



# **A GUIDE TO SEA ANGLING IN THE EASTERN FISHERIES REGION by Norman Dunlop**



**Eastern Regional Fisheries Board  
Bord Iascaigh Réigiúnach an Oirthir**

Published by; the Eastern Regional Fisheries Board, 15A, Main Street, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.  
© Copyright reserved. No part of the text, maps or diagrams may be used or copied  
without the permission of the Eastern Regional Fisheries Board. 2009

# Foreword



I am delighted to welcome you to the Board's new publication on sea fishing Ireland's east and south east coast. Sea angling is available along the entire coastline from Dundalk in County Louth to Ballyteigue Bay in County Wexford. You will find many fantastic venues and a multitude of species throughout the region. Whether fishing from the shore or from a licenced charter boat there is terrific sport to be had, and small boat operators will find many suitable slipways for their vessels.

At venues such as Cahore in Co. Wexford small boat anglers battle with fast running Tope,

Smoothhound, and Ray. Kilmore Quay in South Wexford is a centre of excellence for angling boasting all types of fishing for the angler. There is a great selection of chartered boats and the facilities for small boat fishing are second to none. Anglers can go reef fishing for Pollack, Wrasse, Cod, and Ling. From springtime onwards at various venues shore anglers lure, fly, and bait fish for the hard fighting Bass, while specialist anglers target summer Mullet and winter Flounder. In recent years black bream have been turning up in good numbers in the Wexford area and this species has recently been added to the Irish specimen fish listing.

A variety of species, locations, and methods is synonymous with sea angling in the eastern region, backed up by a quality infrastructure to include approved accommodation, licenced charter boats, tackle shops, bait, and guiding services. Whether from at home or abroad, this booklet will prove a useful reference point for any angler planning to fish the wonderful marks and venues that abound in the area.

Tight lines and safe fishing.

## **Pat Doherty**

Chief Executive Officer  
Eastern Regional Fisheries Board



## PLEASE NOTE

### Errors or Inaccuracies

While every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in the guide is accurate, no responsibility will be accepted by the Fisheries Boards for any errors or inaccuracies therein.

### Access to the Seashore

References in this guide regarding access to the shore at various points, does not imply rights of way and anglers should ensure that, where necessary, they obtain permission from landowners in order to enter or cross private lands.

### Respect for the Environment

Please leave the shore as you would hope to find it. Do not leave litter and do not discard hooks, line or tackle which may be a danger to animals or humans.

### Safety at Sea

It should be noted that all anglers going to sea in small boats must wear life jackets at all times. Anglers under 16 years of age must also wear life jackets at all times when on board licensed charter vessels. All other anglers on board a charter vessel must have access to a life jacket. It is the responsibility of every angler on a charter boat, to ask to see the current certification from the Department of Transport (**[www.transport.ie](http://www.transport.ie)**) and to view a copy of the vessels insurance policy before setting out to sea.

**Tides:** Tide tables are available from the following: [www.sailing.ie](http://www.sailing.ie) . For standard port note time and height of tide on specified date. For secondary locations, select relevant standard port and apply given variations.

**Spring tide:** The tide with the most variation in water level, occurring two days after the new and full moon.

**Neap tides:** Neap tides occur two days after the first and third quarter of the moon, when there is least difference between high and low water

### Licences & Byelaws

A state licence is not required for sea fishing. However, if you are fishing for sea trout, a state licence is required and there are regulations relating to sea trout. These are available from the Board or a local tackle shop, for further details see: **[www.fishingireland.net](http://www.fishingireland.net)**

Anglers should note that there are a number of byelaws relating to bass fishing in Ireland.

- (a) It is prohibited to take and kill or have in possession any bass of less than 40cms in length, (at time of writing this may be changed to 45cms, please refer to website for further details)
- (b) It is prohibited to take and kill or have in possession more than 2 bass in any period of 24 hours
- (c) It is prohibited to fish for bass with any rod or line during the period commencing on the 15th May to the 15th June.

### Chartered boats and angling guides

There are a number of sea angling charter boats and sea angling guides operating within the area. **For further details see [www.fishingireland.net/fishing/sea/charter-boats.htm](http://www.fishingireland.net/fishing/sea/charter-boats.htm)**



# ***Contents***

<b>Fish Species</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Basic Terminal Tackle</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Saltwater Baits, for use in the Eastern Region.</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Carlingford to Balbriggan, Map 1.</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Skerries to Wicklow, Map 2.</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Wicklow to Blackwater, Map 3.</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Curracloe to Cullenstown, Map 4.</b>	<b>60</b>



Mike Thrussell with a cuckoo wrasse  
(photo courtesy of Norman Dunlop)

## Fish Species

### Flounder (*Platichthys flesus*)

Eyes and colour normally on the right side, but “reversed” examples are more common amongst flounders than among other flatfishes. Conspicuous enlarged, rough, hard scales on head ridge, anterior part of lateral line and along bases of dorsal and anal fins on the eyed side. Dark brown to greenish-grey, sometimes with vague orange spots; blind side uniform opaque white. Grows to about 5 lbs. Often occurs in fresh water well above the limits of the tide. Specimen weight: 1.36kg. (3 lbs).



### Turbot (*Scophthalmus maximus*)

Turbot are large flatfish and are regarded as one of the major prizes of Irish sea angling and they are also highly regarded for the table. The upper side is a mottled brown with numerous bony lumps or tubercles. The body is diamond shaped. Turbot can grow to over 40lbs.



## Pollack (*Pollachius pollachius*)

Very popular sport fish. Can be taken from both boat and shore on the eastern coast. Common over areas of rough ground, reefs and sunken wrecks. Easily identified from its near relation, the coalfish, by the protruding lower jaw and by the shape of the lateral line which is bent over the pectoral fin. Tail not forked. Usually brown or bronze on back and flanks. Grows to over 20 lbs. Specimen Weight, 12 lbs.



## Cod (*Gadus morhua*)

Common on most coasts and unlikely to be mistaken for any other species, even though the colour of adults varies. Caught over a wide range of seabed from reefs and wrecks to areas of shingle and sand and in many of the larger estuaries. Cod are available throughout the year, but generally “peak” fishing times are May and June (boat angling) and December and January (shore fishing). Grows to over 50 lbs. Specimen Weight, 20 lbs.



## Ling (*Molva molva*)

Long, eel-like, member of the cod family which has a large barbel under the chin and a mouth of sharp teeth. Olive or red-brown in colour, sometimes mottled. A very popular sport fish, particularly with wreck and reef anglers. Almost exclusively a boat caught fish. Grows to about 50 lbs. Specimen Weight; 11.34 kgs (25 lbs).



## Mackerel (*Scomber scombrus*)

Very common on all coasts in summer when they can be taken by both boat and shore anglers in very large numbers at times. Easily identified by dark, wavy stripes on green upper body and silver undersides. Mackerel are an important bait fish when fishing for other species.





## Wrasse (Labrus)

Large family of deep bodied, hard scaled fish. Two species are of interest to Irish anglers: the Ballan Wrasse (*Labrus bergylta*) which grows to about 10 lbs (specimen weight, 4.75 lbs) and the colourful Cuckoo Wrasse (*Labrus mixtus*) (which grows to around 2 lbs (specimen weight, 1.25 lbs). Both are very common in Irish waters particularly where there are rocky areas of weed covered reef.



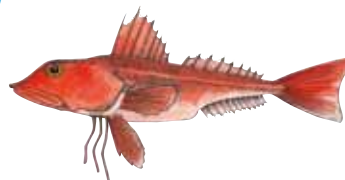
## Bass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*)

This blue backed, silver cousin of the American striped bass is one of Ireland's most sought after sport fish. It is equally at home in the turmoil of an Atlantic surf beach or in the quietness of an estuarine backwater. Most common below a line drawn from Galway to Dublin, populations exist as far north as Dundalk. A protected species by law, with a bag limit of 2 fish per angler in any 24 hour period and minimum size of 40 cms. Grows to about 20 lbs. Specimen weight 10 lbs.



## Gurnard (*Triglidae*)

There are three species of Gurnard which anglers can expect from waters in the eastern region. Grey Gurnard (*Eutrigla gurnardus*) which grows to about 3.5lbs; Red Gurnard (*Aspitrigla cuculus*) which grows to about 4lbs and Tub Gurnard (*Trigla lucerna*) which grows to over 12lbs. Gurnards are bottom living fish, normally found on sandy or muddy bottoms in depths of 50-150 feet.



## Conger Eel (*Conger conger*)

Dorsal, caudal and anal fins continuous; no pelvic fins. Dorsal begins about level with tip of pectoral. Body rather stout and muscular. Mouth large; the upper jaw the larger. Grows to over 100 lbs. Offshore, inshore and in lower reaches of large estuaries. Specimen weight: 18.14kg. (40 lbs).



## Skate (Raja)

Three species of skate have been recorded by anglers in Irish waters. They are:- White Skate (*Raja alba*) (specimen weight 120 lbs); Long Nose Skate (*Raja oxyrinchus*) (80 lbs); and Common Skate (*Raja batis*) (specimen weight suspended). In the interests of conservation, the Irish Specimen Fish Committee removed the Common Skate from its list of acceptable species in 1976. Since then, all Common Skate taken by anglers have been returned alive to the water.



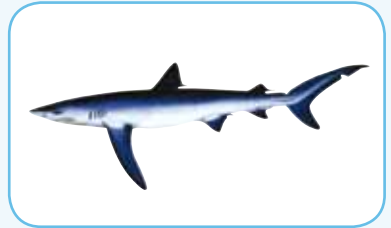
## Ray (Raja)

Popular with boat and shore anglers and often confused with skate; but those with more rounded discs and short noses are generally termed ray. Normally a summer species they are available from May to October. Four species of ray are of interest to anglers in the eastern region. They are Thornback Ray (*Raja clavata*) (specimen weight 20 lbs); Blonde Ray (*Raja brachyura*) (25 lbs); Cuckoo Ray (*Raja naevus*) (4.5 lbs); Homelyn Ray (*Raja montagui*) (5 lbs).



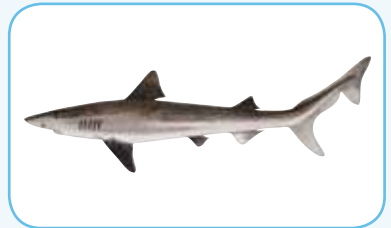
## Shark

There are five species of shark which anglers may contact in Irish coastal waters. They are the Mako (*Isurus oxyrinchus*), Thresher (*Alopias vulpinus*), Six Gilled (*Hexanchus griseus*), Porbeagle (*Lamna nasus*) and the Blue (*Prionace glauca*). Of these, only the latter two are caught with any degree of regularity in the eastern region, the others being mainly accidental catches. Shark fishing is more popular during the summer months.



## Tope (Galeorhinus galeus)

Medium sized shallow water shark, fairly common on the eastern coast of Ireland during summer. Greyish in colour with short, triangular pectorals and deeply notched tail fin. Very popular sport fish, particularly with inshore boat anglers. Male fish to 30 lbs are often encountered in "packs" but much larger females are either "loners" or are found in small groups. Grows to about 80 lbs. Specimen weight, 40 lbs.







Ashley Hayden with a Smoothhound,  
Ennereilly, Co. Wicklow

## Record fish caught in the Eastern Regional Fisheries Board

Species	Weight	Bt/Sh	Captor	Place of Capture	Date
Angler Fish	62 lbs 9.5 ozs	S	George V. Williams	Dun Laoghaire, Dublin	29/04/1962
Bass	14 lbs 12.5 ozs	S	David Flynn	Ballyteigue, Wexford	11/07/1994
Bream, Red	5 lbs 0.5 ozs	B	Joe Monaghan	Ballyteigue, Wexford	18/07/1966
Bream Black **	3lb 4 ozs	B	Gordon Thornes	Kilmore Quay, Wexford	18/9/2008
Coalfish	26 lbs	B	James Devlin	Kilmore Quay, Wexford	19/07/1983
Cod	31 lbs	B	Joseph O'Connor	Greystones, Wicklow	30/09/1967
Conger	50 lbs	S	Frank Reilly	Dun Laoghaire, Dublin	09/08/1974
Dab	1 lb 9.5ozs	S	Gordon Dickenson	Arklow Pier, Wicklow	25/12/1960
Dogfish, Greater Sp.	19 lbs 12 ozs	B	Michael Courage	Bray, Wicklow	06/07/1960
Dogfish, Lesser Sp.	3 lbs 14 ozs	B	Peter Gaffey	Howth, Dublin	13/07/1991
Dogfish, Spur	21.25 lbs	B	Charlie Robinson	Dun Laoghaire, Dublin	10/08/2001
Flounder	4.91 lbs	S	Brian Russell	Ballyteigue, Wexford	02/10/1993
Freshwater Eel	3.89 lbs	S	Anthony Hayden	Kaats Strand, Wexford	24/10/1982
Garfish	2.61 lbs	B	Derek Duggan	Tusker Rock, Wexford	17/08/1987
Gurnard, Grey*	3 lbs 1 oz	B	Brendan Walsh	Rosslare, Wexford	21/09/1967
Gurnard, Tub	6 lbs 4 ozs	B	Oscar French	Dalky, Dublin	05/08/1969
John Dory	4 lbs	B	W. Lowman	Wicklow Bay	01/08/1964
Ling	28 lbs 4 ozs	B	John A. McDonagh	Kilmore Quay, Wexford	24/08/1975
Mackerel	3 lbs 8 ozs	S	Roger Ryan	Clogherhead Pier, Louth	01/07/1972
Monkfish	59 lbs 8 ozs	S	Paddy Dempsey	Newcastle, Wicklow	05/08/1981
Mullet, Grey	8 lbs 2 ozs	S	Brian Buckley	R. Dargle, Wicklow	07/09/2000
Mullet, Red*	1.26 lbs	B	Eamon Hayes	Kilmore Quay, Wexford	30/09/2004
Plaice	5 lbs 10.5 ozs	B	John Harmon	Greystones, Wicklow	08/06/1980
Pollack	13lbs 10 ozs	B	P.C.Keay	Kish Bank, Dublin	25/09/1988
Pouting*	4 lbs 13.5 ozs	B	John Devereux	Kilmore Quay, Wexford	02/04/1983
Ray, Blonde	35 lbs	B	Damien Barrett	Greystones, Wicklow	08/08/1982
Ray, Cuckoo	4 lbs 15 ozs	B	T.M. Aikins	Newcastle, Wicklow	17/08/1960
Ray, Homelyn	6.50 lbs	S	Michael Quinn	Kiloughter, Wicklow	25/04/1998
Ray, Painted	10.98 lbs	B	Ronald Hore (GB)	Rosslare, Wexford	29/09/1987
Ray, Sting	47 lbs	S	Christy O'Sullivan	Morriscastle, Wexford	01/08/1977
Ray, Thornback	26 lbs	B	Patrick Mullen	Greystones, Wicklow	24/06/1973
Rockling, Three Bd.*	3 lbs 1 oz	S	Maurice Laurent	Arklow Pier, Wicklow	11/05/1990
Scad	1 lb 9 Ozs	B	Fergal O'Leary	Howth, Dublin	18/08/1987
Sea Trout	7.84 lbs	S	Martin McBride	Cullinstown, Wexford	31/05/1998
Skate, Common	157lbs 8 ozs	B	Michael Kelly	Bray, Wicklow	08/07/1962
Smooth Hound*	16.58 lbs	B	Keith Gray (GB)	Carne, Wexford	25/09/2000
Sole, Black	2 lbs 8 ozs	S	Neil Thompson	Greystones, Wicklow	19/08/1975
Tope*	66 lbs 8 ozs	B	Cyril Young	Carlingford, Louth	15/07/1979
Turbot	18 lbs 8 ozs	B	Capt. J.P Saul	Kilmore Quay, Wexford	24/10/1965
Whiting	4 lbs 4 ozs	B	Len O'Driscoll	Lambay, Dublin	29/06/1957
Wrasse, Ballan	7.48 lbs	B	Billy McLoughlin	Kilmore Quay, Wexford	29/09/1984
Wrasse, Cuckoo	2.01 lbs	B	John Tanner (GB)	Carnsore, Wexford	22/07/1984

\*Denotes Irish Record Fish i. \*\* to be ratified by Irish Specimen fish committee



