

ANGLING IN IRELAND

The product

Every region in Ireland can offer a quality angling product, whether it be sea, coarse or game angling. The main attractions of Ireland as an angling destination are its relatively clean waters (estimated 14,000km of rivers and 5,600km of coastline), supporting an excellent quality and quantity of fish, and a welcoming and uncrowded atmosphere. Further development and maintenance of these

fisheries in a pollution-free environment will undoubtedly attract more anglers here, thereby creating further enterprise opportunities. The majority of angler tourists use self-catering or B&B accommodation close to their preferred angling location. Opportunities to service this market exist in a wide range of areas such as accommodation, boat and equipment hire, boatman services, providing bait, etc.

Adding value

Land adjacent to lakes and rivers can be liable to flooding and may have a more curtailed grazing capacity than other fields. Utilising a coarse lake can enable farmers to generate income from what was useless ground. Equally, the lakes can add value to the property. Fishing rights for watercourses are most likely State owned, meaning farmers cannot charge for the right to fish and there is an implied right of reasonable access. Value can be added by offering a safe place to camp and park.

Permits

Most salmon and some sea trout and brown trout fisheries are privately owned and a permit is necessary. Having a licence to fish does not entitle you to fish. You may also need a fishing permit or permission from the fishery's owner. A fishing permit costs €20-€50 a day. Some more exclusive fisheries can cost more. Most trout angling is free on loughs but not rivers. Boat, engine and boatman fee per day costs from €200. Boat and engine only cost €75.00. Boat only costs €50.00. Fees can vary widely.

Insurance needs

You will definitely need public liability insurance to cover you against any accidents involving paying members of the public. Buildings insurance will also be needed for any

physical structures relating to the diversification. If you are providing craft, you may need to consider appropriate marine insurance.

The market

There is great demand for good fishing locations. To succeed, marketing strategies must be used. Social media is the most effective marketing tool. Promotional material could also include business cards or leaflets promoting the fish at your location. Anglers always go to tackle shops. Talking to and emailing local tackle shop owners and those in your region can improve income. The typical angling tourist may visit for a holiday for one or two weeks, or for just a few days. Britain is the most important market, followed by mainland Europe.

Several marketing campaigns have been established as part of Fáilte Ireland's tourism campaigns to promote angling holidays in various Irish regions. Love Fishing Ireland offers tailor-made fishing excursions in Ireland's Ancient East, for both wild brown trout and pike within 40 minutes' drive of Dublin city centre. Fáilte Ireland has developed marketing campaigns, which promote the midlands lake regions through Ireland's Hidden Heartlands – aimed at the Irish market. The Wild Atlantic Way marketing initiative also promotes lake and sea fishing in towns and coastal villages along the Atlantic Ocean. On the Wild Atlantic Way, various lakes are promoted, which are renowned for the quality of their fishing, while the River Moy in Ballina is one of the most prolific Atlantic salmon rivers in Europe.

Types of angling and fish available

Coarse fish

Species: bream, rudd, roach, tench, dace, eel, perch and carp.

Main locations – River Shannon and tributaries, mainly in the midlands, parts of the west and south east, and the Erne catchment and Monaghan lakelands to the Munster Blackwater valley. Most coarse angling takes place from a river or canal bank, or a specially constructed platform on lake shores.

Pike

Pike are present in most of our coarse fisheries and Ireland is regarded as the most suitable destination for the larger specimen fish. Pike will often be found in the Shannon and Erne system and associated lakes, the midland lakes and in other lakes, rivers and canals throughout Ireland. Irish pike generally grow faster and mature earlier than in other EU countries. There are angling festivals and competitions throughout the country, which attract foreign anglers each year. This is relevant to coarse anglers.

Game angling

Species: trout (brown trout, gillaroo, sonaghan, ferox, sea trout, rainbow trout) and salmon (springer, summer salmon (grilse)).

While all our coarse fish were introduced to the country, the trout, sea trout and salmon are native. Brown trout are still widely available throughout Ireland, although the quality of the angling and the size of the fish available vary enormously.

Sea angling

Species: (shore) bass, ray, flounder, pollack, conger, wrasse, dogfish, plaice, dab and mullet. (Deep sea) shark, tope, cod, pollack, coalfish, ling, conger, ray, skate and turbot. A fleet of specially built tourist-board approved angling boats are located around the Irish coast. These boats are operated by experienced skippers and can cater for four to 12 anglers. They can be hired by the day or week. Most of Ireland's sea angling reputation is based on charter boat fishing. However, small boat fishing and shore angling are attracting a growing number of visitors. The main attractions of sea angling for tourists to Ireland are the wide range of venues and species available, and the large number of specimens taken each year. Hotels, guest houses and B&Bs are the accommodation type available. There are a large number of sea angling festivals/ competitions, which attract tourists from abroad each year.

Creating access

A more difficult aspect of a lakeside business is accessibility for anglers with boats, or to fish from pontoon jetties. These can be temporary or permanent structures.

Any permanent structures and interference with the lake or river verge will require notification to the local planning authority and a formal planning application.

The proposed development must also be advertised in the local press and notices posted at the site entrance, giving any parties the opportunity to object.

The planning authority will consider the environmental impact of a development on the surrounding countryside. Therefore, for example, the visual impact from public vantage points will be considered.

How will the public will access the site? Will new roads need to be built? There needs to be suitable provision for parking and a consideration for locals. The council needs to be convinced that the development will be carried out professionally and will not produce a blot on the landscape. An environmental impact assessment (EIA) may be required and a foreshore lease will be required for coastal developments. Please consult a planning consultant for exact requirements.

Deep sea angling

Average costs of hiring a boat with a capacity for eight anglers:

- per angler per day cost – €40-€60;
- charter daily cost – €500; and,
- minimum weekly charter cost – €1,375.

Average costings for the range of fibreglass boats and engines are as follows:

- 15ft fibreglass lake boat – from €2,000;
- 5hp outboard engine – €1,250 (Yamaha outboard);
- 6hp outboard engine are also popular – €1,480;
- 8hp outboard engine – €1,625 (and priced similarly);
- 9.9hp outboard engine – €2,150;
- 15hp outboard engine – €2,480; and,
- boat trailers cost from €1,300.

Further information

For further information please contact Barry Caslin, Teagasc, Rural Economy Development Programme at:
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The following resources are also helpful:

- 🌐 www.fishinginireland.info/
- 🌐 www.failteireland.ie
- 🌐 www.waterwaysireland.org