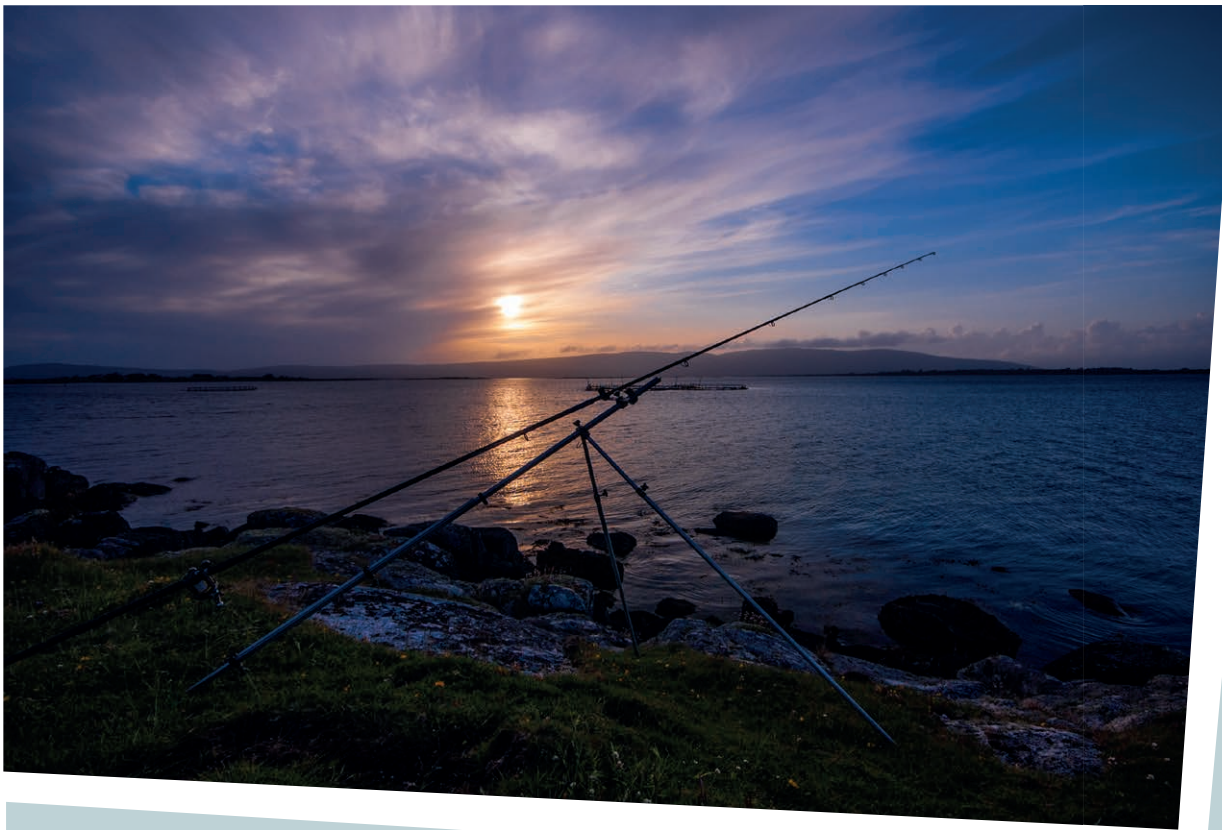




Angling
Ireland



SHORE ANGLING
IN IRELAND



INTRODUCTION

With over 3,000 kilometres of the most varied coastline possible, Ireland offers the shore angler a veritable feast of angling for different species of fish. From golden sandy beaches to towering cliffs, rocky outcrops and sheltered bays, Ireland has a wealth of scenery and angling opportunities just waiting to be explored. Sitting in the north Atlantic and warmed by the waters of the Gulf Stream, the inshore waters of this emerald gem can offer spectacular fishing. But don't just take our word for it – ask one of the thousands of anglers who visit every year to catch wild Irish bass in the Atlantic surf, or target hard-fighting pollack off remote rock ledges.