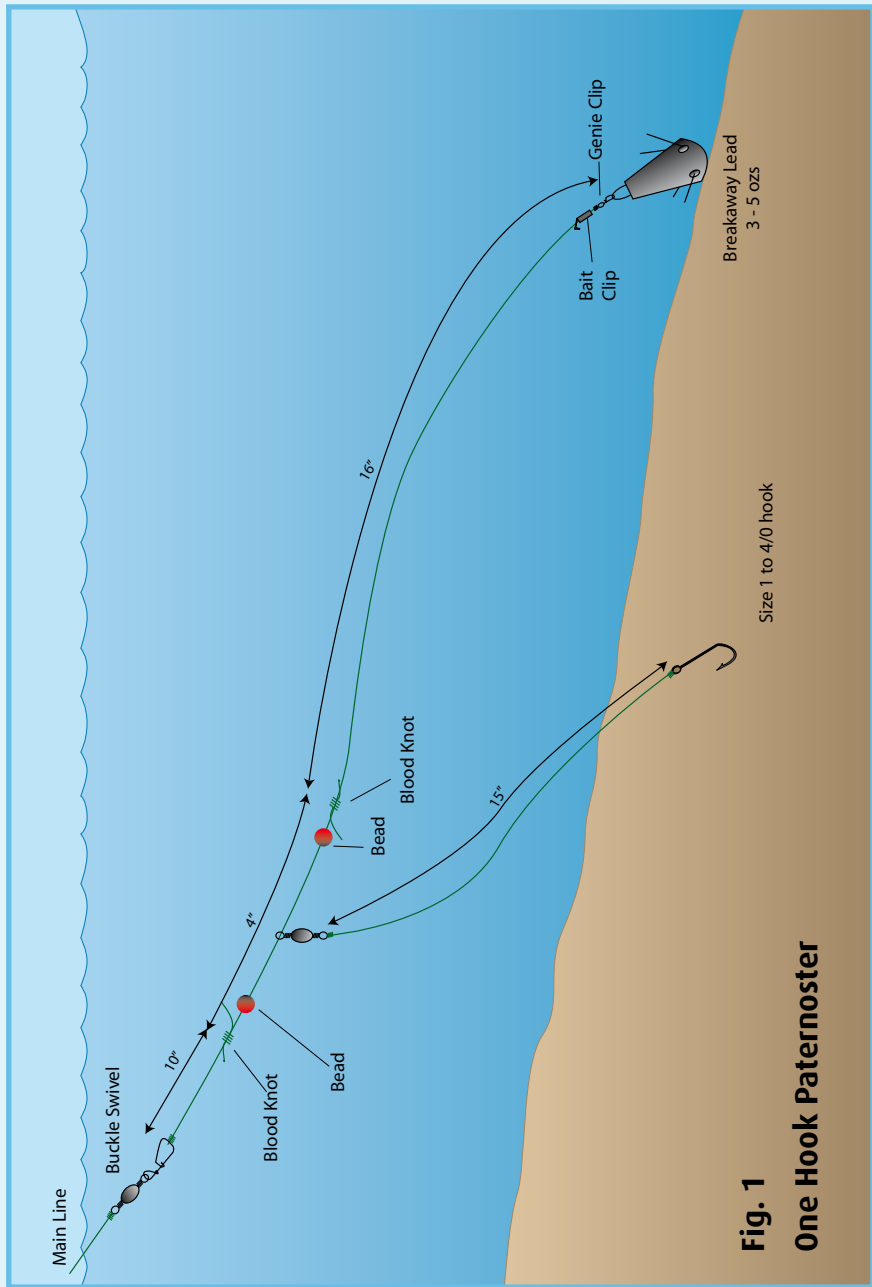
## ***Basic Terminal Tackle***

There are two basic types of terminal tackle which the sea angler will find useful in the Eastern Fisheries Region. These are the paternoster and the ledger. All sea fishing terminal tackle is based on these two patterns or a combination of both. It should be noted that all the 'pieces' which go to make up these rigs are available in the majority of tackle shops. Let us look, in a little more detail, at some of the terminal rig arrangements which have proven successful in the Region.

### **Shore Fishing**

In general, multi-hook rigs do not lend themselves to shore fishing in this part of Ireland as the sea bed can be very mixed and the more hooks one has on the end of the line, the greater are the chances of fouling the bottom.

When fish are feeding at distances of 100 metres or more from the shoreline, multi-hook rigs are again a disadvantage because the more hooks and bait one has on a trace, the less distance will be attained due to wind resistance.

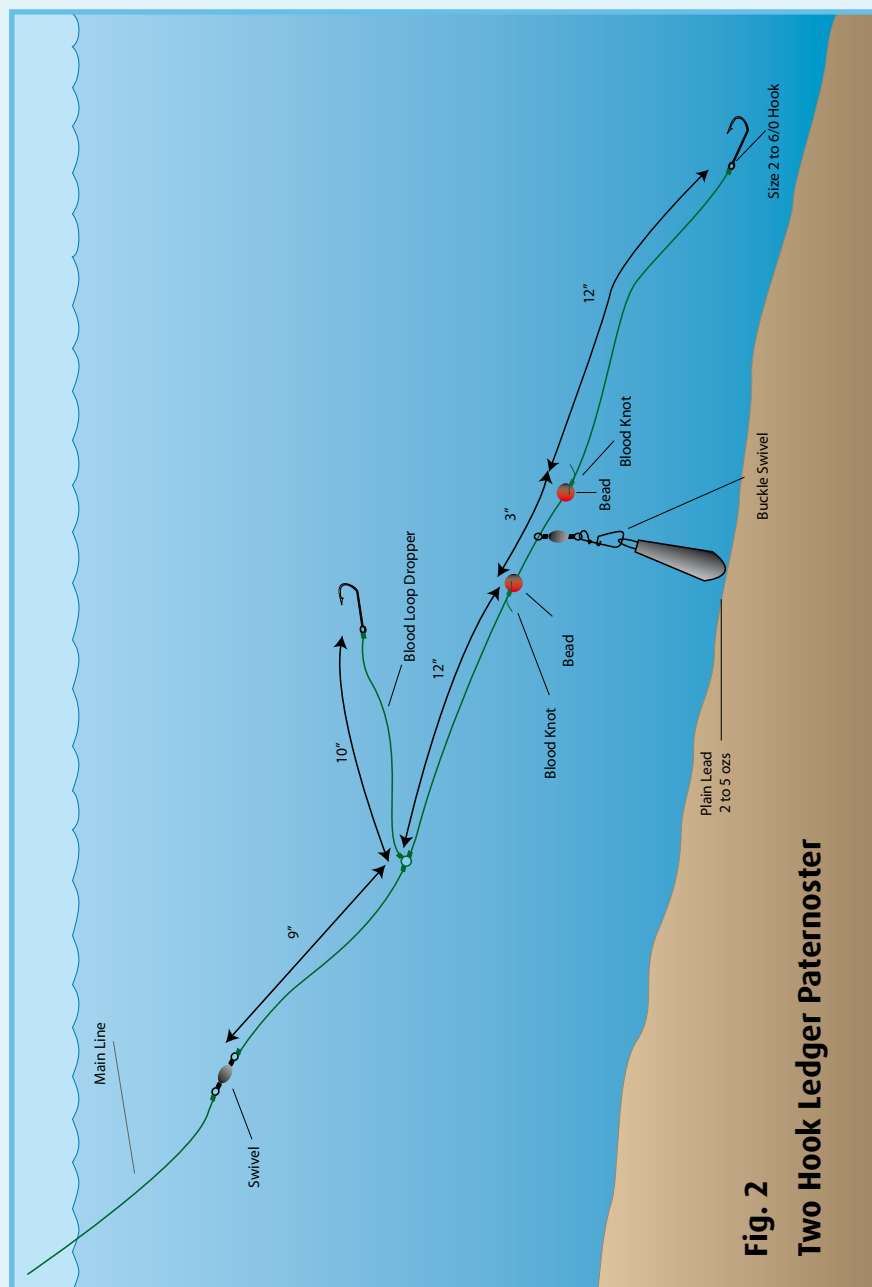


**Fig. 1**  
**One Hook Paternoster**



**The One Hook Paternoster (fig.1)** is the ideal setup for reaching fish which are feeding at long range from the shore. This is a very simple rig which sports a running dropper, between two blood knots. Small beads act as buffers against the knots to prevent the dropper swivel from moving out of its confines. At the bottom of the main trace, and immediately behind the 'Genie' lead retainer, is a bait clip. When the hook has been baited up, it is hung tightly into the clip. The bait will then be directly behind the lead, giving it a streamlined effect and lessening the possibility of soft baits flying off during the cast. When the trace hits the water, it compresses and the snood drops out of the clip, presenting a complete bait to any fish in the vicinity. The line strength and hook size are dependent on the species sought, but this type of rig is useful for codling and whiting in winter and bass in summer.

When fish are feeding close to the shoreline and distance casting is not essential, the **Two Hook Paternoster/Ledger (fig.2)** is recommended because it offers the angler the best of both worlds, in that, a conventional snood can be fished while legering at the same time. This system works particularly well for flatfish on open beaches and will also take ray, dogfish etc from deep water rock marks which give access to sandy ground.



**Fig. 2**  
**Two Hook Ledger Paternoster**

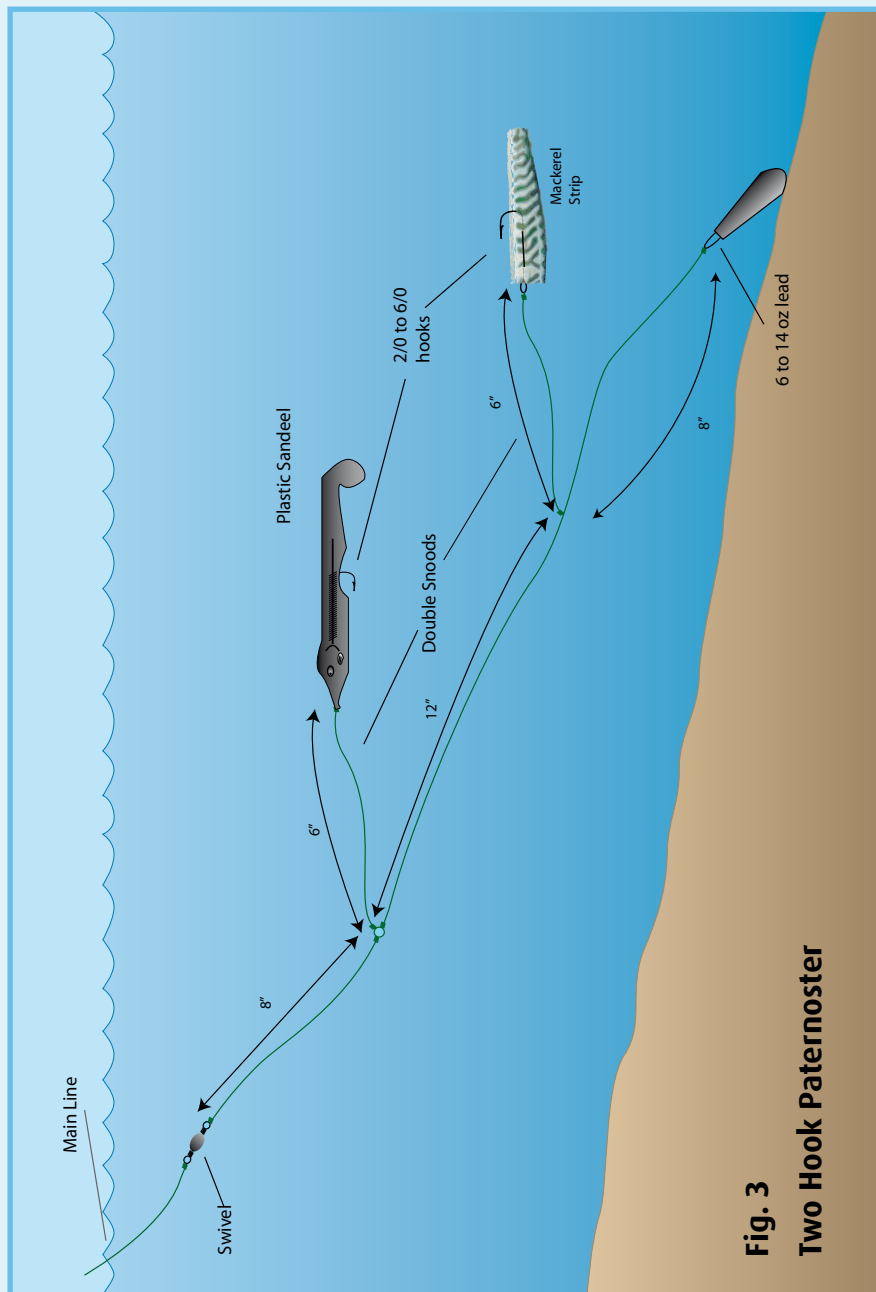




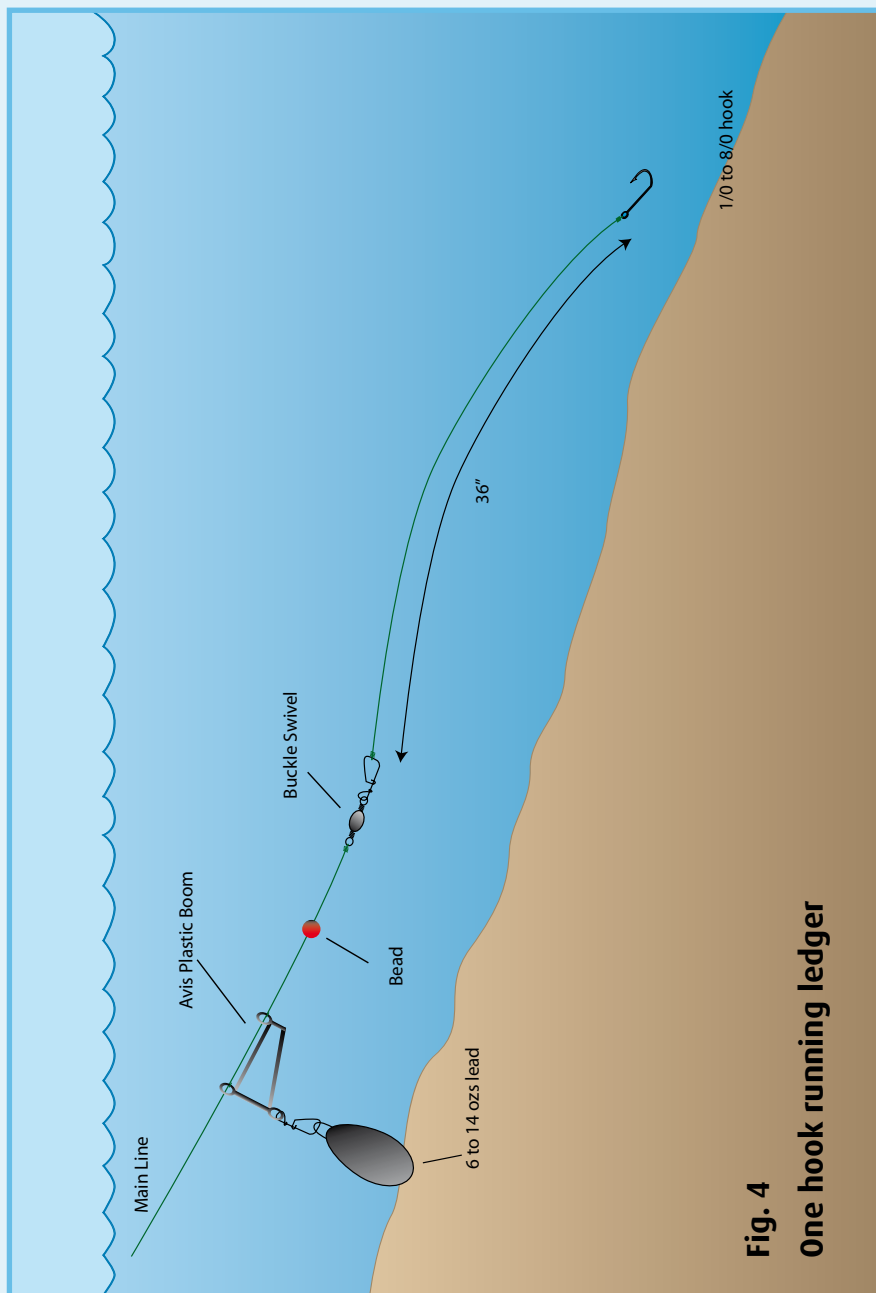
## BOAT FISHING

**The Boat Fishing Paternoster (fig3)** can, in theory, have any number of hooks suspended from the main line on snoods or droppers, with a lead attached below the bottom hook. The rig allows baits and lures or a combination of both to be fished at all levels from just under the surface, through mid water and all the way down to the sea bed. Another advantage which the paternoster has is that a number of baits can be worked or “jigged” together in an enticing manner without tangling with each other. It is recommended that for ease of use this rig should have no more than three droppers attached.

