



GET INTO FISHING

with

National
Fishing
Month

www.nationalfishingmonth.com

Angling Direct
Getting Everyone Fishing



KORDA
THINKING TACKLE

**REUBEN
HEATON**
OF THE

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SHIMANO



Environment
Agency



Take a
friend
Fishing



Canal &
River Trust



NATIONAL FISHING MONTH

Held every year around the month of August, National Fishing Month (NFM) is a celebration of angling in all its forms. Learn how to fish, reignite your passion, or try something new in angling at hundreds of fun, safe and friendly events nationwide this summer.

Everyone is invited – with a calendar that features family-friendly, women's and wheelchair-accessible events – all ages, abilities and experience levels are welcome from all communities.

We want our wonderful waterways to feel an open and inviting place for everybody and raise awareness that fishing is about so much more than catching a fish. Going fishing is your chance to get out in nature, have fun, spend time with others or simply, to relax on your own.

Find out more about NFM and all it has to offer at
<https://www.nationalfishingmonth.com>



TAKE A FRIEND FISHING

The Take A Friend Fishing (TAFF) initiative is designed to give more people the chance to get into fishing by allowing unlicensed anglers to try fishing for a specified day with a licensed angler. Take a Friend Fishing registration is open during National Fishing Month this August: <https://www.takeafriendfishing.co.uk/> **register-free-friend-fishing-licence** so get registered and start creating some amazing angling memories.

Be a part of a fantastic opportunity to experience angling! Getting together with a friend or family member to go on a fishing trip is the ideal opportunity to spend time together outdoors escape your screens and start a new hobby this summer.

Find out more at <https://takeafriendfishing.co.uk>

WELCOME TO ANGLING

This booklet is just the start of your journey of discovery about the joys and ways of angling. By reading it you'll learn how fishing – simply another name for angling – can help you to spend quality time with friends and family in nature and unwind and enjoy your own space. Whether you want to take in the view, breathe in the fresh air, have a laugh, or get a little competitive with your pals, fishing is for you.

Once you have experienced the thrill of seeing your float go under, felt a fish fight on the end of your line, taken pride in admiring it and then carefully unhooking your catch and watched it swim away safely, unharmed, to grow larger, you will know why angling is so popular with so many people, all around the world.

Going fishing provides a great opportunity to spend time outdoors, away from the pressures of normal life. Spending time near water has a positive effect on your mental wellbeing, increasing happiness and your enjoyment of life, as well as reducing stress levels.

It's so easy to get started once you have a rod licence – if you're old enough to need one – and you don't even need them if you are fishing in the sea. Quality starter tackle is readily available in almost every fishing tackle shop and is reasonably priced – it doesn't cost a fortune to get enough gear to catch a fish! There are plenty of waters, rivers, lakes, and canals where you can catch a wide variety of coarse fish, and rivers and still waters with game fish. There are also loads of free introductory events each year where qualified and licensed coaches are on hand to show you how to master the basics and to teach you more advanced skills.

This handy booklet and the internet links provided will tell you all you need to know to get started and enjoy your fishing.



WHAT IS ANGLING?

Angling refers to fishing for freshwater or sea fish with a rod, line, and hook in one of three recognised types of angling – coarse fishing, game fishing and sea fishing. Coarse fishing is for freshwater species that are not members of the trout and salmon family, while angling for trout and salmon is referred to as game fishing. And naturally fishing for fish swimming in the sea is called sea fishing.

WHO CAN DO IT?

Absolutely anyone! Angling is an ageless pastime where children can fish on equal terms with their mums and dads or grandparents. You don't need to be part of a team to fish, you can go on your own or with your mates. It doesn't matter how old you are, what your physical abilities are or where you live – there will be some exciting fish for you to catch near you, whether in your local canal, river, or lake, or from a pier, beach or on a boat at the seaside.

WHAT ARE THE BASIC RULES?

If you are aged 13 and over, you must have an Environment Agency rod fishing licence when fishing in freshwater in England and Wales: <https://www.gov.uk/fishing-licences>. The good news is that if you are aged under 13 you don't need a licence and if you are aged 13 to 16 your rod fishing licence is completely free! In saltwater – the sea – you can usually just start fishing as no permissions and no licence is required, as long as you are not on private property, in which case you need permissions from the owners. For instance, if you are fishing from a pier, you may need to purchase a day ticket to allow you to do so. Your local fishing tackle shop is a great source of information to help you identify the best place to go fishing locally.

