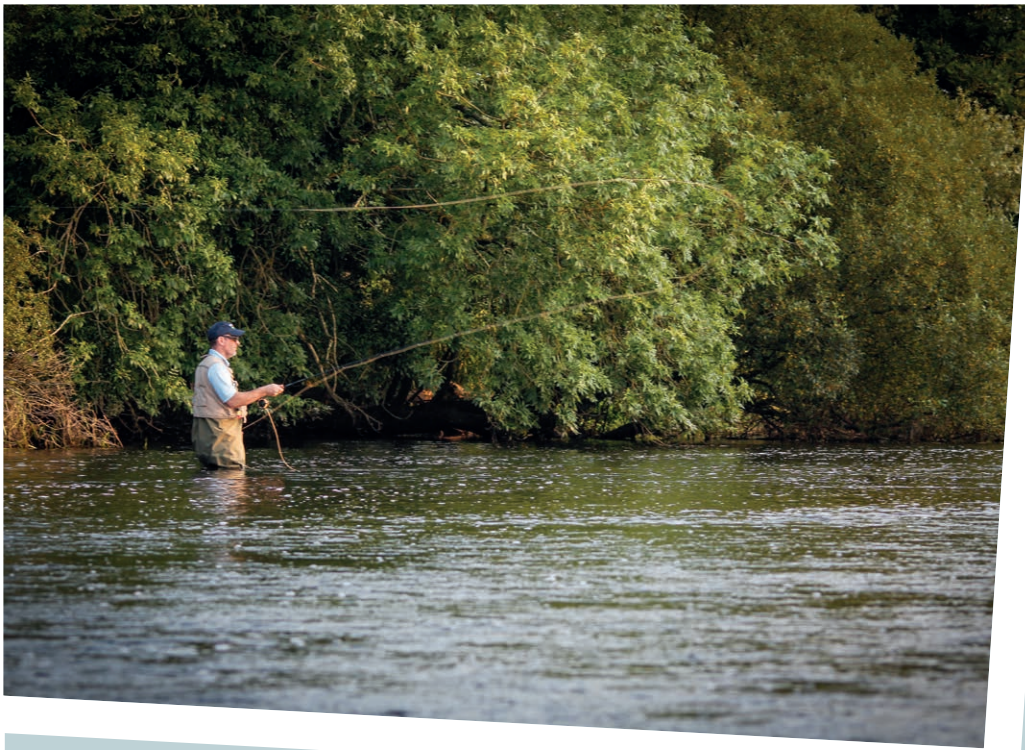




Angling  
Ireland



FLY FISHING  
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.

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 water 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 fly fishing 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 fly angler.

## SPECIES

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

**Brown Trout:** Brown trout are the most widespread fish in Ireland and are generally present in all of our watercourses, making them a prime target for the fly angler. We don't stock our rivers so all of our brown trout are wild, making them a true challenge for any avid fly angler. Brown trout can be found in both river and lake and a different approach is generally required to fish these two distinct types of venue. For river trout fishing an 8-9 ft rod rated #4/5 coupled with a floating line will cover most situations. Nymphing with weighted nymphs will generally produce the most fish but dry fly fishing can also provide great sport, particularly during the 'evening rise' in the summer months. Fishing a simple team of spiders is often an extremely effective method that is regularly overlooked. The best months for river fishing are April - June & September for daytime fishing while late June, July & August can provide excellent evening fishing. A local permit is usually required to fish for trout in Irish rivers.

For lough/lake fishing tackle needs to be stepped up to a 9-10 ft rod rated #6/7 with a range of floating, intermediate and sinking lines. This type of fishing is normally carried out from a boat which is set on a drift with the wind as flies are cast and retrieved in front of the boat. There are a number of distinct hatches on most Irish loughs: duckfly (March-April), lake olives (April-May), mayfly (May- early June) and sedges/caddis (July & August). The most traditional style of fishing is lough style, which involves casting a team of three 'wet flies' ahead of the boat and stripping them back. For chironomid fishing in calm weather, epoxy buzzers fished down deep produce the best results. Dry fly can also be used for all of the above fly hatches when fish can be observed taking adult flies from the surface. Most lough fishing in Ireland is free. For more information on brown trout fishing see our two companion guides on river and lough fishing and for maps of where to fish use the following links or scan the adjacent QR codes: <https://goo.gl/RPsWTS> & <https://goo.gl/6KkxkR>





**Salmon & Sea Trout:** The salmon is an iconic species in Ireland and it features prominently in Irish mythology with the famous story of Fionn mac Cumhaill and the 'Salmon of Knowledge'. Salmon are a popular fly fishing species in Ireland and they are quite widespread, being found in most Irish rivers and also in some loughs. For river fishing a 10-12 ft rod rated # 7/8 with a floating or an intermediate line will cover most situations. On a handful of larger rivers such as the Cork Blackwater, the Galway Weir Fishery or the River Moy a double handed rod can be more suitable. For lough fishing a 10-11 ft rod rated #7/8 in combination with a floating line is the most suitable setup. Equipment for sea trout is lighter than that for salmon with a 9-10 ft rod rated #5/6 being suitable for river fishing while a 10-11 ft rod rated #6/7 is best for lough fishing.

