



A Guide To Irish Angling Regulations

Overview

Ireland, like all other countries has regulations on how, when and where anglers are allowed to fish. This is necessary in order to be able to manage fish stocks and to protect against illegal fishing. This short guide aims to give anglers a quick overview of the main regulations that affect the different angling disciplines and/or fish species. The guide focusses on regulations in the Republic of Ireland but also provides information on where you can access information on regulations in Northern Ireland.

The guide is broken down by angling discipline as the regulations tend to be matched to those disciplines. At the top of each page is a table where the most obvious questions an angler might have are addressed. Then, some additional detail is given in the paragraphs below.

The information in this guide is broad and gives you a general overview of the main angling regulations so you can figure out what may be required before planning to go fishing. We can't cover everything in a guide this small and so we urge you to check our website www.fishinginireland.info for information on individual fisheries and to also enquire locally before fishing (e.g. in a tackle shop or when buying a permit).

Angling regulations change all the time. You should check the latest regulations here before fishing:
<https://fishinginireland.info/regulations/>

Access

Going fishing in Ireland is generally easy with much of the fishing either free or controlled by clubs who make permits readily available. In cases where fishing is controlled by clubs or private owners, access to the fishery is normally at designated entry points which will be indicated when purchasing your permit. In other cases e.g. where the fishing is regarded as free, access may be through farmland and the permission of the landowner should be sought prior to crossing their land. Landowners do not always own the fishing rights on waters adjoining their land and anglers need to ensure they have obtained the correct permissions before fishing.

General Freshwater Regulations

There are some general regulations that apply when fishing in all freshwater lakes rivers & streams:

- ▶ The only legal method to catch freshwater fish is by rod and line
- ▶ You cannot fish with more than two rods at any time
- ▶ You cannot use live fish as bait
- ▶ You cannot transfer live roach from one water to any other waters
- ▶ You must not kill or have in your possession any foul hooked fish (i.e. fish not hooked in the mouth)
- ▶ You may not fish for eels and any eels caught must be returned to the water
- ▶ On waters that are designated closed or catch and release for salmon you may not use worms as bait and you may only use single or double barbless hooks when fishing for any species.

Brown Trout Angling

State Licence Required?	No	State Licence not required
Local Permit Required?	Frequently	Permit required for many rivers Permit not required for many loughs
Open/Closed Season	Yes	Varies with fishery
Bag Limits	Yes	Varies with fishery
Size Limits	Yes	Varies with fishery
Angling Method Restrictions	Yes	Varies with fishery

Licence: In Ireland, you do not need to buy a State Licence to fish for brown trout.

Permit: Trout angling on rivers is most often controlled by local angling clubs who usually lease the fishing rights for a few kilometres of river and make day tickets/permits available to the visiting angler. These tickets are generally no more than €10 - €20 and can usually be purchased in a local shop.

Trout angling on many loughs including Loughs Corrib, Mask, Conn Cullin, Arrow, Allen, Ree and Derg is free and no permit is required.

Seasons: The start of the wild brown trout season varies from fishery to fishery but most will open up between the dates of February 15th and March 17th. Most fisheries will close on September 30th with some exceptions which close on various dates between September 15th and October 12th. Clubs may have their own regulations on opening and closing dates.

Bag Limits: Many fisheries have bag limits and these will vary depending on the fishery. Inland Fisheries Ireland advises anglers to fish sustainably and practice Catch and Release.

Size Limits: Almost every river and lake has defined size limits for brown trout. These vary from water to water and details are available in the brown trout angling section of our website:

<https://fishinginireland.info/trout/>

Angling Methods: Some angling clubs will have their own rules on angling methods such as 'Fly Fishing Only'. If you are fishing on a river that is designated closed or catch and release for salmon (see overleaf) you may not use worms as bait and you must use single or double barbless hooks.

