is joined, where it is tied to swivels etc, and where shot are pinched onto the line.
- **Check** your reel line regularly for flaws caused by wear and damage. Remove and carefully dispose of any damaged line and replace your reel line regularly.

BOLT RIGS

Bolt rigs or fixed leads are acceptable, providing the leger weight can slip free in the event of snagging or tangling. Make sure that if the line breaks it will not result in a fish or bird dragging a leger around.

HOOKS

Use barbless or reduced 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 a rescue being needed, removal of the hook from a bird will be much easier.

WEIGHTS & NETS

Lead weights are illegal in most sizes and non-toxic weights are widely available. Lead weights of 0.06 grams (No.8 shot) or less, or of more than 28.35 grams (1 oz) may be used.

Do remember too if you have just been given some tackle that perhaps has been sitting in some-ones attic for a while, it could be that it includes some of the old lead shot weights and split shot that are now illegal. If in doubt, do replace them with non-toxic shot! The same applies to old landing nets and keep-nets, the mesh types now are much kinder to fish and your local tackle dealer will happily advise whether yours are still usable.

WHILE FISHING

- **Beware** of birds swimming into your line or picking up surface baits.
- Submerge **rod tips when legering using bite alarms. Keep lines under the surface to avoid waterfowl and where there is not heavy weedgrowth it may be possible to use back-leads to keep the line below the water surface.**
- **Watch** your rod at all times when legering with quivertips or other visual bite indicators. Again, it may be possible to keep the rod tip under or close to the water surface to avoid contact with birds' feet. Where this is not possible the line should be retrieved if there is a risk of birds swimming across the line.
- **Retrieve** your line when float fishing if there is a risk of birds swimming through the line. Even when using a waggler float with the line 'buried', it will be only just below the surface and still presents a risk.
- **Take** great care when fishing surface baits such as bread or 'floaters' as they may attract waterfowl. Sometimes the attentions of birds can be avoided by anchoring the bait with a back-lead which allows you to submerge the bait below the surface when a bird approaches. Remember, however, that swans can easily reach food a metre below the surface, and other birds often dive for food. If floating baits attract undue attention from birds then move away or choose a different fishing method.

HELP OTHER ANGLERS

The vast array of tackle and fishing methods may result in novices using unsuitable tackle. A little time spent helping beginners can reduce tackle losses and improve their catches.

ANGLING CLUBS AND FISHERY OWNERS

- Ensure **that anglers follow the Golden Rules at your fishery.**
- Include **rules about litter on angling permits.**
- Promote **the numbers overleaf.**
- Offer **help and advice to beginners.**
- Organise **'clean up' days to remove litter and tackle snagged in trees or vegetation.**
- Consider **providing rubbish bins - but only if you can empty them every evening.**
- Ask for **advice from the Environment Agency or Swan Rescue Groups if you experience problems at your fishery.**

IF THE WORST HAPPENS...

- **Never** attempt to restrain an injured swan (or other large bird or animal) by holding onto the line. This can cause severe injury and heightened trauma. For swans and geese cut the line and report the incident as soon as possible to the rescue organisations below. Smaller birds may be freed at the time of the incident, or held comfortably in a small box or other dark space if treatment is required.

Further Information

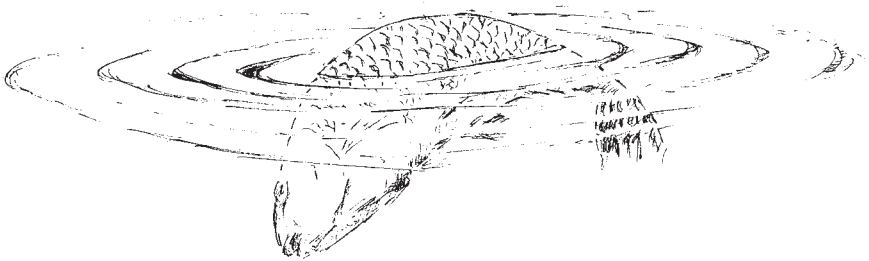
If you own or manage a fishery and would like to know more about how to improve its value to wildlife, contact your local Environment Agency office and ask for a free copy of *Freshwater Fisheries & Wildlife Conservation - A Good Practice Guide*.

NATIONAL SWAN SANCTUARY HOTLINE

0700 SWAN UK or 01932 240790

RSPCA 0300 1234999
Wildlife Hospital Trust 01844 292292

Always have these telephone numbers with you, and report sick or injured animals.
The problem may not be angling related but it may give warning of a serious problem at the water.



ANGLING TRUST

ANGLING TRUST MODEL COARSE MATCH RULES

Effective from 5th January 2009



THESE RULES ARE RECOMMENDED FOR UNIVERSAL USE BY MEMBER CLUBS AND ASSOCIATIONS OF THE ANGLING TRUST.

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1. The starting and finishing times for the match must be prominently displayed at match headquarters and on all literature relating to the match.
2. The recommended duration for a contest shall be five hours.
3. The match must be pegged down competition. Pegs preferably twenty yards apart and not less than fifteen yards, must be staked out and numbered prior to fishing. All pegs used under normal conditions must be of a state to give competitors a practicable and reasonable chance to fish his or her swim.
4. All officials participating in the organisation of the match must wear some kind of insignia, ie an armband, as clear evidence of their authority.
5. Each competitor on drawing his/her number shall proceed to the corresponding number on the bank and this will be considered his/her fishing ground where he/she will fish. The peg must remain in position until the weigh-in is completed.
6. Every competitor must fish from within one metre either side of his/her designated peg. On flowing water, the competitor may fish in the direction of the flow as far as the next peg. On still water, he/she may fish as far as half the distance between his/her peg and the pegs on either side. Where competitors are drawn on opposite banks, the limit of the swim is the line midway between each bank.

The competitor will restrict their activities completely to those boundaries, neither his/her person, his/her tackle, his/her hookbaits or groundbaits may intrude into his/her neighbour's swim.

In an extreme situation eg snagged tackle or a snagged fish, an angler must seek permission from his/her neighbour/s before moving from his/her designated peg to try and remedy the situation.

A competitor must not cause annoyance to, seek to interfere with another competitor or use mobile phones during the course of the competition.

7. No competitor may move his/her peg or exchange his/her peg or draw card with another without the organiser's official consent.
8. No competitor shall buy more than one entry ticket for himself/herself from which it follows that all competitors must be strictly restricted to one draw.
9. Competitors must retain all fish in keepnets which comply with the relevant EA Byelaws. Competitors must take every practicable step to keep their fish alive and, after weighing them, must ensure their careful return to the water. If, for any reason fish are seen to be in distress, a competitor or match official has the right to demand that they be weighed immediately and returned to the water during the course of the match.
10. A Competitor shall have in use one rod or pole, one line and one single hook at one time, but may have other rods or poles and tackle assembled for use in position behind him/her, if possible, providing that no such other tackles are baited.
11. Any bait, subject to local rules, can be used except live or dead fish, frogs, spinning baits or artificial lures.
12. No competitor shall have live or dead fish in his/her possession before a match. All competitors must submit to a search if requested by a contest official.
13. Before the starting signal no competitor must on any account groundbait or loose feed the swim but will be allowed to wet a line, plumb the depth and test the float, mix and wet groundbait, clear his/her ground of weed or obstructions and position his/her equipment. On no account must a feeder be used before the starting signal.
14. Competitors may receive assistance to or from their peg, or both, for themselves or their tackle, or both.
15. All groundbait may be thrown in by hand, or by use of one or two handed catapults, throwing sticks, swim feeders, bait droppers and bait cups, but no other mechanical means of projecting groundbait is allowed. No bait shall be introduced with a pole cup or bait dropper attached to an extra rod/pole whilst continuing to fish.
16. A competitor must strike, play and land his/her own fish.

17. No bait, equipment or information can be given to any competitor during the course of the match. Competitors withdrawing from the match are not allowed to give their groundbait or hookbait to or approach another competitor during the duration of a match.
18. Any competitor who abandons his/her peg having decided to cease taking part in the match but who decides to continue fishing must do so outside the confines of the length being used for the match.
19. All competitors shall, as far as possible, prevent any persons other than match officials from entering the fishing ground.
20. A competitor may wade provided that the water does not extend above the knees unless he/she can touch the bank with fingertips, in which case the water can extend above the knees. When platforms are used, the water must not come over the knees when standing on a river/lake bed.
21. No competitor shall leave his/her peg at any time during the course of the match other than to answer the call of nature and then he/she must not leave his/her baited hook in the water. At the end of the match, a competitor must remain at his/her peg until his/her catch has been weighed unless he/she has been detailed for weighing duties. Any competitor so detailed must have a witness to the weighing of his/her own catch.
22. A competitor must cease fishing at the finishing signal. Should he/she still be playing a fish hooked before the signal is given, he/she will be permitted no more than fifteen minutes after the time has been called to land the fish.
23. All fish caught are eligible for weighing with the exception of game fish and crustaceans. It will be the responsibility of the scalesman to return all live fish to the water after weighing, dead fish, handed to the competitor by the scalesman, must be returned after the match, to the headquarters by the competitor concerned and placed in the receptacle provided.

Any fish suspected of being weighed or any fish considered suspicious by the weighers must be laid before the match organisers and the angler's weight be not confirmed until a ruling has been obtained.

If stewards recommended the disqualification of a competitor they will weigh his/her fish in case the ruling is not upheld.

24. All catches will be weighed to the nearest quarter of an ounce or ten grammes rounded up.
25. Each competitor will be responsible for ensuring the correct weight of their catch is recorded by the Steward and sign the sheet to that effect. In any dispute the decision of the weighers and the organisers will be final.
26. All fish must be weighed at the competitor's peg. Unless the bankside terrain renders impossible, no catch shall be carried more than ten yards to the scales.

27. Competitors are responsible for ensuring that their pegs are clear of litter and no competitor may have his/her catch weighed in who has litter lying on the banks of his/her swim.
28. Any objection to an angler's conduct, for whatever reason, must be lodged in writing with a match official or weigher within one hour of the end of the match. In all cases the objector shall inform the offender of his/her intentions at the time in order that he/she may speak in his/her own defence. Should an offender after receiving such a warning leave the match scene, the objection shall be deemed to have been sustained and the match organisers must inform him/her of their findings and punishment (if any) within seven days.
29. All the foregoing rules are subject to the byelaws of the Environment Agency.
30. All holders of trophies must, on presentation of them, give a written guarantee for their safety and shall undertake to return same (when applicable) in a clean presentable condition when asked by the organisers. In the case of a team trophy, all members of that team are obliged under this rule.
31. Any angler found to have been in contravention of these rules will be disqualified.
32. Any association or organisation wishing to deviate from these recommended AT rules must advertise the fact and list the deviation on the match entry ticket and other literature.