They will also advise about permissions you may require to fish a particular venue. Just pop in and ask the nice person behind the counter, she/he/they will put you right, whether it is coarse, game or sea angling. Find your local tackle shop here - <https://anglingtrust.net/map/> (just click on the tackle shop icon).

Each venue or fishery you visit may have their own set of rules. Be sure to check the club or fishery website before you travel to ensure your tackle and bait are appropriate.



WHAT EQUIPMENT DO YOU NEED?

Once you have a rod fishing licence and a permit or day ticket, if you need them, you can set yourself up with suitable basic tackle and be fishing for between £75 and £100. All you need for coarse angling is a short, 4 to 6m take-apart elasticated pole, some ready tied rigs with a float, weights, and small hooks (size 16 to 18), a disgorging, a landing net, and some bait – pellets, sweetcorn, worms or maggots – and you are ready to catch fish.

For game fishing talk to your tackle shop about waters and take their advice on the right equipment for that water. The same applies for sea angling, talk to the person in the tackle shop and take their advice. They won't sell you any rubbish, they want you to enjoy your fishing and to come back time and time again.

WHEN CAN I GO FISHING?

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

In the sea there is no close season, the fish can come and go as they please, so they will find the right place for spawning and feeding and if they are in range of you, you can catch them.

WHERE CAN I DO IT?

Your local tackle shop will be able to tell you about where there are suitable venues to go to: ask for their recommendations for waters where there are lots of fish to catch! If you are not a club member, you will need to purchase a day ticket to fish the venue. Again, your local tackle shop will have the details on how to go about doing this. In most cases these can be purchased at the venue on the day you are fishing but, in some cases, they may need to be bought in advance. Most owners or fishery bailiffs will be only too happy to show you what to do and pass on tips about good baits and productive spots. At many commercial fisheries there will be a small café where you can meet and get to know other anglers. For more information on local places to fish (coarse, sea or game angling), visit <https://anglingtrust.net/map/> and click on the venue's icon.





HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

There is plenty of information available on angling on the back cover of this publication including many links to access open events run by local tackle shops, angling clubs, fisheries, and organisations all over the country. Events are a great way to start your approach to angling. You will receive hints and tips on how to fish from qualified coaches in a safe environment, with all the equipment, fishing tackle and bait provided.

There are also some fantastic videos on YouTube so check out the many features on instruction, how to set up equipment, tie knots, go sea fishing and much more.

THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF FISHING

Coarse fishing – this is for fish not normally taken for the plate, simply for pleasure and competition. Nearly all fresh waters will hold coarse fish and with the right permissions and licence you could be catching them tomorrow.

Fly fishing – considered the gentlest of arts and entails fishing with an imitation fly at the end of your line for trout, salmon, bass, mullet, and many other species of fish, imitating their natural food with man-made and tied flies – learn more in the next pages about not only catching fish on imitations of their natural food but even about tying your own flies with which to do so.

Sea angling – searching for large table fish in the briny oceans around Britain is the natural instinct of many anglers. Read more in the next few pages about where and how.

COARSE FISHING - VERY ACCESSIBLE AND EASY TO START

Coarse angling is all about fish that swim in freshwater and aren't caught to be eaten – that's most fish in most waters.

The range of species and sizes is immense, from little Bleak or Gudgeon that might weigh less than 15g/ (½oz) each, up to huge carp that can grow to 20kg (44lb) or even 30kg (66lb) plus.

Rivers, canals, lakes, meres, tarns, and reservoirs all hold stocks of coarse fish. They come in many species, colours, and sizes, offering something of long-term interest to any angler. And a whole new world to learn about for the novice. You can fish with a float or a leger, on the surface or on the bottom, even in midwater.



COARSE FISHING - GETTING STARTED

As with any sport you can spend a considerable amount on equipment but for a few pounds you can buy simple useable tackle to get you started catching fish, and for somewhere between £75 and £100 you should be able to buy tackle that will enable you to catch most types of fish, whether coarse, game or sea. Your local tackle shop will be able to provide specific guidance on the items available, but the below list should provide a useful starting point.

