

Anglers recognise the need for healthy aquatic ecosystems and put a lot of energy into ensuring that the waters they fish today will be just as enjoyable for others to fish tomorrow. They understand that they have an essential role to play in protecting the environment and are quick to report pollution, poaching or other environmental impacts.

This short guide gives some advice on how, as anglers, we can minimise the impact we have on our lakes, rivers, coastline, and countryside by following the 7 Principles of Leave No Trace. These principles can be applied to any angling trip and are particularly useful if your angling trip involves camping in the outdoors.

### More Information

For more information on angling in Ireland visit:  
[www.fishinginireland.info](http://www.fishinginireland.info)

For the line recycling scheme visit:  
<https://www.offthescaleangling.ie/anglers-national-line-recycling-scheme-ireland/>

### leavenotraceireland.org

Leave No Trace Ireland is a not-for-profit company made up of partner organisations with a shared interest in encouraging responsible enjoyment of Ireland's natural environment. Our mission is to promote and inspire responsible outdoor recreation through education, research, and partnership throughout the island of Ireland.



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### Inland Fisheries Ireland

Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) is the state agency responsible for the conservation, protection, management, marketing, development and improvement of our inland fisheries and sea angling resources. Our vision is to place the inland fisheries resource in the best sustainable position possible for the benefit of future generations.



Iascach Intíre Éireann  
Inland Fisheries Ireland

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Responsible Outdoor Recreation  
Angling



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## 1. Plan Ahead and Prepare

The preparation and planning in advance of an angling trip is something we enjoy, and most of us will carefully select tackle and bait to cover any situation we might encounter. But sometimes we can overlook other details that can lead to negative impacts down the line and so it's good to take a bit of time to think these through.



To access your fishing location you should always check that you have permission both from the fishery owner and the landowner and access it in a respectful manner. Also, many of our habitats face increasing threats from the introduction of invasive species. As some of these species can be spread by fishing equipment, anglers can help protect watercourses by properly planning for disinfection needs in advance. On camping trips always ensure you bring sufficient bags to take your rubbish away with you.

## 2. Be Considerate of Others

Anglers share their enjoyment of the outdoors with other enthusiasts such as walkers, kayakers, swimmers, and boaters. Anglers should take care that their tackle or cars don't obstruct walkways used by others. Keep noise levels to a minimum, especially when near to someone's home. When fishing from a boat, don't cut across the path of other craft and keep to speed limits.

## 3. Respect Farm Animals & Wildlife

Angling often brings us memorable encounters with diverse types of wild animals; from otters to whales,

robins to peregrines, midges to mayflies. While enjoying these encounters, we always need to be mindful to keep disturbance of wildlife to a minimum, especially at critical times such as the breeding season for birds. Wild animals are naturally wary of us and will tend to steer clear, but if, for example, we choose a swim too close to a swan's nest we will cause stress to the adult birds. If a wild animal is disturbed by your presence, then it's best for everyone if you move to a new spot. When on farmland, it's essential to leave gates as you find them, taking care not to damage any fencing or tread on any crops in fields that you may have to cross.

## 4. Travel & Camp on Durable Ground

Many of our riverbanks, lakeshores and coastal areas are fragile habitats and, in some cases, form natural defences that protect other habitats from flooding. These transitional areas can quickly become degraded by vehicle traffic or even by heavy footfall, leading to lasting or even permanent damage. To prevent this always stay on established roads and tracks and use designated car parks. Use existing boat ramps, launching sites, and moorings to minimise disturbance to the edges of waterways. Try to use designated campsites where possible or, when camping by riverbanks or lakeshores, choose sites with durable surfaces. Don't attempt to drive across farmland if the ground is muddy underfoot as your vehicle will churn up the earth.

## 5. Leave What You Find

We should all aim to leave the natural environment in the same way we find it, and this means minimising any alterations we may make to it. Rod rests should be bought in a tackle shop and brought home to use again, not cut from a living branch and left for the next angler to find. Don't remove stones from dry-stone walls and never interfere with lifebuoys or navigation buoys; they may be needed in a life-or-death situation.

It is also important that when you leave a site, you don't bring any unwanted material, such as invasive species, with you. To prevent accidental contamination, clear all debris from nets, waders, and wading boots, drain boats/engines and, if possible, wash them down on site.

Try to practice Catch and Release whenever possible as it will help to pass the gift of angling on to future generations. Most of our fisheries face multiple threats, including pollution, water abstraction and illegal fishing, all of which have a negative impact on fish stocks. Record any trophy

fish with a quick photo and then carefully return to the water. Minimise time in the air and support fish until they have fully recovered. Remember: #CPRsavesfish

## 6. Dispose of Waste Properly

"Pack it in, Pack it out" is a familiar mantra for outdoors enthusiasts and nothing is worse than arriving at a much-loved fishing spot and finding it ruined by waste and rubbish that have been discarded there by others. We should always aim to take everything we bring with us home again where it can be disposed of properly. Plan your visit to reduce rubbish by repacking food into recyclable containers before you leave home and take any uneaten food home with you. To make a really positive impact, pick up any rubbish you see along the way to leave your environment better than how you found it. An impromptu riverbank clean-up can set a great example and encourage others to do the same.

Disposal of toilet waste in the wrong place can contaminate water, damage the environment and is culturally offensive. Use land-based toilets where available. Otherwise, bury human waste in a shallow hole about 20cm deep and at least 30 metres away from water sources.

Avoid attracting scavenging birds by keeping boat decks, docks or other surrounding areas clear of bait scraps and fish waste; these can be placed in covered bins until you finish fishing. Ensure that you do not leave any fishing lines as these will harm birds and other wildlife. Many local angling and tackle shops are now part of the Anglers National Line Recycling Scheme.

## 7. Minimise the Effects of Fire

For many of us, sitting around a campfire is an essential part of the outdoors experience, but we need to be aware that fires leave a lasting impact on our surroundings and we should always strive to minimise this impact. If planning to build a fire, check first that campfires are permitted in the place you want to camp. Do not light a fire in times of drought. If possible, use a pre-existing fire mound or pit and learn the skills of setting a low impact mound fire to avoid scorching or scarring the soil. Keep fires small, using only dead material for firewood and do not attempt to burn toxic substances such as plastics or non-flammable materials such as soft drinks and beer cans. When departing, make sure you fully extinguish your fire and remove any debris.