



Angling
Ireland



BASS ANGLING
IN IRELAND



INTRODUCTION

When you talk about bass angling to a European bass angler, it won't take long for Ireland to come up in the conversation. This is because Ireland has become renowned as a bass fishing mecca which attracts avid bass anglers from all over the continent.

What makes Ireland such a bass hotspot? One of the key reasons is that bass have been a protected species for many years in Ireland, as a ban on commercial fishing and restrictions on the recreational fishery have allowed bass populations to recover following years of overfishing. Recent European regulations have seen the Irish model adopted on a wider scale with bass now considered a protected species throughout the EU.

Another reason for Ireland's status as a bass hotspot is the varied nature of its 3,000km coastline which is warmed by the waters of the Gulf Stream. Facing the Atlantic on its western and south western seaboard, Ireland's coastline is a mix of inlets, bays, reefs, rocks, cliffs and sandy beaches. Much of this is shallow ground which provides the perfect habitat for foraging bass.

Of course, it's not all about the fishing. Ireland is a beautiful country and the scenery of the Irish coastline can be breath-taking, making it a fantastic place to spend some time enjoying the natural environment. Then, after a long day fishing (and maybe even a 70+cm bass),

where better to go to celebrate than to a genuine Irish pub where you can share your fishing stories over a pint or two...

This brochure contains some basic information to help you get started on your Irish bass fishing adventure. There is a short description of bass fishing followed by some general angling & tourist information. The map on the flip side of this brochure highlights some of the different areas along Ireland's coastline and some of the better-known bass holding areas to target.



There is much more detailed information on the www.fishinginireland.info website and on the accompanying Google map: <https://goo.gl/ty3pLf>

LOCATING IRISH BASS

Bass are found all round Ireland's coastline but traditionally the fishing is best south of a line drawn between Dublin and Galway. However, as sea temperatures continue to rise bass are moving further north in greater numbers and new marks are opening up.

Bass are opportunistic predators and are constantly on the move, foraging for food. In fact, the biggest problem a bass angler normally faces, is finding bass as they rove around the coastline in search of their next meal. Local knowledge is key here, as bass will usually have preferred areas where they feed at different stages

of the tide. For this reason, we recommend that anglers fishing an unfamiliar area for the first time hire a guide to help them get oriented. A guide will know the main feeding times/zones for different marks and will cut out a lot of the guesswork and wasted time. If you can't avail of a guide the following pointers may help you locate bass holding areas:

Bass are a **shallow water** species, preferring to hunt and forage relatively close inshore. They are rarely caught from deepwater marks and so the angler needs to avoid the deeper water and concentrate on shallower areas of coastline.

Rocks/Reefs: Bass love to forage in the nooks, crannies and gullies that form when areas of rocky coastline and shallow reefs are exposed to heavy seas. These areas are often covered in dense seaweed beds and so provide cover for prey items such as crabs and small fish. Bass will move in and out of these areas on the tide and can often be caught very close in, in a foot or two of water.

Beaches: Bass will hunt in and around sandy beaches in search of food and worms, crab & sandeel are the favoured baits off many beach marks. Sandeel burrow into the sand and emerge at night to feed so night time fishing is usually the most productive. Beaches tend to fish best when there is a strong surf, as the wave action scours the gravel and sand to displace food items.

Estuaries/Lagoons: Bass love a strong current as they are sturdy swimmers that can hold in the current and intercept smaller prey as they are swept by. Estuaries/lagoons that flood with the tide can be particular hotspots as bass will follow prey movements in and out of the lagoon and the angler can intercept them en route. Some well-known examples of this type of mark would be Bannow Bay in Wexford or the mouth of the River Inny in Waterville, but there are many other similar marks around the Irish coast.

Tides: Bass tend to feed more avidly during periods of stronger tides so the key times to fish tend to be the spring tide periods around a full/new moon. Tide movements also have an impact on individual marks as bass will prefer certain marks at low water and other marks at mid and high water. Local knowledge is usually the best way to determine which marks fish well at different stages of the tide.

Onshore winds: A good onshore wind can create excellent bass fishing conditions as the force of the wind on the waves churns up the water close to shore. This churned up water is highly oxygenated, which attracts bass, and it also disorients prey items leaving them vulnerable to attack, thus providing perfect conditions for bass to feed hard.