For beginning coarse fishing on a canal, slow flowing river or still water you will need:

- An elasticated 4m pole or whip (4m is spot on for young people, longer poles of 6m plus are more suited when you become stronger)
- Some ready tied pole rigs (hooks should be barbless sized 16 to 20)
- Spare barbless hooks to nylon (size 16 to 20)
- Disgorger
- Plummet
- Spare split shot (small weights)
- Bait boxes
- A landing net and handle
- A seat or something to sit on
- A small pair of scissors is always useful

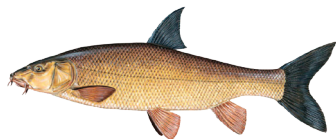


As you develop your coarse fishing you can progress to:

- A rod suitable for your stature
- A reel to match the rod
- Line to fill the reel
- A selection of suitable floats
- A selection of feeders
- Split shot, hooks, and hook-link material
- Rod rest

In freshwater, don't forget, if you are aged 13 and over you need to have an Environment Agency rod Fishing Licence: <https://www.gov.uk/fishing-licences>. You may also need the permission of the owner of the fishery/controller of the fishing before you fish, and this is usually gained by buying a day or season ticket or by joining an angling club that controls the fishing.

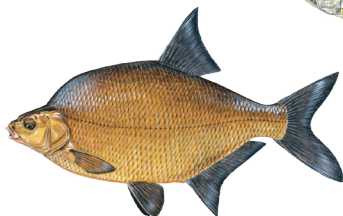
Your local tackle shop will be able to provide you with more specific advice on guidance the equipment you'll need, whatever you want to catch and wherever you want to fish.



Barbel



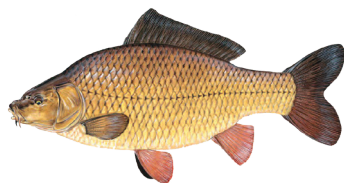
Bleak



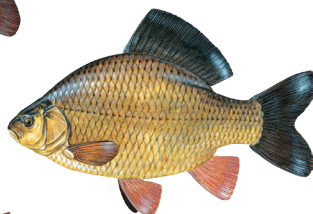
Bream



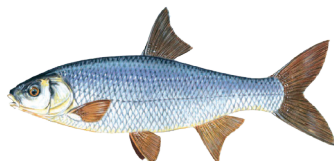
Chub



Common Carp



Crucian Carp



Dace



Eel



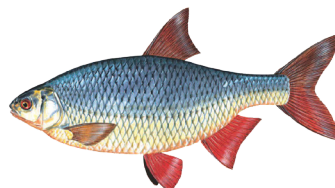
Gudgeon



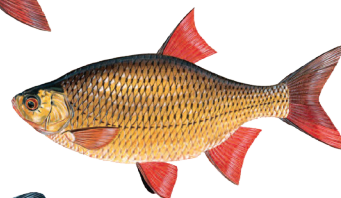
Perch



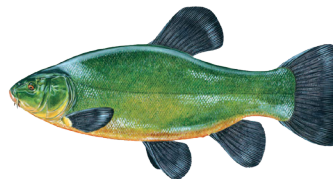
Pike



Roach



Rudd



Tench

Illustrations courtesy of David Hall Publishing Ltd.



SEA ANGLING - THE GREAT ADVENTURE

Every trip to the seashore, a rock or a boat mark is a true adventure because the sea angler can never be sure what species of fish will bite next – it could be a small dab or pouting, or a huge bass, cod, or conger eel, it's this excitement that appeals to people of all ages.

Shore fishing from estuaries, beaches and rocky marks puts you into a fascinating world of white-water surfs and dramatic scenery. You'll be catching flounders, dabs, dogfish, bass, mackerel, huss, cod, conger and many more species. Even the hard fighting, fast swimming tope, a super streamlined predator of the shark family, occasionally comes within reach of the shore caster, and they can grow to weights topping 25kg (50lb).

The choice of baits and techniques is equally large, ranging from fish and worm baits used on the seabed to spinners, plugs and plastic imitations fish, cast and retrieved through mid-water.

Boat angling adds an extra dimension – going to sea to catch fish has to be in every Briton's blood. As an island race, we have always lived by and used the seas around us for food and pleasure. The element of the unexpected is heightened further and there is the thrill of the boat under way, the expectation of a great day afloat and the great company on board. Long range trips to sunken wrecks in deep water are very popular and the wrecks hold some massive fish to challenge you and your tackle.