At 51-55 degrees north, Ireland is at the same latitude as Newfoundland, Kamchatka and southern Siberia, but unlike these regions, benefits from a temperate oceanic climate as the Gulf Stream brings warm water from tropical regions. Consequently, winters are mild, averaging 7-10°C, while summers rarely get too warm, with average daytime temperatures in July-August of 17-20°C. Sea temperatures are also much warmer than comparable areas worldwide, varying from 8-10°C in winter and 14-17°C in summer. At this latitude, summer days are long, with most of the country receiving over 18 hours of daylight, and in June it may not get fully dark until well after 11pm.

While angling is a popular pastime in Ireland, it is uncommon for shore angling venues to be crowded, except when mackerel are inshore and more people will be targeting these. But on the whole, even the best marks are lightly fished, and in many places you will go a whole day without seeing another angler. Many of the surf beaches are several miles long, which provides huge angling space, and away from popular venues are thousands of marks which may never have seen a line. The world is literally your oyster, and getting off the beaten track and exploring new marks can provide spectacular results.

But Ireland offers an experience that is much more than just the fishing. The scenery along the Wild Atlantic Way is unrivalled, and good restaurants and pubs are found everywhere. Taking a break from fishing to explore some of the coastline is recommended, or after a long day fishing, where better to go to relax than to a genuine Irish pub where you can share your fishing stories over a pint or two.

This brochure contains some basic information to help you get started on your Irish shore angling adventure. There is a short description of species available and a brief introduction to some of the areas that consistently produce quality fish.



There is much more detailed information on the www.fishinginireland.info website and on the accompanying Google map: <https://goo.gl/ty3pLf>

SPECIES

Ireland has a wide variety of shore angling species, and in recent years climate change and warming oceans have seen more species arriving on our southern shores, especially in summertime. Species like triggerfish, gilthead bream and golden grey mullet are relatively recent arrivals in Ireland, and angling opportunities for these are expanding every year as they spread further north.

The most abundant species, especially in summer and autumn, is undoubtedly mackerel. These mini-predators follow the shoals of sprat and sandeel and can be caught easily from shore, usually at high tide when they come inshore within casting range. While they are targeted as a food fish in their own right, they are also one of the best baits available, and are used to target many more species.

Fishing on beaches, flatfish such as flounder, dabs and turbot are the most common fish caught. These can be caught year-round, but will be in their best condition from late summer into autumn, feeding up hard before their winter spawning migration.

Ireland has a wealth of shark and ray species available to shore anglers. Several ray species can be caught, including thornback, painted, undulate, cuckoo, blonde and sting ray. Tralee Bay is a noted area for stingray, with many caught off the beaches there in late spring and early summer. Shark species vary from the humble dogfish, the slightly larger and more aggressive bull huss, smooth

hound and spur dog, to tope, blue shark and even porbeagle shark have been taken from one or two shore marks.

More renowned edible species including cod, pollack, coalfish and whiting, are readily caught off the rocks, while species such as ballan wrasse provide rod-bending sport on rough rocky venues. The thick lipped mullet is one of our most abundant inshore species (and one of the trickier species to catch) and they can be found in most estuaries, lagoons and harbours, and also off many beach and rock marks.

The most iconic, and sought-after species in Ireland is probably the Atlantic bass. Found all around the coast, but particularly the south and southwest, bass fishing proves a huge attraction to visiting anglers. Bait, lure and fly fishing are all successful methods for bass, and this hard fighting fish provides great sport for anglers. Of late, both the recreational and commercial fisheries for bass have come under close inspection as the stock continues to decline in the EU area and at time of print bass fishing is on a catch and release only basis.

SEASONS

Some sea fish can be caught all year round, while some are summer visitors, and others stay around but are harder to catch in winter, as they feed less. While winter can be quiet, cod fishing can be excellent on some south coast marks, especially after a storm, and whiting and coalfish are readily caught on beach marks. Many flatfish are still around into January, and bass can be caught all year round in some places, although bait fishing is the preferred method in winter.