The open season for salmon and sea trout fishing in Ireland varies depending on where you are fishing. In some areas the season opens on January 1<sup>st</sup> and after that the remainder of fisheries open on various dates in February, March, April, May and June. The majority of fisheries close on September 30<sup>th</sup> but some rivers remain open for sea trout fishing until October 12<sup>th</sup>.

You must buy a state licence to fish for salmon or sea trout which can be purchased at: <https://store.fishinginireland.info> You will also usually need to buy a local permit to fish. Every year a list is published that sets the status of different fisheries as either Open, Closed or Open with Catch & Release. For up to date information on opening/closing dates for individual fisheries as well as the status of each fishery and other regulations please visit [www.fishinginireland.info](http://www.fishinginireland.info).



For more information on salmon and sea trout angling in Ireland see our two dedicated companion guides for these species. For maps of where to fish use the following link: <http://l.ead.me/bb5RTC> or scan the adjacent QR code:



Scan me

**Pike:** Pike are one of Ireland's most popular angling species and they are most common throughout the midlands and northern part of the country. Irish pike are famous for their strong fighting capabilities and acrobatic jumps when hooked and all this makes them a very exciting fish to target using a fly. A 9 ft rod rated #9/10 is required coupled with a good reel containing plenty of backing. An intermediate is the most versatile line but you should carry a range of lines from floating to fast sinking to cover all possibilities. Flies are usually streamers between 6 and 12 inches tied in a wide range of colours and materials to represent baitfish such as roach and perch. The best months for fishing are usually April - June and September - October when pike are more actively feeding and more likely to take a moving fly. Fishing for pike in Ireland is usually free and there is no closed season.

For more information on pike fishing in Ireland see our companion brochure 'Pike Angling in Ireland' and for a map of pike fishing locations use this link: <https://goo.gl/17J4YN> or scan the adjacent QR code.



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**Bass:** Fly 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 from Wexford to Kerry having the better 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 will move from mark to mark as the tide progresses and sometimes it pays to explore marks at different stages of the tide. In fact, the most difficult problem with fly fishing for bass is usually locating where bass are likely to be at a given time so it pays to put in as much research as possible prior to any trip and using a local angling guide will greatly enhance your chance of catching. A 9 ft #8-10 rated rod coupled with floating and intermediate lines will cover most bass angling situations and bass can be caught on a wide range of streamers tied to imitate bait fish (Clousers, Decievers, Hollow Flies etc.). A line tray is also an essential piece of equipment to stop line from becoming entangled in rocks or being swept away with the tide. Bass can be fished for all year round but are predominantly targeted in the April - October period. There are restrictions on the size and number of bass an angler can take and you should consult the following web-page for the latest regulations: [www.fishinginireland.info/regulations.htm](http://www.fishinginireland.info/regulations.htm)

For more information on fishing for bass in Ireland see our companion brochure 'Bass Angling in Ireland'.

**Pollack:** Pollack are present all around the coast wherever you find deeper water and kelp beds close to the shore but some of the best fishing will be along the west coast from Donegal to Cork. They are predominantly a summer species that can be caught from May to September. Equipment is similar to that required for bass fishing but fast sinking fly lines and weighted flies are often necessary to get the flies into the taking zone. Pollack are a hard fighting fish and will dive for cover once hooked, so it is important to wrestle them out of snags as soon as they are hooked or else you will risk losing them. It's hard to look past a clouser tied in white and chartreuse as your go-to fly for pollack.

**Mullet:** Mullet are a real challenge for any angler and are a particularly difficult prospect on the fly. However, if you are prepared to invest time and effort there is a great satisfaction in managing to catch one of these shy but hard fighting fish. Mullet are found all around the Irish coast and are most easily targeted in areas of slacker water such as lagoons or harbours where their movements can be observed. One approach to catching them involves groundbaiting with bread or rotting seaweed containing seaweed maggots and then using a fly to imitate the bread or maggots. Another approach is to cast a small, shrimp like fly to mullet that you observe actively feeding and retrieve slowly. Either way, a stealthy approach is required as mullet can spook very easily and a mistimed cast can make them vanish from the swim.



For a map of Irish shore fishing locations use this link: <https://goo.gl/ty3pLf> or scan the adjacent QR code.