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Salmon Angling

State Licence Required?	Yes	State Licence always required
Local Permit Required?	Usually	Most salmon angling requires a local permit
Open/Closed Season	Yes	Varies depending on fishery
Bag Limits	Yes	No fish to be taken on C&R fisheries. 1-3 per day on open fisheries up to a max of 10 per year. See opposite for details.
Size Limits	No	No size limit
Angling Method Restrictions	Frequently	Often local restrictions on methods

Licence: You must have a State Licence in your possession when fishing for salmon. The licence includes a logbook and may also include tags for any fish you choose to keep. Licences are available to purchase here: <https://store.fishinginireland.info/>

- ▶ All salmon which you choose to keep must be tagged, and the logbook filled out accordingly
- ▶ All salmon caught and released (including kelts and baggots) must be recorded in the logbook accordingly
- ▶ It is prohibited sell rod caught salmon

In Ireland we publish a list of our salmon fisheries every year which specifies which fisheries are **1)** open for angling, **2)** closed for angling or **3)** open on a catch and release basis only. This list is available [online](https://fishinginireland.info/salmon/salmonregs/) and should be consulted before attempting to fish: <https://fishinginireland.info/salmon/salmonregs/>

Permit: In addition to the State Licence, most salmon fishing also requires a permit for the fishery you intend to fish. These are usually available for sale locally from the fishery.

Seasons: Salmon angling opens on January 1st on a handful of fisheries and after that the remainder of fisheries open on various dates in February, March, April and May. The salmon fishing season closes on September 30th.

Bag Limits: There is a maximum annual bag limit of 10 salmon or sea trout (over 40cm) per year. The bag limits are subject to any quota allocated to a river and its tributaries.

Subject to the maximum annual bag limit of ten fish an angler may take:

- ▶ Daily Bag Limit - 1st January to 11th May - A total of one salmon (any size) or sea trout (over 40cm) per day (three fish in total may be retained for this period)
- ▶ Daily Bag Limit - 12th May to 31st August - Three salmon (any size) or sea trout (over 40cm) per day (except where a salmon rod (one-day) ordinary licence is held, 1 fish)
- ▶ Daily Bag Limit - 1st September to the close of the season: One salmon (any size) or sea trout (over 40cm) per day

After the daily bag limit has been taken, anglers are permitted to fish catch and release, using single or double barbless hooks and fishing with worms is prohibited.

The killing and possession of foul hooked fish is prohibited.

Size Limits: There are no size limits for salmon

Angling Method & Other Regulations:

On fisheries designated as catch and release only:

- ▶ Fishing with worms is prohibited
- ▶ Anglers must use single or double barbless hooks
- ▶ The fish must be handled carefully and should not be removed from the water prior to release

While the above gives a broad outline of the primary regulations, there are a number of local regulations that will vary depending on what river/lake you are fishing. Anglers will need to enquire locally as to what regulations may apply and/or check for information on the relevant fishery on our website at:

<https://fishinginireland.info/salmon/>

Angling regulations change all the time. You should check the latest regulations here before fishing:

<https://fishinginireland.info/salmon/salmonregs/>



Sea Trout Angling

State Licence Required?	Yes	State Licence always required
Local Permit Required?	Usually	Most sea trout angling requires a local permit
Open/Closed Season	Yes	Varies depending on fishery
Bag Limits	Yes	1-3 sea trout over 40cm per day up to a max of 10 per year. Daily bag limit of 3 sea trout per day (any size). See opposite for details.
Size Limits	Frequently	Varies depending on fishery
Angling Method Restrictions	Frequently	Often local restrictions on methods

Licence: You must have a State Licence in your possession when fishing for sea trout in Ireland. The licence includes a logbook and may also include tags for any fish you choose to keep. Licences are available to purchase here:

<https://store.fishinginireland.info/>

In Ireland, any sea trout greater than 40cm is treated the same way as a salmon in regulations:

