

Introduction

The pike is undoubtedly one of the most sensitive fish in our waters, often being the first to perish when there is any indication of pollution. Their formidable reputation has resulted in the unjust treatment of pike over the years. However, they are a fragile fish and a vital component of the ecosystem. Hence, they deserve to be treated with the utmost respect.

Pike Anglers Club

The Pike Anglers Club of Great Britain has been established for nearly 50 years; it is the club for pike anglers. Membership benefits include a periodic club magazine, web site, news updates & organised fishing trips amongst other benefits. There are numerous PAC regions throughout the UK that host regular meetings and events. Membership is open to everyone, and we have members from absolute beginner to expert. As part of our activities, we carry out education and coaching for young and inexperienced anglers.

Tackle

Please ensure that you have the appropriate gear required for pike fishing. The gear should be strong and reliable, and it should include the following items:

- A large knotless landing net (42+ inch triangle net or a suitable equivalent oval net, such as 85cmx70cm).
- A large unhooking mat / cradle and a large weigh sling (combined mat/slings are available to reduce handling).
- Long forceps or long nose pliers (minimum length of 10 inches).
- Long reach wire/side cutters.
- Wire traces (minimum 30lb for bait fishing) with a length of 18 inches or more. It is also good practice to use an 'uptrace' when bait fishing. PAC does not endorse the use of mono or fluorocarbon traces. Shorter traces are acceptable for lure fishing and live baiting with an uptrace.
- Ensure that you have proper bite indication while bait fishing. Use a bite indicator, drop off

indicator, front and/or rear bite alarms, or float. Do not free line.

- Please use a mainline that is appropriate for the venue and conditions. We recommend using a minimum of 18lb monofilament / 65lb (.41 diameter approx.) braided line as a good **all-round** guide. It is advisable to use heavier braided line for large lures and for ensuring that you can straighten hooks to retrieve the end tackle. Braid is much thinner than mono, hence purchasing by diameter is advisable.
- Carry scales and appropriately large weigh slings.
- Leads should preferably be fished on a weak link so that they will break away if snagged, avoiding the loss of a baited rig.



- It is preferable to use semi-barbless or crushed barbed hooks in sizes 4 to 6, as this will prevent fish from escaping. However, using semi-barbless hooks should not be an excuse for allowing a pike to swallow the bait. The hooks should be strong enough to land a large pike but not excessively strong that they will bend out if you become snagged.

- When boat fishing, always wear a life jacket.

Pike Welfare

Do NOT fish for pike when the water temperature is at or above 18 degrees (scientific research shows fishing in water temperatures more than this to be detrimental to pike and could cause fatalities)

Please handle all Pike with the utmost care. When unhooking, please lay it on an unhooking mat or cradle, never on uncovered hard ground. When fishing from a boat, it is preferable to use specialist fish care equipment such as specialist boat unhooking mats such as a 'sladle' or similar Never use a Pike gag when unhooking. Instead, please use



the forceps and hand technique. Lay the pike on its back and firmly hold its lower jaw (through the gill cover, avoiding the gill rakes) with one hand, while removing the hooks with the other. Always be especially careful when you

find it necessary to insert the forceps behind the gill covers. At all times, make sure the fish is held firmly.

Weighing: Should be carried out using a weighing sling or combi matt / sling. NOT with the balance hook under the chin. Boga Grips **SHOULD NEVER** be used to assist in holding or unhooking pike!

Retaining Pike: Pike should not be kept for extended periods or in carp sacks. Large flotation slings, purpose-built pike tubes, and landing nets themselves are appropriate for temporarily keeping pike. The duration of this period is to allow the pike to recover before being released, or while you prepare your photography, unhooking and weighing equipment, or if you need assistance from a nearby angler, etc. Always make sure that the fish has fully recovered before releasing it, supporting it by hand or with the net until it is ready to swim off strongly.

