

Newcomers Guide Angling & Wildlife- “Golden Rules”



NEWCOMERS GUIDE-ANGLING & WILDLIFE "GOLDEN RULES"

ANGLING AND WILDLIFE

Anglers are natural conservationists. Time spent at the waterside instills appreciation and understanding of the natural environment, particularly in the young. The development and management of our fisheries contributes to the wildlife value of ponds, lakes and rivers. Angling contributes towards our environment and people's enjoyment of nature, but inexperience or thoughtlessness may lead to wildlife being harmed and the good image of angling being tarnished.

"GOLDEN RULES"

ANGLING-RELATED LITTER

- **Never** drop litter or discard tackle and remember that discarded nylon line is particularly hazardous to wildlife. Discarded or damaged line should be taken home and burnt or cut into short lengths before disposal
- **Always** clear up litter before you leave - even if it's not yours. If you see any litter or discarded tackle, pick it up, take it home and bin it.

BREAKAGES AND SNAGGING

- **Remove immediately** rigs caught up in bankside vegetation, branches or underwater snags where it is practicable and safe to do so.
- **Report** lost terminal tackle to club bailiffs or the fishery owner for removal, if you can not recover it.

SWIM CHOICE

- **Choose** your swim with care to reduce the risk of snagging bankside trees, vegetation and obstructions in the water.
- **Take extra care** where people feed waterfowl; the birds may have learned to associate people with food at that site and their expectations will increase the risk of entanglements.

UNATTENDED RODS

- **Never** leave rods unattended while fishing. Not only is it poor angling practice as it may result in a hooked fish becoming snagged but it also increases the risk of birds becoming entangled in the line or taking the bait. If you need to leave your swim, all lines should be retrieved, baits removed, and the hooks secured to the rod.
- **Never** leave rods on the bank with hooks still baited, as these food items could be picked up by birds or animals.
- **Remember** - it is illegal to leave a rod unattended while fishing.

RIGS

- **Use** a hook length of lower breaking strain line than the reel line where possible. **Never** use reel line straight through to the hook without a weaker link. This will ensure that the minimum amount of line is lost in the event of snagging. Leger links should also be of a lower breaking strain to minimise loss of line.
- **Remember** that whatever type of rig you use, weaknesses will occur at the knots where line is joined, where it is tied to swivels etc, and where shot are pinched onto the line.
- **Check** your reel line regularly for flaws caused by wear and damage. Remove and carefully dispose of any damaged line and replace your reel line regularly.

BOLT RIGS

Bolt rigs or fixed leads are acceptable, providing the leger weight can slip free in the event of snagging or tangling. Make sure that if the line breaks it will not result in a fish or bird dragging a leger around.

HOOKS

Use barbless or reduced barb hooks where possible. Hooked or entangled birds are more likely to be able to rid themselves of the hook and in the event of a rescue being needed, removal of the hook from a bird will be much easier.

WEIGHTS & NETS

Lead weights are illegal in most sizes and non-toxic weights are widely available. Lead weights of 0.06 grams (No.8 shot) or less, or of more than 28.35 grams (1 oz) may be used.

Do remember too if you have just been given some tackle that perhaps has been sitting in some-ones attic for a while, it could be that it includes some of the old lead shot weights and split shot that are now illegal. If in doubt, do replace them with non-toxic shot! The same applies to old landing nets and keep-nets, the mesh types now are much kinder to fish and your local tackle dealer will happily advise whether yours are still usable.

WHILE FISHING

- **Beware** of birds swimming into your line or picking up surface baits.
- **Submerge rod tips when legering using bite alarms. Keep lines under the surface to avoid waterfowl and where there is not heavy weedgrowth it may be possible to use back-leads to keep the line below the water surface.**
- **Watch** your rod at all times when legering with quivertips or other visual bite indicators. Again, it may be possible to keep the rod tip under or close to the water surface to avoid contact with birds' feet. Where this is not possible the line should be retrieved if there is a risk of birds swimming across the line.
- **Retrieve** your line when float fishing if there is a risk of birds swimming through the line. Even when using a waggler float with the line 'buried', it will be only just below the surface and still presents a risk.
- **Take** great care when fishing surface baits such as bread or 'floaters' as they may attract waterfowl. Sometimes the attentions of birds can be avoided by anchoring the bait with a back-lead which allows you to submerge the bait below the surface when a bird approaches. Remember, however, that swans can easily reach food a metre below the surface, and other birds often dive for food. If floating baits attract undue attention from birds then move away or choose a different fishing method.

HELP OTHER ANGLERS

The vast array of tackle and fishing methods may result in novices using unsuitable tackle. A little time spent helping beginners can reduce tackle losses and improve their catches.

ANGLING CLUBS AND FISHERY OWNERS

- **Ensure that anglers follow the Golden Rules at your fishery.**
- **Include rules about litter on angling permits.**
- **Promote the numbers overleaf.**
- **Offer help and advice to beginners.**
- **Organise 'clean up' days to remove litter and tackle snagged in trees or vegetation.**
- **Consider providing rubbish bins - but only if you can empty them every evening.**
- **Ask for advice from the Environment Agency or Swan Rescue Groups if you experience problems at your fishery.**

IF THE WORST HAPPENS...

- **Never** attempt to restrain an injured swan (or other large bird or animal) by holding onto the line. This can cause severe injury and heightened trauma. For swans and geese cut the line and report the incident as soon as possible to the rescue organisations below. Smaller birds may be freed at the time of the incident, or held comfortably in a small box or other dark space if treatment is required.

Further Information

If you own or manage a fishery and would like to know more about how to improve its value to wildlife, contact your local Environment Agency office and ask for a free copy of *Freshwater Fisheries & Wildlife Conservation - A Good Practice Guide*.

NATIONAL SWAN SANCTUARY HOTLINE

0700 SWAN UK or 01932 240790

RSPCA 0300 1234999
Wildlife Hospital Trust 01844 292292

Always have these telephone numbers with you, and report sick or injured animals.
The problem may not be angling related but it may give warning of a serious problem at the water.