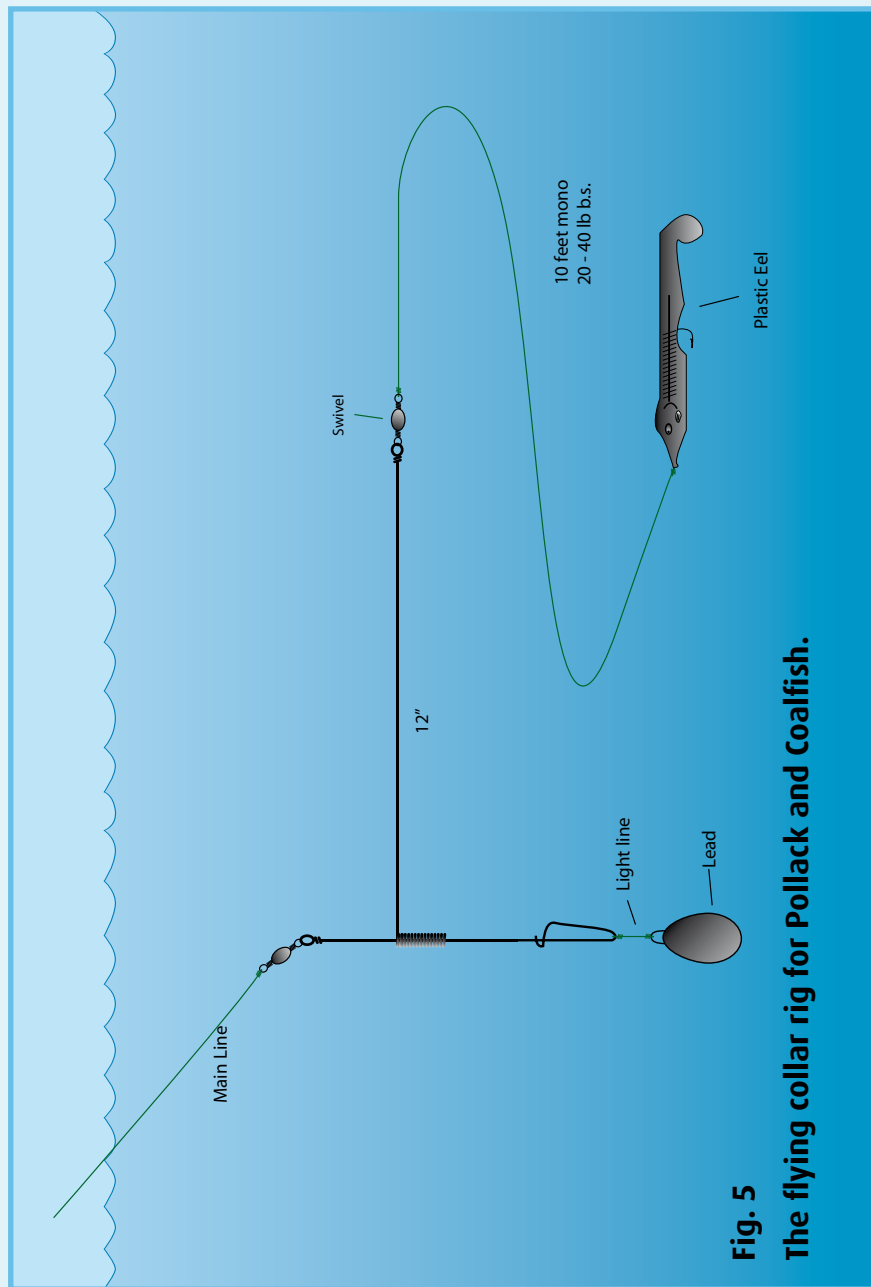
A second type of boat fishing terminal tackle is the One hook **Running Ledger (fig.4)** which can be fished tight to the sea bed for all the bottom living species from dabs to Ray. Again this can be a multi hook rig (three hooks, usually being the maximum). When fishing for larger species, such as tope or monkfish, one hook rigs are advisable to prevent two or more fish grabbing baits at the same time! Two large fish pulling against each other would put unnecessary strain on the terminal tackle and almost surely lead to a breakage. For some of these more “toothy” fish the trace should be made up from heavy duty nylon or multi-strand wire. The free running nature of this rig means that when a big fish picks up the bait, it can make off with it, without feeling any resistance. The angler should allow the fish to take line until it stops to turn the bait before swallowing. The strike should be delayed until until ‘the fish’ stops to turn.



**Fig. 3**  
**Two Hook Paternoster**



**Fig. 4**  
**One hook running ledger**

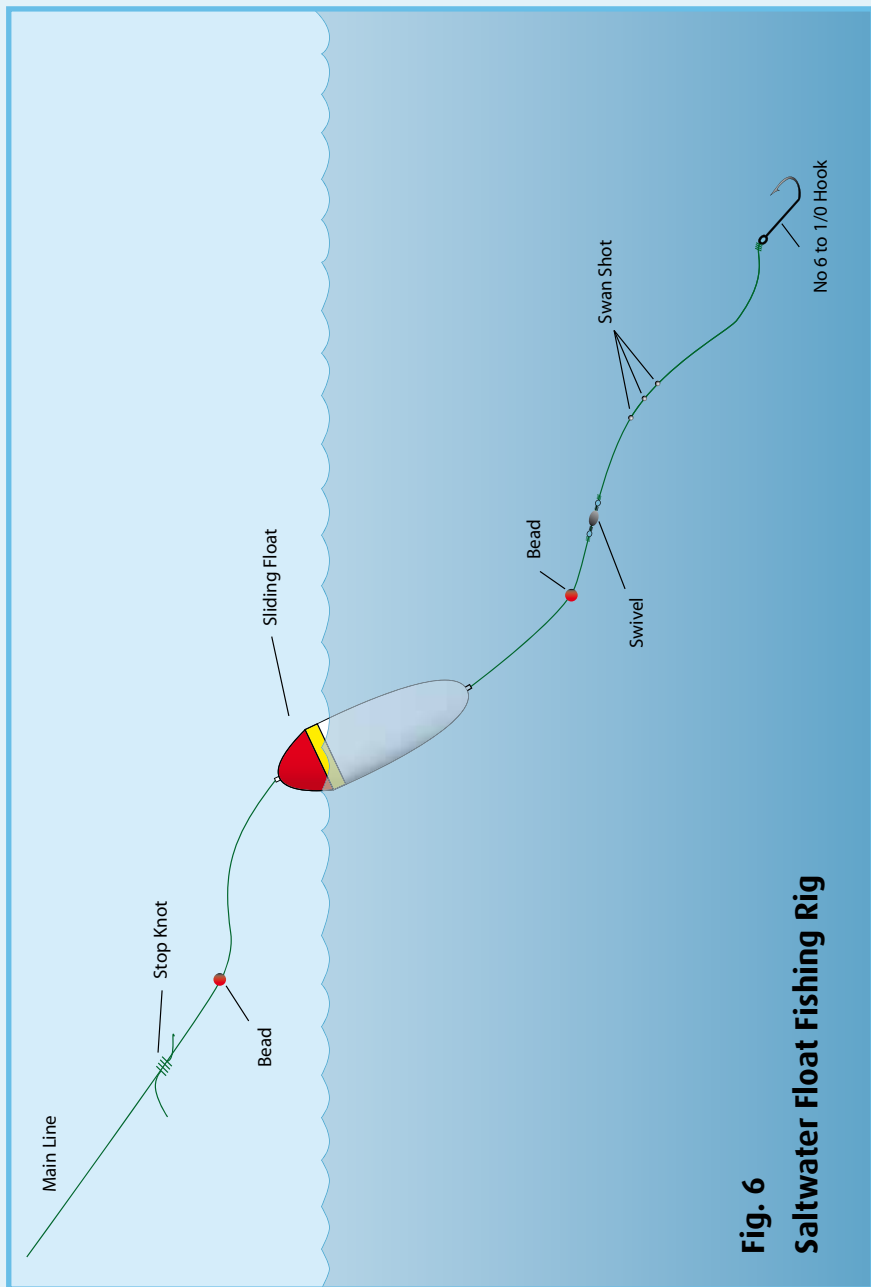


**Fig. 5**  
**The flying collar rig for Pollack and Coalfish.**

There are many specialist boat rigs based on either of the above but one of the most successful fish catchers in the Eastern area, particularly off the Wexford coast, is the **“Flying Collar” (fig.5)**. This is basically a ledger rig with a longer than usual, fixed dropper. At one time wire coat hangers were cut and shaped to create long booms, but today at least one major tackle manufacturer produces booms for this purpose. The rig which normally uses an artificial eel or shad is best employed while drifting over a deep water reef or wreck and should be lowered to the sea bed and reeled back slowly toward the boat. This process should be repeated until fish are contacted. Pollack and coalfish are the main target fish but many other species have fallen to this technique including conger, ling and cod.

### **FLOAT FISHING FROM SHORE AND BOAT**

One of the most successful methods for catching a wide range of sea fish is through the use of a Saltwater Float Fishing Rig (figure 6). Despite what some so called “purist” sea anglers may think, float fishing is a true sea angling method, and in many cases it is the first introduction that beginners and freshwater anglers have to fishing in the sea. It is a very effective way of shore fishing from piers, harbour walls, rocky headlands or while inshore boat fishing. Mullet, mackerel, pollack, wrasse, and garfish can all be taken this way using baits as varied as bread, worm, shellfish or fish strips. The rig can be adjusted to suit the depth being fished and the float slides between a movable stop knot and the trace which is attached to the main line by a small swivel. Beads are inserted between the knots to act as buffers. The trace is weighed down with shot, with the number used being dependent on the size of the float and bait. As a general rule of thumb, the top third of the float should be above water. Size of hook and bait are dependent on the type of fish being sought and in fact a scaled up version of this rig can also be employed from boats where larger fish such as tope or shark are the quarry!



**Fig. 6**  
**Saltwater Float Fishing Rig**



## Basic rod, Line & Reel configurations for the Eastern Region

Rod	Reel and Line	Use	Target Species
2 - 3 metre graphite or kevlar spinning rod.	Freshwater type fixed spool reel loaded with 2 - 4.5kg monofilament line.	Float fishing, spinning or plug fishing from piers, harbour walls, rocks or in estuarine channels.	Sea-trout, bass, mullet, mackerel, coalfish, pollack and garfish.
2.5 - 2.8 metre graphite fly rod rated 8 to 10 weight.	Saltwater fly reel loaded with fly line suitable for saltwater use.	Fly fishing from rocks, piers and in estuaries.	Sea-trout, bass, garfish, mackerel and pollack.
3.3 - 3.7 metre graphite bass rod with a casting weight of 80 - 112 grams.	Small multiplying reel or medium fixed spool reel loaded with 5.5 - 8 kg monofilament line.	Bait fishing on surf beaches, in estuaries or from rocks.	Bass, sea-trout, flounder dab, wrasse, and pollack.
3.7 - 4 metre graphite beach rod with a casting weight of 140 - 170 grm.	Small to medium multiplying reel or medium to large fixed spool reel loaded with 7.8 -12 kg monofilament line and having a shock leader of 18 - 25 kg mono.	Rock, pier, estuary or beach fishing where distance casting is necessary.	Ray, dogfish, huss, cod and tope.
1.80 - 2.20 metre graphite boat rod of line class 2.7 kg - 4.5 kg.	Small multiplying reel loaded with 2.5 - 4.5 kg monofilament or braided line.	Boat fishing in shallow to moderately deep water.	Plaice, dabs, gurnard wrasse, rockling, and whiting.
1.80 - 2.20 metre graphite boat rod of line class 4.5 kg - 6.8 kg.	Small to medium multiplying reel loaded with 4.5 - 6.5 kg monofilament or braided line.	Boat fishing over offshore reefs ,sand banks and wrecks.	Pollack, coalfish, cod, haddock, ray, turbot, and ling.
1.80 - 2.20 metre graphite boat rod of line class 9.0 kg - 13.6 kg.	Medium to large (up to 4/0 size) multiplying reel loaded with 9 -13 kg monofilament or braided line.	Boat fishing in deeper water and over deep wrecks and reefs.	Blue and porbeagle shark, skate, tope, conger, and ling.
2.20 -2.80 metre graphite uptide boat rod to cast 80 - 225 grams.	Medium multiplying reel loaded with 6.8 - 8 kg monofilament line and having a shock leader of 18 - 25 kg.	Boat fishing in shallow water, where casting baits away from the boat yields best results.	Ray, tope, huss, bass, and dogfish.

Diego Leccardi with a  
bass from North Wexford



# Saltwater Baits, for use in the Eastern Region.

## LUGWORM

The presence of **lugworm** (*Arenicolamarina*) is recognised by the spaghetti-like spiral of sand which they leave on the foreshore at low tide. They are abundant in estuaries and on many sheltered beaches throughout the area and trench digging for an hour or so with a garden fork will usually produce enough worms for a day's fishing. In the Eastern Region lugworm have traditionally been a shore angler's bait, normally associated with fishing for codling, flounder, wrasse, and dabs but they are also very effective in attracting plaice and whiting while inshore boat fishing. Lugworm can be kept alive for a few days, wrapped in newspaper and placed in a cool box.



## RAGWORM



### Red and king ragworm

(*Nereis pelagica* and *Nereis virens*) are present in virtually all the east coast estuaries and bays and are a proven fish catcher in the area, being excellent baits for flatfish, whiting, pouting, codling and dogfish. Trench digging in the vicinity of mussel banks will usually yield enough ragworm for a day's fishing but they will

stay alive for over a week if kept in a cool-box, on a tray of coral sand, and moistened regularly with fresh sea water.

**Harbour ragworm or "maddies"** (*Nereis diversicolour*) are very common in muddy reaches of most estuaries. They are a good standby bait, when

these small ragworm used in bunches, for float-fishing for mullet and wrasse or when ledgering for flatfish. Harbour ragworm are difficult to keep alive for more than a few days.

**White ragworm** or “herringbone rag” (*Nephtys hombergi*) are also fairly common, frequenting many lugworm beds and being particularly effective when used in conjunction with other baits such as lugworm or mackerel strip. White ragworm will stay alive for up to a week if kept in similar conditions to red ragworm. It should be noted, however, that white ragworm will not survive if put into the same tray as the more aggressive reds.



**Large white ragworm or “silvers”** (*Nephtys caeca*) are rare and localised in their distribution throughout the entire country but are found in isolated patches at Sutton and Dun Laoghaire on Dublin Bay. They are the single most sought after bait by shore match anglers who tend to jealously guard the location of “silver” beds. Large white ragworm are often the only bait that will attract fish in bright conditions and many shore competitions have been won by the angler with a good supply of them. They are normally found in clean coarse sand in the vicinity of the low spring tide line, particularly where masonry worms (which have little use as bait) are located. Large whites can be kept for quite long periods, in trays of moist coral sand, but should never be mixed with other ragworm species.



## CRAB

Crab has been a very popular shore angler’s bait for many years in the region. The upward trend in inshore boat angling has also seen the successful use of crab in recent years.

**The Common Shore or green crab** (*Carcinus maenas*) moults at least once a year, usually prior to mating. This generally takes place in May



or June, although moulting crabs have been found as late as October in the southern part of the region. Crabs can be collected along sheltered shores, particularly where there is an abundance of serrated wrack (*Fucus serratus*) which provides good cover for them. Not all shore crabs are suitable as baits and only “peelers” or “softies” are used.

A “peeler crab” is one which is in the process of shedding its shell and is generally regarded as the prime crab bait. To tell a “peeler” from an ordinary hard-backed crab, one should twist the last segment off one of the legs. If the segment comes away and there is white flesh underneath, the crab is unsuitable and can be returned to its hiding place. If, however, the segment comes away easily, revealing the newly formed, soft red flesh underneath, the carapace and under shell can be peeled off for use as bait.

Crabs which have already shed their shells but have not yet hardened (a process which takes about a week) are known as “softies”. They are rubbery to the touch and cannot nip as the claws are too soft to do any damage. In most conditions a soft crab will be almost as effective as a “peeler” although the scent may not be as strong. In order to ensure that crab baits are properly presented on the hook they should be tied on with elasticised thread.

Crab can be used in almost any sea angling situation from the estuary and beach where they are excellent for most species through inshore boat fishing for ray, dogfish and flatfish to deep sea fishing for cod.

**Hermit Crab** (*Eupagurus bernhardus*) can be collected in a pre baited drop net in rock pools or below pier walls. Hermit is good bait for cod, ray, and flatfish from boats, but is virtually impossible to cast from the shore due to the soft nature of the tail section, therefore it should be tied to the hook with elasticised thread.

Other species of crab such as the velvet swimming crab (*Portunus puber*) also make excellent baits but they are seldom encountered in moulting condition.

## SQUID AND CUTTLEFISH

The **common squid** (*Loligo forbesi*) and **common cuttlefish** (*Sepia officinalis*) are superb baits for a wide range of species. In the past they were rarely seen on fishmonger’s slabs as they were not a popular food item here, but in the new millennium there has been



a considerable increase in the migrant workforce and as a result many, previously uncommon foodstuffs including squid, are now widely available.

Squid will also fall occasionally to baited lures, while boat fishing and should be frozen while still fresh. They are well suited to being transported in a cool box where they will remain frozen as long as the ice blocks are renewed regularly.

Most tackle shops now carry the smaller “*calamari squid*” possibly (*Loligo vulgaris*) which can be purchased, frozen, in handy 454g cartons of ten. These are valuable bait for various species of ray as well as dogfish, cod and conger.

## **SHELLFISH**

Shellfish are very useful bait, particularly when fishing for specific species, or fish with a soft or small mouth such as haddock, sole or dab.

**Cockle** (*Cardium edule*) live buried just under the surface of damp sand and can be gathered, in several sandy bays and estuaries. They are very useful for shore angling and inshore boat fishing and plaice, dab, flounder, whiting and all the wrasse family will take cockle freely. Cockle is also productive when used in a “cocktail” with other baits such as lugworm or squid. Cod and whiting find this combination particularly attractive.

**The Common whelk or “buckie”** (*Buccinum undatum*) is the largest of the whelk family and the thick flesh is a tough bait for cod, whiting, pouting, coalfish, wrasse and dogfish. Common whelks are a deeper water shellfish than their cousins the periwinkles, living mainly among the stones and mud of the lower shore. As with hermit crab, a pre-baited drop net hung for a few hours at high tide from the end of a pier wall will usually yield ample whelk for a days fishing.

**The Common Gaper** (*Mya arenari*) which is oval shaped and dark grey to black in colour is found in muddy creeks and estuaries. They can be detected at low tide, by searching for a key-hole shaped depression in the mud. The hole is created by the long siphon with which the gaper filters small food particles out of the water. Gapers can be dug up with a wide tined garden fork and when the siphon is removed, it provides a very good boat angling bait for a number of species. Used in combination with lugworm or ragworm, it is also a useful shore angler’s bait for bass and flatfish.

