

Angling Trust FAQs on fishing in England from March 29th



Updated: March 25th, 2021

We have set out a series of answers to the most frequently asked questions to ensure that every angler is able to adhere to the rules.

Can we still go fishing?

Yes, with up to 6 people, or in a larger group if everyone present is from the same two households, whilst maintaining social distancing where possible.

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Can we go sea fishing?

Yes, with up to 6 people, or in a larger group if everyone present is from the same two households.

Can we go fishing from our boats?

Yes, private boat fishing under the Rule of 6 and charter boats operating in accordance with Covid precautions are now allowed.

Can we fish at night?

Yes, there are no time limits on outdoor recreation so you may fish into or through the night. This has been confirmed by the Cabinet Office. Campsites and holiday accommodation cannot open until April 12 but fishing from a bivvy is not prohibited under the regulations.

Can we fish matches?

Yes, match fishing (in sea and freshwater) to Covid secure guidelines is classified as an organised outdoor sports gathering, and not subject to the legal gatherings limit, provided the relevant precautions required by the law are taken.

How far can we travel to go fishing?

There are no statutory limits on how far you can travel to go fishing. We are encouraged to avoid making unnecessary journeys or traveling more than is reasonably necessary to take part in our activity. However, traveling to the coast or to a river or lake is entirely permissible.

Can my fishery stay open?

Yes, fisheries are not on the list of businesses required to close under the regulations. However, club houses or social facilities of any kind cannot open though onsite toilets with appropriate hand sanitising can remain in place. Camping sites and chalet accommodation can open from April 12th.

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Can tackle shops open?

Tackle shops are classed as non-essential businesses and must close until April 12 (Step 2) but they can still offer a 'click/call and collect' service.

Can we still carry out work parties on our waters?

Yes, there are a range of activities which are exempt from the restrictions including "for work, or providing voluntary or charitable services, where it is unreasonable to do so from home". However, numbers should be kept manageable and Covid compliant procedures must be followed. Please see our [Guidelines on Bailiffing and Fisheries Management](#)

Is bait collection still allowed?

Yes. Anglers can undertake bait collection and sea fishing combined as part of their outdoor recreation. If an angler or bait digger has a private arrangement with a private landowner to dig for bait we recommend contacting the landowner before digging.

Can I still Coach, Guide or Ghillie?

Yes. We advise that travel is kept to a minimum and group sizes to a maximum of four. Sessions must take place in a public outdoor space and social distancing maintained. Any coaches or guides undertaking sessions should ensure they are complying with relevant national governing body safeguarding policies and procedures and conduct a thorough risk assessment before engaging in any sessions. This should include particular consideration for under-18s and vulnerable adults. For more details see the [Angling Trust Guide to Coaching and Delivering Events](#)

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Is there still organised fishing for disabled anglers?

Under the new Government guidance, anglers with a disability can continue to go fishing and access organised disability sport. 'Organised sport' refers to sport which is formally organised by a national governing body, club, public body, qualified instructor, company or charity, and which follows the relevant sport's national governing body guidance. Please see [FAQs provided by Sport England](#).

What powers do the police have?

Whilst anglers must apply their own common sense and judgement there is a considerable level of discretion afforded to individual police constables and PCSOs. Each Police Area has a high degree of autonomy. The police can take action against you for breaches of the regulations (such as over the gathering limits) as opposed to any advisory guidance, and can issue you with a fine (Fixed Penalty Notice).

The National Policing College guidance to all forces is to:

Engage – Talk to the Individual

Explain – Explain why it is important to follow the guidance and why you think that person is in breach

Encourage – Encourage compliance with the law/ request of the officer

Enforce – If all the above fails, Enforcement action

- You can be given a Fixed Penalty Notice of £200 for the first offence, increasing for further offences.
- Police officers and PCSOs also have the 'power of direction' to require you to pack up and go home and the power of arrest for failing to comply or to provide a name and address.

What to do if challenged while fishing

- Be courteous and polite and make clear that you are taking part in your outdoor recreation in the form of fishing as allowed in law.
- Demonstrate that your travel to go fishing is necessary in order to take part in your chosen activity and in accordance with the advisory national guidance.

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- Use the information here to demonstrate that you are acting responsibly and lawfully.
- This should resolve most situations however, should the police officer decide to issue you with a direction order or fixed penalty notice you should accept it and pack up immediately and return home if so instructed.
- Fixed Penalty Notices can either be paid or contested in a magistrate court at a later date.
- Please avoid fishing in crowded places where social distancing could be difficult and might give rise to concerns over public health.
- Conduct yourself responsibly and fish safely. Please remember we have been extremely fortunate to be able to fish throughout this lockdown and we must all act as ambassadors for our sport.