**THE FOLLOWING RULES WILL ONLY APPLY WHEN A TEAM
COMPETITION AS WELL AS AN INDIVIDUAL EVENT IS BUILT INTO
THE MATCH.**

33. Details of each angler making up the team must be entered on a team card (or sheet) which must be handed in before the match begins. No alterations in the make-up of a team will be permitted once the draw has begun.
34. A team championship may be decided in two ways, by means of aggregate weight or by means of points. Where the latter is preferred the AT recommend that the system to be adopted be the same that set out in Rule 48 of the Trust's National Championship rules.
35. The use of lead, including any alloy or compound lead, in the form of split shot or any other suitable thing for weighing fishing lines is prohibited. The prohibition does not apply to weights of lead, alloy or compound lead, less than 28.35 grms if such lead, alloy or compound lead, is incorporated in the construction of swim feeders or self cocking floats.

SECTION 1 CARE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Litter/Nylon Line

Litter is anti-social and unsightly, and the anti-litter laws have been further strengthened through the Environmental Protection Act of 1990. **Never drop litter or discard tackle and remember that discarded nylon line is particularly hazardous to wildlife.** Carry rubbish bags in order to always pick up any discarded litter or line you find, and take them home.

Discarded line should be burnt or cut into short lengths before disposal to avoid entangling wildlife at waste tips.

Crack-offs on the cast, and snagged rigs in either bankside or underwater environments, should be removed immediately where practicable or reported to club bailiffs for removal.

Choose your own swim with care to reduce the risk of snagging on trees or bankside vegetation.

Temporary floats such as balloons, which are jerked free from the line when the bait reaches the required area, constitute litter, and must always be recovered.

Wildlife And The Bankside

Respect the environment and minimise disruption to waterside wildlife. Do not light fires, and avoid damage to fences or crops. Do not break down bankside vegetation, although the judicious trimming of plants is acceptable to re-establish existing angling 'pegs' or 'swims'. This should be done carefully and sympathetically, taking out only what is necessary in order to fish the area properly and leaving the surroundings in a tidy condition. In all cases, check that club rules allow pruning by individuals.

New swims should only be cut with the permission of the fishery owner or tenant, taking due consideration for the environment and to anglers in existing swims.

Some birds nest on shingle islands at gravel pits, or in the bankside, not just in trees, bushes and reedbeds as we commonly think. April to June are the most sensitive months, when species such as common terns, kingfishers and little ringed plovers are sensitive to disturbance (this can include simply remaining close to a nest for a long period). Disturbing nesting birds is illegal. Note that, on occasion, fishery owners and managers may designate swims temporarily out of bounds because they are adjacent to nesting birds. Always treat this with the utmost respect and comply.

Never leave rods on the bank with hooks still baited, as these food items could be picked up by birds or animals.

Beware of birds swimming into your line or picking up surface baits, as major entanglements can follow. Remember too, that swans can easily reach food a metre below the surface. To avoid unnecessary problems, try not to fish where people habitually feed water-fowl.

Never attempt to restrain an injured swan (or other large bird or animal), by holding onto line it may be caught in or hooked to. Severe injury and heightened trauma often follow. For swans and geese, cut the line and report to the rescue organisations shown below. Smaller birds can often be best dealt with by unhooking or freeing at the time of the incident, or being held comfortably in a small box or other dark space if treatment is required.

(These are recommended guidelines from the bird rescue organisations.)

National Swan Sanctuary Hotline
07000 SWAN UK

Or 01784 431667

Or RSPCA 0870 55 55 999

Or Wildlife Hospital Trust 01844292292

Always carry these contact telephone numbers, and report sick or injured animals to them. The problem may not be angling-related and may give warning of a serious problem at the water. Either way, report the incident for the sake of the wildlife living by the water.

Working parties and other bankside management should be undertaken in a sympathetic manner, to manage and improve the habitat for **all** wildlife, creating a total environment into which the angler will fit, but does not dominate. For further information on this and vegetation management such as coppicing, hedging and planting, suggested reference books are included in Appendix A

On Sites designated for their nature conservation value such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), it is a legal requirement to consult Natural England (in England), the Countryside Council for Wales (In Wales), or Scottish Natural Heritage (in Scotland), on any proposed developments or changes in management of the site.

Hygiene

On waters where toilets are not provided, anglers should carry and always use a trowel or suitable trenching tool.

Pollution

The Environment Agency runs a total service to fight pollution and improve water quality on our behalf. If serious pollution is reported. Agency staff will come to the site within two hours (4 hours outside office hours). Environment Agency Hotline (24 hours) 0800 807060. This number (which is printed on your rod licence) can also be used to report illegal fish movements, fish-stealing or introduction.

Fish Legal, the legal arm of Angling Trust, fights for compensation through the civil courts when pollutions occur and represents the legal interests of anglers.

Before Fish Legal can act for you, you need to be a member of Angling Trust.

SECTION 2 GENERAL BEHAVIOUR

Conduct At The Waterside

Always park your vehicle considerately and safely, especially on farm land.

Show consideration to other anglers and water users. It is good angling practice to minimise bankside noise and movement, and to avoid fishing in a way which interferes with other water users.

Always consider the peace and quiet enjoyed by residents on or close to fisheries at all times, but especially at night.

Banksticks, umbrella poles and other accessories should not be knocked in with a hammer or other implement. If the ground is very hard, use threaded poles, banksticks, pegs etc.

Do not use bright lights at night; use a shaded torch only.

Before joining other anglers for a social chat, consider that this is not always welcome. If you do so, remove your bait from the water. Also, do not use any equipment such as mobile phones, radios or TVs which are audible to others. Do not shout or use bad language.

Avoid casting into other anglers' swims, or distance casting that stops other anglers from fishing areas of a water normally accessible from their swim. If using two or more rods (subject to Agency byelaws and local club rules), remember that rod butts must not be further apart than a maximum spread of three metres.

Be aware of any specific rules relating to the fishery - and observe them.

Environment Agency Licences/Water Permits

Always purchase and carry current Agency rod licence(s) appropriate to the number of rods used (this applies to England & Wales only). This helps the Agency to secure the funds necessary to protect and improve our fishing.

We strongly recommend that day-tickets and season-tickets should be issued by clubs and fisheries only on production of a current Agency licence.

Always obtain a current fishing permit and abide by its regulations.

Always be polite and helpful to Agency staff - they are there to help you and to protect your interests.

Be sure to read and understand the current Agency byelaws in the region you are fishing, there are sometimes significant differences in what is allowed between regions. It is your responsibility to be aware of these restrictions.

A statutory coarse fish close season (March 15 - June 15 inclusive) applies to all rivers, streams and drains in England & Wales. It also applies to a few stillwaters and canals designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs); if in doubt contact the local Environment Agency office for advice.

Be aware that whilst there is no legal requirement for most stillwaters to close, some fishery owners impose non-statutory close seasons on their waters.

General Safety

When long casting, watch out for people on the far bank in case the line breaks. **Always use an adequate breaking-strain line when using heavy weights. Shock leaders are recommended for heavyweight distance casting. Always ensure that they are securely attached to the main line and that they are safe, so that any knot will pass through the rig should a breakage occur.**

Be aware of the dangers of wading and never wade where you are not sure it is safe to do so. The use of a wading-staff or landing-net pole will provide warning of sudden depth changes or a soft river bed.

On flooded rivers, beware of undercut banks and rising water levels.

OVERHEAD POWER CABLES-LOOK OUT-LOOK UP!

- Never fish within 30 metres of any electric power lines.
- Never forget you can be electrocuted even if your rod or pole does not actually touch a power line - watch out!
- Look out for warning signs



Always notify someone of where you intend to fish and what time you are expected to return.

In pulling for a break to free a snagged line, be aware leads/tackle, (even a float) can fly back and cause serious injury. Apply leverage sideways away from you, or at least turn away from the direction of pull to safeguard your eyes; thick clothing may also help avoid injury.

Always wear a life-jacket or other buoyancy aid when fishing from a boat, even though you may be a competent swimmer. (See Appendix M for full details on boats.)

When fishing from very steep, slippery river-banks it is sensible to use a length of rope tied to a tree or post for assistance. You may also wish to consider wearing a lightweight buoyancy aid.

Never walk out onto frozen waters. The ice is usually too thin to support a person's weight. Falling in can lead to lives being lost, both yours and those of any rescuers.

Take care when moving about at night. We suggest carrying a whistle in order to attract attention in an emergency.

Anglers should be aware of the dangers of Weil's Disease, which is transmitted through rats' urine on the bankside and at the water's edge. Cover any open cuts, however small, with waterproof dressings. Food must not be put on the ground and hands must be as clean as possible when eating and preparing food. Never put wet line in your mouth or trim knots with your teeth. Most cases start with an influenza-like illness, which resolves in two to three weeks. Common features are sudden onset of fever, intense headache, severe pains in calf and back muscles, red eyes and prostration. Some cases develop abdominal pains with diarrhoea and vomiting or meningitis. If these symptoms occur, consult a doctor immediately.

In the case of severe rat infestation, it should be reported to the water owner. If waters are publicly owned, report to the Pest Control Services division of the Environmental Health Services at your local borough or district council.

Match Fishing Code

All competitors must be in possession of a current Environment Agency rod licence.

All matches should be run in accordance with laid down rules; ideally these should be Angling Trust Model Coarse Match Rules and all competitors should be aware of these rules at the outset. These rules must include compliance with local byelaws.

Every care must be taken to ensure no inconvenience is caused to others unless by previous agreement; this includes the parking of vehicles.

Competitors should only fish swims which have been drawn/allocated.

Every care must be taken to safeguard fish and other wildlife

At the weigh-in, fish must be moved to the mouth of the keep-net whilst it is still in the water, large fish should be placed on the scales individually.

All competitors must ensure that their swims are clear of litter. Failure to do so for instance under Angling Trust Model Match Rules will mean automatic disqualification.

Remember that in a match irresponsible behaviour by one competitor often leads to action being taken against all.

For full details of Angling Trust Model Coarse Match Rules see page 37

“Implementing Child Protection in Angling”

Angling Trust has put together an easy to use “Implementing Child Protection” Pack, which includes Template Forms, an Action Plan and contacts for advice. For copies or guidance please speak to Angling Trust

SECTION 3 TACKLE, RIGS AND BAITS

TACKLE

(a) General

Always use balanced tackle that is in good condition and suitable for the species and fishery situation. If in doubt, seek advice.

Be aware that 'line class' records can give rise to fishing with tackle that is far too light for the intended quarry. This is actively discouraged.

Do not fish in areas where lost fish are a virtual certainty (i.e. excessively snaggy swims).

(b) Pole Fishing

When fishing canals do not place your pole across the towpath, restricting the access rights of other users. The same applies to park lakes and other busy places with public access.

Ensure that spare poles and pole sections are positioned parallel to the bank, preferably on a pole rack, to allow unobstructed passage for other bankside users.

When landing fish ensure that your pole can be unshipped without causing similar obstruction.

Always ensure that you remove your pole in good time to allow boats to pass.

Never allow your pole to encroach onto other people's gardens, fences and paths etc without permission.

Do not leave your pole unattended with a baited hook-left in the water; it endangers fish, is particularly vulnerable to tackle loss, and is illegal (Environment Agency Bylaw), and baited hooks left out of the water can be picked up by birds and animals.

Pole fishing leaves you particularly vulnerable to overhead power cables-LOOK OUT-LOOK UP!

Take the weight of long poles across your knees to reduce the risk of back strain.