Day/Night: Bass can be active over the whole 24-hour cycle and the dawn/dusk period usually produces better than average results, particularly if it coincides with a good tide. For those prepared to lose some sleep, night time fishing can be very rewarding and often produces larger than average fish that become less wary and move inshore during darkness. Night time fishing is sometimes the only option when fishing beaches that are busy with swimmers/bathers during the day.

Indicators: There are some signs to look for that can indicate the presence of bass or the baitfish that bass feed on. Diving birds such as gannets usually mean that there is a shoal of baitfish in the area and bass will not be too far away. Splashes & boils or small baitfish breaking the surface usually mean that a predator is feeding and anglers should concentrate on that area. In clearer water, bass can sometimes be observed using the power of the waves to 'surf' after prey items.

SEASONS & REGULATIONS

Bass can be fished for all year in Ireland but they are predominantly targeted in the April to October period. However, along the south coast bass can be caught regularly through the winter months, with bait fishing usually the most productive method.

In recent years, bass angling regulations have changed so often that it is difficult to give any useful guidance here. There can be restrictions on numbers and size of bass an angler can take and there can also be closed seasons. Anglers need to check our website <http://fishinginireland.info/regulations.htm>

prior to fishing to make sure they are aware of regulations in place at that time.

METHODS

Lure fishing is the most popular method to target bass these days and a rod between 8 and 10ft casting from 10 to 40g matched with a good fixed spool reel with 15kg

brail will cover most bases. There are a myriad of lures available and the angler should have a range of different weights, colours & sizes in both soft and hard plastics.

For most bait fishing, a light beachcaster of 11-14 ft able to cast somewhere in the 3-6 oz range (beach) or 2-4 oz range (estuary) matched with a fixed spool reel or 6500 size multiplier is perfect. Using as light a rod as conditions allow will help bite detection. Pulley rigged crab and worm baits work well on the surf beaches, while for estuary fishing peeler crab is the preferred bait.

Fly rods for bass would generally be 9ft and AFTM 8 to 10. Shooting-head or weight forward lines in intermediate & floating will cover most bases. A line tray is recommended to stop line getting wrapped around rocks or feet by the waves. Flies are normally streamer variations such as clousers, deceivers etc. tied in a range of sizes and colours.

CATCH & RELEASE

We all have a responsibility to protect and conserve our fisheries so that they can be enjoyed by future generations. Most fisheries face multiple threats including pollution, water abstraction and illegal fishing, all of which have a negative impact on fish stocks. For that reason, we would ask that all anglers consider practicing Catch & Release for the majority of fish they catch. Record any trophy fish with a quick photo and then carefully return to the water. Remember: [#CPRsavesfish](#)



FURTHER INFORMATION

Angling Information

This guide provides a basic introduction to bass angling in Ireland and gives a summary of some of the key angling hotspots you can visit. However, there are a number of additional resources where you can find more detailed and up-to-date angling information. Firstly, there is a dedicated angling website which has more detailed information on individual fisheries and service providers at: www.fishinginireland.info

If you are planning on fishing in Northern Ireland or on the Foyle and Carlingford area on either side of the border you should consult:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/outdoor-recreation-and-sport/angling
and www.ufishireland.org/

IFI also produces a weekly Angling Update which provides up-to-date reports on what anglers are catching and where. You can sign up to be emailed the weekly Angling Update by emailing contact@fisheriesireland.ie

General Tourism

Ireland also has a general tourism website www.ireland.com that will help you plan your trip to Ireland, providing a wealth of information on travel and accommodation as well as information on things to do and see while visiting the island.

Leave No Trace

Please adhere to the seven principles of Leave No Trace Ireland:

Plan ahead and prepare; Travel and camp on durable surfaces; Dispose of waste properly; Leave what you find; Minimise campfire impacts (be careful with fire); Respect wildlife; Be considerate of other visitors.

Vehicles should be parked in designated areas and in such a manner that they do not cause obstruction.



leave no trace
IRELAND

Anglers should fish responsibly and sustainably – where possible use single barbless hooks and practice no-weight, “in the water” catch and release.

www.leavenotraceireland.org

Safety

Angling is a water based activity with changing conditions and dangers that are sometimes hidden. Drowning is an ever present risk and you should exercise utmost care for your own safety and that of angling partners/buddies.