Bite Indication: The humble float is a great means of bite indication just make sure you watch it closely. If float ledgering combine this with a rear drop off bobbin but keep a close eye on this. Never free line. If you use electronic bite indication ensure that you are within hearing range, even with a remote don't be too far from your rods. Remember that with an open bail arm a roller wheel activated front bite alarm may not sound after the drop off bobbin drops off, due to line skip. If you only have this type of alarm then putting your butt eye directly in front of the alarm may help, fishing directly off the bait runner facility assuming you have bait runner reel in conjunction with a bobbin eliminates this problem. Also, with a float rig a front alarm alone will not register a drop back, if the fish comes towards you

use a bobbin indicator as well. Alternatively use an electronic drop off indicator.

Methods and Techniques

Bait Fishing: Both live (where permitted) and dead baits are used to catch pike. Ensure that you check local rules. Most fishing tackle shops sell frozen dead baits and various sea fish can be purchased from local supermarkets and fishmongers that can be used as bait. Mackerel, Herring, Sardine and Sprats can all be good pike baits to name but a few.

Lures: There are far too many different types to mention here but a lure is basically an artificial bait cast and retrieved or trolled behind a boat to mimic a fish.

Bait fishing:

Straight leger, simply a free running leger is attached to the main line preferably with a weak link e.g. mono or power-gum of a significantly lower breaking strain than the mainline, in-case it gets snagged. Good bite indication is key to successful legering. The use of fixed lead and bolt rigs is unnecessary for pike fishing, if you lose a baited rig its likely to equal a dead pike.

Float, A standard float set up but larger than a standard coarse fishing float can be used, most tackle shops sell suitable pike floats, sea floats, or make your own. In its simplest terms a float rig may be the float with e.g. a few swan shot or a weight set just over depth with a dead bait, or a float used as a 'free rover' casted in and allowed to drift around. Many different types of floats are available and vary on application use and personal preference. Specialist drifter floats are also available.

Float leger This is a combination of the above two rigs. This can help to present baits safely in weedy, snaggy areas or areas where there is a steep under water shelf.

Freelining NEVER use this as bite indication is very poor leading to deep hooking and damage to Pike.

Paternoster This is basically a float rig with the addition of a long trailing weak link that in effect presents the bait off the bottom.

Striking a run: Hit **ALL** runs immediately wind down until you feel the fish and cannot wind

anymore, then pull the rod back over your shoulder, it is as simple as that! By striking immediately, you may miss the odd run by doing so (most times you will hook the pike) but the Pike will still be there for you to catch next time. If you delay your strike and risk gut hooking it the Pike could die so don't risk it!

Lure fishing basics: Always use a wire trace

Surface lures: These are an exciting way to fish.

Subsurface lures: These range from lures that float and then dive once you reel in, to lures that sink at various rates. Consider the type of waters that you are going to fish, read up on the lures and pick the appropriate ones to suit.

Casting lures: Cast the lure and retrieve it to you to simulate a swimming fish

Trolling lures: A specialist boat fishing method.

Striking when Lure fishing: Nice and simple as soon as you feel or see the pike hit the lure strike!

Summary

Whilst it is unlikely that you will catch a big Pike on your first trip, it pays to be prepared, results come with hard work and effort, never put your catch rate before the Pikes welfare. It's always good to read up on the subject and to seek advice and assistance but ultimately you need to get out there and experience pike fishing for yourself in a responsible manner.



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BASIC PIKE FISHING LEAFLET



The aim of this leaflet is to give the reader an insight into fishing for this exciting predatory fish. This guide can be used by both individuals in their own fishing and angling clubs to update or append their pike fishing rules etc.

Pike (Esox Lucius)

The pike is a large apex freshwater predator renowned for its hard-fighting qualities. The species is widespread throughout the UK, Europe, America and Canada. Myth and folklore surround pike like no other freshwater fish – but the fact remains that these 'Freshwater Sharks' do grow very big: in 1983, a pike of 68lbs was caught in Germany, and the British rod caught record is currently 47 lb 5 oz, caught by Lloyd Watson at Chew Valley Lake in Somerset in February 2024.