As spring comes around and sea temperatures rise, other species come to the fore. Ray fishing picks up in spring, especially thornback rays, and sting rays are caught from April onwards in many shallow water bays, usually on sunny days as the sun warms shallow inshore waters. Pollack and wrasse start to appear in dispatches also, and once sea temperatures pass 10°C these become much easier to catch. Southern species begin to make an appearance also, with gilthead bream and triggerfish being caught from May. Summertime from June onwards is peak season, and most species are readily caught right into October, after which water temperatures start to drop again. Mackerel and baitfish such as sprat are most plentiful in late summer, and this can really produce great fishing as other species chase them. September can often be the best angling month, when the water is warmest, and fish are feeding hard to fatten up before winter.

METHODS & BAIT

Bait, lure and fly fishing can all be used for different species. Bait fishing is the most common method for shore angling in Ireland, and many species will only be taken on bait. Bottom dwelling fish like flatfish and ray species are only really targeted with bait. Fish baits such as mackerel or sandeel are good for most species. This can be anything from a small belly strip of sandeel on a size 4 hook for flounder and turbot, to a mackerel flapper on a size 6/0 for conger eel, and everything in between.

Worm baits are also very successful for most species. Lugworm can be dug all around the coastline in sheltered estuaries and beaches, and is a very attractive bait for flatfish, bass, coalfish and whiting. It can often be presented in a cocktail with other baits, or tipped off with a bit of mackerel or squid. Ragworm is a superb bait for targeting wrasse and pollack off the rocks. Ragworm is less widely distributed than lugworm, and can be dug

from areas on the south and east coasts. It can be purchased or ordered in at many tackle shops. Again this can be tipped off with fish or squid.

Squid itself is also a very good bait, either on its own or as part of a cocktail. Crab is an excellent bait for many species, and can be very useful where crabs are stripping fish baits off the hook quickly, as they tend to leave crab alone. Hardback shore crabs are a deadly bait for picking out the bigger wrasse, while peeler crab is used for bass and flatties. Crab can be collected on rocky, weedy shorelines, although it may be easier to obtain from a tackle shop.

Lure fishing is becoming more and more popular, especially with the advent of lighter lure rods and braid. Spinning metal spinners has long been popular, especially for mackerel, but the rising popularity of other lures, such as hard and soft plastics, has introduced a whole new range of fishing opportunities. Lure fishing is particularly popular for bass, as well as pollack and wrasse. Bass lure fishing could take up a whole book of its own, but is very successful in Ireland and a large proportion of bass caught by anglers are caught on lures. Weedless soft plastics in particular have become very popular and have opened access to many shore marks previously unfishable due to heavy weed. Lure fishing has also become popular for wrasse, and small soft plastics are very successful here. Light rock fishing, or LRF as it has become known, can produce spectacular results for most of the smaller species that inhabit sheltered coves and harbours.

Fly fishing is also gaining in popularity. Fly fishing for bass has been practiced by a few pioneers over the last 20 years, and is now becoming more widespread. Pollack can also be targeted on fly, although faster sinking lines are usually required, and even the humble mackerel can provide great sport on light fly tackle.



TACKLE

For most beach fishing, a light beachcaster of 12 feet long and able to cast 3-6 ounces is perfect. "Continental"-style longer rods have become popular in recent years and rods of 14-16 feet with slim diameter and fixed spool reels are much more common now, and are predominating on the Irish match angling scene. Both are perfectly adequate for pleasure fishing. For some species, more distance or weight may be required, and a heavier rod may come in handy. For bass and flattie fishing, in estuaries or on the beach, a lighter 11 foot rod casting 2-4oz may be sufficient.

Lure fishing rods come in myriad sizes and casting ratings, but for most bass and pollack fishing a rod rated to cast 10-40g is perfect – length is a matter of personal preference, but most lure rods would be 8-9 feet long. For LRF fishing, a 7-foot rod rated to cast 5-15g is perfect.

Fly rods for bass and pollack would generally be 8-9 weight rods, 9-10 feet long, and shooting head lines are common. A line tray is recommended to stop line getting wrapped around rocks or feet by the waves.

REGULATIONS

There are very few regulations pertaining to sea angling in Ireland, however, there are a couple of points and regulations to note:

There is no closed season for sea fishing in Ireland, except for sea trout – no fishing from 13 October to 31 December. This is currently under review and may change. A salmon licence is required for sea trout fishing, and bag limits, size limits and other regulations apply.

