



Angling for Children

by Mark Corps, Inland Fisheries Ireland

Anyone can learn to fish. Angling is an activity that is suitable for all, irrespective of race, gender or ability. You might ask at what age you can start. Well, the earlier the better as it will give you a life long interest. However anyone, of any age, can take up fishing and get enjoyment from the activity. Perhaps you and your parents or grandparents could learn together how to fish?



You don't need much equipment to start fishing. The basics would be a rod and reel, suitable footwear, a lifejacket or buoyancy aid and probably some waterproofs. Everything costs money, however it does not have to be expensive. Today perfectly functional tackle can be bought cheaply even from supermarkets. Most angling clubs have a junior section where a supply of rods and reels can be borrowed.

Some places cost to fish but the sea is free around Ireland, as are most coarse fisheries. Even if you buy season tickets to fish a stretch of river, they are very reasonable, with most for juniors under €30 a season - or the cost of one video game!

What do you do if you catch a fish?

If? You mean when! You have two choices - unless the fishery you are fishing at has specific rules:

1. If there are surplus stocks you can keep the fish. Many anglers work to the principle that they only take a fish if they plan to eat it!
2. Most anglers today realise that to ensure future stocks for all they should return fish. It has been said that fish are too valuable to only be caught once.

A few points help ensure that the fish goes back to the water healthy:

- Use appropriate fishing tackle.
- Use a landing net.
- Use barbless hooks.
- Wet your hands before touching the fish. Dry hands burn the side of the fish.
- Try to keep the fish in water.
- Support the fish in the water (facing into the current) until it is strong enough to swim away.

Different Types of Angling

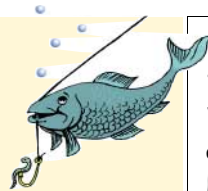
There are three main branches of angling:

Sea - fishing for species found in the sea such as plaice, cod and even blue shark.

Coarse - for fish such as perch, bream or pike.

Game - salmon and trout.

No matter where you live in Ireland you are unlikely to be more than 5 miles from a suitable stretch of water that will hold fish.



Angling & Safety



Whenever one is around water one has to be aware that it is a dangerous environment. However, by following a few basic rules one can minimise the danger:

1. Preferably learn to swim and wear a suitable personnel flotation unit (lifejacket or buoyancy aid) when near water.
2. Go with an adult.
3. Always fish from a safe place.
4. Wear appropriate clothing to suit the conditions.
5. Use appropriate safety equipment such as a hat & glasses if you are fly fishing.
6. Keep out of the water.

Where can you learn how to fish?

Many angling clubs arrange activities and events to attract people to angling. Inland Fisheries Ireland arranges a variety of events throughout the year. In particular they organise and run *Fisheries*

Awareness Week - this year 12-18th May www.faw.ie. During this particular week events are organised and run all over the country. Also find out about your local angling clubs and see if they have a youth section. Some youth groups, such as cubs, run / teach fishing, while some summer camps also involve fishing.