Please consider the following when going fishing:

- Wear a life jacket.
- Follow advice on warning signs, permits and notices
- Don't take any risks when wading or fishing from boat, shore or bank



#CPRSavesfish



- Check the weather forecast and tide tables before you go
- Take time to observe weather, water and tide conditions while fishing
- Fish with a partner/buddy or let someone know where you're going
- Take a fully charged mobile phone in a waterproof case/bag.
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear

For a more detailed guide to safety when angling please visit:

www.fishinginireland.info/safety.htm

Biosecurity

Aquatic Invasive Species and fish pathogens are readily transferred from one water-course to another on angling tackle, boats and protective clothing. These can be very damaging to resident fish stocks, the aquatic habitat and the general environment. We would ask that all anglers inspect and clean their gear prior to travelling to Ireland to fish.

Full information on prevention of invasive species is available on our website at:

www.fisheriesireland.ie/Research/invasive-species.html

Or via Invasive Species Ireland at

<http://invasivespeciesireland.com/cops/water-users/anglers/>

Disclaimer

Every effort has been taken to ensure accuracy in the compilation of this publication and associated maps and web pages. Inland Fisheries Ireland cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions therein. Some sporting activities may by their nature be hazardous and involve risk. It is recommended in such cases to take out personal accident insurance. While many operators would have public liability insurance it is always advisable to check with the establishment or operator concerned as to the level of cover carried.

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Regions and Hotspots

The east coast of Ireland (A) faces the Irish Sea, and experiences smaller tides and usually colder water temperatures than the south and west coasts. Bass are present all along the east coast but are not as plentiful as on the south/south west coast. The coastline is characterised by long stretches of beach interspersed with small rocky outcrops. Traditionally, bait fishing at night from the beaches has been the most successful method. In recent years, lure/lyl fishing the rocky stretches has become more popular and has produced bass given the right conditions. North of Dublin, Carlingford Lough, Port Beach and the Boyne Estuary are known marks that regularly produce bass for lure anglers. South of Dublin, lure/lyl anglers can fish from the rocky marks in south Wick and the West of Waterford are better suited to bait fishing at night. Towards the very southern end of the coastline, from Rosslare Harbour to Carrmore Point, bass become more plentiful and there are some noted marks along this stretch which fish well to both bait and lure. The water clarity along much of the east coast can be an issue for lure and lyl anglers, particularly after a period of easterly winds.

Moving westwards, between Carrmore Point and the Waterford Estuary (B), the coastline becomes more broken as the beaches become smaller and rocky ground starts to dominate. This is a perfect habitat for bass along this stretch, with some noted hotspots at Cullinstown, Barrow Bay and on both sides of The Hook Peninsula.

Across the Waterford Estuary, from Tramore as far as Dungarvan (C), you enter one of the most noted bass fishing coastlines in all of Europe. The Copper Coast which extends westwards from Tramore towards Dungarvan is a complex network of shallow water, rocks, reefs, gullies, coves and storm beaches. It has been made famous through the writing of noted bass anglers such as Henry Gilbey who has travelled here year on year to sample the top fishing in a wild and wonderful setting. Anglers are really spoilt for choice here and while marks at Killybeggy, Amestown and Bannagh are well known, there are plenty of equally good marks without a name to describe them. It is an area that will reward the adventurous, exploring angler. But a word of warning, incoming tides can push right up to the often steep cliffs and may trap unwary anglers. Anglers unfamiliar with an area should consider fishing reefs on a dropping tide to become acquainted with the lie of the land and care should be taken at all times to be observant of changing tides and conditions. Just west of the Copper Coast lies the busy town of Dungarvan where the east facing Dungarvan Bay is lined by the 3km long Carriger Spit. There are oyster beds all along the east side of the spit which provide shelter and herring grounds for bass and which can be fished by careful wading or, more usually, from a small boat.

From Dungarvan west to Ballycotton (D) the ground becomes a little less rocky and a number of longer beaches feature, as does the estuary of the River Blackwater at Yough. These beaches such as Ardmore, Gorycock and Whiting Bay are known for throwing up record fish across a range of species and are also capable of producing large bass, especially when bait fishing at night if the surf is running. There is no shortage of rock fishing either at known marks such as the Black Rocks near Ardmore, the reef at Ballycotton or any number of other outcrops in between.

West of Ballycotton and the most prominent feature on Ireland's south coast, Cork Harbour (E) is one of the largest natural harbours in the world and provides a sheltered environment for numerous fish species. The harbour, which is fishable in all but the strongest of winds, is the centre of a busy recreational angling scene and bass, which can congregate here in good numbers, are one of the primary target species. The bass fishing in the harbour is mainly by boat and lure or lyl fishing are the most popular methods. There are self-drive small boats available to hire locally or, alternately, a number of guides also provide boat fishing for those that prefer to let others do the driving.