(c) Rod numbers/night fishing

Never leave baited rods unattended or unsupervised. Agency byelaws require that while fishing, all rods should be under sufficient control of the angler. Current legislation in England and Wales permits an angler to fish for coarse fish with a maximum of four rods at any one time. Each rod licence entitles the angler to use two rods, with two separate licences required if three, or four rods are to be used. Note that although the four rod limit is a National bylaw in England and Wales, fishery owners or managers retain the right to set a lower limit, if they deem it more suitable.

Whilst on waters with low fish densities multiple rods can be used with no detrimental effects, where fish stocks are high multiple rod usage may not be appropriate and a number of points should be taken into consideration when deciding on the number to use;

- How many rods are actually needed to catch? A single rod approach would be more suitable for certain types of fishing. When fishing for less pressured fish, or alternatively, fish that are wary of disturbance, a single rod approach can be more effective.
- Are you able to fully control multiple rods, and use them sensibly, without impeding the fishing of others in any way? The swim must also be able to accommodate them too.
- Will you be in control of all rods in use, with effective visual and/or audible bite indication (preferably both) on each? On no account should baited rods be left unattended or unsupervised (Environment Agency Byelaw)
- It is recommended that some spacing is left between rods through using either two pods of two rods each, or single bank sticks, to help avoid tangles. Note however that the rods must be placed such that the distance between the butts of the end rods does not exceed three metres (Environment Agency Byelaw)
- Never exceed the number of rods permitted on the fishery, or the number dictated by the applicable Environment Agency bylaw. Ignorance of the rules, or the law, is no defence.

Multiple rod usage can certainly enhance angling productivity, but use only when suitable! We would also add that long stay anglers in particular often fish whilst asleep, which is completely acceptable providing bite alarms are properly used to ensure a bite wakes the angler instantly. Do check buzzers will wake you even when asleep, extension boxes will provide good warning without disturbing other anglers. Also consider speed of access to your rods by putting the bivvy as close as possible, and leaving the door and sleeping bag unzipped whenever practical.

Rigs

(a) General

Your first priority is the safety and well-being of the fish.

Tether-rigs must not be used. If the line breaks, the tackle **must** be free to slide off the line - a towed lead, feeder or float could snag and trap the fish.

(For examples of these dangerous rigs, and some acceptable alternatives, see Appendices C, D, E, F, G, H, & I.)

Remember that if shock-leaders are used, the leader-knot **must always** be able to slide through the rig. Also consider the use of barbless or reduced barb hooks as an additional precaution.

While the deliberate foul-hooking of fish is illegal, it is inevitable that this occasionally happens accidentally. Some regional Agency byelaws require that accidentally foul-hooked fish are returned immediately to the water. Other byelaws limit the number and/or size of hooks that may be used in conjunction with a single rod or attached to a lure, in order to reduce the likelihood of foul-hooking fish. Avoid rigs that are likely to result in foulhooking. Similarly, rigs that are likely to result in deep-hooking of fish should be avoided.

Great consideration should be given before using double-hook rigs, where two separately baited hooks are employed on the same rod. Extreme caution should be taken, and they should **not** be used in heavy weed. They may also be banned in some regions by the local byelaws. To avoid the dangers of leaving a fish tethered to a snag in the event of a break in the main line, **both hook links must be free to slide off the line.**

Please use barbless or reduced barb hooks wherever possible; the widespread use of these should be actively encouraged, especially barbless in the smaller sizes, 14 downwards. Note however some anglers believe large barbless hooks can be harmful, particularly for perch.

Bent hooks should not be used (The term 'bent' hooks refers to certain long shank carp hooks bent at 30° in the middle)

The use of most sizes of lead weights is illegal and non-toxic weights are widely available. Lead weights of 0.06grams (No.8 shot) or less or of more than 28.35 grams (1oz) may be used. While it is legal to use lead "dust" shot in size 8 and smaller, they are toxic if ingested by birds, and should be used with care; always use in spill-proof containers and dispose of used lead safely at home.

Lead core leaders as used for carp fishing can easily tangle on underwater snags due to their tendency to wrap around snags, etc. and tether a fish, should the main-line break. There is a substantial body of opinion against the use of lead-core leaders. If they are to be used we strongly recommend that extreme caution be exercised and the following points be adopted;

- Maximum length of lead core leader should be 3', holding down longer lengths of line than this can easily be achieved by using flying back-leads
- Leads **MUST** be able to slide over the leader-knot so a lost fish is not also towing the lead as well as the leader; splicing the two lines together in accordance with the instructions given by the manufacturers of lead core is usually sufficient to achieve this but do **CHECK** that the lead can detach itself from the leader
- 12lb minimum main line to be used
- As an added precaution the use of safety leads (inline) or safety-clips (pendant) which release the lead, is recommended; check that the safety clip does release the lead properly
- Lead core should not be used with helicopter-rigs as there are too many opportunities for the hook link to jam on the lead core, leaving a lost fish towing a lead

- Consider using a barbless hook as an added precaution to release a tethered fish
- Lead core should never be used on weedy or snag filled waters (which would in any case largely work against the purpose of lead core)

Rigs

(b) For Predators

On most waters when bait fish are used, pike are usually the target species. **Wire traces must always be used for both pike and zander.** Otherwise, they can bite through the trace, leaving hooks etc. in the fish, with potentially fatal results.

For lure-fishing too, regardless of target species, wire traces should be used.

For additional points on pike and zander tackle, rigs and baits, see Appendices J,K,&L.

It is recognised that the use of wire traces may be an impediment to eel and perch angling. As a first step, please consider the use of wire covered with soft silicone tubing. Failing this, employ braids with a high degree of abrasion resistance as a hook link. For eels, perch and catfish, use a single hook only (though not stainless steel, which does not easily corrode); do not use double or treble hooks. If a pike or zander does still take this, and bites through the hook link, a single hook is very unlikely to cause any damage.

If pike or zander are taking baits presented on hook-links for eels, catfish, perch or chub, carefully consider changing bait or venue, or in the case of eels and perch, accepting a lower catch rate through reverting to wire traces.

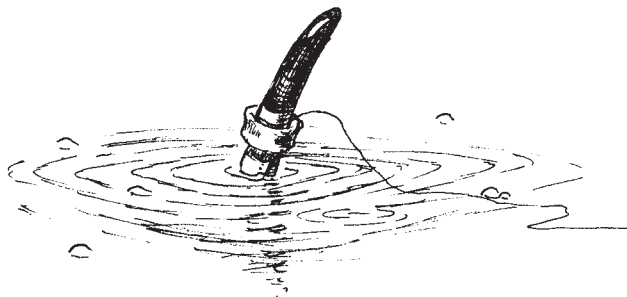
Baits

Always use free bait offerings and groundbait in sensible quantities to ensure that uneaten food does not accumulate in fisheries, especially small, shallow bodies of still water. This will protect the quality of the aquatic environment and safeguard other anglers' sport.

Observe any fishery rules on bait restrictions.

For bait-fish, also see section five 'Fish Movements & Disease'.

Thoroughly soak and cook all nuts, seeds and pulses. (See [Appendix B](#))



SECTION 4 FISH HANDLING

Essential Equipment:

Carry and use

- a knotless landing net, big enough for the intended species. For pike and zander, special wide mesh nets may be used to minimise tangling with treble hooks. Dual mesh nets also help. The top wide mesh reduces water drag when the net is raised, and the close mesh or sacking base enfolds the fish while ensuring no damage is done to the fins or the scales.
- a disgorger and forceps.
- a quality unhooking mat suitable for large fish.
- a weigh sling or bag in good condition.
- anti-bacterial solutions suitable for fish.

Handling:

Always use an unhooking mat spread on a soft flat surface, rather than on uneven or hard bankside (e.g. gravel).

Be aware that watch straps, lapel badges and jewellery could catch on, and damage, a fish.

Minimise the time the fish is out of water, and handle it as little as possible. Covering the head of the fish with a wet cloth or piece of wet netting will help keep it calm and stop it flapping.

Note that deep-hooked fish should survive if the hook cannot be removed. Cut the line as far into the mouth as possible. Do not pull hard on the line and always release the fish immediately.

When releasing a fish, support it carefully in the water, facing upstream (if in a river), until it is ready to swim off naturally. Barbel and grayling may have a particularly long recovery time, and should be supported in the water or held in a landing net until fully recovered.

Respect all fish regardless of size or species.

All eels should be returned alive, as it takes a long time for them to reach specimen size. Eels may become land-locked, in which case they will grow to specimen proportions and provide anglers with an interesting target. Once on the bank all eels should be handled with care. It is particularly important that the protective mucus is not removed in handling; never use newspaper to hold them but lay them on their backs and gently hold in this position for a few moments. The eel will calm down and is unlikely to move from this position. Unhook with forceps, if the eel is hooked in the lips or scissors. If the eel is deep hooked cut the line or trace as close to the eel's lips as possible and release immediately. The eel, under these circumstances, will lose the hook very quickly. Do not attempt to remove deep hooks from eels. The heart and other vital organs are very close to the back of the throat and you may cause fatal injuries if you damage them.

Deep hooked perch should be treated with the same care as you would with eels. Hooklengths or traces should be cut as low down as possible and under no circumstances try to use a deep disgorger to remove deep hooks. In perch, the heart is very close to the back of the throat and it has been shown that fish are much more likely to survive if left to shed the hook naturally.

Never drop or throw fish back into the water.

Sacks, slings, mats, nets and your own hands must all be wetted before use; note a mat left in the sun should be dipped in the water to cool it first. Transfer fish back to the water in a sling or enclosed mat, never carry them.

Photography:

Must also see previous section under Handling.

Select location for photography, position unhooking mat plus wet covering etc, and have camera ready, **before** bringing the fish onto the bank.

When holding a fish, support it properly and keep it close to the ground, over an unhooking mat. **Never stand**, as dropping a fish could cause it severe damage.

Photography of eels will be considerably easier if done immediately after the unhooking technique outlined under [Handling](#) above.

Sacks & tubes

Use only when necessary, and retain fish for the minimum time possible. Large fish that have been retained for a prolonged period can be difficult to handle, so be prepared.

These accessories should be of a reputable make, with plenty of holes to provide a good water exchange. Ensure that they are clean and in good condition, and check the water flow through them, otherwise fish could be damaged.

In use, secure in deep water only, even at night. In shallow margins fish may suffer or even die due to extremes of temperature or lack of oxygen. Stake out securely, placing only one fish in each sack or tube. In rivers, ensure that the fish faces upstream.

Check fish regularly, and release them immediately if they show signs of distress. Hold them upright in the water (facing upstream in rivers), until they push off hard of their own accord.

For catfish, zander, perch, big bream and barbel - only tubes should be used, and they must be large enough to properly accommodate the fish. Big bream however, can also be kept safely in large keepnets with 28" diameter rings. Please note that it is also helpful to cover a staked-out keepnet with light, damp sacking or weed. Framed sacks are also suitable.

To help prevent the spread of disease, thoroughly dry all nets and sacks between sessions.

The health and welfare of the fish must always be your first priority.