Most other species of clam are found in deep water and do not come into the anglers range until a gale throws them up onto the shore. **The Iceland cyprine clam, or “geegan”** (*Arctica islandica*) for instance is a large, round, blue-black flanked shellfish which, over the years, has accounted for numerous specimen bass on the North Derry and Antrim beaches. Despite the fact that “geegan” occur rarely on the foreshore they deserve a mention here because



after easterly gales, they have occasionally been thrown up on beaches such as Velvet Strand and Dollymount Strand, heralding an influx of fish, feeding on them.

**The Common Mussel** (*Mytilus edulis*) can be found on most sheltered shores, where they can be gathered with ease. Once mussels have been opened, the soft flesh should be removed from the shells then tied to the hook with elasticised thread. This provides excellent bait for shore and boat fishing where codling, coalfish, plaice and dabs are expected.

When mussels are not required for immediate use, they should be taken from their shells and within a few hours, frozen down, in “ziplok” bags containing batches of twenty or so. This allows for ease of storage and future transport in a cool box. Frozen mussel is an excellent standby for winter fishing when other baits are difficult to obtain.

Another excellent boat and shore bait is **Razor fish** (*Ensis siliqua*) which are localised in the Eastern Region, and require a little more effort to collect than mussel.

Razors are narrow shellfish which grow to about 17cms in length and live in damp sand near the low water line. They are difficult to dig because they can be up to a meter below the surface and the slightest movement on the sand in their vicinity sends them spurting to the bottom of their hole. The best method for capturing them is to take a carton of salt onto the beach, treading carefully onto the razor beds. Once a razor burrow has been located, some salt should be poured into the hole. In an effort to expel the salt, the shellfish speeds back to the surface, where dexterity and nimbleness are then called for to grab the razor and place safely in a bucket. This can be a very hit and miss exercise but an hour or so will yield twenty or thirty shellfish. Razor is tough bait which is attractive to many summer species but is particularly effective for autumn bass and winter cod.

## FISH BAITS

All forms of oily fish are useful in virtually every sea angling situation, but are particularly effective when seeking the larger predators such as shark, tope, monkfish and skate. Probably the most important of all sea angling baits is the **Mackerel** (*Scomber, scombrus*) which can be used for almost every species of fish from both boat and shore. It can be used in "strip" form for turbot, dab, pollack, coalfish and gurnard. In "last" form (the tough tail section) for ray, bull huss, spurdog, and ling, while whole mackerel can be used for tope, skates and conger. Mackerel can be bought in most fish shops, in season, or can be caught while spinning from harbour walls or rocky outcrops. A string of brightly coloured feathers or lures can also be employed while boat fishing to take mackerel in numbers. Freshly caught mackerel will out fish most frozen fish baits but it is always worth stashing away a few fillets in the freezer for the leaner days of winter, when fish bait is scarce.



Most oily fish deteriorate quickly, particularly in warm weather, and should therefore, be frozen within a few hours of capture,

Mackerel can also be frozen whole, but the innards should be removed and stomach cavity cleaned out with salt water, before doing so.

**Herring** (*Clupea harengus*) are seldom caught on rod and line but are important bait for many species of fish. Herring can be bought fresh in most fishmongers and supermarkets and have the advantage that they survive freezing better than mackerel and do not deteriorate as swiftly when thawed. Herring works well in combination with other baits, particularly red ragworm.

**The Lesser sand-eel** (*Ammodytes tobiannus*) which grows to about 15cms and the **Greater sand-eel or launce** (*Ammodytes lanceolatus*) which can grow to over 30cms are very important bait fish.

Lesser sand-eel are common along sandy shores, where they are excellent bait for sea-trout, pollack, dogfish and occasional bass. They can be collected by the Cornish method known as "vingelling" in the wet sand with a blunt bread knife or bill hook. The blade should be pulled in a sweep through the top 15cms of sand and when a sand-eel is located, it will wriggle out to the surface where speed is essential to grab it before it can escape under the



Bait digging, Clontarf, Dublin City

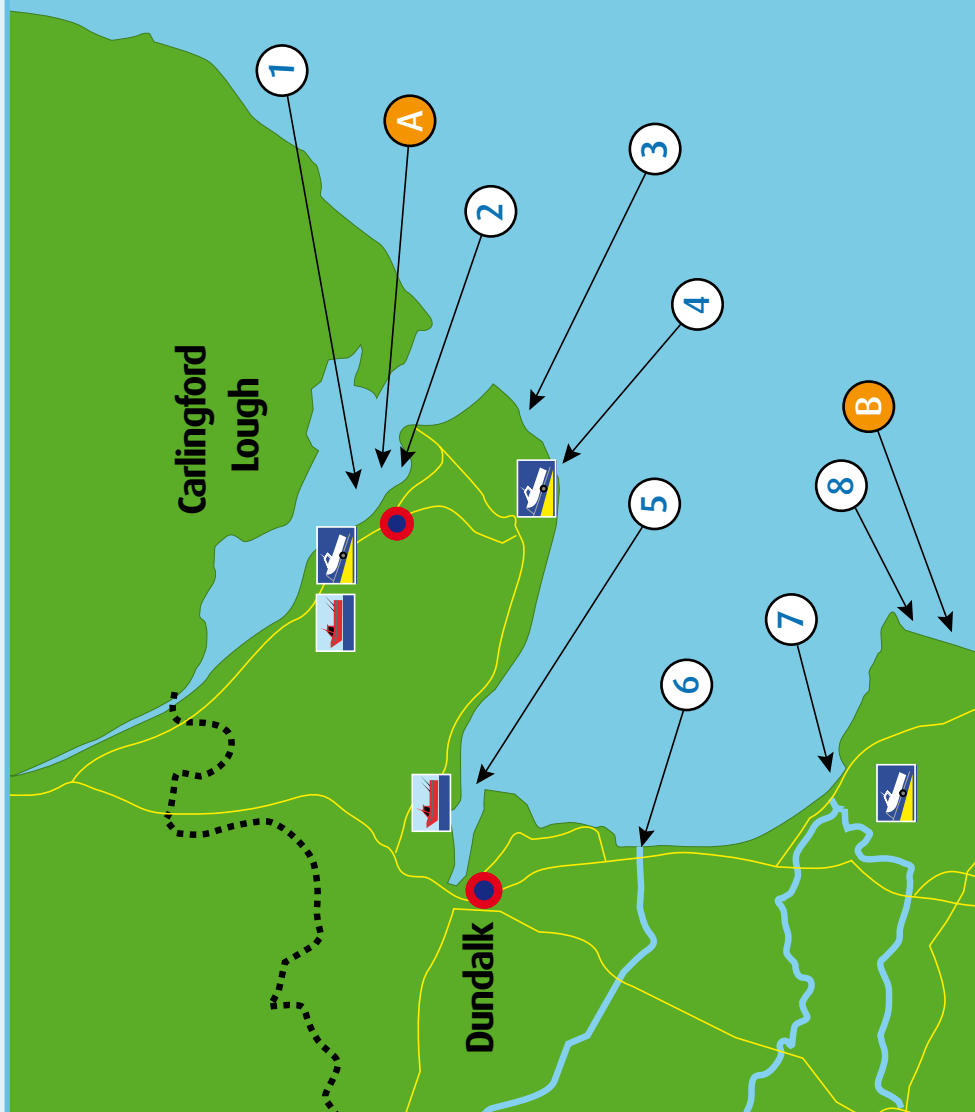
sand again. The greater sand-eel is seldom seen on the shore line being a deeper water fish. They can however be taken on small Sabiki type lures while boat fishing and are prime bait for turbot, ray, tope and cod. Sand-eel will stay alive for several hours in a large bucket of cool, aerated sea water.

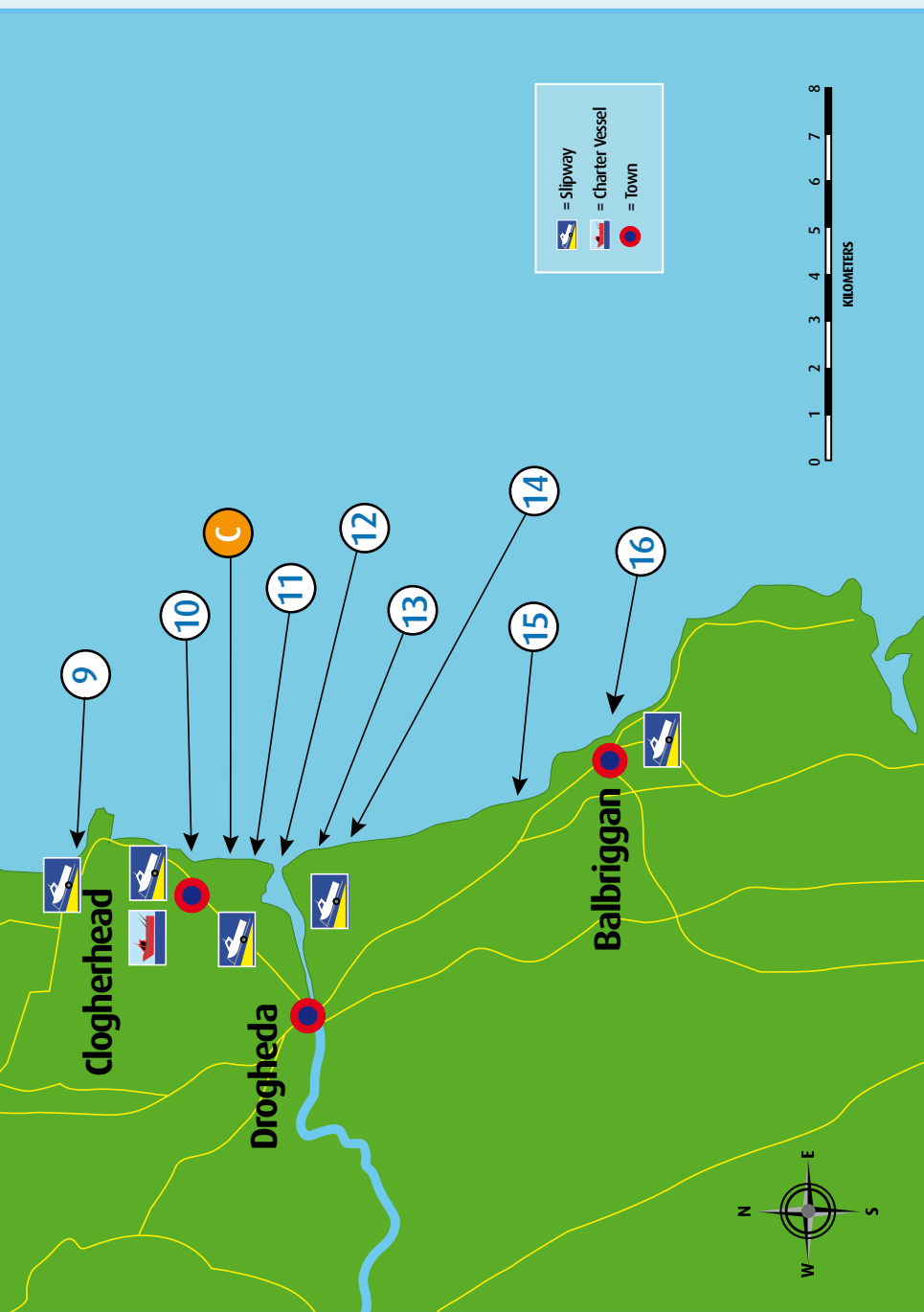
### **SIGNPOSTING**

The majority of fishing locations and bait gathering areas are signposted throughout the region.



## Map 1 Carlingford to Balbriggan





# Carlingford to Balbriggan Map 1.

The south east facing Carlingford Lough forms a natural boundary between County Down in Northern Ireland and County Louth in the Republic.

Carlingford Lough recently came under the jurisdiction of the Loughs Agency and further information on the area can be obtained from the office in Darcy Magee Court, Dundalk Street, Carlingford. Tel: +353 42 9383888. Web: [www.loughs-agency.org](http://www.loughs-agency.org)

The Cooley Peninsula is an area rich in folklore and legend and it forms an impressive backdrop to the southern shore. Tucked into the south eastern corner is the picturesque village of **Carlingford (1)** where the remains of the 12th century, "King John's Castle" overlook the harbour.

Much of the harbour is tidal but small boats can usually be launched and retrieved from the slipways there or from the marina along the Omeath Road (R173) to the north west of the pier. A charter boat is available in the area during the summer months.

Carlingford Lough is best known for it's superb tope fishing, which usually begins towards the end of April and runs through to September. In the main, the tope found there are male fish in the 25 lbs to 35 lbs (11.34kgs – 15.88kgs) bracket, but every year a number of big female fish are encountered. They weigh up to 60 lbs (27.22kgs) with an occasional bigger fish such as the 66.5 lbs (30.16kgs) Irish Record set in 1979. Thornback ray, spurdog and dogfish are also common in the Lough while outside, in the deeper water beyond Greenore Point, wrasse, pouting, codling and dabs will be found. Boat anglers should be aware that there are very strong tides in Carlingford Lough, particularly during springs. It is important that an experienced person takes charge of boat handling there.

Where the road (R176) runs close to the shore to the east of Carlingford Village, there is access, at low tide, to a vast area of **mudflat (A)**. Here lugworm can be dug but this can be a back-breaking exercise due to the very heavy nature of the mud. Digging sites should therefore be chosen very carefully.

Spinning from the shore below the lighthouse at **Greenore (2)** accounts for mackerel during the summer. Pollack also appear on evening tides with occasional bass and sea trout also possible.

Night fishing from the beach produces spurdog, dogfish and ray and there is always the possibility of hooking a tope in this area. Codling are available during autumn and winter, particularly on night tides, but are seldom fished for.





Josie Mahon  
with a mullet

This area has seen a surge of interest in saltwater fly fishing with a number of bass falling to large streamer flies. The late summer is the best time of year, with high water coinciding with dusk being the optimum period.

To the south east of Greenore is Ballaghan Point where the ground is very broken and difficult to fish. In summer, mackerel occasionally come quite close there and can be taken while spinning at high water. Be warned though! Tackle losses are virtually unavoidable. South west of Ballaghan (off the R175) are Whitestown and **Templetown (3)** where the weed and rock give way to more sandy ground. These are popular swimming places during summer, making fishing almost impossible during daylight. In any case, night tides are probably more productive and turn up flounder, dogfish and occasional bass in summer and codling in winter. There is excellent potential in this area but very little serious angling activity.

The shoreline is very broken to the west of Cooley Point and consists mainly of weed covered rock. This terrain offers little of interest to the shore angler although spinning from some of the larger rock outcrops produces mackerel, small pollack and coalfish at times.

**Gyles Quay (4)** is situated on the northern shore of Dundalk Bay, some 1.5 miles (2.5kms) south of the R173.



This is quite a popular small boat angling location, and a slipway of quite substantial proportions lies adjacent to the pier affording safe launching in all but stiff south-westerly winds.

The slipway tends to dry out on spring tide lows and this should be borne in mind when planning a day afloat there. Mackerel are normally plentiful in the bay during summer and fishing for them is a popular “must do” pastime for the many holidaymakers who visit the area. For the more serious angler, the deeper water some 3 miles (4.8kms) offshore, offers dogfish, spurdog, codling, whiting, dab, ray and tope.

Fishing from the pier is also a popular pastime in summer with high tide producing dogfish, flounder, mullet and mackerel.

**Castletown River (5)** flows through Dundalk Harbour and into the sea between Tippings Point on the northern shore and Soldiers Point to the south. The floor of the estuary is predominantly alluvial mud, which gives way gradually to sand beyond the buoyed channel in Dundalk Bay. There is some fishing for mullet and flounder in the main river channel and occasional sea trout and bass show up in spring and autumn. The Bay is very shallow, and at low tide, literally hundreds of acres of sand and mud are exposed. The maximum depth during this period is about eighteen metres. Despite this

the bay offers fair boat fishing at times in the shallows for tope, bull huss, spurdog, mackerel and codling. In the deeper water around the Dundalk Patches and beyond other species such as whiting, coalfish, ling, gurnard, wrasse and pollack become available. Tides at Soldiers Point are -10 minutes on Dublin.

**The River Fane (6)** flows into Dundalk Bay just south of the junction of the N1 and R172 at Blackrock. The mouth of the river offers opportunities for shore anglers to take mullet, flounder, sea trout and bass. Care should be taken here to avoid being cut off from the shore, as the tide fills very swiftly, particularly in easterly winds.

The Rivers Glyde and Dee converge before entering the sea at **Annagassan (7)**, one of the most picturesque harbours on the east coast. Small boats can be launched on the southern side of the harbour, but it should be noted that this is a tidal slipway, confining launching and retrieving to about two hours either side of high water. It is essential that a check be made locally on prevailing tide conditions and sea state before going afloat. Boat fishing is for tope, ray, spur dog, dogfish and dabs. Smooth hound have also been recorded in commercial catches in the area. Shore fishing at high tide from the quay wall yields mackerel (in season), flounder, eel, mullet and occasional bass. To the south east, the broken ground between Salterstown and Dunany offers some possibilities for bass while plug fishing.

To the south of Dunany Point, the shallow beach at **Cruisetown (8)** runs for some 3 miles (4.83 km) broken occasionally by rocky patches and crossed in several places by small streams. Bass and flounder can be taken, towards the southern end of the beach when surf is running. Night tides are generally most productive, but there is little regular angling activity there.