One advantage of sea angling is that you don't need a licence.

A very useful guide to shore fishing marks and species to expect can be found at <https://britishseafishing.co.uk/where-to-go-fishing-in-the-uk-2/>

Just like in coarse angling, your local tackle shop will be able to advise you on the best tackle available to suit you. However, this list should provide a useful starting point.



SHORE FISHING

For sea angling from the shore you will need:

- 12ft beach casting rod, to handle a 6oz weight
- Medium sized fixed spool reel
- 300 metres of 12lb BS line (BS is Breaking Strain, which indicates how strong the line is)
- Hooks in sizes from 2 to 4/0
- A selection of beads, split rings, and swivels
- Assorted weights from 2oz (50g) to 5oz (250g)
- Rod rest or tripod
- Bait

BOAT FISHING

For sea angling from a boat you will need:

- 30lb class boat rod around 7ft long
- Medium sized multiplier reel
- 300 metres of 30lb BS line
- Strong hooks in sizes 1 to 6/0
- A selection of beads, split rings, and swivels
- Assorted weights from 4oz (100g) to 1lb (800g)
- Bait

The Angling Trust's Get Fishing campaign have pulled together a really useful How to Go Beach Fishing video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWkAl-S1yp8> which provides some fantastic guidance to help you get sea fishing.



Bass



Flounder



Coalfish



Mackerel



Dab



Pollack

Fish art by David Overland from 'Get Fishing – the how to guide to fishing'. A colourful, lively book for beginners of all ages. Get a copy at www.merlinunwin.co.uk



FLY FISHING - THE ART OF ANGLING

Somewhere near where you live there will be a lake, river or reservoir teeming with hard fighting game fish, trout of various species and perhaps even still water salmon. There are few rivers that don't have some of our native brown trout ambushing natural flies and many of those rivers will be in and around busy towns.

Once upon a time fly fishing was seen as the preserve of only the wealthiest anglers but no more. Wild fish are readily available in many waters and at many locations, just ask in your local tackle shop.

All these fish can be caught on spinners and bait but the art of fly fishing and fly tying is one of the true skills of an angler. Mastering the fly rod, casting, and learning to drop a fly on the trout's nose is an immense pleasure with a wonderful sense of achievement when you take your first fish, and is a skill you can take to the coast and seek out a bass or two with the fly in the surf.

Fly fishing is all about variety, and the species you are fishing for will all go well on a plate for your supper, if you have the right to take them. Always limit your catch, not catch your limit.

At sea your fly rod will take bass, pollack, mullet and a host of other species. Coarse species like Pike, Perch and Rudd will all take artificial flies as well. So, a fly rod and a suitable fly opens the door to many species in many types of water.

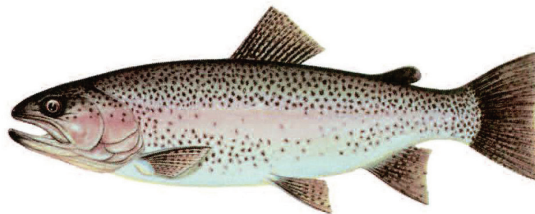
As with both sea and coarse fishing, your local tackle shop or fly fishery will be able to provide information on the best equipment to purchase to suit you. This list, as a general guide, is a fantastic starting point.

For fly fishing in a reservoir you will need:

- 9ft 7-weight fly rod
- A fly reel loaded with a minimum of 50 metres backing AND a balanced floating fly line
- Tapered leaders six metres long
- Tippetts in 5, 6 and 8lb
- A selection of suitable fly patterns in a variety of sizes for the style you want to try
- A cap and polarising sunglasses
- Landing net
- A priest - this is a heavy instrument like a small truncheon to dispatch your catch humanely if you are going to eat it.