Bass fishing is also subject to regulation. These regulations are set by the European Union. Currently (2018), bass fishing is catch and release only.

Fisheries regulations are subject to change and so anglers should consult <http://fishinginireland.info/regulations.htm> for the latest information.



Catch & Release

We all have a responsibility to protect and conserve our fisheries so that they can be enjoyed by future generations. Many sea fisheries face multiple threats including pollution, illegal fishing and over exploitation, all of which have a negative impact on fish stocks. For that reason, we would ask that all anglers consider practicing Catch & Release for the majority of fish they catch. Record any trophy fish with a quick photo and then carefully return to the water. Remember: [#CPRsavesfish](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION

Angling Information

This guide provides a basic introduction to shore angling in Ireland and gives a summary of some of the key angling hotspots. However, there are a number of resources where you can find more detailed and up-to-date angling information. Firstly, there is a dedicated angling website which has more detailed information on individual fisheries and service providers at:

www.fishinginireland.info

If you are planning on fishing in Northern Ireland or on the Foyle and Carlingford area on either side of the border you should consult:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/outdoor-recreation-and-sport/angling

and

www.ufishireland.org/

IFI also produces a weekly Angling Update which provides up-to-date reports on what people are catching and where. You can sign up to be emailed the weekly Angling Update by emailing contact@fisheriesireland.ie

IFI has also produced a suite of angling brochures that provide much greater detail on fishing marks around the Irish coast. These are available from our website or by emailing contact@fisheriesireland.ie

General Tourism

Ireland also has a general tourism website www.ireland.com that will help you plan your trip to Ireland. It provides a wealth of information on travel and accommodation as well as information on things to do and see while visiting the island.

Leave No Trace

Please adhere to the seven principles of Leave No Trace Ireland:

Plan ahead and prepare; Travel and camp on durable surfaces; Dispose of waste properly;

Leave what you find; Minimise campfire impacts (be careful with fire); Respect wildlife;

Be considerate of other visitors.

Vehicles should be parked in designated areas and in such a manner that they do not cause obstruction.



Anglers should fish responsibly and sustainably – where possible use single barbless hooks and practice no-weight, “in the water” catch and release.

www.leavenotraceireland.org

Biosecurity

Aquatic Invasive Species and fish pathogens are readily transferred from one watercourse to another on angling tackle, boats and protective clothing. These can be very damaging to resident fish stocks, the aquatic habitat and the general environment. We would ask that all anglers inspect and clean their gear prior to travelling to Ireland to fish.

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

www.fisheriesireland.ie/Research/invasive-species.html

Or via Invasive Species Ireland at

<http://invasivespeciesireland.com/cops/water-users/anglers/>

Disclaimer

Every effort has been taken to ensure accuracy in the compilation of this publication and associated maps and web pages. Inland Fisheries Ireland cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions therein. Some sporting activities may by their nature be hazardous and involve risk. It is recommended in such cases to take out personal accident insurance. While many operators would have public liability insurance it is always advisable to check with the establishment or operator concerned as to the level of cover carried.

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REGIONS AND HOTSPOTS

The east coast of Ireland (A) faces the Irish Sea, and experiences smaller tides and usually colder water temperatures than the south and west coasts. There are long stretches of beach along this coast, providing great opportunities for flatfish and bass fishing. In summertime, smooth hounds are caught at night, particularly from south Wicklow marks, and in winter, cod and whiting fishing on these beaches can be very productive.

The south coast, from Hook Head west, features more broken ground, with some great beaches interspersed with rocky ground. The Waterford Estuary (B), where 3 great rivers, the Nore, Suir and Barrow meet the sea, provides good fishing for bass, and later in the year, is renowned for cod. The Copper Coast, in west Waterford (C), is a lure anglers paradise for bass fishing. Further west (D), the beaches of east Cork around Youghal are frequently used for large competitions due to the number and quality of fish here, with flounder, bass, dogfish and cod providing most of the catches. Painted ray to specimen size are taken at night in autumn on the main beaches. The Youghal estuary also has great fishing for specimen size flounder and good cod.