Keepnets:

Keepnets are only suitable for small shoal fish. Never use for large carp, pike, zander, tench, perch, barbel, catfish or grayling. Large fish are not suited to keepnets because of their size, and others, regardless of size, such as carp and barbel, are unsuited because the serrated front rays of their dorsal fins can be caught and damaged by netting.

Use only when necessary, and retain fish for the shortest time possible.

Locate as with sacks and tubes. A "stake out bar" to prevent the net from collapsing, or a weight on the end of the net is helpful, when wind or current could move it to the detriment of the fish. In moving water, a rectangular section net helps avoid rolling.

Keepnets must comply with Agency byelaws. Those with a drawstring or zip bottom release are best.

The use of keepnets incorporating 'carp sacking' at the bottom to provide a dark, safe area, is to be encouraged. These are often referred to as 'conservation mesh'

KEEPNET CODE

Wet hands before holding fish.

Retain fish in keepnet for minimum period of time.

Once positioned, avoid all unnecessary disturbance.

Do not overcrowd keepnet - when big catches are expected, take two nets.

Always use the largest keepnet possible.

When safe to do so, on still or shallow waters always peg out the keepnet to prevent collapse.

When returning fish to the water or weighing:

Always place the keepnet as near to fishing position as possible - preferably immediately in front, so fish can be placed quickly.

Collapse the keepnet and place the fish gently in the weighing bag or back into the water.

Do not slide or tumble fish down the keepnet.

Place the fish in the keepnet and as quickly as possible.

Environment Agency Fisheries Byelaws on Keepnets, keepsacks and landing nets

- (1) Any person shall be guilty of an offence if he uses:-
 - (a) a landing net with any knotted meshes or meshes of metallic material.
 - (b) a keepnet with any knotted meshes or meshes of metallic material, or having any holes in the mesh larger than 25mm internal circumference, or of less than 2.0 metres in length, or with supporting rings or frames greater than 40cm apart (excluding the distance from the top frame to the first supporting ring or frame) or less than 120cm in circumference.
 - (c) a keepsack not constructed of a soft, dark coloured, non-abrasive, water permeable fabric, or having dimensions of less than 120cm by 90cm if rectangular, or 150cm by 30cm by 40cm if used with a frame or designed with the intention that a frame be used.
- (2) Any person shall be guilty of an offence if he retains more than one fish in a single keepsack at any time.
- (3) This Byelaw shall not apply to any keepnet or keepsack used for retaining eels which have been legally taken by instruments other than rod and line.
- (4) This byelaw was made taking account of the requirement for notification to the European Commission under Council Directive 83/189/EEC.



SECTION 5 FISH STOCKING, MOVEMENTS AND DISEASE

Never remove fish or introduce fish to any water without the consent of the Environment Agency (for England & Wales) and the permission of the fishery owner. This includes the use of fish for live bait, which should NOT be transferred from one water to another, without consent from the Agency. Serious problems have been caused through the illegal transfer of fish. The movement of fish between waters can introduce Spring Viraemia of Carp (SVC) and other diseases or parasites, and it may also result in undesirable species of fish becoming established in waters which could upset the ecological balance of a fishery.

Stocking with fish from any source may only be undertaken once written Section 30 consent has been obtained from the Agency. It is the personal responsibility of the person stocking the fish to ensure that Section 30 consent has been obtained. The introduction of non-native species such as Wels catfish can adversely affect existing fish stocks and ecology, and requires consent from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) or the National Assembly for Wales Agriculture Department (NAWAD) in addition to Section 30 consent. The Agency has produced a free advisory leaflet 'Buyer Beware - Your Guide to Stocking Fish' - and will provide help and advice. If you have any doubts regarding the origin, health or quality of the fish, do not stock.

Unauthorised fish movements are illegal and prosecutable with serious penalties. Any fish stocking carries the risk of introducing diseases into the receiving water. Entire fisheries can be wiped out by diseases (such as SVC), even when the fish introduced appear to be healthy. The risks can be reduced by following the Agency's advice. Only use reputable fish suppliers - ask for references and speak to other fish purchasers. Request all the necessary documentation, and if in doubt, consult the Agency. Do not accept fish or allow them to be stocked without a visual examination. Remember stock fish introduced in the winter might show no signs of disease until the water starts to warm in the spring. Never be tempted by cheap fish, and **always** obtain a proper invoice/receipt. Do not accept fish that are different from those ordered.

To avoid the accidental transfer of fish diseases and parasites, thoroughly dry or disinfect all nets, sacks and weigh-slings between angling sessions.

Stock Densities

Many stillwater coarse fisheries contain stock densities well above those that would occur naturally, and the fish may be almost entirely dependent on anglers' bait to sustain them. While heavily stocked coarse fisheries provide an enhanced level of sport, both anglers and fishery owners should recognise that the stock densities are artificially high and that this has the potential to cause problems in terms of fish health and welfare and water quality, **and it may increase the opportunities for predation by fish-eating birds and mammals**. Within sensible limits heavily stocked fisheries are viable, providing that they are carefully and properly managed. There is useful guidance for fishery owners and managers in *the Institute of Fisheries Managements Stillwater Coarse Fisheries Codes Of Practice*

Conservation of Predators & Eels

Fishery owners sometimes misguidedly cull predator species such as pike from fishing waters but the removal of large fish merely encourages an 'explosion' of younger predator fish, which feed more voraciously, and thus deprives anglers of the sport derived from larger predator specimens and the younger year classes of non-predator species. If it is believed that a water has too many predators, consult the fishery manager and/or the Agency who, in conjunction with the Predator Groups, can advise and often place unwanted fish in other waters.

Eels do not breed in freshwater and are subject to higher levels of predation than most other freshwater species. Fishery owners and managers should consider the consequences to the species of allowing commercial netters to remove eels from their waters as part of the long-term management of the water. The short-term income does not equate with the loss of sport or the potential damage caused to eels stocks throughout Britain. The mature eel must travel many thousands of miles in order to breed and our freshwater stocks are of prime importance in the preservation of the species as a whole.

APPENDIX A SUGGESTED REFERENCE BOOKS & LEAFLETS

Giles, N. (1992). *Wildlife After Gravel; Twenty Years of Practical Research by the Game Conservancy Council and ARC*. Wetland Research Unit, The Game Conservancy Ltd.

Kinsman, J and Kinsman, D. (1990). *Gravel Pit Restoration for Wildlife: A Practical Manual*. RSPB, Sandy, Beds

Brooks, A. and Agate E. (1997). *Waterways and Wetlands*. British Trust for Conservation Volunteers Ltd., London.

The New Rivers and Wildlife Handbook (1994). The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

Cowx, I. (1995). *Rehabilitation of Freshwater Fisheries*. Blackwell Science Ltd., Oxford.

Cowx, I., O'Grady, K and Mills, H. (1994.) *Fisheries Management and Ecology*. Institute of Fisheries Management.

William Howarth (1987). *Freshwater Fishery Law*. Blackstone Press Ltd., London.

Helping Fish in Lowland Streams. The Game Conservancy Trust, Hampshire.

Freshwater Fisheries & Wildlife Conservation; a good practice guide. Environment Agency, edited by Giles, N. (1997).

RSPB (2002). *Habitat Creation Handbook for the Minerals Industry*. RSPB, Sandy.

Hawke, C.J. and Jose, P. *Reedbed Management*. RSPB, Sandy.

Williams, P. *et al.* (2000). *The Pond Book — a guide to the management and creation of ponds*. Ponds Conservation Trust, Oxford.

Merritt, A. (1994). *Wetlands, Industry and Wildlife - a manual of principles and practices*. Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, Slimbridge.

The Sparsholt Guide to the Management of Carp Fisheries (2001) Ed. C P Seagrave. Sparsholt College, Hampshire.

Other sources:

The 'Natural History Books Service' has a comprehensive list of thousands of books currently available. They can be contacted on 01803 865913 or alternatively by e-mail (nhbs@nhbs.co.uk) or on the internet (<http://www.nhbs.co.uk>).

For practical advice on general fishing we would suggest;

For further information on stocking and importing fish:

Buyer Beware - Your Guide to Stocking Fish.

Available from the Environment Agency

Keep Fish Diseases Out

Spring Viraemia of Carp

Controls on the Keeping or Release of Non-Native Fish in England and Wales

A guide to Importing Fish

Available from CEFAS (Centre for Environment Fisheries and Aquaculture Science), Weymouth

Laboratory, Barrack Road, The Nothe, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 8UB, or alternatively on the internet

(www.efishbusiness.com)

APPENDIX B PARTICLE BAITs - PREPARATION GUIDE

Incorrectly prepared particle baits can kill fish. They **must** be prepared according to the instructions for the particular variety. Buy only from reputable stockists.

PARTICLE PREPARATION

No Pre-Soak is necessary Boil for 1 min

Partblend
Flaked Maize
Groats
Moth Beans

Pre-Soak for 6 hrs and Boil for 10-15 mins

Red Dari
White Dari
Wheat
Buckwheat

Pre-Soak for 12-14 hrs and Boil until split

Hemp

Pre-Soak for 12-14 hrs and Boil for 20-30 mins

Chopped TIGERS
Chick Peas
Sweet Lupins
Maple Peas
Tares
Adzuki Beans
Blackeye Beans
Haricot Beans
Red Kidney Beans
Lima Beans
Pinto Beans
Soya Beans

Pre-Soak for 12-18 hrs and Boil for 20-30 mins

Broken Brazils
Peanut Kernels

Pre-Soak for 24hrs and boil for 30 mins

Tiger Nuts
Whole Maize
Whole Brazils

Although there are many more ways of presenting particle baits such as sprouting, fermenting, colouring and flavouring, provided the guidelines are adhered to, the baits listed will be totally harmless to all fish and can be used with the knowledge that they are completely safe.

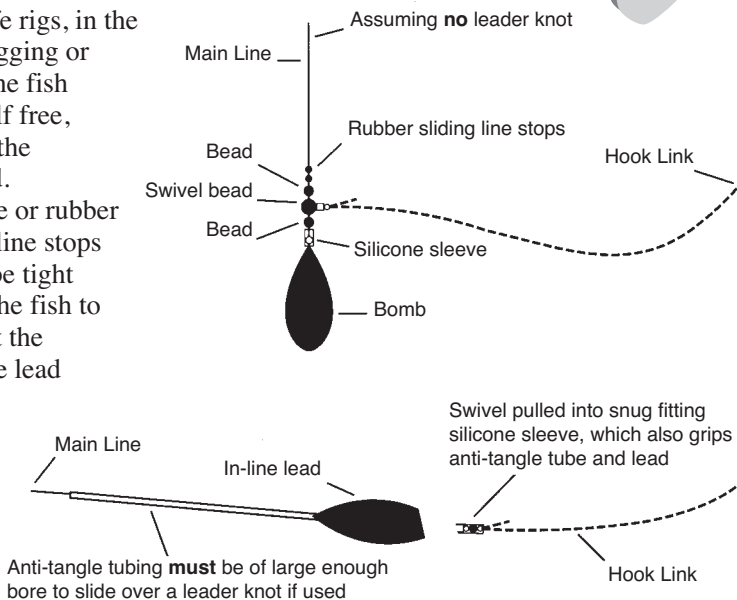
Note: When soaking, particles absorb water quickly. Check and top up after two hours and again after four hours. Always allow plenty of water to cover the particles, and where boiling is specified this **must** be done to ensure safe preparation. If in any doubt, play safe. It is impossible to oversoak.