In the south eastern corner of the beach, above **Hackett's Cross (B)** lugworm and occasional white ragworm can be dug at low tide.

**Port Oriel (9)** on the sheltered north western side of Clogherhead is a busy commercial harbour which offers excellent launching facilities for small boat anglers wishing to explore the local waters. Fishing is for codling, dab, coalfish, dogfish, ray and tope. Access to the slipway and harbour area is restricted, so anglers wishing to use the facilities should get permission from Clogherhead Fisherman's Co-op, Tel: 00 353 41 9881403. The pier and adjacent rock outcrops afford a number of vantage points for spinning, float fishing and bottom fishing with pollack, coalfish, dab and conger all possible.

On summer evenings, during the tourist season, fishing from the pier for mackerel is a very popular pastime. A number of very large specimens have been recorded over the years including a fish of 3lbs 9ozs. (1.62kgs) which held the Irish Record for the species for some seven years.

During easterly, autumnal winds, or immediately afterward, bass fishing is worth trying where Ballywater Stream runs across the beach and enters the sea at **Termonfeckin (10)**. Anglers who are prepared to put in the hours may be well rewarded as this area is capable of producing bass to over 10 lbs. Flounder and dogfish may also be taken especially on night tides.

**Baltray (11)** is situated on the northern shore of the River Boyne Estuary. The easterly facing beach offers good bass fishing in the vicinity of the bar which runs at right angles to the shore and has been created by gravel and sand being deposited by the strong currents deflected along the beach by the River Boyne breakwater. Fish to over the specimen size of 10 lbs (4.54kgs) are possible here but there is very little angling pressure. On the Boyne River side of the breakwater, spinning with plugs or "German Sprat" type lures or free-lining sandeel are popular methods for bass from June to September. The last hour of the ebb and first two hours of the flood tide being the optimum time. There is a tidal slipway south of the reservoir which allows access to the estuary. Trolling a "Red Gill" or similar lure behind a boat is a very effective way of taking bass and has a number of local devotees. Outside the estuary, bottom fishing will produce plaice, flounder, dab, dogfish and ray.

Peeler crab can be collected at low tide in the weed margins of the main channel during May and June, while lugworm can be dug at several locations on the mudflat adjacent to the R167 between Baltray village and **Roe's Point (C)**.

It is thought that **Drogheda (12)** or Droichead Atha (the bridge of the ford) was established by a Norse chieftain named Thorgestr in 911. Today this busy, modern town is the gateway to the beautiful and historical Boyne Valley.

Anglers fishing from the Quays will find mullet and flounder, while bass and sea trout are also possible. When spring tides coincide with a dry spell, during summer, mackerel may move well upstream. On these occasions they can be taken in numbers in the vicinity of the old yacht club on the southern shore and a carnival atmosphere often prevails as every available rod and reel are pressed into service. Several slipways are located along the quays affording access to the estuary for the growing number of small boat angling enthusiasts in the area.

On the southern side of the river at **Mornington (13)** access to the estuary mouth is much more difficult than on the northern bank. The breakwater has not been concreted there, and the adjacent foreshore is very soft sand, making for almost impossible walking conditions. The fishing found on this side can also only be carried out safely for two hours either side of low water. Despite this, the scramble over the beach and rocks may prove to be well worth the extra effort. Crab baits, fished tight to the base of the rocks can be

very effective for bass and flounder while casting plugs out into the channel and allowing them to be carried round by the current before retrieving has also proven a potent bass catching method. Spinning also accounts for a number of sea trout to over specimen size of 6 lbs (2.72 kg) each season from May onwards.

Tides at River Boyne mouth are -20 minutes on Dublin.

The shallow beaches at **Bettystown and Laytown (14)** produce sporadic bass fishing with the best opportunities occurring when surf is running and the water is coloured after an easterly blow. Where the River Nanny enters the sea a deep pool has formed below the railway bridge. Mullet are known to have taken flies there and crab fished into the main channel attracts flounder, eels and occasional bass in autumn.

Similar fishing can be found where the Delvin River enters the sea just east of the N1 road at **Gormanstown (15)**. Night tides are regarded as providing the best opportunities. Despite showing a lot of potential, the fishing on the beaches in this area is under utilised and visitors will seldom meet another angler.

**Balbriggan (16)** affords excellent launching facilities for small boat anglers. There are plans to upgrade this harbour's commercial potential and visitors must be aware of this at all times.

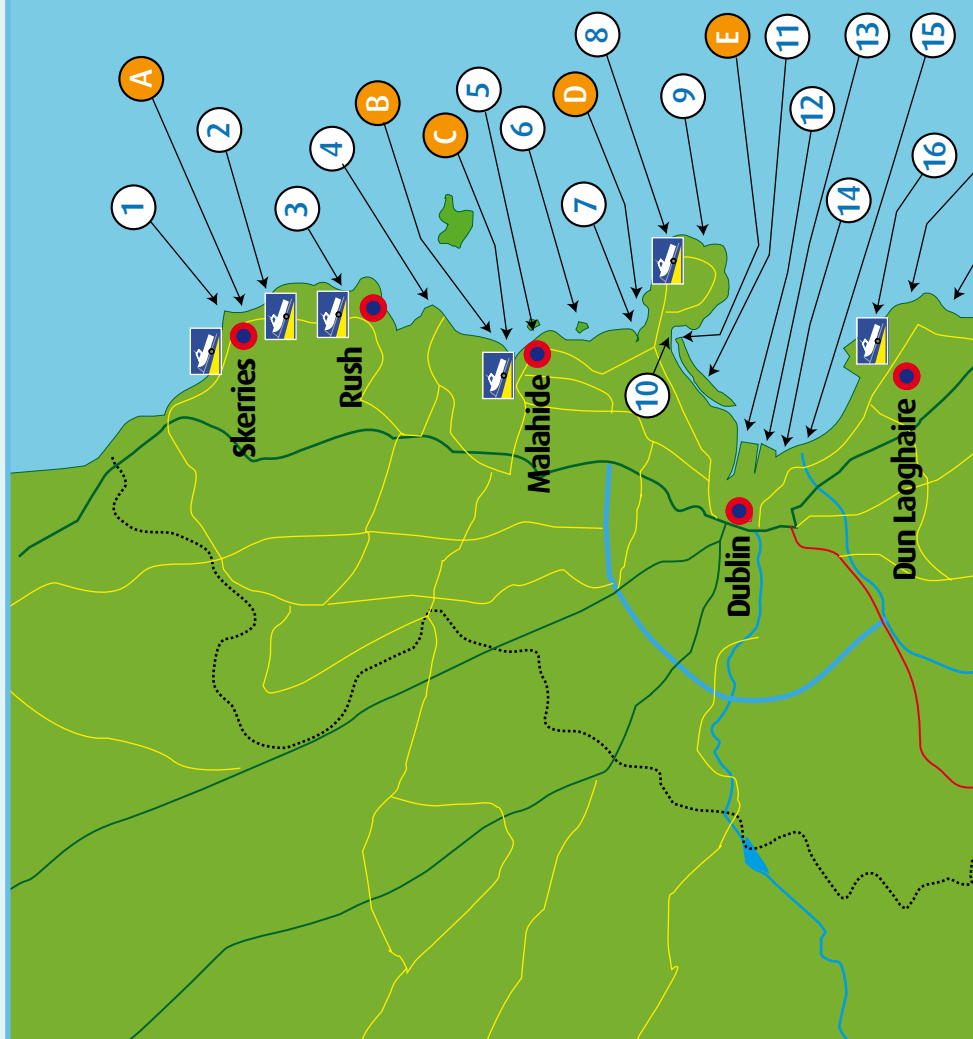
The main harbour area is quite confined, particularly at low water. The entrance is also narrow and small boat users should always be prepared to give way to trawlers entering or leaving, as their manoeuvrability is very restricted.

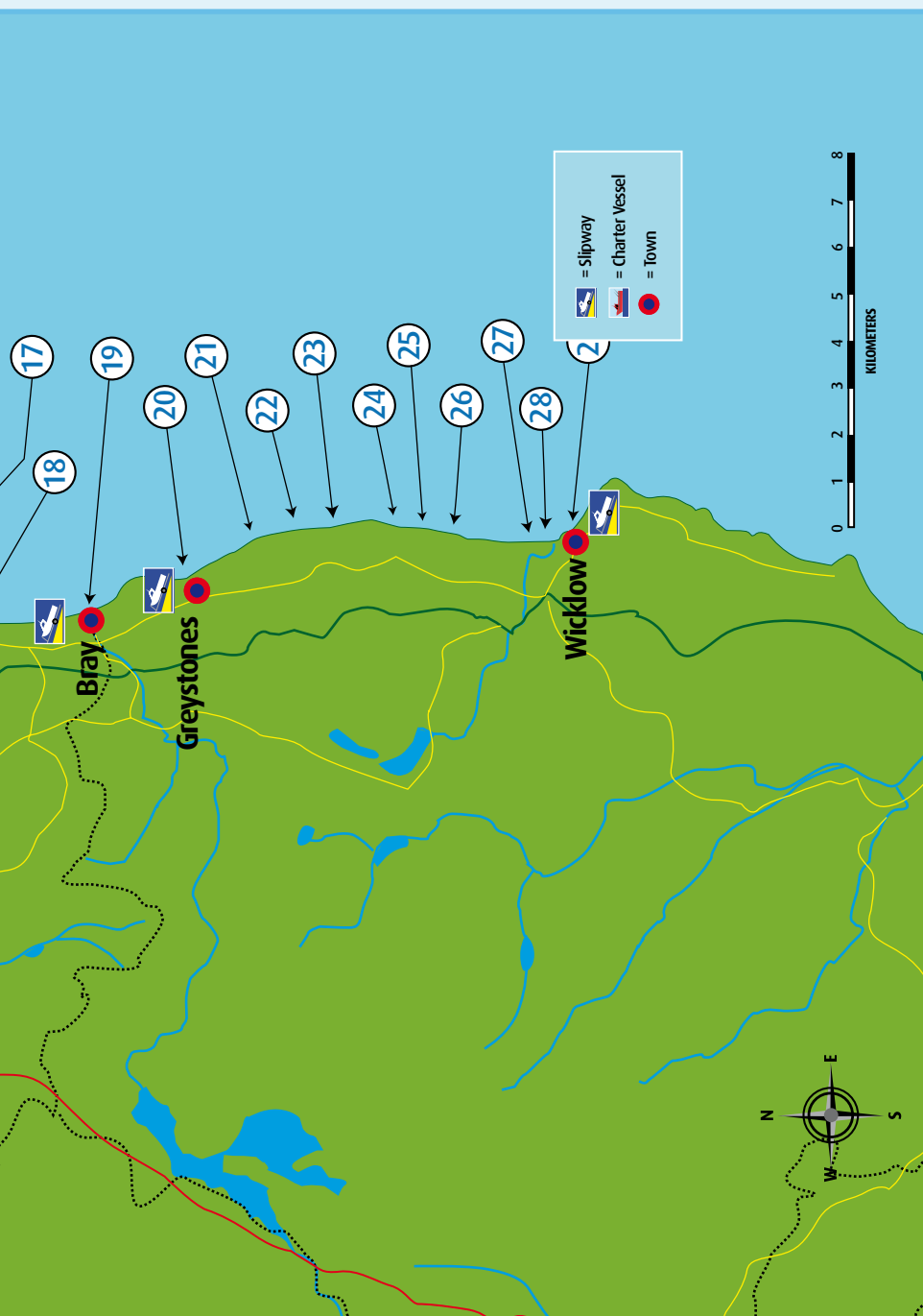
The slipways are also tidal and cannot be used at low water.

Boat fishing is carried out mainly around the Cardy Rocks north of the harbour which offer pollack, coalfish, codling and wrasse. The sandy ground to the east produces dabs, dogfish and occasional ray.

At one time, some of the best mullet fishing on the east coast was to be found in the harbour but this has all but disappeared due to the arrival of a group of seals which have taken up residence there. They have become something of a local tourist attraction and as long as they continue to get easy pickings from local fishermen, they are sure to remain, making it very unlikely that the mullet will return. This phenomenon is not only confined to Balbriggan but has taken place in a number of east coast harbours recently.

## Map 2 Skerries to Wicklow







# Skerries to Wicklow

## Map 2.

Small pollack and mackerel can be taken while spinning from the pier at **Skerries (1)** while mullet to over the specimen size of 5 lbs (2.27kgs) are taken fairly regularly. Free lined bread crust or fish paste are particularly effective. Coalfish and codling can be expected at night from the rocks to the east of the pier.

Skerries is growing in popularity as a small boat angling centre but the available slipways at the east pier and opposite the sailing club are tidal and cannot be used for two hours either side of low water.

A favoured mark for inshore boat fishing is the navigation perch to the east of Red Island peninsula where mackerel, coalfish and pollack are plentiful in summer.

East north east of Skerries and some four miles (6.5 km) distant is Rockabill Lighthouse, which rises to over eighty feet above Carrig da Bheola or Two Lips Rock. The light came into service in 1860 and was manned until 1989 when it went fully automatic. Around the base of the rock in 7 to 9 fathoms (12.8mts to 15.5mts) boat anglers will find good fishing for pollack, wrasse, whiting, conger, coalfish, cod and dogfish. North of St. Patrick's Island in 10 fathoms (18.3mts) is a region of mixed ground which yields dabs, plaice, tope, ray, codling, conger and spurdog. Generally this area fishes best at anchor, particularly when high tide and dusk coincide.

Ragworm and some lugworm can be dug on the foreshore below the **promenade (A)**.

The pier and slipway at **Loughshinny (2)** are tidal but small boats can be launched at high water and there is some inshore fishing for spurdog, codling, whiting, occasional ray and tope. Mackerel are often taken from the pier on high tides during the summer and small coalfish and codling appear at night during autumn.

At **Rush (3)** the pier and slipway are also tidal but it is possible to launch and retrieve there at half tide. Boat fishing is mainly concentrated around Lambay Island which lies some three miles (4.8 km) to the south east. Good fishing is normally found there, while at anchor, in about 15 fathoms (27.40mts) for spurdog to over 15 lbs (6.60kgs), bull huss up to 17 lbs (8.60kgs), conger, dogfish, ray and tope. Drifting over the reefs will produce pollack, coalfish, wrasse and occasional ling. At the quay in Rogerstown Estuary, south of the village, a charter boat is occasionally available during spring and autumn.





Free lined sandeel at the mouth of the main estuary channel produces bass to over the specimen size and occasional sea trout. This area also offers excellent opportunities for the fly-fishing enthusiast.

**The Rogerstown Estuary (8)** is a popular bait collection area and the inner reaches, particularly along the northern shore provides digging for ragworm and lugworm. Crab can be gathered under the weed near or on the channel banks while sandeel can be dug over the sandbars at the entrance on spring tide lows. Access can be gained via the Balleally Road from the R127 or Pipe Road from the R128.

**Donabate Strand (4)** runs south from Portrane for over 2 miles (3.22kms) to the northern entrance of Malahide Estuary. Night fishing in autumn turns up occasional codling, bass and flounder and the recognised hotspots are the rocks at the Martello tower and opposite the lifeguards hut.

**The town of Malahide (5)** is situated on the southern shore of Malahide Estuary and there are two slipways adjacent to the town marina which give access to the main channel. Bottom fishing in the channel from boat or shore is for flounder and eels. Drift lining sandeel on a flood tide can also be rewarding for mackerel (in season) occasional garfish, bass and sea trout.

Boat fishing between two and three miles off shore has produced cod, ray, whiting, tope, spurdog, pollack, mackerel, coalfish, dabs and plaice.

A shallow saltwater lake which runs inland for some 3 miles (4.83kms) and is 1 mile (1.60kms) across at its widest point was formed in 1844 as a result of the construction of the railway viaduct which carried the main Dublin to Belfast railway line. The viaduct was rebuilt in 1965 and today has twelve spans and is 577 feet (84.12 m) in length. The Broadmeadow and Ward Rivers run into the lake which in turn has an outlet below the railway line and out to sea through the estuary. At the western extremity of the lake there are several pools in the river channel above and below Balheary Bridge. Mullet and sea trout over the specimen size for both species have been caught there while fly fishing or free lining baits.

To the north of the estuary, on the banks of the channel at **Corballis (C)**, lugworm, clam and small white ragworm can be dug. Access is from the R126, via the road signposted Corballis Golf Club. At the southern end of the golf course, king ragworm can sometimes be found where the shingle meets the mud.

On the southern side of the estuary mouth is a sandbank where bass and flounder can be caught on a flooding tide. On neaps, this area can be fished throughout the tide but on springs, it is necessary to move back to the beach below Lambay Court bungalows, two hours before high water. Specimen bass to 11 lbs (4.99kgs) have been taken there and night tides are generally more productive than daylight ones. Further south the shore becomes rocky providing several fishing platforms, the most notable of which is the "Bathing Place" where whiting, codling, coalfish, dogfish and smoothhound, mackerel and bass have been recorded in summer. Fishing should not be attempted when swimmers are in the water and in any case it is probably more productive on night tides when swimmers are generally not in the vicinity.

Below the championship Golf Course at **Portmarnock (6)** is the shallow, three miles long, Velvet Strand. Bass, flounder, plaice, dab and smoothhound occur around the rocks to the north of the beach especially while night fishing in summer. Distance casting will also sometimes produce dogfish, whiting and codling in autumn.