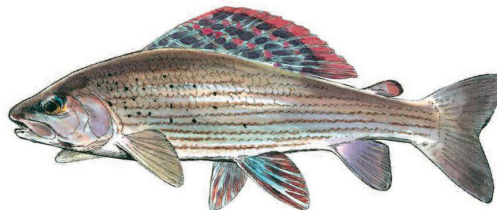
Brown Trout



Rainbow Trout



Salmon



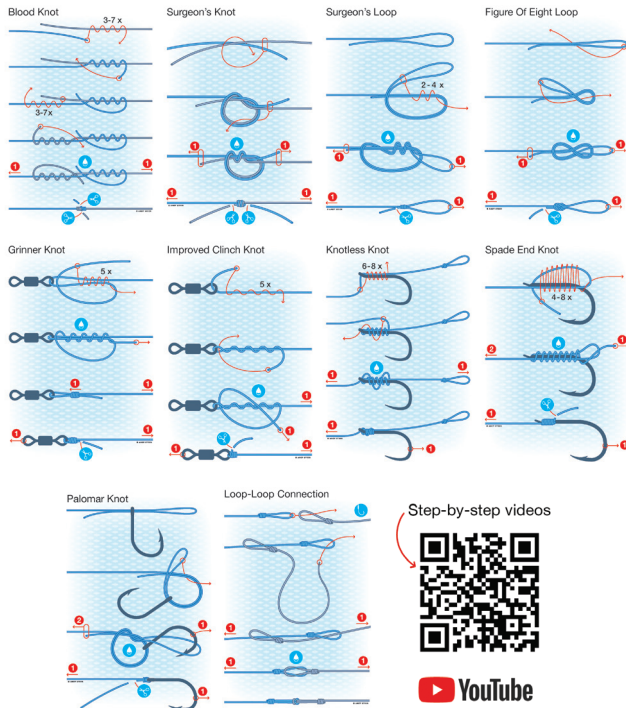
Grayling



ANGLER'S KNOTS

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

Practise them with white string to start with and then with nylon line of the breaking strain you will fish with, before you go to the water.



Step-by-step videos



Knot illustrations courtesy of Andy Steer:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/AnglingKnots>

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

Put the clippings in your tackle box for disposal at home.

ALL ABOUT BAITS

To catch fish on a rod, line, and hook, you need some sort of bait to tempt them to bite.

For sea fish, baits can be divided into artificials – lures, spinners, and plugs, in metal and plastics, which imitate fish – and natural baits such as fish, shellfish, rag and lugworms.

For game fish, trout and salmon, many baits are made from silk, fur, feathers, or man-made materials and tied to a hook to resemble or imitate an insect trapped in the water surface or suspended just below it, above the fish and in its eye line. When starting your fly fishing it is best to ask for advice on the best flies to use and how to fish them, for the fish you are trying to catch. On some waters you may also use small spinners or fish imitations to take game fish of various species.

For coarse fish, baits can be divided into artificials and naturals. Artificials can be lures, spinners, and plugs, in metal or plastic, which imitate fish, insects and other aquatic life forms. Natural, or man-made baits include maggots, squatts, pinkies, earthworms, sweetcorn, bread, pellets, luncheon meat, or boilies.

Maggots are by far the most popular coarse fishing bait. They will catch every fish that swims, big or small and are a great bait to begin coarse fishing with. Be aware that maggots will eventually turn into flies so be sure to ask your tackle shop about the best way to store and look after them in between fishing sessions.

At the start it is best to understand what fish you are targeting and then use the baits which that species prefers. As you become more experienced, you can experiment with different baits and even develop your own concoctions.



Sweetcorn



Luncheon Meat



Bread



Maggots



Boilies



Earthworms



Flies



Lures such as spinners, plugs and soft baits



Rag and Lugworms

HANDLE WITH CARE

Before you start fishing, you must know how best to treat the fish you may catch. If you are weighing, measuring and or photographing your catch to capture the memories of your day, make sure you keep handling and time out of the water to a bare minimum. Here are some simple Do's and Don'ts.

- Always prepare your equipment. Make sure scales, weigh slings, measures, unhooking mats, landing nets and any other items are set up beforehand.
- Make sure all weigh slings, unhooking mats, and other items likely to come into contact with the fish are wetted first.
- Always handle fish with wet hands.
- Never put fish on a dry dusty bank or lift them high off the ground.
- Be firm and confident while handling fish, rather than indecisive and hasty.
- Use barbless hooks so unhooking is easier and without delay.
- Never try to pull a hook out - use a disgorger or enlist help from another angler.
- If using a keepnet, never tumble the fish down the net - this will damage the fins and scales. Gather them at the front of the net and let the fish swim out of the mouth of the net.