Our thanks go to Hinders of Swindon for their assistance in the preparation of the above guide.

APPENDIX C SEMI-FIXED LEAD RIGS

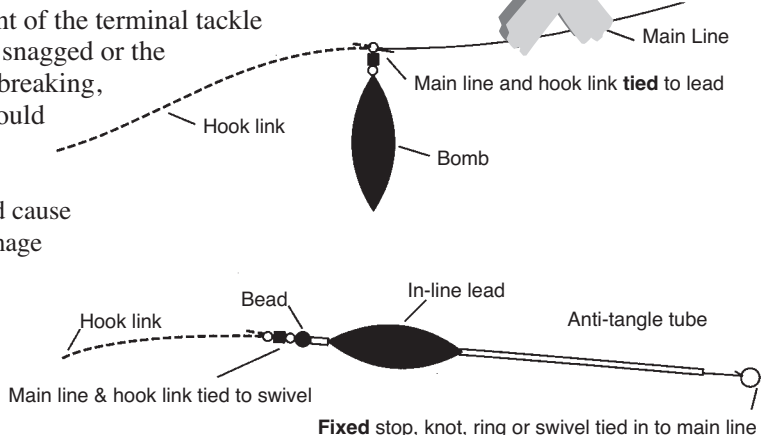
Examples of Safe Non-Tether Rigs - **RECOMMENDED**

By using safe rigs, in the event of snagging or line break, the fish can pull itself free, leaving just the hook to shed. Note silicone or rubber sleeves and line stops should just be tight enough for the fish to hook against the weight of the lead but loose enough to pull free.



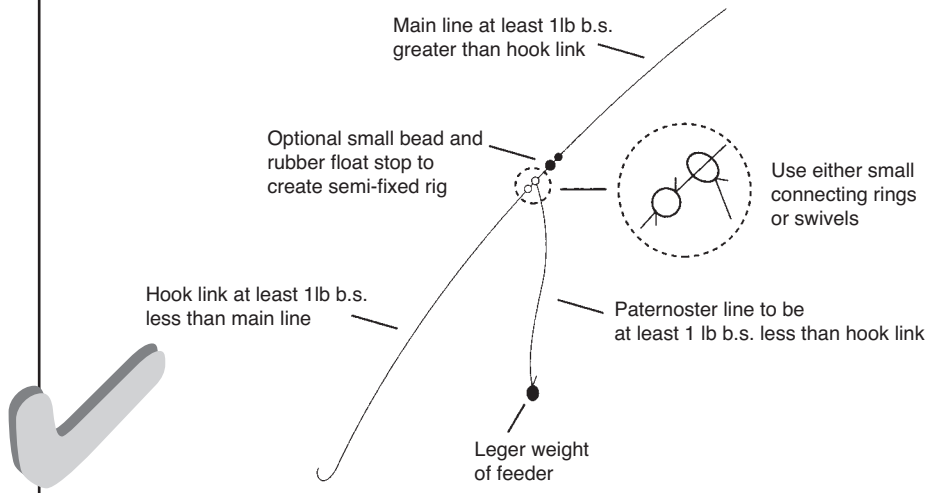
Examples of Tether Rigs - **NOT TO BE USED**

In the event of the terminal tackle becoming snagged or the main line breaking, the fish would remain tethered. This would cause severe damage to the fish and could be fatal.

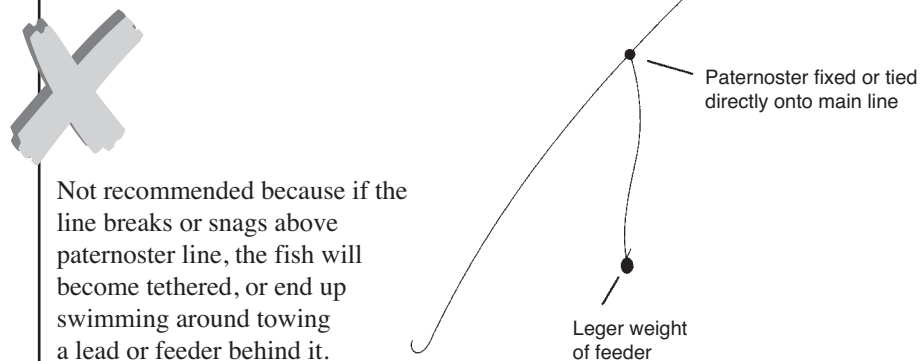


APPENDIX D NON-TETHER FEEDER/LEGER RIGS

Free running or semi-fixed Paternoster Rig

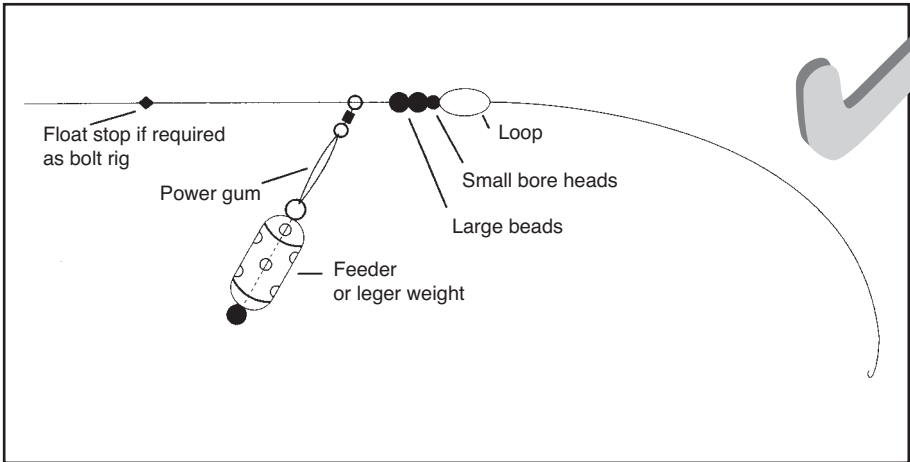


Fixed Paternoster Rig



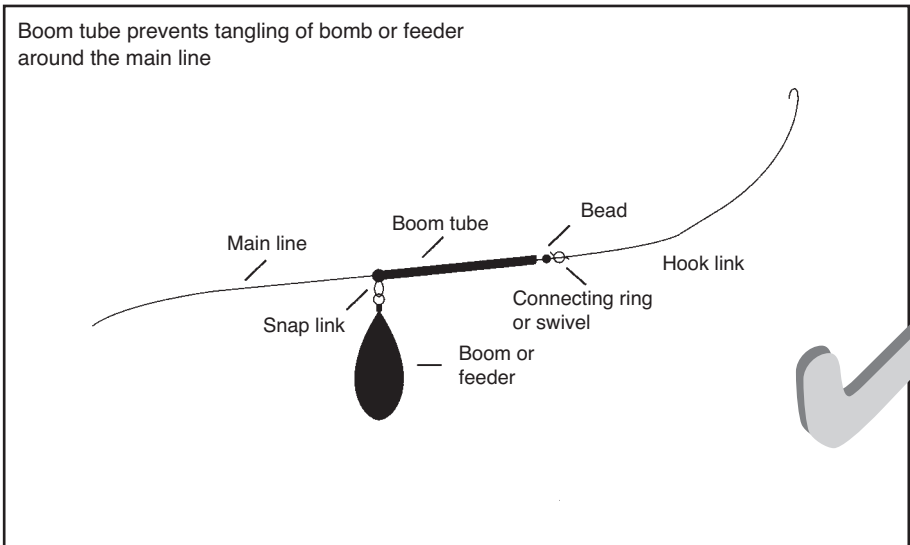
Free running or semi-fixed feeder rig

Ideal for heavier main lines, may tangle if used with light lines at distance



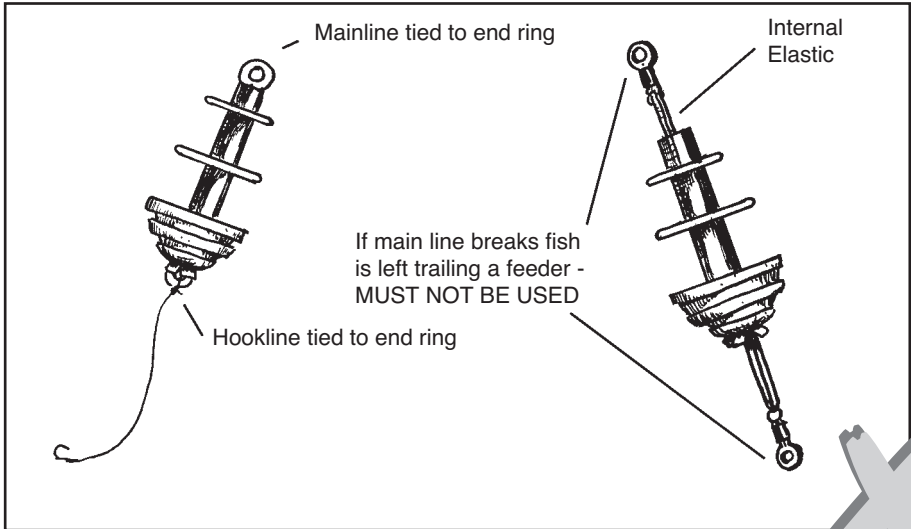
Free running ledger or feeder rig

Boom tube prevents tangling of bomb or feeder around the main line

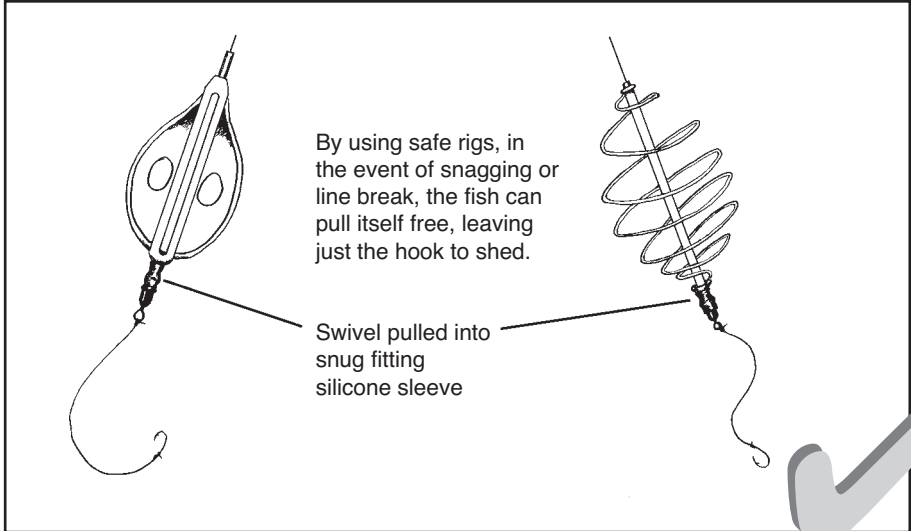


APPENDIX E METHOD FEEDERS

Fixed Method Feeders - THIS STYLE MUST NOT BE USED!