Once into West Cork (F), the force of the Atlantic Ocean has more of an effect and the coastline becomes more intended. Smaller beaches are the norm and these are punctuated by rocky beaches and bays. The key bass fishing spots on this coastline are at Courtmacsherry and Clonakilly, fishing in the estuaries and from the rock marks and small bays in the vicinity. There are self-drive boats available for hire at Courtmacsherry allowing greater scope for exploring the area while there are guides working both areas that can also provide fishing from boat or shore.

West of Clonakilly the coastline becomes steeper, with more cliffs and deep water than the shallow ground that bass prefer. This type of deeper water coastline stretches all the way around the south west tip of Ireland as far as Kenmare in Kerry. While bass will be present in many locations, this part of the coast is better suited to deeper water species such as pollack and wrasse and is not normally known as a bass hotspot. If fishing for bass, bait fishing from the beaches close to estuaries will probably produce the best results.

Both the Iveragh (G) and Dingle (H) peninsulas in Kerry provide a return to the shallow water habitat that bass thrive in and it is no surprise that they contain some of the best-known bass angling marks in Ireland. Bass are regarded as a year-round species in this part of Ireland and they are regularly taken right throughout the winter months. At the tip of the Iveragh peninsula, Waterveil Bay boasts a range of bass marks from both beach and rock with the best known being the key mouth right to the centre of the bay. Bass will congregate here to ambush smaller species as they move in and out of the estuary with the tide. Bass are also found in the bays, coves and beaches around the town of Cahersiveen to the north of Waterveil.

Opposing each other across the expanse of Dingle Bay, the two spits of Rinebeg and Inch can provide excellent surf fishing for bass. Further along the peninsula, Trabeg on the southern shore and Ballycranig, Brandon Bay (various marks) and Cotleegregory stream are all known bass marks.

North of Tralee (I), bass are caught from a number of marks around Fenit, Barrow Harbour and Carrabane as the tide pushes in and out of the various channel systems. Further north, lure fishing from the outcrop at Black and surf fishing from Ballybeggy Strand can produce results as can fishing Ballybunnon beach.

County Clare (J), famous for the Cliffs of Moher, is often overlooked when it comes to bass but they are present in decent numbers for anglers that are prepared to put in a bit of work. On the northern side of the Shannon Estuary, fishing at the mouth of Pookasherry Bay from the western side and at Querin will produce bass. On the other side of the peninsula bass are found at Killee, Doughmore Strand (where the Irish record bass was caught) and at Spanish Point. Northern Clare is usually known for its deepwater fishing but when you can find areas of shallower water bass will be present. Such areas exist at beaches around Doolin, Trillick and Fanore.

Galway Bay (K) is generally regarded as the northern extremity for productive bass fishing on the western seaboard and while bass are targeted successfully by some local anglers they are not considered plentiful. Anglers seeking bass in this area should concentrate on the shallow ground around Ballyvaughan and the channel at Newquay on the southern shore while on the northern shore, marks at Seaside Point and Banna Beach are the most productive. Autumn is generally the best season as it usually coincides with the presence of sprit and mackerel close to shore.

Further north, bass are an occasional capture, with the surf beaches of Moyra including Whitestrand, Carronbeg and the Muller peninsula producing the odd bass. Donegal was long regarded as a bass wilderness, but in recent years they have been turning up here in better numbers, all the way to the surf beaches of north Donegal.

IRELAND/ NORTHERN IRELAND

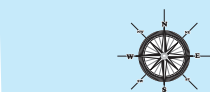
The island of Ireland consists of two separate countries: The Republic of Ireland (also known as Eire or Southern Ireland) and Northern Ireland, which is part of the UK. As a result of this, there are three separate agencies that control fishing on the island of Ireland: Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) which controls the majority of the fishing in the Republic of Ireland, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) which controls most of the fishing in Northern Ireland, and the Loughs Agency, which controls the fishing on the Foyle and Carlingford systems that span the border between Northern Ireland and Ireland. These areas are marked on the adjacent map.

This brochure only provides information on fishing in IFI controlled waters in Ireland. Anglers wishing to fish in Loughs Agency or DAERA controlled waters should check the relevant website for information before fishing.

DAERA: www.direct.gov.uk/information, and www.hatcheriesireland.com/sport/fishing
Loughs Agency: www.ifihireland.org



For a Google map, scan the QR code or use the following web link:
<https://goo.gl/1z3pit>



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