**Shark:** Usually a species only targeted by bait anglers, in recent years we have begun to catch shark on the fly in Ireland. Ireland has a number of shark species, but the one most likely to be caught on fly is the Blue Shark. To do this you need to have a charter skipper who specialises in this type of fishing and who will use rubby dubby to create a slick behind the boat to attract the shark. As the shark come close to the boat, you cast your fly to them and if they see it they will take. This type of fishing requires very strong gear as the shark will run for 100 metres or more. 12 weight rods with sinking lines and a strong wire trace are needed as well as a good reel with plenty of backing. If there is a weakness in your setup, the shark will find it... Shark fishing is best from June to September.

**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. 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. They often hold up in water slightly beyond casting range for the fly angler but they will chase small baitfish close to shore and an hour either side of high tide is usually the best time to target them with a fly. Small streamers with plenty of sparkle in them work well.

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

## 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:

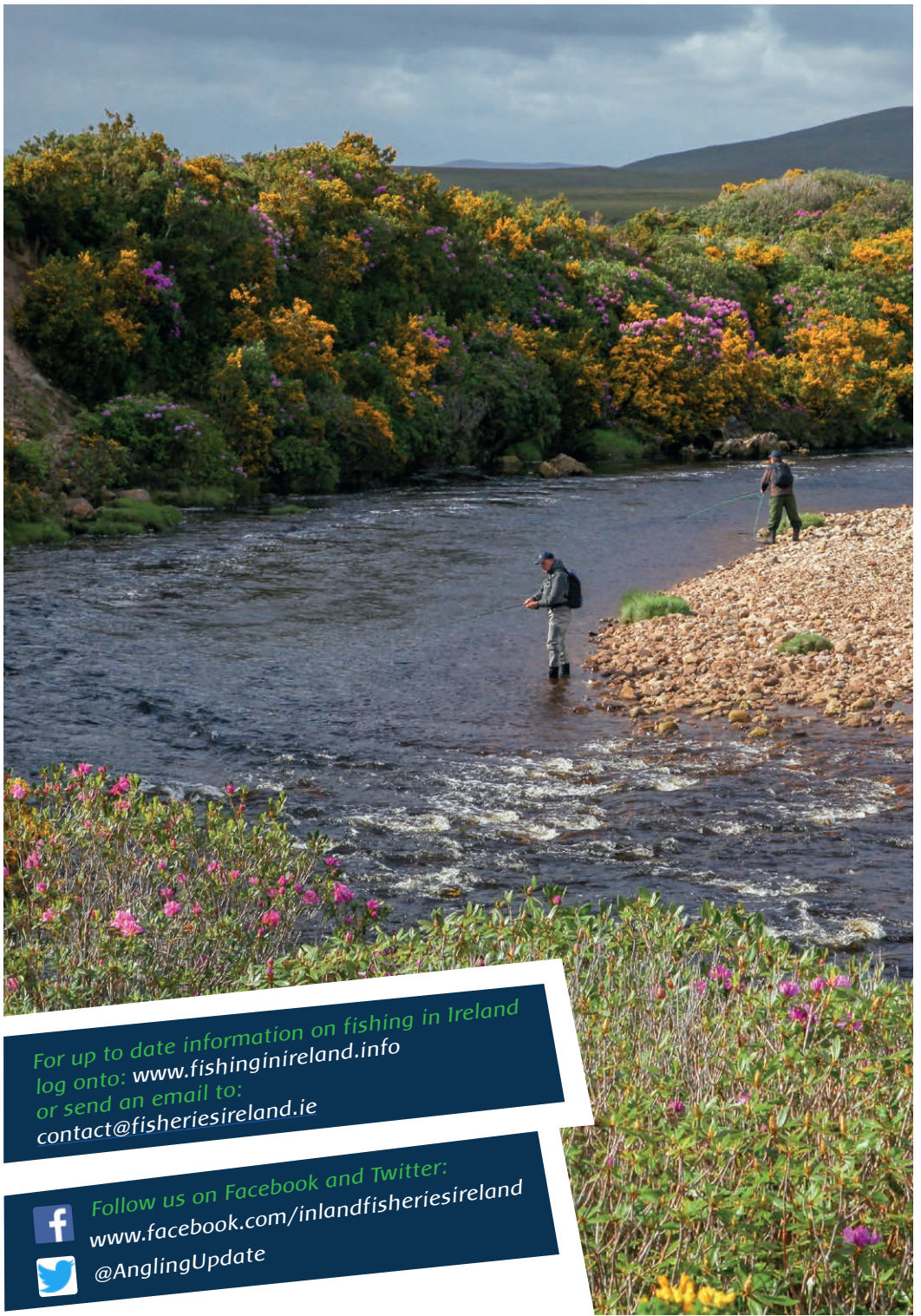
DAERA:

[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/)





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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