Inline Method feeders - SAFE NON-TETHER VERSIONS



APPENDIX F LOOP RIGS

Standard Loop Rig



Commonly used for light line feeder fishing

Use typically with 41b main line (maximum 51b), 21b/31b hook links

Note use with caution-must not be used with heavy mainlines and hook links as in the event of the main line breaking the lead or feeder could still be attached to the hook link

Safety Loop Rig-an Alternative for use with Heavier Lines

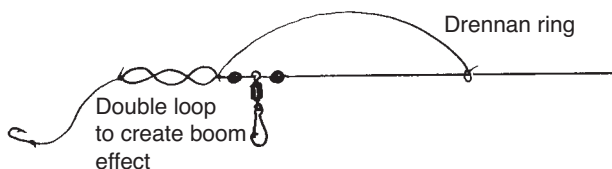


Fig A

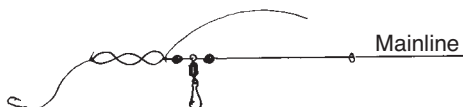
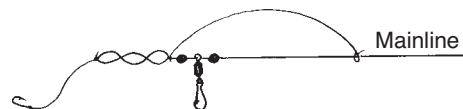


Fig B



Prepare a hooklength, tie on hook and tie a double overhand loop at the other end.

Onto the mainline, thread a small ring (from a Drennan rig ring to a curtain ring), then a fine bore bead, then a snap-link swivel and finally another bead, **this bead must be a fine bore type (hole just big enough to allow line through).**

With these threaded on, tie a large overhand loop to the end of the mainline (leaving 12-15 ins of spare line on the tag end (Fig A), then halve this loop by tying it in the middle to form a double loop (this gives a boom effect which helps stop the hooklength from tangling)

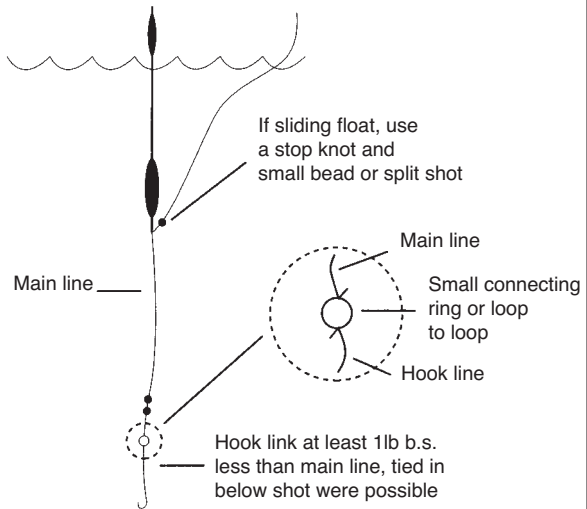
Tie this tag end to the ring (using a four turn blood knot), encasing as you do so, the swivel and beads (Fig B), **check now that the bead and swivel will not pass the knot and ride over the hooklength,** then connect your hooklength loop to loop.

This will pick up very little “debris” in a moving water situation but a fish will shed the weight in the event of the line breaking anywhere on the rig. It minimises tangling, and also acts as a bolt rig.

APPENDIX G FLOAT RIGS

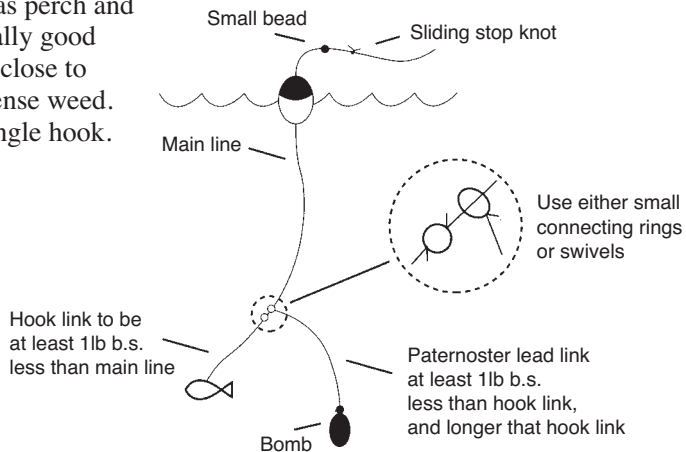
Safe Float Rig

By utilising a lighter and minimum length hook link, if the tackle becomes snagged and a break occurs, the risk to fish or wildlife is minimised.

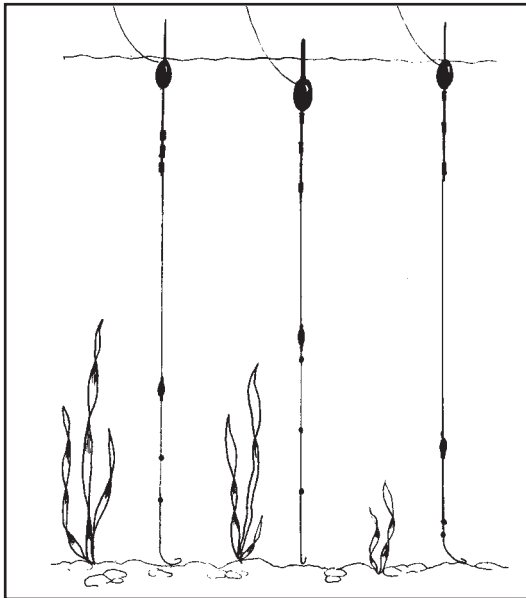
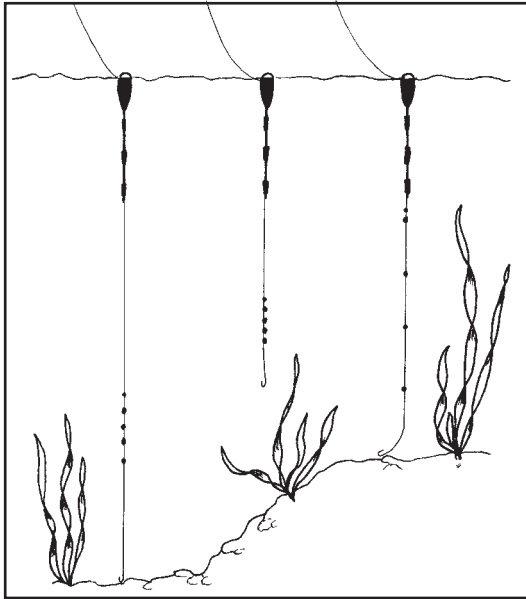


Safe Float Paternoster Rig (NOT SUITABLE for waters containing pike or zander)

For use with fish baits for such species as perch and chub. Especially good when fishing close to snags or in dense weed. Use only a single hook.



APPENDIX H SAFE POLE FLOATS

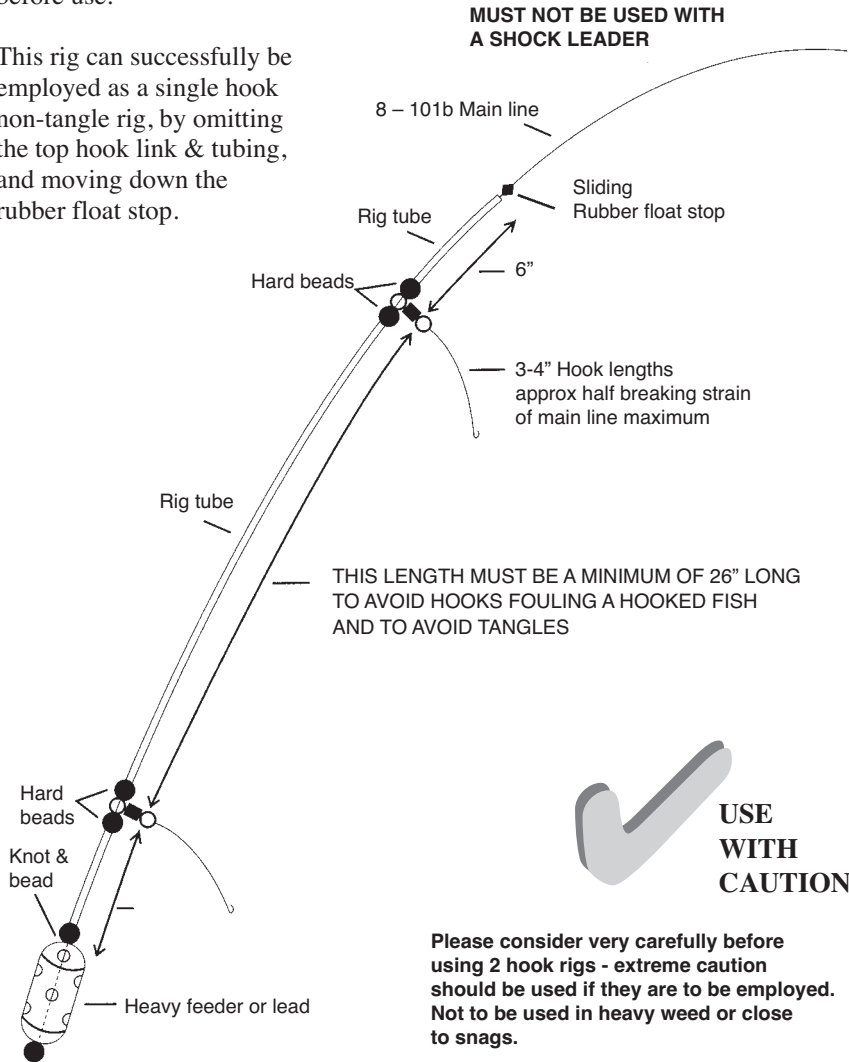


APPENDIX I TWO HOOK SEMI-FIXED FEEDER RIG

TAKE GREAT CARE HOW 2 HOOK RIGS ARE TIED, THE HOOK-LINKS MUST COME FREE OF THE MAIN LINE IN THE EVENT OF A BREAK.

Note: On many waters, more than one hook per rod is not permitted. Check carefully before use.

This rig can successfully be employed as a single hook non-tangle rig, by omitting the top hook link & tubing, and moving down the rubber float stop.



APPENDIX J ADDITIONAL POINTS ON PIKE AND ZANDER

(Also see 'Fish Handling', Section 4)

Use a main line of 5.4kg (121b) minimum breaking strain.

Correctly placed hooks in bait fish no larger than 20cm (5in) are recommended to minimise the chances of deep hooking. As a guide, for most suspended baits, place the top hook in the dorsal fin root and the other behind the pectoral fin. For legered baits, place the top hook in the tail root and the other no further forward than the dorsal fin.

Wire traces must always be used, with a minimum breaking strain of 6.8kg (15lbs), preferably 11.7-13.6kg (25-301bs). Use a minimum length of 450mm (18in) for bait and 15" for lure fishing.

When paternostering or suspending a bait, use a wire uptrace at least 150mm (6in) longer than the main trace. Check traces regularly for kinking or fraying, and dispose of safely if this occurs.

Use semi-barbless hooks which should be of the smallest sizes (size 10, 8 and 6) consistent with the safe landing and handling of the fish. Do not use stainless steel hooks as, in the event of losing a hook in a fish or snag, they will not degrade.