Mullet, flounder and sea trout are common in **Baldoyle Creek (7)** particularly at "Hole In The Wall" on the southern shore where occasional bass to specimen size will also be encountered in autumn. Lugworm and ragworm can be dug on the estuary below the **R106 at Baldoyle Church (D)**.

The bustling fishing port of **Howth (8)** is as famous for its fresh fish as it is for the rocky "Hill of Howth" which towers above the town, providing spectacular sea views and containing many exclusive residences. It is just nine miles

from the centre of Dublin and is almost an island, linked to the mainland by a narrow spit of land. Despite its proximity to Ireland's capital city, Howth has maintained a very strong sense of identity which is reflected in the constant coming and going in the harbour of a multitude of vessels including dinghies, yachts, cruisers, motorboats and trawlers of myriad colours, shapes and sizes.

Boats can be launched from the slipways in the harbour to fish around Ireland's Eye, a small island north of the pier where coalfish, pollack, codling, dogfish, whiting, mackerel and dabs can be expected. In deeper water off Howth Head, ray, bullhuss and occasional supurdog are fairly common. The local angling club have a purpose built centre on the west pier. This is usually the first port of call for anglers visiting Howth.

Both the main piers are popular with shore angling enthusiasts and the head of the west pier has been designated an "angling only" zone. This is almost certainly a unique situation but one that should be encouraged in other areas. At weekends, during the mackerel fishing season, literally hundreds of anglers descend on the harbour. On these occasions, it is virtually impossible to find a space from which to fish after 10 o'clock in the morning. Places are also eagerly sought on the rock marks to the east of the harbour at Balscaddan. As well as mackerel, the piers can produce whiting, pollack, coalfish and codling, while the rock marks give up a wide variety of fish including mackerel, plaice, dabs, dogfish, pouting, whiting and codling during the summer months. Tides at Howth are generally – 1 minute on Dublin times.

On the rocks around the **Bailey Lighthouse (9)** there is exceptional fishing at times for wrasse, dogfish, whiting, dabs, pollack and codling. Great care should be exercised in this area in easterly winds, which can cause high sea swells, or in rainy conditions when the rocks become slippery and dangerous. If in any doubt, steer well clear. Access to these rocks is through private property and permission to fish must be obtained.

On the southern side of Howth at **Red Rock (10)** bottom fishing into the channel on either side of the boat club will yield bass, flatfish, dogfish and occasional smooth hound. **The southern shore (E)** is also a good bait collecting area and the rocky ground east of the boat club, up to the Martello tower, turns up peeler and soft crab below the weed. Lugworm, ragworm and clam can be dug in the mud and mussel banks to the west of the boat club and below the R105 at Sutton.

The four miles long Bull Island is an extensive area of sand dunes and salt marsh which is separated from the mainland by a muddy inter-tidal zone. This is an internationally important over-wintering site for large numbers of wild fowl and waders and is one of Ireland's premier bird watching stations.



The island is fronted by the shallow **Dollymount Strand (11)** which is best fished after an easterly gale, particularly at night. Bass to over 13 lbs (5.89kgs) have been recorded there and anglers can also expect codling, eels and flounder. Just east of the Dublin suburb of Raheny is the main access road to the beach. This crosses a causeway onto the island from the main coast road at St. Anne's Park.

The southern end of the island is terminated by the 1 mile (1.6 km) long **Bull Wall (12)**, which is further extended at the south eastern end by a half mile long (.80km) breakwater which is a popular bait digging area. This structure forms the northern perimeter of the main shipping channel into the River Liffey and the Port of Dublin. Small pollack, codling, whiting, bass and flounder can be taken there. The hotspots are at the viaduct where the tide runs under the bridge or at the end of the wall below the monument. Fishing is at its best in August and September. Mullet move well up the River Liffey and through the city centre in mid summer and have been caught as far upstream as Heuston Station. Bread flake, either float-fished, or free lined are the popular tactics. Each year a number of fish over the 5 lb (2.27 kg) minimum specimen qualifying weight are recorded. On the southern side of the Liffey Estuary, the River Dodder enters the main channel at Ringsend Basin and mullet run up as far as Landsdown Station. Mullet and school bass



Rostoonstown Strand, Co. Wexford

congregate, sometimes in large numbers, in the section of river between the basin and the Pigeon House

**Power Station (13)** where the hot water outlet is the main attraction. As the vast majority of fish caught in this stretch are immature, they should be handled carefully and returned alive to the sea.

Below **Poolbeg Lighthouse (14)** at the end of the three miles long southern Liffey breakwater, spinning produces bass and mackerel. One hour either side of low water is the best period. Conger are taken there occasionally on fish baits, placed close to the piles or amongst the boulders and big smoothounds can be taken in May and June.

To the south east of the River Liffey is a large expanse of flat beach at **Sandymount Strand (15)**. The tide strips a long way out at low water and this is a popular exercise area for Dublin “Southsiders”. It is also a popular location for beach anglers to practise their casting techniques, because there is literally miles of space and the distance a lead has flown can be easily measured in the sand.

Towards the low tide area there is a complex system of gullies, channels and pools. Some of the deeper depressions, notably “Cockle Lake” hold school bass, mullet and specimen sized flounder. Fishing is best on the last hour of

the ebb and first two hours of the flood. An important feature of this beach is the rapidity with which the incoming tide flows back. This can be further exacerbated when the wind is pushing the tide from the northern or easterly quarters. There is a very real danger of getting into difficulties, so caution must be exercised at all times.

**The Strand (F)** is also a good bait gathering area and lugworm can be dug on the foreshore below the car parks on the promenade, Cockle Lake and at the Seapoint end of the beach where the elusive “snake” white ragworm can sometimes be found on spring tides.

The ferry port of **Dun Laoghaire (16)** is some 7 miles (11 km) from Dublin City centre and is accessed via the N31. It was named after the ancient Irish high king Laoghaire who had a fort (Dun) there prior to the arrival of the Vikings. There is a long established boating and sailing tradition in the harbour and the Royal Irish Yacht Club, founded in 1813, had its headquarters in a prominent position on the sea front. This was the first purpose built yachting clubhouse in the world and is now a listed building. Past members include the first Duke of Wellington, Daniel O’Connell (the Liberator), the physician Sir Dominic Corrigan and novelist George A. Birmingham.

The 450 berth marina was opened in March, 2001 and offers full facilities to visitors. The harbour provides pier fishing for much of the year. From the west pier, dabs, conger, occasional bass (1.81kg) are available during summer. Whiting, codling, pouting and coalfish can also be taken from the end of the pier in autumn and winter. From the seaward side of the east pier, spinning over rocky ground accounts for mackerel and pollack between May and September.

Up to four slipways are available in the harbour from which to launch small boats to fish the Burford and Kish Banks on Dublin Bay, where codling, whiting, pollack, coalfish, pouting and ray are fairly common between May and September. In mid summer, large numbers of big spurdog are to be found in the deeper water outside the bay and included an Irish Record of 21.25 lbs (9.64kg) in 2001. East of the harbour off Scotsman’s Bay mackerel are usually plentiful in season while codling, pouting, plaice, whiting and dogfish are all possible.

Car parking is tightly controlled in the harbour precincts and a parking disc must be displayed at all times including Sundays. Tides at Dun Laoghaire 5 minutes on Dublin.

At the time of writing Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council have proposals for new beach byelaws which will restrict fishing at particular locations. For further details please contact them at: (01) 205 4700, [www.dlrcco.ie](http://www.dlrcco.ie)



South east of Dun Laoghaire, the small harbours at **Bullock and Colliemore (17)** are good starting points for exploring the inshore boat fishing off the “Forty Foot”, the Maidens and Muglins Rocks, Dalkey Island and Sound. In summer the species to be expected include wrasse (off Bullock), pollack, small codling (especially in the inner sound) and coalfish. In winter, small codling, dab and whiting are common in ten fathoms off Bullock. The tides in Dalkey Sound are swift and extra care should be taken in easterly winds. There is some shore fishing over rough ground at Colliemore for mackerel, in season, codling, coalfish and occasional conger, flounder and eels’ while from the rocks on the northern side of Sorrento Point, mackerel and pollack can be taken while spinning. Bottom fished baits will also attract whiting and small codling and dogfish on slack tides.

South of Sorrento Point lies the picturesque **Killiney Bay (18)** which has in the past been compared to the Bay of Naples. There is sporadic fishing on the beach for whiting and small codling, dogfish, whiting, coalfish and occasional bass. In past years, codling may appear after onshore winds during the summer months. The best of this fishing was on evening tides into darkness. Towards the southern end of the beach where the Loughlinstown River enters the sea, the ground becomes interspersed with weed covered rock. Here wrasse and rockling can be taken. Occasional specimen bass have also been recorded in autumn. Access to the beach is via an underpass from the R119.

Inshore boat fishing is fairly productive over sand in seven or eight fathoms (12.80m to 14.63m). Species to be expected are plaice, dab, gurnard and dogfish. From time to time, bass shoal over the Frazer Bank. Freelined sandeel can prove very effective at these times and could result in a fish over the 10 lb (4.54 kg) specimen size.

The popular holiday resort of **Bray (19)** known as “the Gateway to Wicklow” lies, mainly, between the River Dargle in the north and the 78 ft (780m) high, Bray Head to the south.

The Dargle enters the sea between two breakwaters from where anglers can cast into fairly deep water. Codling, dabs, flounder and plaice are regularly taken with bass appearing periodically during summer. Spinning will also take mackerel at high water in season. The inner harbour holds a few conger, flounder and eels and shoals of mullet are consistent visitors. There are two slipways from which small boats can be launched. Boat fishing in the deep water off Bray Head is for tope, spurdog, dogfish and codling. Ray and bull huss also turn up infrequently. During the summer the beach, which is backed by a fine esplanade, is a popular focal point for tourists, so little shore fishing can be practised during the day. Night fishing, however, will provide sport with dogfish, codling, whiting, rockling, coalfish and flatfish. When the



beach is busy during daylight, an alternative may be found from the rocks at the northern side of Bray Head where float fishing will yield wrasse, pollack and mackerel.

**Greystones (20)** is one of Ireland's longest established, and most popular angling centres for both boat and shore anglers. As a result of many years of organised angling in the region, much is known about the fishing locally.

Small boats can be launched from two slipways in the harbour for fishing for a wide range of species. Plaice can be taken occasionally using worm, mussel or cocktail baits in conjunction with attractor spoons. It is possible in good seasons to record bags of 20 fish in a day during July and August. Specimens to 5.5lbs (2.50kgs) have been recorded. Worm, mussel or "cocktail" baits are generally most successful particularly when used in conjunction with attractor spoons. The inshore banks are also capable of producing excellent ray fishing, particularly for blonde ray, up to near record size of 35 lbs (15.88kgs). Other specimen fish that have been taken are: tope, spurdog, thornback ray and smoothhound. The "bread and butter" fishing, however, is for whiting, coalfish, dabs and dogfish which provide good sport for much of the year and are the key species in the large number of small boat and dinghy fishing tournaments which are staged annually.

The North Beach, which runs from Bray Head to the harbour, generally fishes best for shore anglers on evening tides when coalfish, pouting, pollack, dogfish, dab and occasional plaice and bass can be expected. The beach is very rocky particularly at the northern end which is also weedy and towards the harbour, where years of erosion has left rubble and debris from the old railway embankment and harbour wall, (which is almost inaccessible at the time of writing) partially buried on the beach. Tackle losses are therefore almost unavoidable.

The outer wall of the harbour offers pier fishing for pollack, coalfish, flatfish, codling and school bass, while the rocks between the rear of the old La Touche Hotel and the school are worth investigating for plaice, codling, pollack and coalfish. The rock venues may prove particularly productive during calm or bright spells when fish appear to move off the beaches to seek cover or deeper water. There is good parking there with easy access to the fishing from the road.

The "steep-to" shingle beach south of Greystones runs for some 15 miles (24.14 km) all the way to Wicklow, broken only by the short stretch at Ballygannon where the county council has reinforced the beach with large bounders to protect it from erosion.

This is probably one of the most famous of all Irish match fishing stretches having been the stage for many major tournaments including several European and World Championships. A look at returns from the various



competitions over the years makes interesting reading because no less than 22 species have turned up. This probably goes some way to explaining why these beaches remain extremely popular with resident and visiting anglers alike.

Generally the Wicklow beaches fish best after an easterly blow when long casting is seldom necessary to get among fish. During calm spells, however, a bait cast into the 100 yd to 120 yd (91.44 m to 109.73 m) band has a much better chance of success. There are, of course, exceptions to this. During warm, calm weather, plaice seem to do the opposite to all other species and move close in, where they can be caught occasionally at times no more than 30yds (27.45 m) from the shore. In recent times tope are appearing providing great winter sport for the shore angler.

**The South Beach, Greystones (21)** can be the most frustrating of all the local beaches to fish. When it is on form, there are few places to match it for codling, dogfish, dabs and plaice, while opposite the outflow pipe, pollack and coalfish can be caught regularly. This beach, however, experiences unexplained lean periods, even in what appears to be very suitable conditions. As a result of this, the beach has received the nickname of "The Hungry Acre". Access to the South Beach is via the tunnel, under the railway line, from the car park on the R762.

Around the rocks are coalfish, codling, rockling and dogfish are the main species encountered. Every year, however, these rocks produce a number of bass to about 6 lbs (2.72 kg). Spinning is a popular method for catching fish. Fishing is best on the first two hours of the flood tide and an hour either side of high water. Access to Ballygannon involves a walk from the car park at the Golf Driving range. It can be dangerous to fish here at night, extra care should be taken.

By taking the turn at the signpost, from the R761 in the village, easy access will be found to the beach at **Kilcoole (22)**. Plaice and dabs are usually quite prolific here and specimen fish of both species have been recorded. Spinning for bass and mackerel is also popular. Winter tope are providing great sport for the shore angler.

An area about 500yds (457m) south of the railway platform is regarded as offering best opportunities. Codling, dogfish and coalfish also turn up there regularly. Every spring the area of beach south of Kilcoole is the nesting site for one of Ireland's scarcest breeding birds, the little tern. This area generally is a sensitive bird watching area and anglers should be aware of this.

The area is usually taped off to indicate the extent of the nesting area but chicks will invariably stray outside this zone and are very difficult to see among the stones and shingle.

Unfortunately they can be accidentally stood on and to prevent this happening, anglers are requested to avoid this area during the breeding period.

Behind the beach is a complex system of channels and gullies, which drain a number of streams running down from the Wicklow Mountains. This area is in turn drained by a channel which runs to sea under a railway bridge at a point on the shore known as the **Breaches (23)**.

The freshwater entering the sea there encourages flatfish to move close to the shore and flounder are quite common, both at the outflow and in the pool behind the railway line. Other probable species are codling, dab, coalfish, bass and sea trout. Mullet also move under the bridge and into the pool and channels behind the beach. Some of these fish appear to be well over the specimen weight of 5 lbs (2.27kgs) but to date there has been little attempt to catch them. This area also looks perfect habitat for freshwater eels. Time spent fishing for both of these species may be well rewarded. Access involves a long walk from either Kilcoole in the north or Newcastle to the south.

At **Newcastle (24)** the water close in is slightly deeper than on the surrounding beaches and the 5 fathom (just over 9 m) line is nearest to the shore there. Traditionally : November has some of the best whiting and dab fishing in this area particularly in the vicinity of a railway workers hut about 1 mile (1.61 km) north of the access gate. During summer, dogfish, plaice, coalfish and gurnard are all possible. The beach is signposted from the village and is about a mile from the R761.

The beach at **Five Mile Point (25)** contains less stone and shingle and much more sand than the other beaches. In spring, smoothhound to over the

specimen size of 7 lbs (3.17kgs) have been caught there during the hours of darkness, with ragworm and peeler crab being the best baits. Homelyn ray and plaice are to be found here in May and mackerel during the summer, however for much of the year this area appears to be something of a nursery for immature fish of 6 inches (15.24 cm) or so, from several species including cod, dab, flounder and whiting. Access is via a mile (1.61 km) long road from the R761.

Many anglers regard **Killoughter (26)** as the best of all the Wicklow beach venues. This opinion has probably come about because the beach turns up quality fish with a fair degree of regularity. Included in catches have been specimen homelyn ray, thornback ray, smoothhound, bullhuss and occasional spurdog. Early in the season dogfish and the occasional ray can be taken. Fishing for the “more regular” species such as whiting, dogfish, flatfish and tub gurnard has also been regarded as above average. Tope are also appearing here in recent years providing great sport for the shore angler. Two hours either side of high water is the optimum period with night tides most productive. At the time of writing, the access lane from the R761 is littered with deep potholes which are inclined to fill with water after heavy rain. Great care should be exercised while driving down this lane as damage to vehicles could easily occur.