- ▶ All sea trout greater than 40cm which you choose to keep must be tagged, and the logbook filled out accordingly
- ▶ All sea trout greater than 40cm caught and released (including kelts and baggots) must be recorded in the logbook accordingly
- ▶ It is prohibited to sell rod caught sea trout

In Ireland we publish a list of our sea trout fisheries every year which specifies which fisheries are **1)** open for angling, **2)** closed for angling or **3)** open on a catch and release basis only. This list is available [online](https://fishinginireland.info/salmon/salmonregs/) and should be consulted before attempting to fish: <https://fishinginireland.info/salmon/salmonregs/>

Permit: In addition to the State Licence, most sea trout fishing also requires a permit for the fishery you intend to fish. These are usually available for sale locally from the fishery.

Seasons: Sea trout angling opens on January 1st on a handful of fisheries and after that the remainder of fisheries open on various dates in February, March, April and May. The season closes on September 30th for most fisheries but some remain open until October 12th.

Bag Limits: There is a maximum annual bag limit of 10 salmon or sea trout (over 40cm) per year. The bag limits are subject to any quota allocated to a river and its tributaries.

Subject to the maximum annual bag limit of ten fish an angler may take:

- ▶ Daily Bag Limit - 1st January to 11th May - A total of one salmon or sea trout (over 40cm) per day (three fish in total may be retained for this period)
- ▶ Daily Bag Limit - 12th May to 31st August - Three salmon or sea trout (over 40cm) per day
- ▶ Daily Bag Limit - 1st September to the close of the season: One salmon or sea trout (over 40cm) per day
- ▶ There is a daily bag limit of three sea trout (up to 40cm) per angler per day

After the daily bag limit has been taken, anglers are permitted to fish catch and release, using single or double barbless hooks and fishing with worms is prohibited. The killing and possession of foul hooked fish is prohibited.

Size Limits: There are different size limits for sea trout depending on the fishery but any sea trout over 40cm that you choose to keep must be tagged and recorded in the log book.

Angling Method & Other Regulations:

On fisheries designated as catch and release only:

- ▶ Fishing with worms is prohibited
- ▶ Anglers must use single or double barbless hooks
- ▶ The fish must be handled carefully and should not be removed from the water prior to release

You may not kill any sea trout in the following areas:

- ▶ Galway, Connemara or Ballinakill Fisheries Districts including at sea from Hag's Head in County Clare to Clew Bay (and in any waters flowing into Clew Bay) in the Bangor Fishery District south of a line drawn due east and west through Achill Head
- ▶ Kerry District, in that part of the sea east of a line between Bolus Head and Lamb's Head and all the waters discharging into it (i.e. Waterville area)

While the above gives a broad outline of the primary regulations, there are a number of local regulations that will vary depending on what river/lake you are fishing. Anglers will need to enquire locally as to what regulations may apply and/or check for information on the relevant fishery on our website at:

<https://fishinginireland.info/salmon/>

Angling regulations change all the time. You should check the latest regulations here before fishing:

<https://fishinginireland.info/salmon/salmonregs/>

Pike Angling

State Licence Required?	No	State Licence not required
Local Permit Required?	Rarely	Permit only required on small number of fisheries
Open/Closed Season	No	Fishing year round
Bag Limits	Yes	1 pike per day
Size Limits	Yes	Maximum size of 50cm
Angling Method Restrictions	Yes	Various, see below

Licence: There is no State Licence required to fish for pike.

Permit: Most pike angling in Ireland is free. There are only a few places a permit is required to fish for pike. This is mainly in the following areas:

Midland Fisheries Area: <https://fishinginireland.info/midland-permit/>
on ESB fisheries: <https://www.esb.ie/acting-responsibly/fisheries-2>
and on a few smaller locally managed lakes.

Seasons: There is no closed season for pike angling in Ireland, you can fish all year round.

Bag Limits: You cannot keep, or have in your possession, more than 1 pike (less than 50 cm) or more than 0.75 kgs of pike flesh.