Never wait for a second run. Strike as soon as you are sure that the fish has the bait in its jaws.

Gaffs should NEVER be used. Always use a large knotless landing net. (Gaffs are now illegal in all Agency regions.)

Backbiters. When using drop-back/backbiter type indicators, care should be taken to ensure that they are set up properly, i.e. to indicate a slack line or drop-back take which occurs when a fish picks up the bait and moves toward the angler. The line (which should be tightened down to the bait) is clipped up to the indicator sight head just behind the reel spool. The indicator arm should be parallel with the rod butt, allowing the arm to drop through 90° in the event of a slack line or drop-back take.

Forward takes, i.e. when the fish picks up the bait and moves away from the angler, will be registered by the line being pulled from the clip and the arm dropping from horizontal to vertical.

Backbiters occasionally **freeze** in position, so in sub-zero temperatures check them regularly.

Freelining. At no time should a freelined bait be employed. This method is likely to result in a late indication of a take, potentially resulting in a deeply hooked fish. The only exceptions to this are if you have visual contact with the bait, or when fishing sink and draw.

Fly fishing for pike. The following points should be noted.

- A rod with a minimum AFTM rating of 10 weight is essential
- Use a wire leader of 20-301b test, minimum length 12", and check regularly for fraying or unravelling. Note 301b plastic coated wire is preferable, and fly fishing for pike in shallow water can employ shorter traces but this must be used with extreme care
- Behind this use a leader of 12-181b mono filament, and check regularly for damage
- Any links or swivels to be of at least 301b test
- Use top quality hooks, micro-barb or barbless
- It is essential to wear eye protection as the large flies used for pike can be dangerous
- Always be careful on the back cast not to endanger other people or wildlife
- Pike fly fishing is often carried out in the summer, so be particularly aware that fish should be returned as quickly as possible in warm weather

Lure Fishing

Standard forceps may be inadequate for lure fishing, so a pair of fine nosed pliers with long handles is better, or alternatively a tool called a HookOut is also recommended. These give better leverage on the hook, and keep your hand clear of both the pike's teeth and any free hooks. If difficulty is still experienced in removing the trebles then cut the hook with a strong pair of side cutters or small bolt croppers. Close your eyes when cutting the hook in case the cut piece flies in your direction, and remove the cut pieces of hook with pliers.

A wire trace of at least fifteen inches of 30lb test with a strong swivel and snap link is essential when lure fishing for pike or zander, coupled with a minimum 15lb line. The use of braided lines of higher breaking strains also offers greater sensitivity than nylon monofilament while being no thicker. For techniques such as jerkbait fishing specialised tackle is required and even 15lb line is not sufficiently strong to withstand constant casting.

HANDLING

Handle all pike and zander with the utmost care. On landing, lay them in the landing net on an unhooking mat, never on uncovered hard ground. When boat fishing, be sure to protect the fish from the bottom boards with an unhooking mat or other suitable soft material.

To help with unhooking, all predator anglers should carry a set of 250mm (10in) forceps and cutters suitable not only for cutting trace wire, but also for cutting through a hook.

To control the fish during unhooking, place it on its back on the mat while still in the landing net. By kneeling astride the fish, strategically placed folds of the net over the fish can be used to control it. To provide a confidence boost for the next stage, wear a glove on the left hand (right hand if you are left handed) and carefully slip the fingers of your gloved hand beneath the gill cover, taking care not to damage the gill rakers, and slide your fingers forward until they rest on the back of the lower jaw. Light upward pressure will persuade the fish to open its mouth and with the use of 250mm (10in) forceps the hooks can be easily removed. This technique makes gags redundant and they should not be used. In the event that the hooks are further back a 'deep throat' disgorger can also be a valuable aid. A hook in the back of the fish's throat can sometimes best be reached by carefully inserting the forceps via the gill cover. Great care must be taken to not damage the gill rakers. If you are in any doubt or are unsure, sack the fish safely and seek the assistance of another angler. Four hands are often better than two.

Always consider the welfare of the fish first. Be prepared to offer assistance to other anglers, especially if they appear to have difficulties or seem to be inexperienced. If in doubt yourself, do not be afraid to seek assistance.

Treble hooks can tangle and knot in the landing net mesh. If this happens it is best to use wire cutters to cut out each hook of the treble at the bend in order to extract from the net. The use of special large mesh landing nets will help eliminate this problem.

Weighing should be carried out by using a weigh sling or soft net, not with the balance hook under the chin of the fish.

Pike and zander may look tough, but they have a greater tendency than others to suffer as a result of poor handling, stress and low concentrations of dissolved oxygen. Bear this in mind, especially in warm weather when they fight hard and should be landed, and returned to the water, with the minimum of fuss.

Nylon-covered wire can quickly deteriorate and should be safely discarded after each session.

Double check that all the elements of your tackle are sound and capable of doing the job properly and safely.

See Appendix K for instructions on unhooking pike.

See the following pages for safe pike and zander rigs.

We are indebted to the Pike Anglers' Club of Great Britain for their specialised advice on pike handling and care.

APPENDIX K UNHOOKING PIKE

When landing pike, use a large knotless mesh-landing net - triangular nets should have arms at least 36" in length, preferably longer.

With the pike safely on the bank, the hooks have to be removed.

Despite the fact that the pike is well equipped with teeth it will not bite you.

If you are unsure, use a soft leather glove.

A. Lay the fish on its back on a good quality unhooking mat, and gently kneel astride it.

B. Slide your first and second fingers of your left hand under the pike's gill covers, making sure that you do not damage the gill-rakers.

C. Slide your hand firmly forwards until you feel the jaw bone, and lift firmly. The pike's mouth will open, revealing the hooks. Using a long, strong pair of forceps (10" plus), remove the hooks.

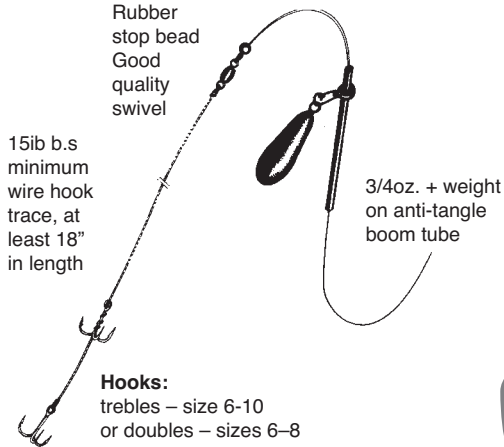
(The above is for right handed people - reverse sides if you are left handed.)



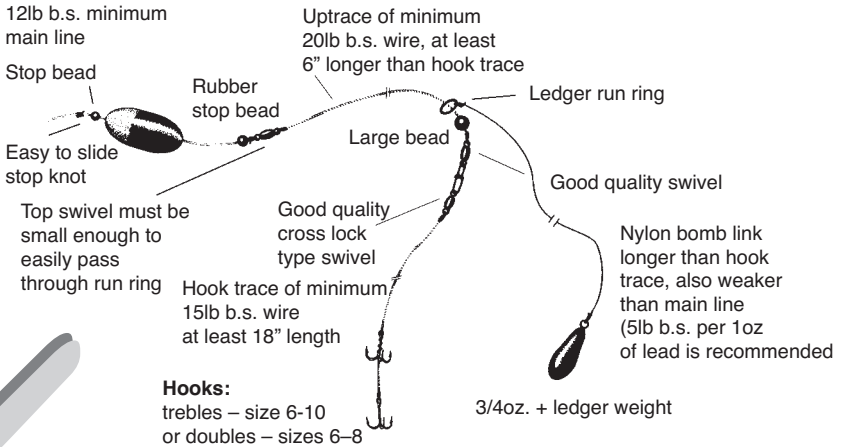
APPENDIX L RECOMMENDED SAFE PIKE & ZANDER RIGS

Deadbait leger rig

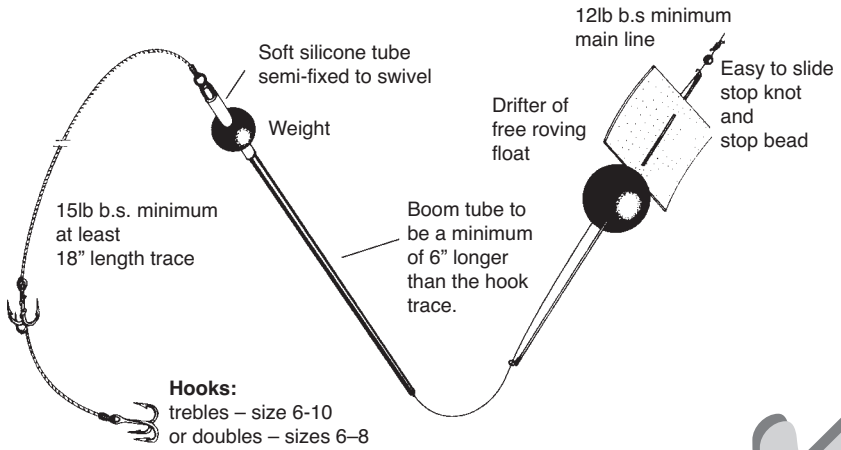
use in conjunction with a drop-back indicator



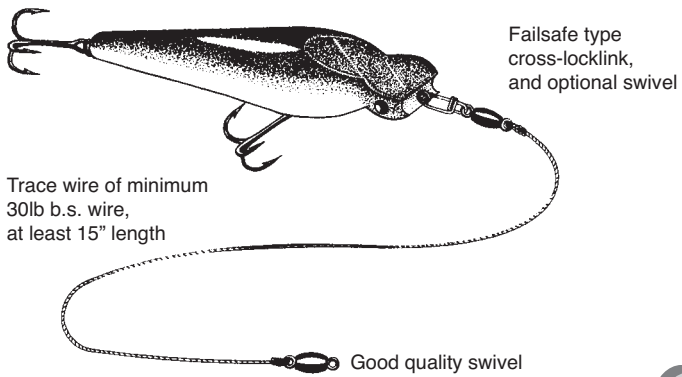
Paternoster Safety Rig



Drifting/Free-roving Safety Rig



Lure Rig



APPENDIX M THE USE OF BOATS (including 'bait boats')

Only use if allowed by the fishery rules.

Ensure that you do not encroach on other anglers' fishing areas, either on the bank or in another boat. This also applies to radio-controlled bait boats.

For dinghies:

Buoyancy aids or preferably lifejackets must be worn at all times. Select one with the CE mark.

Make sure that the aid has sufficient buoyancy for the clothing and footwear you are wearing, and that it is capable of keeping you afloat on your back, otherwise you might float face downwards and drown: if in doubt seek specialist advice. **Non-swimmers** should wear a lifejacket which **inflates automatically on immersion**.

Always inform someone of your approximate location, and likely date and time of return.

Carry emergency equipment, e.g. waterproof torch, whistle, flares, baler, compass, mobile phone and spare oars.

Avoid wearing waders or heavy boots in a boat.

Never overload a boat with above its capacity of fishing tackle or people.

Obtain a weather forecast before setting out, and never go or stay afloat in bad weather.

Do not navigate after dark unless the boat is fitted with navigation lights.

