A Beginner’s Guide to Coarse Fishing

Welcome to angling, whether you are looking for a new hobby, competition or just relaxation, fishing is the sport for you!

On the following pages you will find information on the basic fishing tackle you will need to go coarse fishing and what you need to know to start fishing for coarse fish. I hope you find the information helpful and interesting.

What is Fishing?
Fishing (also called angling) is the sport of catching fish, freshwater or saltwater, typically with rod, line and hook. Fishing originated as a means of providing food for survival. In its most basic form, fishing is throwing out a fishing line and pulling in the fish when it goes for your baited fishing hook or fishing lure.

Types of Fishing
There are three types of fishing: coarse, game and sea. Coarse angling is fishing for any species of fish other than those that live in the sea or trout and salmon. When coarse fishing you can catch chub, carp, roach, perch, bream and many more species. Game fishing relates to the pursuit of trout and salmon. Sea fishing, as its name suggests, is fishing for species that inhabit the sea such as cod, pollock and bass. An off-shoot of coarse angling is carp fishing. Carp is the common name for the fish belonging to the family ‘cyprinidae’. These fish can grow to really big weights and over the last decade or so anglers have specifically targeted these specimen fish. Hence the birth of carp fishing and the ‘specimen angler’.

Rod Licence
Any angler aged 12 years or over, fishing for salmon, trout, freshwater fish or eels in England (except the River Tweed), Wales or the Border Esk and its tributaries in Scotland must have an Environment Agency rod licence. You can buy your rod licence at Post Offices, by telephone or online. Be warned! It is an offence to fish for freshwater fish and eels without a valid rod licence - if you do you are looking at a fine of up to £2,500. If you’re serious about taking up fishing then it is cheaper to buy a 12 month licence. If you are unsure then I would suggest buying a 1 day or 8 day licence.

Close Season
Close season means no fishing (you are not allowed to fish in certain areas during a specified period). Coarse fish close season – 15th March to 15th June inclusive. The coarse fish close season applies to all rivers, streams and drains in England and Wales, but does not apply to most still waters or canals following recent byelaw changes. Fishery owners and angling clubs are also free to introduce a close season through club or fishery rules if they wish to.
Fish welfare

The welfare of the fish is vital to the future of fishing and all fish that are caught must be returned to the water without injury. It is preferable to use barbless hooks as these do less damage to fish - they are a lot easier to remove as well.

Handling fish

All fish are covered with a protective layer of slime that acts as the first line of defence against parasitic infections, bacteria and other diseases that a fish may contract. When you catch a fish, you must make sure that you don’t remove too much of this protective coating so always wet your hands before handling fish and never use a cloth. Always unhook fish quickly but carefully and return them to the water as quickly as possible. If the fish is too large to hold, use an unhooking mat (padded cushion to protect fish from being injured on the ground). With a smaller fish, hold it tightly so that it doesn’t flap about and slip out of your hands but don’t hold it too tight or you may damage its internal organs.

Unhooking a fish

Never pull on the line to remove a hook from a fish – this will not work without seriously injuring the fish. If the fish is lip-hooked, you may be able to remove it using your fingers. If the fish is hooked inside its mouth, and you can see the hook, use a disgorger (a thin rod with a slot in the end). Hold the line tight, put the slot of the disgorger over the line and slide it along until you reach the hook. Push the hook in the opposite direction to the way it went in until it is free to be carefully removed. If the fish is deeply hooked, it is better to cut the line as close to the hook as possible. The hook will dislodge itself or will eventually rust away. Using barbless hooks make removal a lot easier!

Returning fish to the water

Never throw a fish back into the water! Always get down close to the water to release a fish and let the fish swim away. If it is a large fish, especially Barbel, it may have tired itself out while you were catching it. In this case, hold the fish in the water facing the current until it is ready to swim away. Moving the fish backwards and forwards sometimes aids its recovery.
Get hooked

Don't cheat on angling - buy a rod licence
postoffice.co.uk/rod-fishing-licence

WARNING!

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