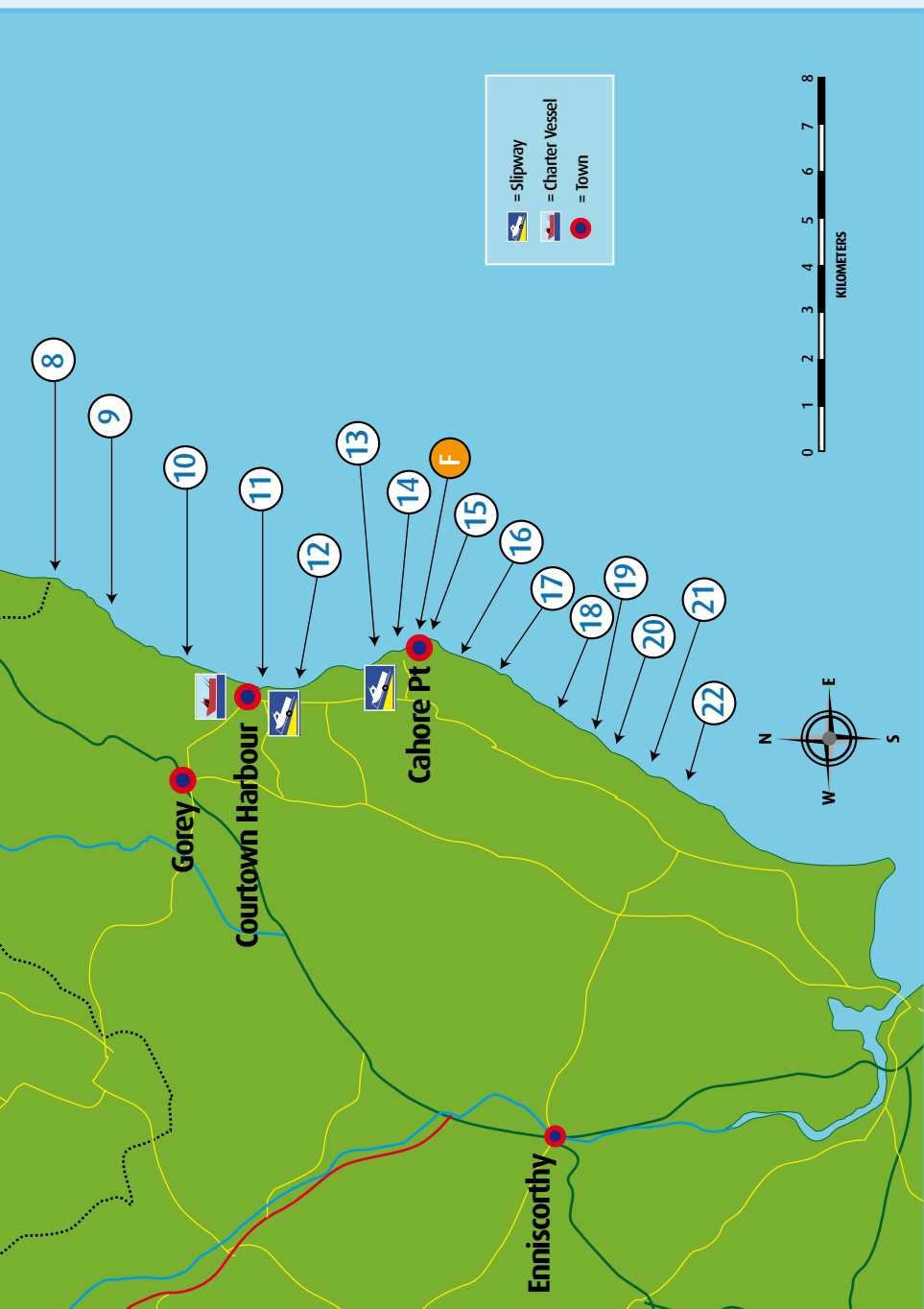
**The North Beach, Wicklow (27)** is accessed from Wicklow town via the “Burrow Road”. This beach can fish exceptionally well during daylight particularly on the overcast days of autumn and winter. Early in the season dogfish and the occasional ray can be taken. Night fishing can also prove worthwhile with the area next to the boulders below the car park or on the Burrow around the Monkey Pole (a well known fishing mark, the actual pole has been removed in recent times) being two of the favoured vantage points. Codling, coalfish, dabs, dogfish and whiting are some of the species on offer.

Behind the Burrow and North Beach is the almost land-locked **Broadlough (28)** which drains the Vartry River. Small bass, mullet and eels are common in the brackish water but the best fishing is for the big flounder which move up and down the lough with the tide. Fish to over 2.5 lbs (1.13 kg) have been taken but like several other locations in Wicklow, time spent could pay major dividends for that elusive specimen fish. Anglers must, however, be prepared to move location several times during the day. At low tide, flounder and mullet will be found at the weir in the main channel and as the tide fills, they move up the lough until they reach the northern shore at high water. As the tide recedes, so the fish move back towards the sea.

**Wicklow Harbour (29)** affords excellent launching facilities for small boat anglers and the ground off Wicklow Head provides good sport, mainly in summer, for occasional, spurdog, tope, ray, plaice and codling. Shore fishing from the pier and breakwater offers opportunities for mackerel (in season), pollack, coalfish, dogfish, rockling, flounder, dab and wrasse. There is also limited space for bottom fishing from the rocks below the castle ruins on Wicklow Head. A short cast will put baits onto sand for plaice, dabs and dogfish in daylight. Night fishing will also produce occasional codling and coalfish but the rocks here can be very dangerous and they should only be visited in calm dry weather. Tides at Wicklow are 21 minutes on Dublin.

# Map 3 Wicklow to Blackwater





# Wicklow to Blackwater

## Map 3.

On the north east side of **Wicklow Head (1)**, a walk is required from the car park on the R750 to reach the available rock fishing below the golf course on Brides Head. Spinning there will produce mackerel (in summer) and pollack. Float fishing should turn up coalfish and wrasse. On the southern side at the "Long Rock" spinning will again account for mackerel and pollack. Fish baits will produce occasional conger while plugs cast across the current will take bass.

Best period for the latter species is on a dawn or dusk tide. Worm and crab baits cast over sandy patches turn up dabs and plaice in July and August.

Some three miles (4.83km) south of Wicklow Head is the beautiful **Silver Strand (2)** where there is good surf fishing early in the year for bass, flounder, dogfish and plaice. Night fishing turns up spurdog and infrequent ray in the summer months.

Rock and sand are interspersed in a cove between Silver Strand and Brittas Bay, known as **Jack's Hole (3)**. Beach and rock fishing produces bass, flounder, plaice and pollack in autumn while school bass have been noted there, in numbers, during the winter months. Access from the main road (R750) is difficult and care should be taken.

**Brittas Bay (4)** is a popular bathing place and for this reason, fishing is not usually carried out in daylight during the peak holiday months of July and August. Easterly gales, however, are not uncommon at this time of year and during these periods, the majority of holidaymakers will be discouraged from venturing onto the beach due to the high winds and rough seas which are invariably also accompanied by driving rain. Bass over the specimen weight of 10lbs (4.5kg) have been taken in these conditions and the angler prepared to persevere should be rewarded. At other times, night fishing will produce bass, codling, whiting and dogfish. Sandeel and crab are regarded as the top baits on this beach. There are excellent facilities at Brittas and access to the beach is from the car parks on the R750, via one of the paths through the sand dunes.

On its way south the R750 passes over the Redcross River by way of the quaintly named Pennycomequick Bridge. The river then enters the sea immediately to the east at **Ennereilly Strand (5)** which has become a very popular venue for fishing night matches due to the apparently ever-present dogfish, which also appear to be well spread along the entire stretch.



Beach fishing near the rocks to the south yields bass, flounder, whiting, codling, dogfish and plaice. One hour either side of high water is the best period.

The town of **Arklow (6)** sits astride the Avoca River which enters the sea through a long, narrow harbour to the east of the N11. The first evidence of habitation in the area dates back to 6400BC, but it was probably the 2nd century before a settlement was established. The Vikings, who arrived some hundred years later, are responsible for giving the town its name.

They called the locality “Arn-kell” after a local Norse chieftain and “lo” which meant a low-lying meadow near water. The Irish name “A T’inbhear Mor” means “the large inlet”.

A marina, with first class berthing facilities is situated between the road bridge and the north pier. For further details contact + 353 40239901.

A fleet of commercial fishing vessels are housed in the main harbour on the southern shore. Dinghy or small boat fishing in the area is concentrated over the numerous offshore sand banks for dogfish, ray, codling, whiting and tope. The best sport is to be found in the summer months from early June to the end of August. Fishing should not be attempted in strong easterly winds as this causes the sea to break over the bar at the harbour mouth and boat owners should also note that there is a 3kn speed limit within the harbour confines.

Shore anglers are spoiled for choice, as there are several good fishing locations in the immediate vicinity of Arklow particularly at Ferrybank on the northern side and also below the estuary mouth on South Beach where bass are fairly common at times. Although the average size is only around 3lbs (1.36kg), much larger fish, though infrequent, are taken annually. Codling, whiting, dabs are all common at night particularly in autumn, while sole to over the specimen size of 2lbs (.91kg) have also been taken. On the Roadstone Pier, south of the town, bottom fishing will produce codling, whiting, dabs, flounder, plaice, pouting and dogfish with night tides in autumn most productive. An Irish Record, three-bearded rockling of 3lbs 1oz (1.39kg) was also recorded there in 1990. The Roadstone Pier is privately owned and permission must be obtained at the site office before fishing there. Due to the complex nature of the offshore banks and the geographical position of Arklow, the area experiences four tides each day. The main tide, however, is -2.5 hours on Dublin.

Four miles south of Arklow is a small beach surrounded by rocks at **Clogga (7)** where there is float fishing and spinning for bass and mackerel from the rocks in summer. Bottom fishing from the beach over sand is for bass, dogfish and flounder while codling and whiting are probable in winter.



Mick Doyle with a flounder  
from Cullenstown, Co. Wexford

**Kilmichael (8)** is just inside the Wexford County boundary and is best accessed by turning southeast at the Scarnagh crossroads on the N11 and following the signposts. From the rocks below the old coastguard station, now well appointed holiday homes, good sport is available for bass. Fish are generally caught there while float fishing or spinning either with a metal lure or a plug on a flood tide. Sea trout and mackerel will also be taken occasionally. The best period is when high tide coincides with dawn. Casting worm or crab baits out over sand, on the northern side of the point, produces flounder, dogfish and bass. Codling also put in an appearance in winter. The rocks on the southern side of the point are backed by clay cliffs, and from there, dogfish and flounder can be caught during daylight. Tope and bass are more liable to show on night tides particularly in spring and summer. Night fishing on the beach immediately below the point can be excellent in winter for whiting, codling and flounder. Spring and early summer sees good fishing for bass and smooth hound but crab baits are essential at this time.

Two miles south of Kilmichael, the Kilgorman River crosses the beach and enters the sea at **Clones (9)**. This beach is a favourite of many anglers because it generates consistently good fishing in spring and autumn. After an easterly blow the beach provides excellent fishing for codling, bass and

flounder. During calmer periods, at night, tope, smooth hound, dogfish, bull huss and ray can be expected.

Clones is best approached from the N11, two miles south of Inch village, by taking the turn at Rogan's Crossroads, signposted Castletown, then via the road north of the post office.

At **Ballymoney (10)** there is some beach fishing in several little coves for flounder, coalfish and bass in autumn. Fishing in Tara Cove in particular can be very rewarding at night.

**Courtown (11)** is a very popular holiday destination, particularly with Dubliners and there are a large number of holiday parks, containing literally thousands of mobile homes, in the surrounding area,. In fine weather, the local beaches are a hive of activity and for this reason, fishing is virtually impossible. Night tides, however, are worth trying for dogfish, ray, smooth hound and tope. When surf is running the main target species is bass and big baits cast from the beach around the harbour mouth seem to attract the better fish. Indeed the biggest fish ever taken there, which weighed in at 13lbs 12ozs (6.24kg) fell for a large mackerel fillet.

Courtown Harbour is a well-known mullet fishing venue. Bread is the most widely used bait, but ground baiting the day before fishing takes place, usually gets fish feeding well. The local mallard population, however, can turn what should be a relaxing day into one of total frustration as they scoff literally every crumb that hits the water. This leaves the angler with no alternative but to pack up. Mallard are not as plentiful in early spring, prior to the nesting period or in autumn, when the year's brood have fledged and moved on. These periods, therefore, would appear to offer best opportunities.

Boat fishing locally is for ray, flatfish, tope, spurdog, bull huss, smooth hound, bass, codling and dogfish. Dinghies and small boats can be launched from the slipway on the eastern side of the harbour. At low water on spring tides, the harbour can almost dry out, so launches and retrievals should be calculated to take this into account. Easterly winds can also cause a heavy groundswell at the harbour mouth. Passage to sea should not be attempted in these conditions.

As at Arklow, the tides at Courtown are affected by the alignment of the offshore banks. Tides are generally calculated as -3hrs 30min on Dublin.

Courtown can be approached by taking the R742 from Gorey.

Three miles (4.83km) south of Courtown, there is good general shore fishing at **Pollshone (12)**. The best fishing is usually on evening and early morning tides from the rocks at the southern end of the beach with spring and autumn being the best seasons. Species available include bass, flounder, eels, dabs,

dogfish and smooth hound. Fresh soft or peeler crab is by far the most successful bait in this area.

Up to ten bass, to 8lb or 9lb (3.63kg to 4.08kg) on a single tide were once possible off Roney Point and around the **Roney Rock (13)**. Those days have, sadly gone, but in the right conditions, bass can still be caught there in the run of tide between the headland and the rock. Spinning is the best tactic while using plugs or "Jensen" type lures.

South of Roney Point a rough shingle beach terminates at **Glascarrig Point (14)**. Fishing close to the rock in the sandy gullies on the northern side produces flounder to 2lb (.91kg) on crab baits. Dogfish and occasional bass are also occasionally taken. Bass fishing is usually best on a flooding tide at dawn, to the east of the point, where crab baits are also successful. Silver coloured plugs worked slowly around the rocks can also be very effective.

The small harbour and slipway at **Cahore (15)** is a popular venue for small boats because it affords access to some of the best spring and summer fishing on the entire east coast. The maze of inshore sandbanks produces consistent fishing for tope to over 50lbs (22.68kg), bull huss and thornback ray to 15lbs (6.80kg), smooth hound and bass to 10lbs (4.54kg), painted ray, dogfish, whiting, plaice and dabs. The parking of boat trailers can be something of a problem at weekends or periods of fine weather during the season, so intending visitors are advised to travel early to ensure a space near the harbour. The beach to the north of the harbour, particularly between the groynes and the pier, produces codling, whiting and dabs in winter, while smooth hound, dogfish and bass can be expected in summer. Behind the castle on Cahore Point lies several rocky outcrops. A short cast will put baits over sand where plaice, dab and flounder can be expected. The "hotspot" is in the south-eastern corner where the tide washes round the point causing a back eddy across the beach. Bass can be taken there also while spinning or bottom fishing but dogfish can be a nuisance while employing the latter method. Lugworm is usually the best bait while shore fishing at Cahore in winter with ragworm and crab the top baits in summer. Night tides are generally best throughout the year. Cahore can be approached via the R742 at the signposted turn in Ballygarret village.

To the south of Clonevin Cross Roads on the R742, a small road leads to the beach at an area known as **Old Bawn (16)**. Bass fishing can be good here from May to July. This period also provides sport for dogfish, smooth hound, flounder, spurdog and occasional tope. Night tides are best.

The stretch of beach at **Ballinoulart (17)** some 2 miles (3.22km) further south has produced a number of specimen bass over 10lbs (4.54kg). Usually the best fishing is to be encountered when surf is running during, or



Pete Turner with  
a Garfish, Wexford

immediately after, an easterly blow. The best periods are in May and early June or September and early October with crab, ragworm and sandeel being the most commonly used baits.

Situated to the east of the holiday village of Kilmuckridge lies **Morriscastle Strand (18)** which is one of the most popular and productive early season beaches in Ireland. In good years, fishing can begin there in early April with the first inshore migration of the predatory species. A wide range of specimen fish have been recorded there including monkfish, thornback ray, painted ray, sting ray, tope, smooth hound, spurdog, bass, bull huss and dogfish. The consistently good quality of the fishing to be found at Morriscastle has seen the area develop as a popular match fishing venue with many important events being staged there. It is also the beach, which sets the standard, against which all other Wexford beaches are judged. If a tactic or bait works on Morriscastle, then it can be safely assumed that it will work on all the other local beaches. The best fishing is to be found during the hours of darkness with crab, sandeel, mackerel and ragworm being the most successful baits.

Just south of Morriscastle, a maze of narrow roads leads off the R742 to an area of beach which is crossed by a stream at **Tinnabearna (19)**. It was on this beach, in the late seventies, that the first Irish Record smooth hound was recorded. Up until then this species had not been "officially" recognised in

Irish waters. Since that time this beach, like Morristcastle, has produced a wide range of species, including tope, ray, spurdog and bass, and has become popular in spring. During May and June the area to the north of the stream is most productive. As the season wears on, the section of beach south of the stream, where the ground becomes rocky, appears to improve. Night fishing is essential for best results there, although the overcast days of autumn can be productive for bass and flatfish. At times distance casters too will have an advantage, as many of the banks which run parallel to the shore, are more than 100 yards (91.5mts) distant.

About 2 miles (3.22km) further south on the R742, another small stream crosses the beach at **Ballynamona (20)**. Just to the north of the stream, anglers can expect bass, flounder, dab, ray, smooth hound, spurdog and dogfish. Like all the other venues in this area, night tides in springtime are most productive.

South of Ballynamona, the beach tends to become a little steeper and at **Ballyvaldon (21)** the water close to the shore is deeper than in the surrounding area. It is not, therefore, necessary to fish night tides exclusively and the ability to cast a bait a long way is not as important. The species of fish available are similar to those found elsewhere but anglers probably catch more bull huss there, than anywhere else on the east coast. Spring and autumn are the most popular periods.