Size Limits: You must return all pike greater than 50 cm (fork length) to the water.

Angling Method & Other Regulations:

- ▶ You cannot use live fish as bait
- ▶ You can only use 2 rods at any one time
- ▶ You cannot have more than 12 coarse fish for use as bait in fishing for pike
- ▶ If you have more than 4 coarse fish in your possession for use as bait in fishing for pike, you must have –
 - (a) obtained the fish from a fish tackle dealer or fish bait supplier and
 - (b) obtained and retained a receipt of your purchase.

There is more information on pike angling in Ireland on our website here:

<https://fishinginireland.info/pike/>

Angling regulations change all the time. You should check the latest regulations here before fishing:

<https://fishinginireland.info/regulations/>

Coarse Angling (Perch, Eel & Cyprinids)

State Licence Required?	No	State Licence not required
Local Permit Required?	Rarely	Permit only required on small number of fisheries
Open/Closed Season	No	Fishing year round
Bag Limits	Yes	4 fish per day
Size Limits	Yes	Maximum size of 25cm (Fork Length)
Angling Method Restrictions	Yes	Various, see below

Licence: There is no State Licence required to fish for coarse fish.

Permit: Most coarse angling in Ireland is free. There are only a few places where a permit is required to fish for coarse fish. This is mainly in the following areas:

Midland Fisheries Area: <https://fishinginireland.info/midland-permit/>
on ESB fisheries: <https://www.esb.ie/acting-responsibly/fisheries-2>
and on a few smaller locally managed lakes.

Seasons: There is no closed season for coarse angling in Ireland, you can fish all year round.

Bag/Size Limits: You can only keep 4 coarse fish on any one day. Those fish must be 25cm fork length or under.

Angling Method & Other Regulations:

- ▶ You may not fish for eels and any eels caught must be returned to the water
- ▶ You cannot use live fish as bait
- ▶ You cannot sell coarse fish
- ▶ It is prohibited to transfer for any purpose live roach (*Rutilus rutilus*) from any waters to any other waters
- ▶ On some waters where fishing for salmon/sea trout/brown trout also takes place additional rules may apply. For example you may be required to use a single barbless hook or certain baits (e.g. worms) may be banned. You will need to enquire locally to find out the rules before fishing.

There is more information on coarse angling in Ireland on our website here:

<https://fishinginireland.info/coarse/>

Angling regulations change all the time. You should check the latest regulations here before fishing:

<https://fishinginireland.info/regulations/>

Sea Angling

State Licence Required?	Rarely	Only if fishing for salmon or sea trout
Local Permit Required?	No	Permit not required
Open/Closed Season	Rarely	Only if fishing for salmon or sea trout
Bag Limits	Rarely	Only for salmon, sea trout & sea bass
Size Limits	Rarely	Only for salmon, sea trout & sea bass
Angling Method Restrictions	Yes	Restrictions on trolling

Licence/Permits: A State Licence is only required if fishing for sea trout (& salmon). Otherwise sea angling in Ireland is free, with no licence or permit required.

A special authorisation is required to fish for bluefin tuna and this is only awarded to a small number of charter boat operators on a catch & release basis. All other fishing for bluefin tuna is prohibited.

Seasons: There are open/closed seasons for salmon and sea trout. There is no open/closed season for other fish species.

Bag/Size Limits: There are bag and size limits for salmon, sea trout and sea bass. See other pages in this brochure for relevant information.

Angling Method & Other Regulations: Porbeagle shark, common skate, white skate, undulate ray, spurdog & angel shark (*Lamna nasus*, *Dipturus batis*, *Raja oxyrinchus*, *Raja undulata*, *Squalus acanthias* & *Squatina squatina*), are all considered endangered and should be quickly returned to the water when caught. You cannot troll using gear that is capable of capturing a bluefin tuna without special authorisation.