Respect all other water users and avoid anchoring in a main navigation route or channel.

A large unhooking mat, foam or rubber underlay should always be carried to lay over the bottom boards, to protect the fish you may catch.

**CONTACTS-Government Bodies
Administrative Bodies**

Department for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

**Fisheries Division
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR www.defra.gov.uk**

Formerly the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF), this Government department organises research and regulates fisheries. For example, DEFRA controls the stocking of non-native fish such as grass carp.

Similar functions may be carried out in Wales and Scotland by:

**National Assembly for Wales Agriculture Department (NAWAD)
Fisheries Section
Cathays Park
Cardiff CF10 3NQ www.wales.gov.uk**

**Scottish Executive Rural Affairs Division
Marine Laboratory
PO Box 101, Victoria Road
Aberdeen. AB9 8DB www.scotland.gov.uk**

**Centre for Environment, Fisheries & Aquaculture Science (CEFAS)
Barrack Road Lowestoft Laboratory
The Nothe Pakefield Road
Weymouth Lowestoft
Dorset DT48UB Suffolk NR33 OHT
www.cefas.co.uk**

CEFAS is a Government agency carrying out fisheries research and regulation. For example, CEFAS controls imports of live fish from outside the UK.

The Environment Agency *See advertisement on back cover*

Your regional Environment Agency office is listed in the 'phone book. The Agency carries out fisheries monitoring, maintenance, improvement and research. Its fisheries enforcement work includes issuing and checking rod licences.

CONTACTS - Angling's Representatives

Angling Trust
Eastwood House
6 Rainbow Street
Leominster
Herefordshire HR6 8DQ
Tel 0844 7700616
Fax 01159 819039
Email admin@anglingtrust.net

Angling Trust is the single organisation representing all game, coarse and sea anglers in England. We lobby government, campaign on environmental and angling issues and run national and international angling competitions. We fight pollution, commercial over-fishing at sea, over-abstraction, poaching, unlawful navigation, local bans and a host of other threats to angling.

Angling Trust was formed from an historic merger of six angling and conservation organisations in January 2009. Other bodies will merge with the Angling Trust in future years.

The Angling Trust:

- Promotes the benefits of angling for the environment and individuals
- Supports angling and angling interests
- Campaigns for anglers and the environment
- Protects our waterways and marine environment
- Lobbies government and agencies on behalf of angling interests
- Delivers real benefits for anglers in the UK

For further information about The Angling Trust go to www.anglingtrust.net

Angling Development Board

www.fishcoach.org

Angling Trades Association,

c/o Dr Bruno Broughton,

Trenchard,

Lower Bromstead Road,

Moreton, Newport,

Shropshire TF10 9DQ.

Tel: 01952 691515; fax; 01952 691316.

bruno.broughton@virgin.net

Professional Coarse Fisheries Association

c/o Barford Lakes,
Chapel Street,
Barford, Norwich
Norfolk NR94PL.
Tel: 01603 759624

mailto: enquiries@pcf.co.uk

Association of Stillwater Game Fishery Managers

Packington Hall,
Packington Estate,
Meriden, Coventry CV7 7HF.
Tel 01676 522754

asgfml@btinternet.com

Atlantic Salmon Trust

Ivor Llewelyn,
Linkwell
High Street, Bexhill-on-sea,
East Sussex, TN40 2HA.

ivorllewelyn@atlanticsalmontrust.org

Training in Angling and Fisheries

Angling Development Board

The Angling Development Board (ADB) is the development department of the Angling Trust; the national governing body for angling. It is supported by Sport England, the Environment Agency, British Waterways and SportsCoach UK.

Working with key partners, the ADB aims to establish an infra-structure to develop the sport of angling within England. This includes working with national, regional and local angling and non-angling organisations to:

- develop policy;
- provide leadership;
- provide coach education and training;
- develop clubs and volunteers;
- establish regional development frameworks;
- establish a safe environment for young people to participate in angling.

The benefits to angling include:

- increased participation;
- better quality clubs;
- increased club membership;
- increased numbers of qualified, licensed and active angling coaches;
- more recognition and support for the development of angling;
- seamless participation frameworks and structures.

Full-time and short courses in fishery management are offered by a number of colleges around the country, most notably Brooksby Melton in Leicestershire (tel: 01664 850850; www.brooksbymelton.ac.uk), Sparsholt in Hampshire (tel: 01962 776441; www.sparsholt.ac.uk) and Rodbaston in Staffordshire (tel: 01785 712209; www.rodbaston.ac.uk). These courses are aimed at those people who want to work in recreational fisheries. Government bodies (e.g. Environment Agency), fish farms or the ornamental fish business. Some of the courses include angling and angling coaching.

The Institute of Fisheries Management (tel 0115 9822317) offers two correspondence courses in fishery management which provides people with the opportunity to learn from home.

Fisheries Consultants

There are a number of companies and individuals in the UK who are established consultants able to help angling clubs or individuals with fishery problems such as fish health or weed control. In the first instance, contact your local Environment Agency fishery officer; he or she may be able to help with problems directly or refer you to an appropriate private consultant.

For individual copies of this Code please send A4 SAE to:

Codes at Angling Trust,
Eastwood House, 6 Rainbow Street
Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 8DQ

To obtain copies of this Code

For bulk copies, please apply by email to coarsecode@anglingtrust.net or to above address. All copies are supplied free of charge.

ANGLING TRUST - AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Angling Development, Promotion, Protection, Education and Competitions

- Increase funding for developing the sport of angling
- Teach young people how to fish, train fishing coaches and improve recognition of the educational value of fishing
- Secure angling as part of the National Curriculum
- Protect the angling rights and practices of members
- Promote angling as a pastime to non-angling markets
- Continue and improve fishing competitions and success rates at regional, national and international levels
- Protect angling from being banned from rivers, lakes, harbours, shorelines and piers due to overbearing health & safety or wildlife protection
- Get angling recognised as an environmentally sustainable activity which contributes to the economic, environmental and social well being of society.

Licences and Angling funding

- Seek further funding for angling collected via the freshwater rod licence
- Reinststate angling and fisheries to the heart of the Environment Agency's and DEFRA's policies and ensure representation on RFERAC, REPAC and relevant RAC committees
- Reverse the decline in government funding for fisheries despite increased revenue from rod licences
- To become, once adequate financial controls are in place, the national rod licensing body for English angling and to buy in fisheries services on behalf of members from suitable suppliers including the Environment Agency

Conservation, Fisheries and Fish Welfare

- To negotiate areas reserved for sea angling, such as the Golden Mile
- To achieve recognition of species such as bass, mullet, flounder etc as sport angling species.
- To improve the recording and reporting of stock impacts by RSA on marine stocks to enable better stock management at local and national level.
- To ensure that recreational sea angling is allowed to continue in Marine Protected Areas where it is not causing damage to the protected elements of the MPA
- Reverse the damage caused by overfishing at sea
- To campaign for a cessation of discards by commercial fleets
- To campaign for more access to launching sites for marine and freshwater craft.
- Work with gravel and sand extraction groups to minimise the effect of aggregate dredging

- Reverse the destruction of habitat by flood defence, land drainage and damaging trawling methods
- Remove barriers to the migration of marine, coarse and game fish in rivers and estuaries and to oppose the development of new barriers
- Keep fish diseases such as Gyrodactylus salaris out of the UK and control the spread of KHV
- Campaign to stop commercial fish farming causing pollution, sea lice infestation and escapes of farmed fish into the wild.
- Improve fish stocks of coarse, game and marine fish throughout the UK by campaigning to reduce pollution, abstraction, habitat destruction
- Work to increase the minimum sizes at which sea fish can be retained to above that at which they first spawn
- New legislation to protect bass nursery areas and the power and ability to enforce it.
- Use the law to stop damage occurring to aquatic habitats owned or leased by Fish Legal club, riparian and fishery owner members and to fight for compensation when it does occur.
- Secure management strategies for predators such as cormorants, goosanders, otters and seals
- Improve monitoring and regulation of water pollution from industry, agriculture and sewage
- Work with other organisations to reduce the amount of litter in rivers and on seashores

Represent Anglers

- Represent English anglers on the EAA, FIPS, CIPS, CCPR, PAW, OPLWG etc.
- Support existing regional networks (e.g. consultatives and fishery associations) with professional staff
- Raise local issues at a national level and report back the results of lobbying and campaigns
- Ensure the proposed Inshore Fisheries Advisory Committees have adequate angling representation and have a positive programme to protect and develop angling, consistent with the Cabinet Office's document 'Net Benefits'
- Demand better enforcement and legislation to prevent fish theft, illegal sales of fish and poaching
- Prevent unregulated access by canoes and other craft to rivers and canals
- Protect the rights of sea anglers to collect bait from the foreshore for personal, friend and family use.
- Work to introduce a simple, nationally accepted bait collection code for sea anglers.
- Generate legal advice to assist in fighting planning applications that would destroy bait collection areas through construction works, dredging, burying or otherwise damaging them. Seek compensation areas where applicable

Provide other benefits to Members

- Support angling clubs with legal advice and provide guidance on constitutions, leases, club and fishery management, health and safety, fundraising and access
- Work with clubs to help them achieve Clubmark status
- Provide discounted insurance, advice on club and fishery management and other benefits to members
- Offer enhanced benefits to Angling Trust members who sign up for the Fish 4 Free loyalty programme
- Provide newsletters, magazines and e-updates
- Offer a members-only area on the web site



Environment
Agency

HOW DO WE HELP?

Better Fish Stocks

Through: Stocking Fish
Fish Rescues
Surveying Fish Stocks

A Better Environment For Fish

By: Fighting Pollution
Safeguarding River Flows
Improving Habitat

Better Regulation Of Fishing

By: Providing Angling Information
Checking Fish Introductions
Fishery Byelaws

A Better Environment For Anglers

By: Providing Angling Information
Protecting Wildlife
Promoting Fisheries Development

It all adds up to BETTER FISHING-Your licence fee helps towards the Agency's fisheries work.

ANGLIAN

Peterborough
Tel: 01733 371 811
Fax: 01733 231 840

NORTH EAST

Leeds
Tel: 0113 244 0191
Fax: 0113 246 1889

SOUTHERN

Worthing
Tel: 01903 832 000
Fax: 01903 821 832

THAMES

Reading
Tel: 0118 953 5000
Fax: 0118 950 0388

MIDLANDS

Solihull
Tel: 0121 711 2324
Fax: 0121 711 5824

NORTH WEST

Warrington
Tel: 01925 653 999
Fax: 01925 415 961

SOUTH WEST

Exeter
Tel: 01392 444 000
Fax: 01932 444 238

WALES

Cardiff
Tel: 029 2077 0088
Fax: 029 2079 8555

For general enquiries please call your local Environment Agency office. If you are unsure who to contact, or which is your local office, please call our general enquiry line.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY
GENERAL ENQUIRY LINE

0845 933 3111

The 24-hour emergency hotline number for reporting all environmental incidents relating to air, land or water.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY
EMERGENCY HOTLINE

0800 80 70 60

Fishing for a better environment?

Make sure you have a licence

www.environment-agency.gov.uk