



**Angling**  
**Ireland**



**LURE ANGLING**  
**IN IRELAND**



## INTRODUCTION

Ireland has long been known as one of the premier angling destinations in Europe and for decades anglers of all ages and abilities have been making annual pilgrimages to Ireland in search of wild fish in wild places. So, what makes fishing in Ireland so good? Well, we have lots of water for a start, with many thousands of lakes (or loughs), 70,000 kilometres of river and stream and over 3,000 kilometres of fishable coastline. Moving away from the coast, there is a continental shelf that stretches for nearly 400 kilometres off our western and southern shores, providing a shallow, nutrient rich feeding ground for numerous saltwater fish species.

The climate is another factor. Sitting in the north Atlantic and warmed by the Gulf Stream (a warm water current flowing up from the Gulf of Mexico), Ireland has a moderate oceanic climate that is ideal for a broad mix of warm and cold-water sea species. The Gulf Stream keeps our waters relatively warm in winter where other seas at the same latitude would be under ice. Inland, mild but wet winters mean the waters usually remain ice-free while relatively cool summers mean that fish are active throughout the season; frequent rain also means that low water levels are rare.

Geology also plays its part; much of the midlands and mid-west of Ireland is a large limestone plain, from which most of our rivers and loughs drain. The limestone lends a

high alkalinity to the water, which increases productivity and provides an abundance of rich feeding for our fish.

Finally, angling pressure in Ireland is generally low, with most fish never seeing an artificial fly, lure or bait. It's not all about the fishing though; Ireland has a wealth of scenery and history to explore if you take a break from fishing. There are great restaurants and pubs, most of which serve good food as well as drink, so what better way to relax after a long day on the lake than with a tasty evening meal and a pint or two...

This brochure contains some basic information to help you get started on your Irish lure angling adventure. It gives a brief introduction to some of the main species you can target and some information on seasons, methods, regulations and other useful information. There are also links to web pages, maps and social media that will help you learn more about what Ireland can offer the lure angler.

## SPECIES

There are a number of different fish that can be caught by the lure angler in Ireland, below is a brief description of the most important of these angling species.

**Pike:** Of all species targeted by the angler, Irish pike are probably the first fish that most lure anglers aspire to catch. Irish pike are renowned for their fighting qualities and to see an Irish pike leap acrobatically on the end of your line is one of the great thrills of angling. Irish pike can grow large (115cm/15kg+) and are widespread in loughs and slow rivers or canals. Pike can be caught on a wide selection of lures, spoons and spinners as well as mounted natural fish baits and they love weedy areas where they can ambush their prey. A wire trace is a must when pike fishing as their sharp teeth will slice through nylon or braided fishing line. Good pike fishing can be had on upper and lower Lough Erne, the Shannon and western loughs, the larger rivers like the Erne, Shannon, Suck and Barrow and also the lakelands regions of Cavan, Monaghan and Leitrim where you will have hundreds of small to medium sized loughs to choose from. For more information on pike fishing venues got to this website <https://goo.gl/17J4YN> or scan the adjacent QR code.

**Perch:** A voracious and numerous species, perch are widespread throughout Ireland and so are one of the easiest fish for the lure angler to target. Many an Irish angler learned how to fish through catching these stripy assassins but for some reason most Irish anglers do not regularly target perch. Small spinners and lures along with drop-shotted jigs and small soft plastics will catch perch on rivers, canals and lakes – the bigger fish generally coming from the loughs, with fish of 40cm or more possible for the specialist perch angler. Places to try include the river Barrow and its canals, Loughs Derravaragh and Ennell in the midlands and Loughs Gill, Arrow and the Erne loughs further north. Many of the larger loughs will hold shoals of good sized perch but a fish finder will be needed to locate them.



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**Trout/Sea Trout:** The most widespread fish in Ireland, the brown trout inhabits most river systems from remote mountain loughs all the way to their brackish estuaries. The brown trout's migratory form, the sea trout, also inhabits many Irish rivers and loughs during their journey upstream to spawn, usually entering the rivers from spring through to autumn. In freshwater, trout can be caught on a wide range of small lures, plugs and spoons but the Mepps blade spinner is by far the most popular.