UNHOOKING FISH

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

Firstly, wet your hands before touching the fish. If you have used a landing net to land the fish, unhook it while it's still in the net. If it is a large fish, lay it carefully on a soft surface - a padded unhooking mat is ideal.

Look to see where the hook is located. You can remove the hook if the fish is hooked by the lip by firmly holding the shank of the hook between thumb and finger, then pushing the point of the hook in the opposite direction from which it entered.

You should not pull upwards on the hook under any circumstances.

The use of a disgorger can greatly help the unhooking of fish as it is a tool specifically designed for removing hooks from fish without damage. Plastic disgorgers are cheap, do not damage your line and hook and will often float if dropped in the water.

Wrap the disgorger around the line so that it stays on the line, and then slide it into the fish's mouth so that the end of the disgorger rests on the bend of the hook. To remove the hook, push the disgorger in towards the fish - you may have to rock the hook from side to side to release it.



VALUING AND PROTECTING WILDLIFE

All anglers are natural conservationists, helping to protect the water where they fish and the wildlife, plants, animals, and fish that live in it and around it.

Things to remember:

- The use of barbless hooks is always recommended where possible to minimise any damage to the fish you are catching. These hooks work for you as well since they are much easier to remove from a captured fish.
- Check your line regularly for flaws, nicks and cuts caused by wear and damage. Remove any damaged line and dispose of it safely, in an Anglers National Line Recovery Scheme (ANLRS) line bin, if there is one at hand, <https://www.anglers-nlrs.co.uk>. Otherwise take it home and dispose of it in the recycling bin. Loose line kills wildlife and strangles plants, NEVER leave it behind when you leave a fishery.
- Always use non-toxic split shot in sizes from No6 or bigger; lead shot and weights may still be used at No8 and less or for 28g (1oz) or more.
- Take extra care when surface fishing as bait fished on the surface can often attract water birds and you must avoid hooking any bird with your gear.
- Never leave rods on the bank with baited hooks as these can easily be picked up by birds or animals searching for food.
- Never ever leave litter, any litter. Always take it home for safe disposal.



WHAT ARE THE RULES?

Angling is one of the largest sports in the country, with thousands of people taking part. You can enjoy yourself without having to be part of a team or an organised event if you so wish.

It is also one of the most self-disciplined, with the vast majority of anglers taking great pride in keeping to the rules and guidelines of various recognised codes of behaviour and practice.

They are based on a few sensible principles intended to benefit everybody and everything which uses or lives by, on or in the water.

- The most obvious is not to leave litter, especially nylon line. At best, it looks a mess, at worst, it can kill or injure wildlife and farm animals. There is absolutely no excuse for not taking it home and disposing of it safely in the dustbin, having first cut it into short sections.
- Every effort should be made to cause the minimum of stress to the fish you catch. Handle the fish gently, with wet hands, and return them carefully to the water as soon as possible.
- Don't cause a nuisance to other people. Your pleasure shouldn't spoil that of others.
- Clubs and fishery owners often have their own local rules which should be printed on the permit. They usually relate to specific methods and baits, or times for angling (such as no night fishing) and should always be observed. If you're not sure... just ask!



USEFUL CONTACTS, ORGANISATIONS AND WEBSITES FOR ANGLERS



The Angling Trades Association Limited

www.anglingtradesassociation.com



Environment
Agency

Environment Agency

<https://www.gov.uk/fishing-licences>



angling
cymru

Angling Cymru

www.anglingcymru.org.uk



Anglers National Line Recovery Scheme (ANLRS)

<https://www.anglers-nlrs.co.uk/>



Angling Trust

<https://www.anglingtrust.net>



**Association of Advanced Professional Game
Angling Instructors (AAPGAI)**

<https://www.aapgai.co.uk/>



The British Disabled Angling Association (BDAA)

<https://www.bdaa.co.uk>



Canal &
River Trust

Canal and River Trust (CRT)

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



Game Angling Instructors Association (GAIA)

<https://gameanglinginstructors.co.uk/>



Get Fishing

<https://www.anglingtrust.net/getfishing>



National Fishing Month

<https://www.nationalfishingmonth.com>



Take A Friend Fishing

www.takeafriendfishing.co.uk



Wildfish (formerly Salmon & Trout Conservation)

<https://wildfish.org/>

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