

Angling Trust guidelines on fishing in England from March 29th



Updated: March 25th, 2021

These guidelines have been produced by the Angling Trust in our capacity as the recognised national governing body for all forms of recreational fishing in England. They have been drawn up following extensive dialogue with relevant Government departments and our colleagues in the Environment Agency to help anglers, fishery owners and managers to better understand what is permissible as the current lockdown regulations are lifted from March 29th.

Angling Trust guidelines on fishing in England from March 29th



The guidelines follow on from the Angling Trust's Fishing out of Lockdown submission on February 11th to the Cabinet Office making the case for a relaxation of travel restrictions and a return to all forms of angling including night fishing, charter boat angling and match fishing. **Please note, however, that the statutory close season for coarse fishing on rivers remains in place from March 15th to June 15th inclusive.**

The regulations have now been published by the Government and they are in line with both our guidelines and those issued by Sport England. They confirm the following from March 29th:

- Fishing will remain as a legitimate outdoor recreation or exercise for up to 6 people, or in a larger group if everyone present is from the same two households. A 'household' can include the support bubble linked to that household [if eligible].
- Outdoor recreational activities and exercise may take place at night so you may fish into or through the night. There are no time limits on outdoor recreation. However, you may not go on holiday to go fishing or use fishing as a pretext for a camping trip. Formal campsites and self-contained holiday accommodation cannot open until April 12th (Step 2).
- Angling clubs and fisheries should take steps to ensure that the gathering limits (Rule of 6) are adhered to and that social distancing is not compromised by the enthusiasm of anglers to resume fishing on March 29th. As it is currently permissible to fish into the night it would be entirely possible to fish through the night of March 28th and into the next day. However, fisheries may want to consider opening up in a manner which limits any larger gatherings in car parks or outside the fishery in order to minimise the risk of infection transmission. As long as social distancing is maintained there are no legal limits on the numbers attending any fishery but sensible local management measures will be important.

Angling Trust guidelines on fishing in England from March 29th



- Match fishing (in freshwater and at sea) can go ahead as an organised outdoor sports gathering from March 29th. Organised outdoor sports will not be subject to the gatherings limits but must be compliant with guidance issued by national governing bodies to ensure appropriate steps, including risk assessments, are taken to make it Covid secure in line with the law. At this stage, these gatherings must only include participants – not spectators.
- Private boat fishing under the Rule of 6 and charter boats operating in accordance with Covid precautions should now both be allowed. However, where fishing takes place on a partially enclosed boat (eg with a cabin or lounge area) with the exception of the skipper, those outside the household support bubble must not go indoors (except for access to/use of the toilet).
- The statutory stay at home restriction will be lifted but the guidance will encourage you to minimise travel outside of your local area. This means avoiding making unnecessary journeys, combining trips and avoiding travel at peak times where possible. People should avoid travelling further than is reasonably necessary to take part in, or during, their activity.
- Tackle shops and other 'non-essential retail' can fully open at Step 2 (April 12th) but can continue to offer click/call and collect until this point. Fisheries offering self-contained accommodation such as campsites and holiday lets, where indoor facilities are not shared with other households, can also reopen at this point.

Throughout, anglers must also ensure they are in possession of a valid fishing licence, adhere to fisheries bylaws, including the close season for coarse fishing on rivers, and have permission of the fishery owner.