Sea trout can be targeted in the open sea and river estuaries with some of the best fishing in the springtime; Tasmanian Devils, Tobys and any lures resembling small fish will work – it is always worth using something silvery when fishing for sea trout.

The biggest of trout can be caught in the limestone loughs and the largest of these – the mighty Ferox, a piscivorous subspecies of Irish trout growing to over 10kgs, can be caught by trolling lures or mounted fish baits through the depths of loughs like Corrib, Mask and Melvin (trolling is a traditional Irish method of trailing a lure or fish bait behind a moving boat). There is also a long held tradition of trolling the brickeen (natural minnow) for trout in the western loughs of Corrib and Mask.

Hotspots for trout fishing include the large loughs of the Shannon system and the west of Ireland, while most rivers where lure fishing is permitted will be worth a try, particularly those that are connected to a large lough. For sea trout fishing in the tide, the estuaries of the Moy & Erne rivers in the north-west as well as places like the Carlingford peninsula in the east are worth exploring. A map detailing some of the main trout angling rivers & loughs can be found by scanning the adjacent QR codes.



**Salmon:** When spinning for salmon in Irish rivers the angler only needs to decide on the colour and size of lure to use; the type of lure has been chosen already by countless thousands of Irish salmon anglers, namely the Flying C. The Flying C ousted the Devon Minnow as the most prolific salmon catching lure a long time ago and still remains the number one choice for the Irish salmon angler. The Flying C comes into its own on slower, deeper holding pools and is fished across the stream against the current or sometimes with the current at speed. Other traditional lures will of course work on Irish rivers, but none will work as effectively. Rivers that are worth fishing include the Moy, the Blackwater, the Mourne system and the Drowes.

Salmon will also be taken on loughs by trolling over known salmon holding areas, or 'lies', whose whereabouts have been passed down through generations of local ghillies and boatmen; silver spoons such as the Toby or Lukki in large sizes work well as do plugs such as Rapalas. Trolling for salmon can be effective on calm days when other forms of angling are ineffective. Popular loughs for trolling include Loughs Conn, Currane, Caragh and Melvin.

For a map of Irish salmon angling hotspots, scan the adjacent QR code.



**Pollack:** Deep water and kelp beds are the kind of habitat that pollack love. Spun jelly worms and soft plastics fished deep are the preferred choice for pollack anglers and they can be caught both from the shore and from a boat. Pollack are a hard fighting fish and will dive for cover once hooked, it is important to wrestle them out of snags as soon as they are hooked or else you will risk losing them. Pollack are present all around the coast where you find deep water and kelp beds close to the shore but some of the best fishing will be in west Cork, Kerry, Clare and off the north-west coast.

**Bass:** Lure fishing for bass has increased in popularity in recent years and Ireland, with laws in place since 1990 to conserve bass for the recreational angler only, still boasts some of the best bass stocks in Europe. The southern half of the country from Wicklow to Clare holds the best stocks of fish with the south coast itself from Kerry to Wexford having the best marks. Bass love shallow broken ground and any area with a mixture of rock, sand and weed is worth a cast as are areas where strong tidal currents are evident. Bass can be caught on a wide range of lures with shallow diving hard plastics and weed free soft plastics being popular choices. Bass will move with the tides and sometimes it pays to explore different marks at different stages of the tide.

**Mackerel:** The iconic sea fish of the Irish summer, mackerel will arrive in vast numbers in high season and are easily catchable from rock marks, jetties and piers by anglers of all abilities. Popular methods include multi hook rigs like mackerel feathers, Hokkai and Sabiki rigs fished with an adequate casting weight, although light spinning rods and small spoons will often pick out the bigger fish. Mackerel will be spread right around the coast when they do arrive and it pays to watch the local anglers to find the best places to fish.

**Wrasse:** The most common wrasse species in Irish waters is the Ballan wrasse and these colourful fish can be caught close to the shore over very rocky, snaggy ground particularly in deep water. Wrasse primarily feed on crustaceans and shellfish but can be territorial and aggressive, snapping at any unwelcome lures with their strong jaws. In recent years there has been an increase in the popularity of Light Rock Fishing (LRF) and Hard Rock Fishing (HRF) and wrasse can be caught on LRF/HRF tackle using soft lures such as jelly worms and curly tail worms fished with a drop shot or jig head.