Once into West Cork (E), the force of the Atlantic ocean has more of an effect and the coastline becomes more indented. Smaller beaches are the norm and these are punctuated by rocky headlands and bays. Bass fishing is excellent along this coastline, and in early summer gilt-head bream arrive in good numbers too. Some of the estuaries along this stretch of coast provide excellent fishing for flatfish, mullet and bass.

The Beara Peninsula (F) is a well-kept secret. Its rocky shorelines provide superb angling for a variety of species, including specimen sized bull huss, ray and plaice, as well as monster conger eels.

Kerry (G), is renowned for bass angling, and the Atlantic storm surf beaches like Inch and Brandon are legendary among bass anglers. Both and lure fishing are very popular along this coastline and Kerry probably has some of the most prolific bass angling in the country. Other species are found in good numbers too, with Tralee Bay one of the most popular areas to fish – painted ray, undulate ray and stingray are common catches here, while the rocky headlands all along this coastline provide excellent pollack and wrasse opportunities.

The Shannon Estuary (H) is a long inlet with large areas of rough ground and stony mud, dominated by thornback ray and bull huss well into double figures. Further west and along the coastline of County Clare (I) are steep rocky headlands with more Atlantic storm surf beaches like Lahinch and Doonbeg (Doughmore), providing good flounder and bass fishing, with pollack and wrasse off the rocks. In north Clare, at Ballyvaughan and Black Head, distance casting from rocks onto sand produces spotted ray and good size dab, with wrasse and conger in close.

County Galway (J) is more rocky, with many small bays and islands – few long beaches but these beaches provide good ray fishing at distance, with excellent flounder fishing in the surf, and miles of unexplored rocky shoreline to try for pollack and wrasse. Little Killary is a sheltered bay with excellent thornback ray fishing, and specimen size dab on occasion. North of Killary Fjord the coastline reverts to long wave-swept beaches, with flatfish and occasional bass, and sea trout starting to show in numbers.

Clew Bay (K), with its many islands, headlands and narrow channels is a haven for thornback ray and bull huss, with plenty of dogfish to keep you busy between ray bites. The beaches of Belmullet (L) are renowned for sea trout, and the rocky headlands to the north end of the peninsula provide great pollack fishing to lure and fly.

The coastline between Belmullet and Sligo (M) provides opportunities to fish from numerous rock and beach marks and the most prominent feature on this stretch of coastline is the broad expanse of Killybeg Bay. Sea trout fishing in the Moy Estuary in the middle of the bay is popular while Enniscrone Strand on the eastern side of the estuary provides good beach fishing for flatfish.

Donegal Bay (N), stretching from north Mayo through County Sligo and south Donegal, has a myriad of diverse fishing, from sandy beaches to rough rocky shorelines, and has the variety of species to match. St John's Point is a noted headland with renowned wrasse fishing, and some of the beaches are among the best competition beaches in Ireland due to their prolific flatfish catches.

North and west Donegal (O) are a varied mix of beaches and rough ground, while the inlets such as Lough Swilly can provide great ray fishing. Bass have even been taken recently as far north as Inishowen, possibly another sign of climate change.

IRELAND/NORTHERN IRELAND

The island of Ireland consists of two separate countries: The Republic of Ireland (also known as Eire or Southern Ireland) and Northern Ireland, which is part of the UK. As a result of this, there are three separate agencies that control fishing on the island of Ireland: Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) which controls the majority of the fishing in the Republic of Ireland, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) which controls most of the fishing in Northern Ireland, and the Loughs Agency, which controls the fishing on the Foyle and Carlingford systems that span the border between Northern Ireland and Ireland. These areas are marked on the adjacent map.

This brochure only provides information on fishing in IFI controlled waters in Ireland. Anglers wishing to fish in Loughs Agency or DAERA controlled waters should check the relevant website for information before fishing.

DAERA: www.wildirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/outdoor-recreation-and-sport/angling

Loughs Agency: www.lfishireland.org/



For a more detailed Google Map scan the QR code or use the following web link:
<https://goo.gl/vy3p1t>

Angling *Ireland*