There is more information on sea angling in Ireland on our website here:

<https://fishinginireland.info/sea/>

Angling regulations change all the time. You should check the latest regulations here before fishing:

<https://fishinginireland.info/regulations/>

Sea Bass Angling

State Licence Required?	No	State Licence not required
Local Permit Required?	No	Permit not required
Open/Closed Season	No	Can vary year to year (see below)
Bag Limits	Yes	Varies (see below)
Size Limits	Yes	Minimum size of 42cm
Angling Method Restrictions	No	No restrictions on method

The EU makes regular decisions on regulations and restrictions for fishing for sea bass and so the situation is very changeable. Regulations are liable to vary from year to year and/or at short notice. The below gives an indication of the types of regulations that may be in place but all anglers should check for the latest information prior to fishing: <https://fishinginireland.info/regulations/>

Licence/Permits: There is no licence or permit required to fish for sea bass.

Seasons: There is currently no closed season for sea bass but this situation changes from year to year so you should check before fishing.

Bag/Size Limits: Bag & size limits can change on a regular basis and some periods of the year can be designated as catch and release only. At present (Spring 2021), a minimum size limit of 42cm applies for those times of the year when it is allowable to keep a bass.

There is more information on sea bass angling in Ireland on our website here:

<https://fishinginireland.info/sea/bass>

Angling regulations change all the time. You should check the latest regulations here before fishing:

<https://fishinginireland.info/regulations/>

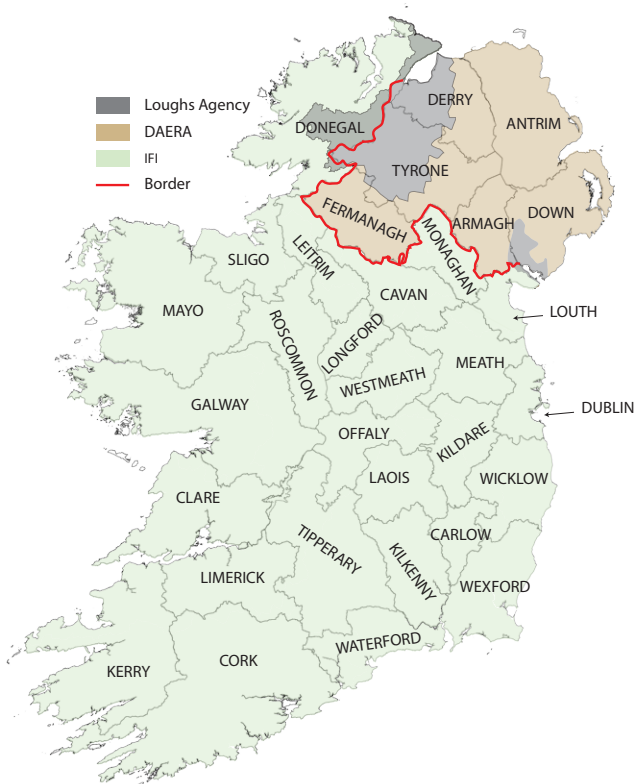
Ireland/Northern Ireland

The island of Ireland consists of two separate jurisdictions: 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 map below.

This guide 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

Loughs Agency: www.ulfishireland.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

* It is legally required to wear a lifejacket in any boat under 7 metres in length. This includes all lough angling boats.

For a more detailed guide to safety when angling please visit: www.fishinginireland.info/safety.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 & Release for the majority of fish they catch. Always prioritise fish welfare when angling and record any trophy fish with a quick photo and then carefully return to the water. Remember: Catch, Photo, Release [#CPRsavesfish](https://twitter.com/CPRsavesfish)

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.



leave no trace
IRELAND

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

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 when moving from one water to another.

Full information on prevention of invasive species is available on our website at:

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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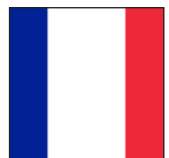
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