For a detailed map of Ireland's shore angling marks please log onto to this Google map: <https://goo.gl/ty3pLf> or scan the QR code below.



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## SEASONS

The fishing season in Ireland varies depending on which species of fish you target. For some species, like pike and perch in freshwater and most saltwater species, there is no regulated angling season meaning you can fish throughout the year; however, fish may be less active in freshwater or further offshore in saltwater during the colder months.

For the game fish (salmon, brown trout, sea trout) there is an angling season, usually between sometime in February/March through to the end of September; for these species it is best to enquire locally or check the information given on the websites listed later in this document. The best of the fishing for migratory game fish will be from May until the end of September with July and August being the peak months, while earlier in the season can provide the best sea trout angling in salt water.

One of the most popular salt water species, the European sea bass, prefers warmer water and numbers of bass around the shore will increase from April onwards. Bass can be targeted with lures right until November in some areas while other saltwater species, like the wrasse, will be present in deep water close to the shore all year round.

## METHODS

For lure fishing in Ireland an 8-10 foot (2.4m-2.7m) fishing rod capable of casting up to 35 or 40 grams will cover most situations. The strength and length of rod will depend on where you choose to fish and what species you want to catch. For example, a 7 or 8 foot (2.1m-2.4m) 5-20 gram rod will be great for catching perch in a canal or trout in a stream but a much more powerful rod will be needed if fishing for large trout and pike on a lough or hauling big pollack up from an underwater kelp forest.

Braided line of 10kgs-15kgs breaking strain is the most popular choice for the modern lure angler with its low diameter and lack of stretch but mono is still used by many; again match the strength of line to the methods used and the ground you are fishing over, as well as the size of fish you hope to catch. When using braided line it is a good idea to attach a length of mono/fluorocarbon between the lure and the braid to prevent loss of fish or lures through abrasion.

## GUIDING & BOAT HIRE

There are a large number of specialist guides, ghillies and charter boats in Ireland for each of the species listed above. It is advisable for an angler visiting a venue for the first time to hire a guide for a day or two as a guide will have local knowledge of the water and the fish holding areas which will greatly increase chances of hooking up. You will need to contact and make your own arrangements with guides and to help with this, there is a list of angling guides available at: [www.fishinginireland.info/guides/index.htm](http://www.fishinginireland.info/guides/index.htm)

## REGULATIONS

A State licence is required to fish for salmon or sea trout in the Republic of Ireland (southern Ireland) and these are available here:

[www.fisheriesireland.ie/Angling-Information/salmon-licence.html](http://www.fisheriesireland.ie/Angling-Information/salmon-licence.html)

and for Northern Ireland and the Loughs Agency here:

[www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/angling-rod-licences-explained](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/angling-rod-licences-explained)

Fisheries regulations are subject to change and so anglers should consult this link for the latest information:

<http://fishinginireland.info/regulations.htm>

## 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, Photo & 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 lure fishing in Ireland and gives a summary of some of the key angling hotspots. However, there are a number of 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](http://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](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/outdoor-recreation-and-sport/angling)

and

[www.ufishireland.org/](http://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](mailto:contact@fisheriesireland.ie)

### General Tourism Information

Ireland also has a general tourism website [www.ireland.com](http://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.



**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/](http://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
- 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](http://www.fishinginireland.info/safety.htm)

## Biosecurity

Aquatic Invasive Species and fish pathogens are readily transferred from one watercourse 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](http://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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## 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.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/outdoor-recreation-and-sport/angling](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/outdoor-recreation-and-sport/angling)

Loughs Agency:

[www.ufishireland.org/](http://www.ufishireland.org/)

This brochure can be made available in alternate formats upon request.





For up to date information on fishing in Ireland  
log onto: [www.fishinginireland.info](http://www.fishinginireland.info)  
or send an email to:  
[contact@fisheriesireland.ie](mailto:contact@fisheriesireland.ie)



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