The village of **Blackwater (22)** lies at the junction of the R742 and R744 and is a good centre for exploring the local beaches, on either side of the River Blackwater, which enters the sea some two miles to the south-east. There is good spring and autumn fishing on the northern side at Ballyconniger for bass, flounder, eel, codling, dogfish, tope, ray, smooth hound and spurdog. Access to this area is not easy and invariably means a long walk. As a result, this section of beach sees very little angling pressure. Where the river crosses the beach, however, is very easy to reach and is much more popular with anglers. Good autumn fishing for bass and codling is possible on evening tides. Flounder, rockling, dogfish and occasional ray are also available there. The beach immediately to the south of the river is very broken and tackle losses are almost certain but a mile (1.6km) further south at Ballynaclash, the conditions are much easier to cope with and when a surf is running the bass fishing there can be outstanding.





David Gray with a tope  
from Killiney Bay, Dublin





## Map 3 Wicklow to Blackwater



= Slipway



= Charter Vessel



= Town

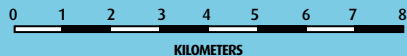
1

A

B

10

C



# Curracloe to Cullenstown

## Map 4.

The popular holiday village of **Curracloe (1)** is some 5 miles (8km) due south of Blackwater. It was in this area that Steven Spielberg filmed the stunning beach landing sequences for "Saving Private Ryan" starring Tom Hanks.

During the summer, many holidaymakers bring their fishing tackle with them to fish on the beaches to the north at Ballinesker and south towards Raven Point. Unfortunately, the summer fishing does not compare with the spring and autumn shoulder periods. In spring, bass, smooth hound and flounder can be taken on a flood tide, while in autumn and winter, codling, whiting, dabs and dogfish are common. There is a 3 mile (4.8km) walk from the car park south of Curracloe to Raven Point. The best access is by following the main track through the forest, then across the dunes to the beach at the southern end. This is a very important area for wildlife and all visitors are requested to stick to the designated walkways. The walk should be well rewarded as this area is seldom fished but bass, dogfish, ray and tope are all possible for much of the year.

The estuary of the River Slaney enters the sea in the sheltered Wexford Harbour. This area is a very popular match fishing location, especially along the northern shore where access is easiest. Flounder can be caught almost everywhere in the harbour, but bass are much more elusive. Due to the shallow nature of the shoreline, chest waders are essential because anglers must be prepared to wade up to 100 yards (91.44mts) in places, at low tide. This allows casts to be made into the channels which fish use like roadways to navigate around the estuary. As the tide floods, fish appear to move out of the channels and into casting range. Wading should only be attempted in those areas where the mud is firm enough to allow it. Generally, most of the recognised, signposted hotspots are safe. It should be noted, however, that the rules of some tournaments prohibit wading as a safety measure.

**Ardcavan (2)** is easily approached from the R741 to the west. Flounder, eels, bass, plaice and occasional sea trout can be taken there on a rising tide. Peeler and soft crab are virtually essential baits, as all others are gratefully accepted by the large, local crab population! The sea wall to the east of the access road borders one of the most important wetland nature sites in Ireland. In winter, the area is home to internationally significant numbers of Greenland white-fronted geese and to avoid disturbing these birds, fishing from the wall into the estuary should be curtailed. The area of beach between Ardcavan and the municipal caravan park to the **south-west (A)** is



a noted crab gathering area while some ragworm can be dug, with difficulty, in the shallow mud at various places.

Spinning from the northern breakwater of the **River Slaney (3)** produces bass on a flood tide but bottom fishing with crab or ragworm is regarded locally as the more productive method. Flounder, dogfish and eel will also fall to these baits. In summer "school bass" tend to congregate adjacent to the breakwater and road bridge where they can be taken in large numbers on virtually any bait presented to them. As these fish are juveniles which have not reached spawning age, they probably represent the future of bass fishing in the entire area. Anglers are requested to handle these fish with care and return them safely to the water.

A narrow slipway is located on the breakwater which allows small boats to be launched and retrieved. Unfortunately this slip dries out, becoming unusable two hours either side of low water.

The species encountered by boat anglers are similar to those found on the shore but the beauty of using a boat in Wexford Harbour is that numerous marks which are out of range and inaccessible to shore anglers can be investigated. For instance the vast area of sand banks and deep gullies near the estuary mouth provides excellent fishing, in fine weather, for bass, tope,

dogfish and ray. The other advantage of boat fishing is that when fish are moving up or down the estuary on a flood or ebb tide, the boat can easily move to intercept them and therefore ensure optimum fishing time.

One of the most popular venues on the estuary is **Kaats Strand (4)** which is signposted a mile (1.6km) north of the road bridge and to the west of the R741. Fishing is similar to other marks with flounder and eels tending to predominate, however, a number of specimen bass to over 10lbs (4.5kg) have been recorded there with September and October being the best months. The majority of bass are taken on a flooding tide with crab being far and away the most successful bait.

Another popular estuary fishing spot is at the junction of the R730 and N11 at **Ferrycarrig Bridge (5)**.

To the east of the bridge the road runs along the river bank and during the summer holidays, numbers of local youngsters go fishing there. Small school bass are very common and take baits freely. As previously mentioned, these immature fish should be handled with care and returned safely. Occasionally a larger fish will fall to bottom fished crab, lugworm or ragworm.

The historic town of **Wexford (6)** which dates back to early Celtic times lies along the southern shore of the Harbour. The Irish name for the town is Loch Garman (Garman's Lake) after a legend, where a Celt, called Garman Garbh, was drowned in a great flood caused by an enchantress. In the early tenth century the Vikings called the settlement "Weissfiord" (inlet of the mudflats).

There is a fine all tide slipway to the west of the town at Wexford Boat Club where a warm welcome awaits all visitors. A nominal charge is made for the use of the club facilities which include toilets, showers, lounge bar and safe parking for car and trailers. For further details contact Tel: + 353 91 22039 / 91 47504.

There is good shore fishing for bass, flounder and eel opposite the boat club at the old bridge wall or from the car park wall. The largest bass ever taken in this area weighed 13lb (5.9kg) and took peeler crab.

In the late nineties the town quays underwent dramatic improvement work and this created several new vantage points for shore anglers. Bass, flounder, plaice, eel, codling, whiting and coalfish are all available with the hours around high water the most productive. Ragworm and crab are the two most widely used baits in Wexford. There are several well stocked tackle shops in the town where live and frozen baits can be purchased. It is advisable to order live bait the day before fishing to ensure a supply. Tides at Wexford Quay are -4hrs 15mins on Dublin.

The south eastern side of the harbour is protected from the open sea by a narrow spit of land which runs north for 3 miles (4.83km) and terminates at **Rosslare Point (7)**. Bass can be taken on plugs and lures fished in the deep channel on the western or "inner" side of the point. A flooding tide particularly on an autumn evening is the best period. The strong tides in the area make bottom fishing very difficult but the reward for perseverance during the slack water period of springs or on the gentler neap tides can be worthwhile for bass, flounder, dogfish and occasional ray.

On the seaward side of Rosslare Point, the tides are not as strong and bottom fishing is much easier. Sandeel and mackerel baits cast out from the eastern facing groyne will attract tope to over the specimen size of 40lbs (18.14kg), spurdog and dogfish. Crab and worm baits will account for smooth hound to over the specimen size of 7lbs (3.17kg), bass, dogfish and flounder. Rosslare Point can be reached by taking the R740 off the N25 through to Rosslare village, then turn left and follow the Burrow Road until it becomes a track which runs directly to the point. Care should be exercised in this area as the track can become difficult to traverse on spring tides or in wet conditions.

Lugworm and ragworm can be dug at low tide on the mudflats below the **Burrow Road (B)**.

Night tides in autumn will yield bass on Rosslare Strand, particularly when surf is running. Fish to over 12lbs (5.44kg) have been recorded with crab and lugworm the most successful baits. The section of beach from the carpark in the village to the track across the Golf Course is the most widely used by anglers.

North of the village of Kilrane, a narrow road runs from the N25 to a small cove at Ballygerry, just to the east of **Rosslare Harbour (8)**. Two slipways are located there with the outer one the most suitable for launching boats. Local inshore fishermen keep their boats in the cove, and as space is limited, care should be taken to avoid impeding their activities by ensuring that cars and trailers are parked properly. Boat fishing on Rosslare Bay is for ray, plaice, dabs, codling and gurnard. An Irish Record for grey gurnard of just over 3lbs has been held there since 1967. During the summer some of the best boat fishing is to be found in the buoyed channel leading into the ferry terminal. Common sense and vigilance should be exercised there because modern day ferries travel at considerable speed and what was a small speck on the horizon a moment ago can be almost on top of you the next. The majority of ferries moving in and out of Rosslare Harbour would also have great difficulty avoiding a small boat anchored in their path particularly in the narrow confines of the channel.



A ling from Kilmore Quay, Wexford

To the south east of Rosslare Harbour lies a long, shallow underwater reef known as the Splaugh Rock. In the late sixties, this area was famous for the large numbers of bass that shoaled there in spring and autumn. An armada of small Wexford cots hunted the free feeding bass and lures like the German Sprat took up to 40 fish on a tide to each boat. Alas, like bass fishing everywhere, this wonderful sport declined due to over exploitation, so that by the mid eighties, it had all but gone. Since then, there has been something of a recovery and today trolling with redgills, shads or similar lures can catch bass. To the south of the harbour wall, there is shore fishing over mixed ground for bass, dogfish and flounder. A number of specimen bass of over 10lbs (4.53kg) have been recorded on this stretch, particularly where the flooding tide flows across the rock outcrops at Greenore Point. Tides at Rosslare are -5hrs 58mins on Dublin.

**St. Helens (9)** is located 3 miles (4.82km) south east of the N25 and Kilrane. The beach, which lies to the north of a small harbour, is a popular swimming place in summer. Most of the fishing carried out there is at night in spring and autumn when bass and flatfish are the quarry. Boats can be launched, with some difficulty, at high tide from a disused slipway on the northern side of the harbour. Launches or retrievals should not be attempted without the



use of a four-wheel drive vehicle. There is ample parking for vehicles and trailers beside the slipway.

**Ballytrent (10)** is some 4 miles (6.5km) south east of Kilrane. This is possibly the best autumn bass fishing venue in the south east, particularly after an easterly blow has put up a good surf. Dogfish, flounder, dab and occasional plaice also turn up there. Crab, ragworm and sandeel are the best baits with night tides or overcast days offering most opportunities.

The slipway in the south western corner of **Carne Pier (11)** is only viable at high tide. Small boats can, however, be launched across the beach, below the car park. The sand is usually quite firm but to avoid difficulties, boats should only be launched by four-wheel drive vehicles. Carne is the nearest launch site for fishing the reefs 6.5 miles (10.45km) away at the Tuskar rock. Over twenty five species have been recorded in the area including tope to over 50lbs (22.68kg), an Irish Record smooth hound of 16.58lbs (7.52kg) and an ex Irish Record cuckoo wrasse of just over 2.00lbs (.91kg). Anglers fishing from the pier have recorded bass to over 11lbs (5.00kg) with crab and sandeel proving to be the most successful baits. Spinning at high water on evening tides also accounts for bass and mackerel.

**To the west of the pier (C)** lugworm and sandeel can be dug in the sand at low tide, while crab can be collected around the rocks on the seaward side of the pier.

**Carnsore Point (12)** is located in the extreme southeastern corner of Ireland and can be reached by passing the turn off for Carne at the Lobster Pot Restaurant and following the road for a further 2 miles (3.22km) until it peters out into a track. This track runs east over very rough terrain and is not recommended for the standard family saloon! The point is made up of very rocky ground, running onto shingle, where big wrasse, rockling, dogfish and pollack can be caught. Tides are extremely strong there and fishing is virtually impossible on anything other than neap tides when the prime fishing periods are directly after low water and one hour either side of high water.

As the coast swings away from the east, towards the west, the inshore waters come under the increasing influence of the North Atlantic Drift (an offshoot of the Gulf Stream). As a result, the sea is marginally warmer and therefore produces a greater diversity of marine species.

**The Coombe (13)** is a south facing, steep-to, shingle and sand beach, which runs for over 8 miles (12.88km) from Carnsore Point, west, almost to the port of Kilmore Quay. The eastern end is affected by the strong currents at Carnsore and as a result is best fished on neap tides. The currents ease, however, the further west one travels. Night fishing, on a flood tide in spring or autumn is regarded locally as offering best opportunities. Species to be

expected are bass, dogfish, flatfish, codling and seatrout. Tope to over 30lbs (13.60kg) turn up regularly, but wire traces are almost essential to ensure that any hooked fish are actually beached. From time to time an opening is cut through the beach to ease flooding on Lady's Island Lake. On these occasions, large numbers of fish are attracted to the outflow and sport can be hectic from the beach there. The trick therefore, is to know exactly when the flood easing exercise is to take place!

One of the easiest access points to the beach is on the western shore of Lady's Island Lake at Rostoonstown, where a road runs for 3 miles (4.8km) south from the R736. From the beach there spinning in summer, particularly on flood tides, can produce large numbers of mackerel. Occasionally seatrout and bass will also be taken.

Some 2miles (3.22km) farther west is another outflow, this time a permanent fixture, from Tacumshin Lake. This is known by local anglers as the "Tunnel". It is a large concrete culvert that runs from the lake, under the dunes, through the beach and out to sea. Several specimen bass over 10lbs (4.5kg) have been recorded there and flounder, dab, dogfish and occasional ray have also turned up recently.

he beach at Ballyhealy is 2miles (3.22km) southeast of the R739 and in autumn, it produces codling and bass. Generally this section of the beach fishes best after an onshore blow, which creates surf conditions.

Tides at Carnsore Point are + 29mins. on times at Cobh.

When breaching the top of the hill leading down to the picturesque village of **Kilmore Quay (14)** with its quaint, thatched and whitewashed cottages, pubs and restaurants, one could be excused for a first impression that the air of peace and tranquillity which greets you, applies to the entire surrounding area. On arrival at the bottom of the hill, however, it quickly becomes clear that this is no sleepy hamlet, but a busy commercial fishing port. The harbour also contains a 55 berth marina from which up to 8 fully licenced, purpose built, charter vessels operate annually. The huge all-tide slipway, possibly the widest in Ireland, has contributed greatly to the rapid expansion of small boat angling locally. Indeed the boat fishing from Kilmore has built up a truly deserved international reputation. Over 40 species have been recorded including blue shark and tope to over 50lbs (22.68kg), thornback ray to over 20lbs (9.00kg), bass to over 12lbs (5.45kg) and Irish Records for pouting of 4.80lbs (2.18kg) and Red Mullet of 1.26lbs (0.57kg).

**Courtown South Beach, Wexford**  
(photo courtesy of Joanne Grant Photography)



All the boat fishing hotspots, such as the marks around the Saltee Islands 2.5miles (4km) offshore to the Barrels, Brandies, Bores and Conningbeg Rock afford a very wide variety of sea bed types from mud, sand and gravel to boulder and reef.

This diversity offers great opportunities for the experienced angler and novice alike. Shore fishing locally also provides exciting prospects, and fishing from the piers will produce wrasse, flounder, mullet and bass. To the east of the harbour is a long, low lying spit of rock known as St. Patrick's Bridge. Fishing with crab baits close to top the rock will yield bass and wrasse. Plugs worked across the reef on a flood tide will also produce bass with additional possibilities for pollack and seatrout. Plugs and lures can also be used successfully, for bass, to the west of the harbour at Forlorn Point. Lugworm and clam can be dug at low tide on the eastern side of the **harbour (D)**

Details on berthing charges and facilities at Kilmore Quay can be obtained from the harbourmaster's office on +353 53 912 9955. Kilmore Quay can be reached by taking the N25/R739 Roads from Wexford town which is 14 miles (22.50km) to the north.

Ballyteigue Strand (15) lies west of Kilmore Quay. The 5.5mile (9km) long sandy beach produces good bass fishing when surf is running. Fish to over 10lbs (4.54kg) have been recorded in autumn when codling, whiting, dab flounder, and occasional ray are also possible. The beach can be difficult to fish on spring tides, particularly after a period of onshore winds, which cause rafts of floating weed to collect along the shore. Tackle losses are unavoidable in these conditions. Behind the beach, a narrow strip of sand dune known as the Ballyteigue Burrow separates the sea from a long estuary, which drains the slob lands between Bridgetown to the northeast and Duncormick in the northwest. Just before the main channel enters the sea, a deep hole has formed where local fishermen moor their boats. This is where several Irish record flounders have been caught including a fish of almost 5lbs (2.27kg)! Crab and lugworm are the best baits there. The western side of the entrance can be approached from Cullenstown, where fly fishing in the tideway with streamer flies has proven to be very effective in taking bass and seatrout. Bottom fished crab or sandeel baits on slack water will also yield bass and flounder. Further west towards Blackhall, the ground becomes very rough and difficult to fish; although a number of very big bass have been recorded over the years. Plug fishing on early morning tides could pay off there particularly in autumn. Peeler crab can be collected in May and June along the weedy margins of the **estuary (E)** and lugworm can be dug on the northern shore at low tide.



## Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 horizontal blue lines spaced evenly across the page, typical of standard notebook paper. The lines are thin and light blue, set against a plain white background. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.



[illegible]